

Paul H. Dixon
Moving of God in History
circa 1978

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

This morning, we're looking at the book of Psalms, the 44th Psalm, and the first verse. Psalm 44 verse one says we have heard with our ears, oh God. Our fathers have told us what work thou did in their days in the times of old.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, what David is doing here is remembering what he's been told of the moving of God in history. If you go on through the chapter, we won't take the time this morning, it'd be a good chapter for your meditation and thought today. In essence, he's saying, "We've heard of this, but we've never seen it." And he says, "Lord, do it again." In 1857, there was a man by the name of Jeremiah Lanphier. He was a layman in a Dutch's reform church on Fulton Street in New York City. He was greatly burdened about the needs, spiritual need of that day.

Paul H. Dixon:

As he'd walk along the streets of New York City, look at the faces of people that these were times of depression and times of great trial for our nation. And he knew that the only answer was a revival. And so he decided to start a prayer meeting there in the church at noon. He announced it. And the first day six men met there at the church at noon to pray. They decided to meet the next week at the same time and 20 men came. They thought they want to make it a daily business instead of just a weekly business, and soon they had 30. And the next day it was 40. And before long, they had completely packed out that church and decided they'd have to get another church. So they got the St John's Methodist church. And 2000 men turned out the first day there.

Paul H. Dixon:

So they said, "We filled these two churches." And they started filling other churches. "What are we going to do?" And so they got the Burtons Theater. 5,000 people turned out there. In six months, they had 150 men's prayer meetings going throughout New York City. There were 50,000 people praying.

Paul H. Dixon:

This thing broke loosen to revival. And in the first three months of 1858, 3 months after they started these prayer meetings, there were 25,000 souls saved in New York City alone. They said it was nothing for the preachers and the churches to get up and preach and give the invitations, see 75 to a hundred people walking down the aisles every Sunday, coming to know Christ as their savior.

Paul H. Dixon:

Suddenly it spread throughout the east and then it crossed the nation. And in the first 18 months after that prayer meeting started, they estimated there were 1 million converts in America. The population of America at that time was 30 million people. Or in other words, one out of every 30 Americans came to know Christ as their savior.

Paul H. Dixon:

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Do you realize what that would mean if the same thing would happen today? We would've six or 7 million converts if that would start today in the next 18 months.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, David said, "We have heard with our ears, oh God. Our fathers have told us what worked though did in their days in the times of old." We've never seen anything like that. Every century in America, there has been a Great Awakening with the exception of the 20th century. There's been nothing in these 70 years that has come close to a Great Awakening in America. Now, God's been good to us and God's still working today. I just came from a thrilling meeting in Loraine, Ohio, and other evangelists and pastors and missionaries in the school were seeing God move and people are being saved. But I'm talking about something that will literally shake this nation to its very foundation. I mean, just move throughout the nation. We haven't had anything like this in this century.

Paul H. Dixon:

Did you know that many of the Great Awakening started with young people? The famous Haystack Prayer Meeting was on one of our leading college campuses. This led to another one of the Great Awakenings in America. Modern day missionary movement came out of that Haystack Prayer Meeting. So I want us just to think together today as to what God would have for us this week and for many weeks and months and years to come.

Paul H. Dixon:

As David considered history, lets us consider history this morning. And first of all, the experiences of old. He talked about what God had done in the days and in the times of old. I like history. I like to read about what happened in years, gone by. And I think the greatest history book we have is the word of God to see at least what God has done in history.

Paul H. Dixon:

And I thrilled to look back and see God's people in bonded in the land of Egypt and then to see him and his might and power deliver these people from under the heel of the Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and then to see him take them and lead them by a fire at night and cloud by day, and then take them through the red sea and destroy the enemy behind them, take them in there to the wilderness and then give them water out of the rock, mana from heaven, cloth them, defeat their enemies, later to lead people across the Jordan River and get them into the land of Canan, where they're faced with giants. They have a giant wall that surrounds the city of Jericho and they walk around that wall and it comes down with the shall as again, the power of God is displayed. We see David as he goes out against the Goliath. There no match. And yet there's a smile on his face. There's confidence in his heart. He knows that victory is his.

Paul H. Dixon:

He has that stone in the sling and he lets it fly and the giant falls. And before long, his head is severed from his body. And David has come back with the victory because of the power of God. We go again and again, through the Bible, we find Daniel, we see him in the lions' den and come out with the victory. We see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the furnace of fire and come out with the victory.

