

Paul H. Dixon
First Century Men
circa 1980

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Thank you, Pastor. I'm delighted to be here tonight and to be able to share in the state meetings of Ohio for these three nights. I've always appreciated the state. I got my start in evangelism nine years ago. We're in our 10th year now, full-time, after graduating from Tennessee Temple. We started one of our first meetings at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Toledo, Ohio. Don [Seul 00:00:25] had just gone there to be the pastor. And that, I think, was my first meeting in a [GARB 00:00:30] church in this state. And since that time, we've grown to appreciate all the churches across the state that we're acquainted with. I've appreciated the solid foundation that most of the churches are built upon, the emphasis upon the word of God. And especially, as I see it, a renewed interest in evangelism. I believe that this state has some of the most aggressive churches perhaps in the country in evangelism right now.

Paul H. Dixon:

And so, we praise the Lord for this. I think that you folks enjoy. Traveling around in the various states, some of the men I meet who once were in your state and in your fellowship have expressed that they've not found that in the other states. And they've said they really miss it. Another thing they've expressed is they do not feel that the camping programs of the other states begin to compare with the camping program that you have here. So, we have much to rejoice in, in what the Lord has given the churches here in the state of Ohio. I might share this with you. I imagine many of you have already heard about it, but the Calvary Baptist Church of Findlay, Ohio had a terrible fire, as you know, last Wednesday night. Approximately a half million dollars worth of damage, and their auditorium has been gutted.

Paul H. Dixon:

It was definitely an arsonist that did this, and I'm sure that Brother Crown could give you more information than I, being from Findlay. Pastor [Snively 00:01:51] and I have talked three times on the telephone since because I'm due to start a meeting there Sunday, and he is rejoicing today. He called me this morning. We talked on, let's see, on Thursday and then on Saturday. And then again, this morning. And Dick had already said he knew that God had a purpose in it. A week ago yesterday, they had over 700 in attendance. Yesterday, as they met in the local high school, the Findlay High School, they had 914 in attendance. They had several come to know Jesus Christ as their savior, including detectives and his wife. This detective was on the job, Dick told me that this morning, on the job when they had a break-in some weeks ago. And Dick, if any of you know Dick, he's one of my favorite people.

Paul H. Dixon:

He is solid, all business. God's really used him there over the years, and Dick is a witness. And he witnessed to this fellow, this detective, and he told him about Christ and how he needed to be saved. And the fellow said, "When I become interested, I'll look you up." But he said, "No, I'm not going to be pushed." Of course, Dick's not that type anyway. But a week ago Sunday, the detective and his wife were in the service. He also, of course, after the fire, had something to do with investigating the arsonist, was there yesterday, all the way in the back of the building. When the invitation was given, walked down, received Christ as his savior, both of them, they want to be baptized. We're back in the service last night.

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Dick asked the people, he said, "Do you still want to go ahead with the meeting?" They already have arranged for the junior high school to be rented for the entire week of meeting starting next Sunday, going through the following Sunday. And the people unanimously said, "We want to go ahead with the meeting." So, I'd like for you to pray for us, that God would just move in Findlay in an unusual way. Calvary Baptist Church has the ear of the entire city right now. And of course, they've been on television and it's been on the front page of the newspaper. So, God can do great things. You pray for us there. And I might just add this. This was a special blessing to me. I just finished two weeks of meetings in Danville, Illinois, and I was in Calvary Baptist closing last night. And Saturday night a man came up to me and handed me a note.

Paul H. Dixon:

He said, "Someone told me to give you this." And I opened that letter. And in there I found two \$100 bills and a note that said, "God's laid this on my heart. We want you to give it to the Calvary Baptist Church at Findlay, Ohio." And of course, when those people and pastor heard about that, they were thrilled that people, just an independent church, and all the way in Danville, Ohio said, "We want to share in the ministry there." And so, we thank God for what he's able to do. Dick, I said, "Dick, what'd you preach on yesterday morning?" He said, "I preached from 1st Corinthians chapter 3, that your work shall be tried so as by fire."

Paul H. Dixon:

I believe that you've chosen a great theme this week when you speak about first century methods for a 20th century ministry, and God laid three messages upon my heart that I'd like to share with you. But before we look into the scriptures and share these thoughts together, I'd like for us all to bow our heads in prayer. Would you pray with me one more time please as we meet tonight? Our Father, we thank you for the business that's gone before, the good reports that we've heard from Brother [Umba 00:05:09], from Brother [Bosworth 00:05:10], from all that's going on in this state for your glory. We pray your continued blessing upon the fellowship of churches as they endeavor to get out the gospel for the Lord Jesus Christ, and every legitimate means in this state.

