

Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Certainly appreciate the ministry of the choir and the trio this morning. I know our hearts are going to be especially blessed tonight. I've already heard of some of the special music that we'll be having and a couple of choirs and maybe a brass trio, something like that, that it'll be a special time in music. I want you to take your Bibles this morning and turn with me to the book of 1 Kings chapter 12. 1 Kings back in the Old Testament. Let me encourage you to bring your Bibles to every service. Bring your Bibles, bring some notepaper or three by five cards, something to write on. You retain three to four times as much when you write something down as when you just hear it, and you can be able to reflect back upon these notes years from now, and perhaps you'll even forget who the evangelist was, but you can remember how God spoke to your heart through this particular passage of scripture.

Paul H. Dixon:

I have notes going back right after I was saved, when I was a senior in high school, I developed a notebook system and then took notes all the way through my college chapels and seminary chapels, and I still have all those notes. From time to time, go back and look at those and get some good thoughts. And I want to recommend that, take notes from your pastors speaking and your Sunday School classes, missionary conferences, Bible conferences, evangelistic meetings. In 1 Kings chapter 12, a division has taken place, a split in the twelve tribes of Israel. Ten tribes have broken off and two tribes remain. The two that remain are Benjamin and Judah, they will be known throughout the rest of the Old Testament as Judah. God will send prophets to Israel and God will send prophets to Judah. Israel will have her kings and Judah will have her kings.

Paul H. Dixon:

I want you to note that the twelve tribes have already split. Israel has just called her first king, that king's name is Jeroboam. He devises a new religious system that we're going to read about right now. I call it a convenient religion. 1 Kings 12:25, "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim and dwelt therein and went out from thence and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.' Whereupon the king took council and made two calves of gold and said unto them, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem, behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.'" A convenient religion.

Paul H. Dixon:

I think all of us have to recognize that we are surrounded by convenient religion. There are churches this morning, they're meeting all over the Kokomo area, they will not meet back tonight because it's not convenient to have Sunday night services. Men stand in pulpits and preach messages that are convenient to listen to, easy to listen to. They're very careful not to disturb anyone. They don't want to mess up anyone's lifestyle. They do not faithfully exegete the word of God. They do not deal with sin. Did you know that some of those preachers used to be Bible preachers? Did you know that some of those churches used to have revival meetings like this? They wouldn't think of it now. There are entire

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denominations that have chosen to go the convenient religion way. This has carried over not only into our churches, into preacher's lives and ministries, to denominations, but into the school.

Paul H. Dixon:

Many of the most liberal institutions of our land were started as Bible schools: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, all started to train preachers, to train young people in the Bible. Did you know it was not too many years ago, I would say perhaps 50 years ago that those schools were having revival meetings? I've read of evangelists who went into Princeton and held meetings 50 years ago, into Yale and preached 50 years ago. I was at Oberlin College in the area holding meetings, and I decided since one of my favorite evangelist was Charles G. Finney, God used his autobiography to stir me early in my Christian life, I decided to go over and see this school that Charles G. Finney started. So the first place I went was into the congregationalist church that he had pastored when he started the school. I walked in, I wanted to see the pastor.

Paul H. Dixon:

I walked into the office, pastor wasn't there, but one of the assistants was there, back in his chair, feet propped up on the desk, smoking his pipe. And I said, "I just try to find all I can about Charles G. Finney, the man who started the school and pastored the church here and I wonder if you could help me." He said, "Well, we have his pulpit." He said, "The pulpit he used is out there in the church, in the auditorium if you'd like to go see that." I said, "Yes. I'd like to see that." I said, "Don't you have a picture of him?" "Oh," he said, "We have all of our former pastor's pictures out there on the wall." He said, "It used to be out there go see if you can find it." I went out there. I said, "No, I can't find it." Well, he said, "They must have taken it over to the library."