Paul H. Dixon:

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We see Elijah there all [inaudible 00:07:12]. He's surrounded by a host of compromising Christians and many unbelievers and infidels. And he stands there by himself. No one, even for moral support and that rugged preacher, that fearless preacher stood up there, looked him in the eye and said, "How long halt you between two opinions?" If the Lord be God follow him. But if bail then follow him and the people answered him, not a word. So he then proceeded to demonstrate the power of God. As he calls down the fire from heaven. The Bullock is destroyed and consumed in the altar and the rocks and the dust and the water that had been poured upon it. And if I ever broke loose, we saw God work. And we go over into the new Testament.

Paul H. Dixon:

I thrilled to read about Peter. Unlearned, ignorant fishermen, as he stands up before that multitude of people who said amen to the death of Jesus Christ. And he looks them in the eye and preaches unto them, that Jesus that they crucified and told Ali had died for their sins and that he arose from the dead and the people cried out, "What must we do?" When's the last time you were in a service? When the people gave the invitation. Not the preacher, but the people.

Paul H. Dixon:

3000 souls came to Christ on that one day. Go on and see the apostle Paul as God and his grace saves that man. And then see what he does through him and write on through the new Testament and the book of Acts, what a thrilling book. If you want to get excited, enthusiastic in the cause of Christ, read the book of Act. The book of action.

Paul H. Dixon:

And I believe the same thing God did for that early church, he can do for us, he can do for our churches today. And what God did for those individual Christians than he can do for us as individual Christians today. But let's not just look to God's record of history. Let's also considered some of the history we get from books. I want to encourage your students to read, not just for your classes, but I'm talking about for your own individual good and read biographies. I know some fellows, some good preachers don't like to read biographies. I recommend biographies. Whole bottom shelf of my library is just filled with biography. I know what God did for me as a student.

Paul H. Dixon:

When I went to school, the only thing I'd read, I'd read everything John Artunas had ever written. John Artunas wrote books about baseball and basketball and football. And I'd read everything he'd written. And I read just about every classic comic book that had been written from my book report when I was in high school. But when I got to college, I'd just been saved. I got saved when I was a senior and I went to school. I hadn't been there long. And somehow I just had some extra time and I was down browsed in the library one day and I found the book, the Autobiography of Charles G Finney. That book changed my life. And then I started reading some more books. And then the next summer I went to the mission field to work with the missionary in the Virgin islands, who was an avid reader. And he challenged me. He said, "Paul, do you read?"

Paul H. Dixon:

I said, "I read Psalms." He said, "I want you to read a book a week while you're over here." And then he told me the books I was to read. And one of them was Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secrets. And some other

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real good books. And I read those. And then I came back and I got ahold of a book the roommate gave me, said, "Do you ever read this?" I said, "No." Borden of Yale. Read that book, Borden of Yale. It's about a college student, a rich college student, dedicated to Christ at Yale University, read that book.

Paul H. Dixon:

But we can read these books and we can read the history of what God has done. Not only in Bible time. I think of what God has done through men like George Whitfield. That man, if he would stand up there and 10,000 people would flock to hear there in the field, the coal miners would come out. They would've the cold dust all over them. And they would peer through all of that dust. They would still have their paraphernalia on.

Paul H. Dixon:

Benjamin Franklin would be standing in the crowd. George Woodfield would stand up there and preach on you must be born again. No microphone. His voice would carry over the thousands of people. They said they never saw that man preach, but what souls were saved, but what tears were flowing down his cheek. Read what God did through John Wesley.

Paul H. Dixon:

See how God got hold of that man, who was a preacher. He came to America to be a missionary to America, but he was lost. And he went back to England, a defeated discouraged man. And there on Aldersgate Street in London, England, he went into a little gathering of people and found Christ as a savior. And God used him to bring revival to all of England.

Paul H. Dixon:

Read how God used Jonathan Edwards, that brilliant man, the president of Princeton University. Now he would stand and read sinners in the hands of an angry God. And there would be such power that the people would grab all of the columns for fear they were falling in the hell.

Paul H. Dixon:

Read of the ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Now every Sunday, they would've 5,000 people there Sunday morning and Sunday night. And once a quarter, he would beg the people not to come to church. He'd say, "Please don't come next Sunday because there's so many people trying to get in. We don't have room for them." And those people would stay home. And once a quarter, they'd pack it out with 5,000 brand new people. 35 to 80 were saved, baptized and added to the church every month of this ministry for 37 years.

Paul H. Dixon:

We're talking about what God has done and we can go on and on and on. These are the experiences of old. But wait a minute, let's not just look at the experiences of old. Let's also look at the examples of old. These experiences were not given in the Bible just for our instruction or for our education. But rather we're told that what we have in the Bible is given to challenge us, and to motivate, us and to encourage us, and to tell us that what God did then, he can do now. Same God who worked through that Paul can work through you, John. Can work through you, Judy. Same God, same thing God did through a Spurgeon and a Finney and a brainer to whoever it might be. He can do through you and through me.