Paul H. Dixon:

But our Father, as we come right now to this preaching of the word, we know the exceeding importance of it. And I pray that in a very special way you will minister to us as a people, as preachers, as churches, as we gather here day by day and night by night. Not by might, nor by power, but by thy spirit accomplish thy great purpose in Jesus' name, amen.

Paul H. Dixon:

First century methods for a 20th century ministry, I believe that a ministry could be defined like this. God's man, giving out God's message, using God's methods. And we're going to deal with a ministry around those three subjects for these three nights. First of all, tonight we'll consider God's man, a first century man. Secondly, God's message, a first century message. Thirdly, God's methods, a first century method. And I believe it's only right that we should start with men. I think sometimes we like to emphasize the message, and many times we sit back and wonder why is it that we have the right message, but seemingly not the special blessing of God? Why is it that someone can take one of Spurgeon's sermons out of his Treasury of the Bible, stand up and preach it word-for-word, and yet not

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have the same blessing that Charles Haddon Spurgeon realized when he preached that same sermon? The answer is that it's not totally in the message.

Paul H. Dixon:

It's also in the man. One time an evangelist had a revival meeting with Warren Wiersbe. Wiersbe picked him up at the airport, drove him over to the motel and said, "Now brother, the day is yours. We have this motel room for you. We want you to stay here. You can take your meals here. We're not demanding anything else of you. You stay here and get prepared." An evangelist spoke up and said, "I already have my messages." Wiersbe said, "I'm not talking about the message, I'm talking about the man." We need today first century men. God emphasizes men throughout the word of God. God started with a man back in the garden of Eden. Who can open up the Old Testament and go through it without being thrilled with the men of Abraham, Isaac, David, that God used? We go into the New Testament again and see that God has a very special plan for a man. Tonight, as I speak, I would not in any way be saying that I am just speaking to the males.

Paul H. Dixon:

I'm using this in a general sense. It's for men, it's for women, it's for young people, but I think we do need to underscore this that especially God wants to use men. There's an interesting passage that I'll just refer to, if you'd like to look at it, in Isaiah chapter 3. In Isaiah chapter 3, God pronounces a judgment upon Judah. And he says, "This is how I'm going to judge Judah." Isaiah chapter 3, verse 1. "For behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff. The whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water. The mighty man and the man of the Lord. The judge and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, and the captain of 50, and the honorable man, and the counselor and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent order. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them."

Paul H. Dixon:

God said, "I'm going to judge Judah. And the way I'm judging Judah is I will take away the men." We have all had a setback as Americans, just in recent days, and what's going on and the high office and places of politicians and leadership in our government. I just came from the Chicago area, and been reading the Chicago Tribune for the last two weeks, and we think we have problems as a nation. Their police department is shot through with corruption, all kinds of exposures being made. Their superintendent has just resigned. And I sometimes have to wonder if God is not judging America today by taking away the men. If ever there was a need for a man of God it's today. I think J.D. Holland's poem, Wanted, is very fitting. When he wrote, "God, give us men, a time like this demands. Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands. Men, whom the lust of office does not kill. Men, whom the spoils of office cannot buy. Men who possess opinions and a will. Men who love honor, men who cannot lie."

Paul H. Dixon:

One day, Plato was asked by Dionysos what business he had in Sicily, he said, "I came seeking an honest man." Diogenes, explaining why he went about Athens in broad daylight with a lighted lamp said, "I am seeking a man." God, today, is looking for man. Certainly we don't have to look far into the word of God to find first century men. And we're going to devote the bulk of our attention tonight, and these next three nights, as we gather together looking in the book of Acts at first century men. I'd like for you to

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turn over there with me to the first chapter. I think it's thrilling the way this book opens. In the first chapter, the book of Acts, with us addressing the 11. No longer the 12, the 11.

Paul H. Dixon:

And as we would go down through this chapter, we would find in verse 4, being assembled together with them, he commanded them in Acts 1 verse 4, that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the father what sayeth he that heard of me. God gave them a command. He said, "I don't want you to go out and do the work until you've had a special visitation of my spirit." And then after he gave them a command, he gave them a commission. When he said in verse 8, "Ye shall receive power. After that, the holy ghost has come up on you and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the outermost parts of the earth." I don't believe those 11 men ever forgot that experience. They listened to their savior as he commands them and commissions them. And the next thing they know, he's ascending into heaven.