Paul H. Dixon:

He said, "I'll say this." He said, "You ought to see that picture." I said, "Why?" He said, "He had the most piercing eyes, and it was evident in that picture of anyone I've ever seen." In fact what reading I can do they said that he used to walk down the streets and sometimes he could just look at a person and they'd just fall under conviction. His eyes would just penetrate right through them.

Paul H. Dixon:

I went over to the library I said, "I'd like to see a picture of the man who founded this school." "Oh" they said, "Yes, that Mr. Finney. Yes, there's a picture around here someplace, we'll check on that." So I wait about five minutes and he came back and he said, "We found out it's down in the basement, and there are a lot of books piled up on top of it and so we can't get to it right now." Oh, I got the message you see. They wanted to blot out the memory of their founder. I said, "Could you tell me where he is buried?" And they came through with a very profound statement. I remember that they said, "Up in the cemetery."

Paul H. Dixon:

I said, "I kind of figured that." I said, "Where in the cemetery?" "Well," they said, "We don't know. We've never seen his grave, but I'm sure if you go up there, you'll find it." So I went up there and I asked the caretaker where he was buried, he had to scratch his head for a while. He said, "I think it's over in this part of the cemetery." So I went over there in kind of an unkept area, there's where the man, one of the greatest evangelists America's ever known was buried, and the school that he started wanted absolutely nothing to do with his memory. What happened to that school? If it can happen to that school, can it

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happen to Cedarville? Can it happen to Clarks Summit? Can it happen to Moody Bible Institute and Bob Jones University and Tennessee Temple and all the schools across this land of ours that presently teach and preach the Bible and stand for something.

Paul H. Dixon:

Can it happen? Sure it can. If it can happen to those denominations can it happen to this fellowship? It can happen to other churches around this area can it happen to Bible Baptist Church? If it can happen to other evangelists can happen to this one? If it can happen to other pastors can it happen to Joe Stowell? Sure it can. So what we need to find out is before us in the passage I read is a picture of a convenient religious system. What we need to find out, we need to find out how one like that gets started. And I want you to notice two basic things with me from this passage this morning. Number one, the origin of a convenient religion, how it gets started. And number two, the evidences of a convenient religion, how you can tell after it started. And then we'll apply that.

Paul H. Dixon:

First of all, let's look at the origin of a convenient religion. If I were to ask you before we looked, would you had a guess? This is not the opportunity for interaction, and I'll not ask you to stand, but I just wondered. How would you think a convenient religion gets started? You asked the sociologist today, "Why is it that we have riots?" You read what happened in Chicago last night? You read about the rioting that took place in Chicago on yesterday? Uncontrollable, the police couldn't do anything about it, cars burned, all kinds of things.

Paul H. Dixon:

You ask, "How does that happen?" And many people will come back, "Well it happens because the people who did it did not have enough money. It happens because the people who did it were living in such an environment that caused it." You see what we want to do is anything that happens, socially, we like to blame it on humanity. We like to blame it on the day we're living in. We like to blame it on the environment. You know why we do that? Because that takes the blame away from the individual. That way no one is responsible. What happens in much counseling today? You go in to your professional counselor, your psychiatrist, and you sit down and you say, "I'm having a problem." "Oh, well, tell me about your mother."

Paul H. Dixon:

"Tell me about the relationship that you had with your father." They can't find anything there, he starts looking back at your grandparents. He starts looking back into your past because he knows that somewhere along the line, some other person, some school teacher, some preacher, somebody caused your problem. It's not your fault. Somebody else's fault. I have a very simple thing that I tell my boy. I say, "Buddy, I don't buy this bit, that if you blow it, your dad caused it." I am really concerned today. I know of preachers kids, and I know of Christians who have problems with their children. And everybody says, "Well, where in the world did their parents fail?" I think that is a grave error. You know what we're doing? Taking the responsibility away from that kid, putting it on the parents. I say, "Hey buddy, you blow it, don't come back to me."