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Paul H. Dixon:

What God did a hundred years ago, he can do it today. Some people like to think that the reason we don't have such an awakening today is because of the wicked days that we're living in and they blame the world. May I say that the world has never been to blame for a lack of revival.

Paul H. Dixon:

See, but these were such wicked days. They were wicked days then too. We like to pride ourselves. And living in a day that's so different than any the other day. But sin has always been wicked. Man has always been the prayed. And England was in a greater plight in their day than we are in our day. I assure you of that. And yet God gave an awakening. He can do it now. But if we don't blame the world, then we like to blame God. I have no use. For the modern theology that it's impossible to have revival today. Some say, "Well, due to eschatology, we believe that you can't have revival today." One of my favorite radio preachers has written a little book on why we can't have revival today. And I just thoroughly disagree with him. I appreciate his ministry, but I just don't agree with him.

Paul H. Dixon:

Supposedly before the Lord comes and will not be an awakening. But wait a minute, I don't think we're anymore looking for the Lord to come than the apostle Paul was looking for him to come in that day. He had that expectation. He had that hope and yet he was also looking for God to work and for [inaudible 00:15:38] to be revival. And I believe we ought to look to God. We can't blame God. God is a God of greatness and power and might. And our God wants to work in this day, but it comes back to you and to me. God works through believers. It's if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, pray, seek my first face, turn from their wick aways, then I'll work Jesus.

Paul H. Dixon:

So let's look at their example. Number one, these were men of earnestness. I can't study about men, God used or women God used without seeing dedicated people. Listen to what Paul said. For me to live is Jesus Christ. Can you be any more earnest than that? John the Baptist said "He must increase, but I must decrease." Isaiah said, "Here Am I send me." You.

Paul H. Dixon:

Josh was said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Job said, "Though, he slay me yet will I trust him." D.L Moody overheard someone say the world is yet to see what God can do with one man holy dedicated to him. And D.L Moody said, "By God grace, I'll be that man." And by the time he was 21 years old in Chicago, Illinois, he had a Sunday school that he started by himself that was running over 2000.

Paul H. Dixon:

John Knox said, "Give me Scotland or else I die." One morning his wife was about 1:00 in the morning. She got out of bed and found John Knox sprawled on the floor. It was cold, he was crying, he shook him and said, "John, get off the floor. You're going to catch pneumonia." He said, "Woman, leave me alone. How can I sleep? Literally, tens of thousands of people in Scotland are going to hell."

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Give me Scotland or else I die. I wonder how many of us are that concerned about America today. Scott said, "Had I a hundred lives I would give them to God's work." Had I as many sons I would gladly give them to him.

Paul H. Dixon:

Robert Murray McChain said, "Oh, God make me as holy as a pardon sinner can be made." Men of earnestness. All right. Let's face it. As students we can be earnest about our studies and I hope you are. Don't come here to study to be a student at this school waste the teacher's time and your time by not getting down to business about the studies.

Paul H. Dixon:

We can be earnest about the sports and playing basketball, and soccer, and football, or baseball, or cross country, whatever it might be or golf, fine. Nothing wrong with participating in the sports. We can be earnest about our date life, and social life. Work on that. We can be earnest about this business. What we're going to do with our lives. Be thinking about that. But I want to challenge you to be above all earnest for God.

Paul H. Dixon:

Dedicated to God and getting involved in this business of getting out the God for whether it be in a pulpit ministry, whether it be in the prayer closet, whether it be in a class that you teach. But mostly say, "I have one purpose in living. Wherever God puts me, I want to live for Christ."

Paul H. Dixon:

Let's get earnest this week. Let's trust God to do something in each of our lives that will make us on an exceedingly higher plane in our Christian experience and closer to him than ever been in our lives. Not only were they men of earnestness, they were also men of faith. I don't believe we can expect much unless we have great faith in the God we have.

Paul H. Dixon:

You go to Hebrews chapter 11 and again, read of the experiences of old. But the key for every one of these lives was that they believe God. Without faith, it's impossible to please him. He had come at the God must believe that he is, that he's reward of them that diligently seek him. Our God's alive. We need a vision of the same God that Isaiah saw high lifted up on his throne and he was holy. And he was powerful. And when Isaiah caught a vision of that, God, he caught a vision of his own sinful self and he cried out, "Woe is me. I am undone." And then God shouldn't revive and God cleansed him. And then he went forth saying, "Here am I, send me"

Paul H. Dixon:

Let's get a vision of our God believing this week to reveal himself to us and reveal our own sinful selves to us, and then reveal a lost and perishing world to us. They not only had faith in God, they had faith and the savior. May I say that I'm sure there'd be some here who need to examine yourself this week if you be in the faith and come to know Christ as your savior. You've had no interest in spiritual things. Some of you were raised in church. Some of you're here because you want to be others because there's a lot of pressure put on you to come here.