Paul H. Dixon:

The angels are encouraging them saying, "This same Jesus shall so come again in like manner." And I don't believe they ever forgot. And those 11 men went out and accomplished, in the next few years in a city of four million, far more than any 11 of our churches are accomplishing in any city in America. Do you realize there were four million people in Jerusalem? There were 120 who gathered later in that upper room. That means there was one Christian for every 30,000 people. Can you imagine that? Not one church> Generally we think of a population of town with 25,000, 30,000 people we say, "There's one church there." And we say, "Man, what an opportunity. Let's get more churches in there." One Christian for every 30,000. And yet in just a very short time, those men, and women, and young people were able to turn those cities upside down for God.

Paul H. Dixon:

They weren't talking about 25 churches in two years, they must have been talking about 25 churches in a year. They must have been talking about 25 churches in a month. Oh, the job that they did. G. Campbell Morgan says, "These men fill us with hope, but these men also fill us with shame." What made the difference in those first century men? I believe the first thing that made a difference is that they were convinced men. They were convinced that God was God. You say, "Paul, you don't need to preach them something like that here tonight, everyone in this building probably believes that God is God." Now, I don't know that everyone's saved here tonight. I trust that some unsaved are going to be visiting these meetings. I trust we'd have the joy of seeing some people come to know Christ in these days. But even those of us who preach the word of God, and those who teach the Sunday school classes, and those are on the deacon boards, I wonder, are we really convinced that God is God?

Paul H. Dixon:

They were. Did you ever notice in the second chapter of Acts, when Peter stood up to preach, how many times he talked about God? Let's just circle it in our Bibles. In Acts, chapter 2 verse 17, I don't know that I found them all, but I'll at least point out most of them. Acts 2:17, he says, "It shall come to pass in the last days, sayeth God." And oh, the way he must have said that. God said this, you folks who are listening to us. In Acts chapter 2, beginning in verse 22, "Ye, men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by

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him in the midst of you." Verse 23, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

Paul H. Dixon:

Verse 24, "Whom God," verse 32, "This Jesus hath God raised up." Verse 33, "Therefore being by the right hand of God." Verse 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom you've crucified, both Lord and Christ." Verse 39, "As many as the Lord, our God, shall call." Is it any wonder that verse 47, after these people got saved, and they got baptized, and they continued, it says they were praising God? Here was a man preaching who was convinced that God was God. He spoke with authority. And brethren, what I believe we need today is to reevaluate our theology of God. I believe there's a tremendous need today to back up and say, "Now, just what do we really believe about God?" I think we need to see God like Isaiah saw him. He looked and he saw Him high and lifted up, and it brought such shame, and it caused him to see his sin that he prorated himself on the ground and say, "Whoa is me. I am undone."

Paul H. Dixon:

Could it be that the reason most sinners do not see themselves lost, if we're not preaching the same God that Isaiah saw? We need to preach a sovereign God, we need to preach a holy God. We need to preach that God is God. We don't need a God in the heaven who peeped down through some little hole and saw what man was going to do throughout all eternity, and therefore decided what his will was according to the will of man. We need a God who's over man. That man does not control, but who controls man. This is the kind of a God we need. He was convinced of God. I believe that if we'd go through the Old Testament, and I've just seen some things recently that I'd never saw before. One of the things that really impressed me was when the people started giving towards the construction of the temple in Chronicles. And so much money was coming in, and David was just awe, all of a sudden he just burst out into praise.

Paul H. Dixon:

And he said, "Lord," he said, "All of this money that's coming in, we never could have had this money, but for you. Lord, we never would've had the willing hearts to give it except for you. And he just stood there and praised God. It was just a sudden outburst. Well, I believe our hearts and our churches would be full of praise like this if we were convinced that God was God. I believe that we would have our prayer lives changed if we believe that God was God. Most every place I go, we all admit there's very little real praying today. If there's a need for a revival of anything, it's a revival of prayer. Could it be that the reason we pray so little is because we don't believe that God is God? That we don't believe God is still working today? It'll change our prayer lives. It'll change our preaching. It'll change our witnessing. It'll change our churches if we're convinced that God is God.