Paul H. Dixon:

You got to answer to God for it, every man should give account of himself to God. You're going to have to accept the responsibility for your life. I'm not going to accept it, I refuse to. And I believe that if we're

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not careful, we even do this in our churches, we put the responsibility on somebody else. God puts it on you and on me for our own lives. Notice where it starts.

Paul H. Dixon:

Verse 26, "Jeroboam said in his heart." It started in an individual's life. It started in an individual's heart. Down in verse 33, two-thirds of the way through the verse, "Even in the month, which he had devised of his own heart." When he got ready to spread it, notice what happens in verse 27, "Then shall the heart of this people turn." It started in the heart of a man, and he found people with open fertile hearts. He could appeal to them and they would buy it. Listen carefully. No person ever comes to Christ until he realizes there's something wrong with his heart. Now I'm talking about true conversion. There's no such thing as salvation without repentance. There's no such thing as the person who gets saved, who doesn't come to grips with his sinfulness, with his lostness.

Paul H. Dixon:

We're trying to get people to the Lord today, and we're wondering why so many people make professions and don't go on for the Lord, it's because they don't know what they're saved from. And my friend, you have to admit that you're a sinner, that you have a heart problem, that you're lost before you can ever be saved. Jesus said, "They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Jesus said, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost" and you have to be lost before you can be saved. God only saves sinners. Just as a lost person must realize his need before he can be saved, Christians must realize there's a need before he can ever experience revival away from every sin of a superficial revival that does not deal with sin. I'm reminded in the Old Testament in 1 Samuel chapter 4, this is a tremendous illustration. The people of God were being defeated.

Paul H. Dixon:

The Philistines were running over them. And somebody said, "We need a revival meeting." A lot of churches, the only way they know to cure a problem is to have a revival meeting. They're going to have a special week and that's going to cure all the problem. And somebody said that, "You got an idea of an evangelist, anyone who's really doing the job? And somebody said, "Well, I've read the story of the Lord recently, and I read about this guy at a fantastic meeting." "Well, what's his name?" "Ark of the Covenant." "Ark of the Covenant? Yeah, I've heard of him, and I've seen some posters on him and he's going all over and some great campaigns. Right?" "Right." Well, let's see if we can't get Ark of the Covenant. So they wrote to the Ark of the Covenant and he said, "Yeah, I'll be glad to come for a week of meetings, just send somebody for me."

Paul H. Dixon:

And so they send out some people to get Ark of the Covenant and they come carrying in the Ark of the Covenant, into the camp, and you talk about people getting excited. They were amen-ing, praise the Lord, bless God. I mean, they got all excited emotionally and the Philistines heard about it and they sent two spies. I mean, this is in the Bible. I mean, I've changed just a little bit, but I mean, it's in the Bible. 1 Samuel chapter 4, they send the two spies and the two spies, they go running back to the rest of the Philistines. They say, "Hey, there's no way. We're defeated." "Why?" "Because they have a revival meeting going on. They got Ark of the Covenant in their midst." You've heard meetings like that haven't you? Down south that you might be able to tell that I have a little, some of you're smiling, I wouldn't smile if I were from Indiana.

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Paul H. Dixon:

I'm from Southern Ohio. I'm from Southern Ohio, and then I spent 15 years in Chattanooga. So, that kind of... You put Ohio and Tennessee and I married a gal from the south and you mix that and you get what I got, that's my problem. But down south, we would call it a gully washer. You ever heard of those? You ever had gully washers around here. I mean, when you have a real revival, "Oh man, we had a gully washer last night." Well, they had a gully washer.

Paul H. Dixon:

And while they're... Philistines are sitting there trembling and the people of God are all excited and having a gully washer, somebody whispered in the ears of those Philistines. "What? Quit ye like men. Be strong. Charge." Must have been the devil. Huh? I mean, the devil is actually telling the unsaved heathen to go down there and fight God's people. No, wasn't the devil, was God.