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Paul H. Dixon:

Some of you have never showed any interest in spiritual things. You're not interested right now, back spiritual things completely turn you off. And what you probably need is a good dose of salvation. And I challenge you to examine yourself to see if you'd be in the faith. Faith in Jesus Christ. Every one of these men, they were saved men. Faith in the promises of God that God can still use his word.

Paul H. Dixon:

Listen, I also thrilled to hear of how many of you are ministering in some of these colleges around here. And you're coming in contact with some of the young people and able to confront them with Christ. This is wonderful. I praise the Lord for it. I had the joy the first hour of this year of leading a skeptic to Christ. Was a young man, 17 years old. He started attending the church where we attend in Chattanooga eight months ago. First time I came home from meetings and met him I found him, a very cordial young man. His father's in the service. He just retired from the service. He'd traveled around the world. He'd heard everything. He didn't believe in God. And when he started talking about all he knew about physics and all the rest, I didn't know much of what he was talking about. And I could find him with the savior. He was very cordial, but he just didn't believe it. But he kept coming to church, kept coming to church and the word of God kept prodding him and kept speaking to his heart. Sometimes he'd go away mad.

Paul H. Dixon:

And I preached the watch night service and old Don came up to me. I could tell Sunday, he talked with me and I could just tell that there was a difference in his thinking. He came up after I preached the watch night service and it was about 15 minutes after 12. He started talking about how he was thinking differently. And I said, "Look, Don, you been saved." Said, "You know how to get saved?" He said, "No." But he said, "I didn't want to tell you, but that's why he came over here. I want to know [inaudible 00:23:36] show me." I said, "Sure, Don." I took him back into a room and opened up the Bible, went over step by step. He asked his questions and then he trusted Christ [inaudible 00:23:46] saved, beaming now for Christ. God uses his word to reach these skeptics. Have faith in the power of this woman.

Paul H. Dixon:

God's word. This is what it's going to take to reach into these college young people's hearts is the word of God. Whether they believe it or not. The word of God, it's still the power of God and the salvation. It's still sharper than any two edge sword.

Paul H. Dixon:

I also say there were not only men of earnestness, but men of faith. They were men of prayer. This is our closing thought this morning. I'll tell you this because I trust that in these days we will pray perhaps like we've never prayed before.

Paul H. Dixon:

Let's pray individually. Let's set aside definite times to pray for moving of God in our own hearts and other hearts. Pray in your rooms. As roommates get together and pray. I was at Grand Rapids this past fall for a meeting. And it was a thrill to see some of the young fellows who admitted by the close of the meeting. "We never prayed together in our room before, but God's done something this week. As we just started praying together." Pray together as roommates, don't be afraid to be spiritual this week. You

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know what I mean? Sometimes we're afraid to bring it up. All the other guys think I'm trying to be spiritual. So bring it up, pray together in your room. Maybe add some dorm meetings and pray together as dorms, maybe other special meetings. Some of you fellows just want to get together, pray as a basketball team.

Paul H. Dixon:

But pray, pray, pray. This is the key. As I started out this illustration we started with was about men praying. I remember Jack worked and telling how that as a young man in his twenties, when he came to know Christ as a savior he started praying there in New York City with some other young fellows. And as they heard the people walking overhead, they could hear their footsteps, lost people, many of them. God broke their hearts and started something in his own heart. And that prayer mean that he hadn't gotten over yet.

Paul H. Dixon:

The secret to every revival and every moving of the spirit of God in history and in our day, whatever it might be is always been prayer. Make God help us to pray in these days like we've never prayed before. We've heard with our ears Oh, God. Our fathers have told us what worked out did in their days in the times of old. David said, "Do it again."

Paul H. Dixon:

Two men stood in London, England, both preachers just in recent days. They're in front of that little church of Aldersgate Street in London where the metal plaque was that [inaudible 00:26:45] that there, John Wesley came to know Christ as a savior. And out of that experience, revival came to England. As the two preachers walked away, they both get tears in their eyes. And they looked at one another and wondered why the other one was crying. And one man said to the other, "Why the tears?" And he told him why. What he'd been thinking. He said, "That's the same thing I was thinking." And what they thought? Do it again, Lord. Do it again.