Paul H. Dixon:

I was in a meeting once in New York several years ago, and the pastor took me out to visit an older lady. And naturally, many times you go out to visit a shut-in, or to go in the hospital, and you go with the idea, "Well, I'll give this lady a blessing. "And you go away realizing you didn't give the blessing, they gave it. And I met one of the most spiritual people I'd ever come in contact with> The word of God just flowed from her lips, and she just quote poetry. And she started quoting old hymns. And in fact, I'd like to get ahold of some of those old hymns. Most of our hymnology today, most of them, the doctrine is very,

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very shallow. And some of these older hymns are just filled with the doctrine of God. Is there anything that approaches A Mighty Fortress is Our God? Could that be the reason that Luther was able to accomplish so much in his life? He believed that it came out from his pen as he wrote that hymn.

Paul H. Dixon:

And so, I wrote her later and I said, "There was one that you quoted that I just wish you could find and give it to me." She wrote it out in long-hand. It's been several years ago. I don't know that she's still living, but it's called Elijah's God Still Liveth. I'll read the verses and then give you the chorus. "Elijah made a sacrifice to offer to Jehovah. It had been wet with water thrive, Baal sacrifice was over. Elijah prayed, the fire came down and licked the water all around, and trembling souls believed and found Elijah's God still liveth. If you would make a sacrifice, God answers still by fire. My friends, just let him have his way. He'll grant your heart's desire. Consume the sacrifice you make, and for your soul fresh courage take, and chains of inbred sin will break, Elijah's God still liveth. Elijah's God still lives today, to take the guilt of sin away. And when I pray my heart's desire upon my soul, he sends down fire. Elijah's God still liveth."

Paul H. Dixon:

I believe those first century men were convinced that Elijah's God still lived. We've got to have that same conviction. We must be convinced that God is God. I believe the second thing we need to be convinced of, they were convinced they had a living savior. Let's look at Acts chapter 1, verse 3. "To whom also he showed himself alive." No wonder these men were so alive. They saw a living savior. He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs. Verse 22 of the same chapter, "Beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us," of what? "His resurrection."

Paul H. Dixon:

Chapter 2 verse 24, again, you might want to mark it. Chapter 2, verse 32, chapter 3, verse 15, chapter 4, verse 10, chapter 4, verse 33, chapter 5, verse 29 through 32. You can look them up, mark them for yourself. These men preached it. They lived it. They believed it, that they had a risen savior. What changed the lives of Peter, and James, and all of these men? What brought James to Christ? This one who wrote the book of James, it was a resurrection of Christ. He saw his half brother alive and he got saved. And what we need today is to be convinced that Jesus is living, and that ought to make us alive. I preached, some of you were there in Kansas City, and I made the statement then, I'll make it again.

Paul H. Dixon:

For the life of me I can't figure out how it's possible for anybody who believes the Bible to preach a dead message. I don't see how it's possible to have a dead song service. I don't see how we can have dead churches when we have a living Christ. This Jesus was risen alive, and these men were alive because of it. That's what we need to have. Someone asked Charles Spurgeon what made [Whitefield 00:22:43] different? He said, "He was alive. Other men were half dead." That's it. He said, "He was all fire. He was all fury." He said, "this man was a 100 percenter. He was alive." We need to be convinced that God is God. We need to be convinced that we have a living savior. Number three, they were convinced they had the answer. I mean, they knew it. There just wasn't any getting around it. They knew they had the answer for that day, and they were going to get that answer out.

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Paul H. Dixon:

One of the things that appalls me today is how many believers in our fundamental churches are sitting back, looking at the signs of the times, studying all the prophetic messages that come out on tape, and record, and that the pastors preach, and the evangelists preach, and I'll grant you it's all quite sensational. And I'm not saying that we shouldn't preach messages like this, but brother, I wonder if it's accomplishing what it's supposed to accomplish. I find a bunch of depressed saints. They're sitting around saying, "Well, things are so bad the only hope we've got is for Jesus to come." I don't believe that's the way these men lived. You'd think that we have things bad today. Did you ever stop to think about how bad things were then? Not only were they outnumbered 29,999 to one, they had the gigantic Jewish religion on one side who rejected Christ as the Messiah, who considered them unlearned ignorant men who had no right to teach theology.