Paul H. Dixon:

And the Philistines charged and slew the people of God by the thousands. You know why? Because God can't stand counterfeit revival. If there's anything God hates, it's a counterfeit, a hypocrite. Jesus leveled his most severe marks to the counterfeits and the hypocrites, the Pharisees and the Sadducees of his day. 20 years later, you come to 1 Samuel chapter 7, and the people have been under the heat of the Philistines for 20 years. And they come, to Samuel and they say, "Samuel, is there anything we can do?" He said, "Yeah, same thing I've been telling you for the last 20 years, repent of your sin." You don't need a special meeting. You don't need some preacher to come in and tell you that, you just go out and repent of your sin. And they went out and repented of their sin in sack cloth and ashes. They went out after the Philistines and defeated them for the first time in 20 years.

Paul H. Dixon:

And the point is that many things that are called revival today, real emotionally stirrings don't last because simply people don't come to grips with sin. That's the need. We have to admit to something wrong with my heart. We have to deal with the heart problem. But the problem is we blame everybody else and we don't want to accept any responsibility. I got on a plane in Chicago, I'm flying to Grand Rapids to start meetings at the college. We stop some place to pick up passengers, a guy gets on the plane, you can't believe him. This guy, 6'2, 6'3, 6'4, well built, khaki jacket, khaki pants, shaved his head all off Kojak style. Great, big handlebar mustache, sandals, no socks, carries a bamboo umbrella and has a chain around his neck with a peace symbol on it about yay big.

Paul H. Dixon:

I can't believe it, everybody just staring as he walked. Guess where he sat down? Right next to me. I thought this going to be exciting. We're flying along, we get talking. He says, "Paul, what do you do?" I said, "I'm an evangelist." He said "What?" I said, "An evangelist." He said, "What's that?" I told him what I do. "I go around the country week after week, two weeks out in row, then spend time a week with my family, and while I'm gone, I go to churches and preach every night."

Paul H. Dixon:

Sure do. It's amazing what God's doing today. People coming, filling churches, God's working in families and individual lives. People are being saved, thrilling what God's doing today. He said, "Have you ever heard of a guy named Jonathan Edwards?" I said, "Sure. One of the greatest minds in Christianity." He

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said, "I've been reading him and I can't answer his logic. I don't believe it." "But he said, that's some logic." I said, "Well, what is it?" He said, "Well, he tells me that God made me and I'm accountable to God, and that my sin separated me from God. That God sent His Son to die on a cross to pay for that sin, and if I don't receive Christ, I'll have to pay for it myself in hell. If I do receive Christ, that sin will be forgiven and I'll go to heaven when I die." Now, he said, "I don't like that, but I can't answer that."

Paul H. Dixon:

I said, "Sir, what do you do?" He said, "I'm a professor at Michigan State." I said, "That's interesting." He said, "Yes. I make every one of my students read Jonathan Edward's sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." I said, "Keep it up. Keep it up that's a great sermon." I said, "Sir, you've already told me what you think of Jonathan Edwards. Since all of your students have to read him, would you please tell me what did they think of it?" "Oh," he said, "They hate him." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because they're typical, middle American, young people."

Paul H. Dixon:

I said, "What's that?" He said, "That's somebody who can find everything wrong with his parents. Everything wrong with the President of the United States. Everything wrong with the President of the university and all faculty members. But when Jonathan Edwards tells him or something wrong with him, he just can't buy that." I said, "Sir, you've not defined typical middle American young people, you've defined all of us. We can find everything wrong with our wives, and our husbands, and our kids, and our parents, with a preacher, and the deacons. We can become so critical and what we end up doing is we judge things in other people's lives that are in our own lives and we don't judge them in our lives."

Paul H. Dixon:

Friend, we have to admit that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it. Now, if that'd be the case, we better be careful because a convenient religion can slip in so subtly that we won't even know it's there and begin taking over our lives, then our families, then our churches, that's just the way it goes. So what we better find out is not only the origin of a convenient religion, but starts in our hearts, but the evidences, how you can tell when you have it. First evidence is found in verse 28, "The king took council, made two calves of gold and said unto them, 'Behold, thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.'" Can you believe it? Notice what happens. He puts a golden calf in this side of the kingdom, another calf over on this side, calls the people for a big gathering and says, "Here are the gods who took you up out of Egypt."

Paul H. Dixon:

"Led you by a pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day. Took you through the Red Sea and destroyed the enemy behind you, gave you manna from heaven and water out of the rock." That's the most unbelievable thing, and you know what the people said? "Amen, don't we have a wonderful king. Aren't you glad that Jeroboams' our king" and they continued to worship and tithe and sacrifice to two golden calves. Why? Because they believed it. No, because everyone down deep inside wants some kind of a religion and the human heart gravitates to a convenient, easygoing religious system that soothes the conscience.

Paul H. Dixon:

The song and the book, the games people play now. And one of the biggest games being played now is being played in our Bible-believing fundamental churches. It is so easy for us to take on all the trappings

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of Christianity and begin going through the motions, and yet there be no heart to it. There be no reality to it. Let me ask you, when you got up this morning and I realized this is not a good morning to check it because it was really gray out there. I got in last night and changed my watch, we're an hour over in Ohio ahead of you.

Paul H. Dixon:

And when I got up this morning, I looked outside I said, "I wonder if I got it right." It was gray as I seen it in a lot of weeks because there'd been drought all over, just sunshine, everything, and I looked out this morning and it was not, the brightest to get started on. But when we ordinarily get up and it's Sunday, is it, "Oh no, it's Sunday, I got to go to church today." Or is it, "Hey, it's Sunday, I'm going to hear a message from the word of God. God's going to speak to my heart through His servant, through His book today, and I get to go and hear it." You see the difference. We're talking about reality.

Paul H. Dixon:

When you come to church, what do you get out of the services? Why you say all right, "I go to church all the time. I'm here every Sunday morning, and I come back Sunday night and I sing in the choir and I'm a deacon. I'm a Sunday school teacher, and I come always and I [unintelligible 24:05.]" Tremendous. I believe in that. But did you know that doesn't make you spiritual? Being here is not spirituality.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, I think in our effort as pastors and evangelists to try to get people to be faithful, we almost communicate that but because you're here that doesn't mean you're a strong Christian. It's what you get, what you do with what you get while you're here that makes you spiritual. It's what you get and you take out and say, "How can I make that work in my life?" That's what Joshua 1:8 talking about. That's what Psalm 1 is talking about. "Hey, I well heard from God and I can make this work in my life, and I want God's word to change my life and to fashion my life and my family." That's reality.

Paul H. Dixon:

But we can just come to church and go through the motions and hear the messages and not be doers of the word just be hearers only, God deliver us from that kind of Christianity. That's a convenient religion. There's no reality to that. What about our prayer life? I don't know about you, but I get convicted on my prayer life I think more than anything else. Sometimes we're no better than our friends who have their prayer books and their prayer beads.

Paul H. Dixon:

We have been saved for some years, and we have said these same things over and over and over again. I got to the place where I like the prayers of kids. We had a little kid in camp one time. We asked him to pray, the director thought it was a mistake after he prayed, but I thought it was good. The kids about nine years old, he bowed his head and he said, "Lord, thank you for the food. It's not very good, thank you for it anyway." I like that. I really think that's what I think we need, just be honest and open with God and really communicate with God instead of trying to put something together that's going to impress someone. Is there any heart in our praying, any burden in our praying for a lost world around us?

Paul H. Dixon:

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The times in my life, when in meetings, or in the area where I'm living and have been burdened for people that God's put people in my heart and I've prayed for them and seen them saved, have done more to strengthen my faith than anything I've ever done. I'm just sharing my testimony with you, that's how God's worked in my life. But definite answers to prayer for people being saved has done more to strengthen me and prove to me that there's a God I think, than anything else I've ever done. And what we need to do this week is have some reality in our praying, reality in our witnessing.