Paul H. Dixon:

On the right, they had the Greeks, the intellectual Greeks, who could not fathom how the wisdom of God could be seen in the cross. These were a bunch of numbskulls, they thought, who had no cultural appreciation, a bunch of misfits, and they couldn't figure out how they had anything for them. And right in the middle of the road stood the mighty Roman army. And the Romans said, "You worship our emperor. And because you only have one God, you must be an atheist. We have many gods. Did not your Jesus say, 'Give honor unto Caesar?'" And they would reply. "Yes, we'll give honor unto Caesar, but we will not worship Caesar." They were willing to feed them to the lions. They were willing to cut off their heads. They went against this. What an impact they had upon those enemies for Jesus Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

You say, "But Paul, you have to admit there weren't the cults of that day. Man, in our neighborhood we got Mormons every place, and Jehovah Witnesses coming around, and everybody's so aggressive. And we got so many people who don't believe the Bible." Listen, the Seventh Day Adventists of our day were the Judaizers of that day. The tongue speakers of our day were the aesthetics of that day. The Jehovah Witnesses of our day were the gnostics of that day. The situation ethics people were the libertines of that day. The ritualistic religionists of our day were the Pharisees of that day. The rationalists of our day were the Sadducees of that day. They had as many obstacles, or more, than we have in America. They didn't have a completed Bible. They didn't have television, they didn't have cars, they didn't have a radio, they didn't have a printing press. They didn't have books written about the Bible to read and to study. And yet, they went out and shook their world. They were convinced they had the answer for their day.

Paul H. Dixon:

Apostle Paul said an Ephesians chapter 5's, verse 16, "Bind up the opportunities because the days are evil." They did not look at the evil days and sit back and say, "Whoa." He said, "Hey, these are evil days. Great, let's get with it. There's a job to do." They were convinced that God was God. They were convinced they had a living savior. They were convinced they had an answer for their day. And brethren, if we want to be first century men we've got to be men with the same conviction that those men had. Secondly, I believe they were not only men of conviction, but they were controlled men. They were convinced men, and they were controlled men. I just want to briefly touch on this. When I say they were controlled men, I mean that they were filled with the holy spirit. And I know some of you, when I said that, just kind of ... Your heart just missed a beat, didn't it?

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Paul H. Dixon:

Because you know, Baptists today aren't supposed to talk about filling with the spirit. We leave that to the Pentecostals, and since they're so mixed up on the holy spirit we don't talk about the holy spirit. When's the last time you heard a Baptist talk about sanctification? When's the last time you heard of Baptist talk about holiness? These aren't Pentecostal words, these are Bible words. And let's not go from one extreme to the other. These men were filled with the spirit of God. Let's note it, Acts chapter 2, verse 4. "They were all filled with the holy ghost." Acts 2, 4. Acts chapter 4, verse 8. "Then Peter, filled with the holy ghost, said unto them." Acts chapter 4, verse 31. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. And they were all filled with the holy ghost." Acts chapter 6, verse 3. "Where for brethren, look out among you seven men of honest report, full of the holy ghost."

Paul H. Dixon:

Acts chapter 7, verse 55. "Stephen, standing up, being full of the holy ghost." Acts chapter 11, verse 24. "Speaking of Barnabas, he was a good man and full of the holy ghost." Acts chapter 13, verse 9. "Then Saul, who also called Paul, filled with the holy ghost, set his eyes upon them." Brethren, there are 40 references to the spirit of God in the first 13 chapters of the book of Acts. We cannot be men of God, unless we're controlled by the spirit of God. These men were convinced that the same God who had commissioned them had given His spirit to enable them to fulfill His commission. I think sometimes we have lost the significance of what the holy spirit is for because of what Jesus said in John 14, and the way it is translated today. For instance, we, most of a us, are aware of the fact that Jesus said he would send a comforter.

Paul H. Dixon:

Of course, this is the Greek word [Greek 00:29:39]. And immediately when we think of a [Greek 00:29:42], we think of a comforter, we think of someone who's with us in the time of sorrow, in the time of distress. And actually, where we have become confused in this is that we take this word from the original ... It goes all the way back to when [inaudible 00:29:57] used it many, many years ago. And we still use the same word in our King James 1611, but it did not mean the same thing. Comfort comes from the word [Greek 00:30:12]. That has to do with bravery, has to do with courage, has to do with power, and of course the [Greek 00:30:23] is the one who is called alongside. So, the holy spirit comes within us, the spirit of God fills us or controls us. And incidentally we're commanded to be controlled by the spirit of God. We're commanded to be constantly filled with the spirit of God.