Paul H. Dixon:

Did you ever notice this, in the book of Acts in all the epistles, there's very little stress on evangelism. There's very little challenge to evangelism. You know why? It was assumed. It was unheard of that someone would be a Christian and not communicate Christ. They were so excited about what Jesus had done for them. They said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and we have heard", that's reality. Not because I have to, but because I want to, Jesus has done so much for me. God delivers so much. Religion has no reality. Number one, no reality. Number two, no standards. No standards.

Paul H. Dixon:

Notice if you will verse 31, "He made a house of high places. He made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." Remember what God said? I want the priests to be from the highest of the people and from one tribe and one tribe only, the tribe of Levi. Along comes this man, he said, "I'll take them from the lowest of the people and from every tribe, with the exception of the tribe of Levi." What'd he do? He threw away God's standard. You be careful. The more, the longer we live and know the Lord, the easier it is to have fewer and fewer standards in our lives.

Paul H. Dixon:

It's a very, very dangerous thing. There are two extremes when it comes to standards. I suppose the best way to sum up those two extremes would be two words, legalism and liberty. And if you want a good understanding of them from the word, I would suggest you spend a great deal of time in Galatians chapter 5. We're studying the book of Galatians as a family, we conclude chapter 5 today and start chapter 6 tomorrow. It's been a great study.

Paul H. Dixon:

But in Galatians chapter 5, Paul talks about legalism and he talks about liberty. And we have people running all over the country today, crying, "Legalism, legalism, and down with those that preach legalism. And we don't like the churches that are legalistics, and the movements that are legalistic, and the schools that are legalist." Howard Hendricks of Dallas seminaries, "That I'm so sick of this word legalism, that I think the next time I hear somebody say it, I'm going to throw up on his foot." That's a little gross. I don't recommend that, but I know what he's saying. I get so tired up because most people that's kind of the intellectual approach of the day.

Paul H. Dixon:

Many of us like to conceive of ourselves as being intellectual, and so to be intellectual, you have to speak out against legalism because it's only the dummies who have standards and rule. Hey, that's not so. I believe with all my heart that the early believers had some strong standards. They were different from the world. They knew they had to be, to have an impact upon that world. And they wrestled with some of these things in these early epistles. I do not believe that because you have standards in any way that that makes you a legalist, it's the attitude that goes with it. It's the attitude that says, "I've arrived at



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a half a dozen things, and I don't do these things anymore, and I go around and I measure everyone else and if someone violates that, uh huh (negative), you're not spiritual." Then they go around judging everyone.

Paul H. Dixon:

They judge schools and boy all this junk and criticizing schools and they criticize churches and they criticize other believers, and they just go around with their little measuring rod of things that they've arrived at as this big spirituality. Friend, you can have all those outward things that you go by and have a rotten spirit. Friend, you are in a backsliden condition. Just because you outwardly go by those things that doesn't make you spiritual. There is an attitude that is legalistic. We don't need that, but I'll tell you what we do need. We need to have some good standards and hold to it with a good spirit. That's what we need. We're not all going to agree. Your pastor and I can sit down, I'll guarantee you just give us about three minutes and we'll find something to disagree over. You go to a pastors meeting, those pastors are not all going to agree.

Paul H. Dixon:

We're not all going to agree with, we don't have to. Love each other anyway, but the point being, I got to have some standards for my son and our family. And I just don't believe we should be watching all this junk that's on TV today. It's terrible. And it's very little you can turn on and watch, and somehow they don't play up the thing of sex. You can't even watch a commercial today that doesn't emphasize sex. We better get some standards of what we're going to watch on TV, and we better get some standards about what we're going to listen to. We better get some standards about where we're going to go and how we're going to look. And you arrive at that for yourself and for your family, and perhaps as a church, you have already arrived at some things like that.

Paul H. Dixon:

And God help us to arrive at them and stay by them and hold to them with a sweet spirit. But rather when you have a convenient religion, you water down to the place where you don't have any standards anymore, and when that happens, you've lost your impact upon the world. Harnack, the church historian, said, "The church has never had as much impact upon the world as when it held itself aloof from the world." Now you can carry that to an extreme. I believe too many people are trying to become like the world today, and certainly we have no impact in. Then number one, no reality. Number two, no standards. Number three, no sacrifice.

Paul H. Dixon:

Did you notice when I read verse 28, I skipped over part of the verse? "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." Aww that's the heart of the argument. People don't put out anything extra for God. Isn't it amazing how much extra we put out for everything else? Hesitate to do it for God. Boy if we're going on a fishing trip, we'll get up at 4:30 in the morning. We have things we want to do we put out the extra time, the extra effort, the extra energy. I went to one guy's house.

Paul H. Dixon:

I invited him to come church Sunday. He said, "I wish I could." He said, "Paul, I shave six days a week, I can't bring myself to shave a seventh." That's really a sacrifice for God, isn't it? I know people who can't sacrifice a favorite TV program on Sunday night to go to church. They have to stay home and watch that. They just couldn't miss that, they have to see it. Last week. Closed out meetings last Sunday. Homeless,

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last few days. Last meeting I closed couple nights, I'd go in to the restroom before the service started, there's a man in there changing clothes. He worked every night until service time, went to church and changed clothes, was in the services as far as I know, every night. There'll be people like that this week. Men will get off late, go home, run in, hey, have time, change clothes, throw some water on their face, miss supper, throw the family in the car, be here for preachers pals, go home after the service, have supper, maybe read the paper, go to bed, won't miss service.

Paul H. Dixon:

Be some other guys, get home 4:30 in the afternoon, have a shower, have their supper, watch Kronkite, read the paper, wife say, "It's time to go to church." They'll say, "I'm too tired, don't think I can make it tonight." Tell me who has the convenient religion? Who doesn't? There're people today who won't sacrifice ball games, PTA meetings, bowling nights. I mean, they have their schedule all fixed. You have a meeting like this and they, "Well, I might be able to fit it in on Tuesday and Thursday night." You got it backwards, friend. You put God first, and those other things are what should be sacrificed, not God. You know what bothers me? Is that here we are in America on a Sunday morning, and I'm preaching to you about sacrifice and sacrifice's a TV program. A little league ball game.

Paul H. Dixon:

We don't know anything about sacrifice. That's what sacrifice is to us. Messing up our schedules, a few dollars, that's sacrifice. We don't know what it is to live sacrificial lives for Christ. I know a lady in the Chicago area who used to get on a bus over in Czechoslovakia and she had to get up at five o'clock in the morning, once a month, she got to go to church and ride on a bus for an hour and a half there an hour and a half back. Left her family, came to the states so she could be under the word of God, hasn't seen her family for 20 years. Mother, brothers, sisters, the Lord meant that much to her. She knows a little bit of what sacrifice is; we don't.

Paul H. Dixon:

The communist marched into Poland on Sunday. First place, they went were into churches like this, grabbed the pastor, threw them down, announced to the people, "We're taking over your country and your church. We want everyone who will renounce Jesus Christ to line up against this wall those who will not do so, line up against this wall. But before you make your decision, listen, you hear that. It's shoveling, it's out in your church yard because all of you who line up against this wall will be dead in ten minutes, now make your decision

Paul H. Dixon:

Most got against that wall, no doubt thinking I can be a secret disciple. A few lined up against that wall, they marched them out, machine gunned them to death, they know what sacrifice is. This morning, we're not at the place where we have to die for Christ, but perhaps it's even a greater sacrifice. You have to decide if you're going to start living for Christ. And I would pray that many this morning would say, "I am tired of the evidences of a convenient religion in my life, and I want to renounce every semblance of it." There are others here who don't know what I'm talking about because you haven't taken advantage of Christ's sacrifice. Friend, you do not make sacrifices to go to heaven, Jesus already made that sacrifice. He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. What you need to do is repent of your sin and receive this Jesus Christ by faith as your savior this morning.