Paul H. Dixon:

And He fills us, not just to abide with us and comfort us, He fills us to give us courage to go out and do the battle. He strengthens us to go out there and get involved in this world around us, and to do the job for Jesus Christ. They were controlled by the spirit of God. And you know what happened? I know a lot of people say, "Well, Paul, I believe in the holy spirit. And I believe in emphasizing the fruit of the spirit, and love, joy. And that's great. It's all right there in the Bible, but I'm not too happy on this thing of evangelism because ... And getting the message out, because I believe that God's just called me to teach the word, and to bear the fruit of the spirit." Well, you may feel that way, but they didn't feel that way.

Paul H. Dixon:

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Because there's an interesting verse in Acts chapter 5, verse 28, "These spirit filled men," the word of God says, "Did something in Jerusalem." They didn't say it. Their enemy said it. "Did not we straightly command you that ye should not teach in this name, that is in the name of Jesus. And look what you've gone and done. You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Brethren, if we're spirit filled preachers and we have people in our churches, you deacons who are here, and Sunday school teachers, and lay people, and young people who are spirit filled Christians, we're going to fill Columbus with the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We're going to fill Cleveland, and Cincinnati, and Cedarville, and cities and towns all over the state with the doctrine of Jesus Christ. That's what spirit filled men accomplished.

Paul H. Dixon:

They were convinced men. They were controlled men. And therefore, they were committed men. God had made a commitment unto them, and in turn they had committed themselves entirely to God. Someone asked a well known religious leader, "How did you build the work that you have?" He said, "With the blood of men." There's no work today for God that is not being done by men, and women, and young people who have totally committed themselves to God. The word commitment means to place on deposit, to put in one's trust. And we need to put on deposit with God everything that we have. They did. They were committed to studying Christ, they were committed to sharing Christ. They were committed to serving Christ. They were committed, if need be, to sacrifice themselves entirely for Jesus Christ. I get excited about the book Acts. I got saved on the book of Acts.

Paul H. Dixon:

I was a senior in high school, and I walked into a Bible preaching church, the Norwood Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. I'd never been to church in a Sunday night before my life. And I get saved. And the pastor was going through the book of Acts, and the first days and weeks of my Christian life were in the book of Acts. And I had the idea, this Christianity business, that's for the bird, that's for a bunch of dead heads. And boy, I found out that the men in the book of Acts were alive, and vibrant, and real, and what they did for God. And I still get excited about it. Some of my first preaching came from the book of Acts. And well, I just see Peter going up there in Acts chapter 3, with John, and as he's going into that temple there's that man sitting there, no one ever saw that man before like Peter saw him.

Paul H. Dixon:

He was just committed to God, and he saw that man's real need. And we're passing by too many people today who have a far greater need than we're realizing because we're not totally committed to Jesus Christ, day in and day out. If we would just give our all to Christ a day at a time, 100% every day. Acts chapter 4, I get thrilled about this. "They came to Peter and they said, 'Look, we're going to let you go, but don't you talk about this Jesus anymore.' He said, 'That's all I have to talk about. I just got to talk about Him.'" In Acts chapter 5, "Their backs were beaten and they walked away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." In Acts chapter 6, they're willing to rearrange things to make proper priorities, giving themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Paul H. Dixon:

In Acts chapter 7, Stephen is willing to lay down his life for Christ because he's totally committed to Christ. And I like Acts 8. And you see Philip running across that desert to a Black man sitting in his chariot. And it must have been at least 120 degrees out there on that desert. And he is running in 120 degree heat. We go across the desert as we're on our way to California, and we have our air

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conditioners going. And sometimes we even arrange to go at night instead of the daytime because of the heat. And Philip ran across that desert. He didn't care how hot it was, he had a gospel to take to this man. He was excited at about it because he was totally committed to Jesus Christ. Voltaire said of Paul, "He's that ugly little Jew." I don't know how accurate this is, but some say that he was four feet six, and they say you talk about ugly it was spelled with a capital U.

Paul H. Dixon:

And was the apostle Paul in Acts chapter 17, this runt of a man walking into Athens, all of these statues around him, everyone else walks into Athens and looks at the art and says, "Isn't it so beautiful?" And he walks into Athens and he's pulling on his clothes, and the tears are running down his cheeks, and he's stirred because these are people who know not his God. Why did Peter see that man like nobody else saw him? Why did Paul see that city like nobody else saw it? Because he was totally committed to Jesus Christ. The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight. But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward through the night. Can we begin to fathom what God could do in the state of Ohio if every pastor here became a totally committed pastor to Christ? Every one of us who are evangelists became committed evangelists to Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

If every deacon here tonight, and every Sunday school teacher, and every church represented here became a committed person and church to Christ, what God could accomplish. Ohio is only, what? Two and a half, maybe three times larger than the city of Jerusalem was? Well, if we could only begin to realize the blessing of God that they realized there. I have many times been moved by the account of the last days of George Whitefield. As Spurgeon said, he was so alive and he was so committed. You read his sermons, and he was so convinced that God was God. He was so controlled by the spirit of God. If anyone was like a first century man, it must have been Whitefield. And one day he stood out in the open fields, and of course the thousands had gathered to hear him preach as they generally did.

Paul H. Dixon:

And he stood up, and he had a way of preaching. He constantly wept while he preached. Benjamin Franklin said he never heard anybody preach or move a crowd like Whitefield. And he was very tired in body, and he was sick, and his body was aching as he preached that message. And he preached for about an hour and stopped. That was a short message for him, and folks back in that day. And the people just started crying out more, "More. More, Mr. Whitefield, more." So, he preached for half an hour more, and he stopped and they started it all over again. "More." So, he preached for another half hour, and it was dark. He said, "I must go home." So, he picked up his light, his lantern, and he took off down the road.

Paul H. Dixon:

And would you believe those people followed him all the way home? And he got to his house, and to the end where he was staying, and he went up the stairs and prepared for bed when he heard them out in the streets yelling, "More, Mr. Whitefield. More, Mr. Whitefield." So, he went out in his nightgown, with a Bible in one hand and a candle in the other. He started to preach again. He said, "I'll preach until the candle goes out." He preached and preached, and they hung on every word. And finally the candle was out, and they bowed their heads, and he bowed his, he went into his room and they went home. The next morning the innkeeper knew that Mr. Whitefield had not come down for breakfast. And he was

Paul H. Dixon
First Century Men
circa 1980

really concerned because he knew he was an early riser. And he waited maybe 30 minutes more, and he couldn't hear him up in his room. So, he went up and knocked on the door, but there was no reply.

Paul H. Dixon:

So, he took his master key, unlocked the door, walked into the room, and there was George Whitefield on his knees by his bed, dead. His hand was covered with wax. He'd literally preached until the candle had gone out. If we would be first century men, we must live, and we must preach, and we must be totally committed until the candle goes out. Tonight, I'm going to give a brief invitation, two verses, of Just As I Am. You'll not need any hymn books. You may say, "Paul, I don't know if there's much purpose in giving the invitation tonight." First of all, in a crowd like this there's a good possibility somebody's not saved. And my friend, you need Jesus tonight. And we'd like to invite you to get up out of your seat, and walk down this aisle, and meet us at the front. Walking down this aisle won't save you, but we have someone who has a Bible who'd like to sit down and explain to you how to become a Christian tonight and lead you to Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

Number two, perhaps there's some preacher here, or some preachers who realize maybe you've been thinking about resigning, but as Vance Havner says, "You don't need to resign, you need to re-sign." You've been about ready to throw in the towel. Everything has been crowding in around you, but God's spoken to your heart tonight and you like to make a decision for Christ to be committed to him in a fresh and a new way as a preacher tonight, as a deacon, as a Sunday school teacher, as a teenager. My good friend, Don Seul, spoke at a New York pastor's meeting a couple years ago. He told me, he said, "Paul, I gave an invitation to those preachers." And he said, "One man came forward." That man was Alvin Ross. Alvin Ross went back to Jamestown and started the wheels turning in a new way of reaching Jamestown for Christ. He's calling 1973 his year of ... I mean, he is doing a tremendous job for Christ, and it started when he made a decision in a preacher's meeting to really get down to business for God at the job that God had called to do.

Paul H. Dixon:

We're singing two verses, that's all. You'd like to come, the opportunity's here. Let's stand together, shall we, and sing? Just As I Am. We'll just have a chord and start to sing it. Just as I am without plea, oh, Lamb of God, I come. You need Christ tonight. You'd like to trust Christ. You need to make a decision tonight. Something that would turn your ministry, your life around, we pray. We invite you to come. Don't let anybody else, God spoken to you, just the chord, Just As I Am. (singing)