

...making way for God's new thing!

a Bible study by David Legge

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Something Old, Something New - Chapter 1
"Isaiah's Day"

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Good evening everyone. It's a privilege and a delight to be here with you again for the Easter Convention here in Bangor. I've been looking forward prayerfully in anticipation of sharing fellowship with you all again. I have many special memories of two years ago here, and we do trust that we will know the Lord's presence, as you already have been during this Convention - and that the Lord will come near. I do believe I have a message from the Lord for this series of meetings, and we pray that He will come and meet with us.

I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 6, and it would help as well if you turned also to 2 Chronicles 26. Our reading will be taken from Isaiah chapter 6. Now before we read the scriptures - get the portion there, get it marked - maybe we could stand, if you can stand, could we stand together for prayer? Let's all stand. Now, I would request that you pray now, and I want you to pray for yourself - could you do that? Would you pray that God would speak to you tonight and meet you? We want to pray corporately, do pray for me, I could do with that, and we want to pray for one another, but I would ask you just now as we come to God's word: would you ask God to speak to you tonight?

Father, we come to Your Holy Word, and we thank You that You are our Abba Father. We hallow Your name, but we thank You for the Spirit of Your Son rising up within our hearts, crying 'Abba'. We thank You for the witness that we are children of God, and Lord, we need to feel Your nearness tonight. Lord, deliver us from conceptualism, and help us to know You as You are to be known - the great 'I AM'. Lord, we pray that as we come to the written word tonight, we will experience fellowship with the Living Word. We ask now for the blessed Holy Spirit to come and presence Himself with us. Lord, we long to hear from heaven; Lord, we long to hear the voice that wakes the dead. We thank You for everything that has happened already tonight, and we praise You for your grace and mercy that has been testified to - but, Lord, each of us individually needs a fresh touch, a fresh revelation and experience of God. So, Lord, we pray that we will know that tonight, that heaven will open above us and blessings will be outpoured upon us, and, Lord, that we will be changed tonight, that there will be a seismic shift in the spiritual realm this evening so that we, individually and collectively - and dare we even ask it, even nationally - will be changed forever! So, come, we pray, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ we ask it. Amen.

I believe I have been led of God to bring to you over the three main sessions I will be preaching, a series under the heading 'Something Old, Something New'. We're going to read here in verse 1 of Isaiah chapter 6: *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his*

face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!'. And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts'. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged'. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'".

Isaiah the prophet was a man who learned to let go of the old in order to receive the new. King Uzziah of Judah had a long and distinguished reign. It's described for us in 2 Chronicles 26, if you want to turn to it, it's also found in 2 Kings 15, where he is called 'Azariah'. In his biography we find that he began to reign at the age of 16 years old. He reigned a total of 52 years, and generally speaking we could summarise him as being a good king. In 2 Kings 15:3, we read: 'He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done'. Here in 2 Chronicles 26, if you look at verse 5, it says: 'He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper'. He was a great ruler. We also find that he was a mighty military leader and strategist. He led the nation in victories over their archenemies the Philistines, and indeed over all surrounding neighbour nations.

So Uzziah was a strong King, and he was also a modern man. He was a developer, he engaged in many building projects, and he was renowned for his innovation. If you look at verse 8 of 2 Chronicles 26, you see: 'Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong'. But, as with any son of Adam, Uzziah had his flaws. Of course, success often highlights our human flaws. You've heard the adage: 'A full cup requires a steady hand', and success for any of us is hard to carry without it contaminating us with pride. It was the same for Uzziah. If you go to verse 15 of this chapter, we read: 'And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones'. Now notice this: 'So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvellously helped till he became strong. But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense'.

Look at that phrase at the end of verse 15, 'he was marvellously helped'. Now that, in the Hebrew language, is a special Hebrew word, and it really has the meaning which is equivalent to the New Testament concept of the enabling work of the Spirit. It's the sense in the term in Romans 8:26, 'likewise the Spirit helps our weaknesses' - the same meaning. Uzziah was marvellously helped by God, but he was puffed up in his pride and he forgot who got him to where he was. We read that he violated a principle in Israel that no King should also be a priest. You see the offices of prophet, priest, and King were never to be combined in one man until the Messiah would come who

fulfils all three. So we might well say Uzziah had a true Messiah complex. God had helped him, but he got too big for his boots.

We see the consequences of his pride, verse 17: 'So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD; valiant men. And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honour from the LORD God'. Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him. King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land'.

What a consequence of his pride! Now, I'm led to believe that leprosy never breaks out on the forehead first. So why, in this case, did this happen? Well, this is where his pride came from - literally it was 'head-swell' for Uzziah. A man whom God had marvellously helped by the Holy Spirit's unction, but now he is proud. Also I don't think it's insignificant to realise that the High Priest wore on his mitre, right there on his forehead, words that read 'Holiness unto the Lord'. Holiness was to adorn God's house.

So here was this great, we might say godly King, and he has a tragic end. The potential among God's people, Israel and Judah, was dejection and utter despair at this giant, this elder statesman, socially, civilly and spiritually - he has fallen! You see this is a principle I want you to see tonight, and indeed through each session I will be preaching: the old had to die in order for the new to be born. It appears that the people, even this prophet Isaiah, got their eyes on the King, Uzziah, and their eyes off the Lord, off His special enabling marvellous help - or, to put it in a New Testament way, they got themselves fixated on the form, but began to deny the power of godliness.

So, as with any substitute, any idol, God removes it. Only when God removed Uzziah did Isaiah see the Lord high and lifted up. This is a tendency with God's people in every generation: God blesses them, God helps them marvellously, and then there is a movement is birthed or founded. Then that movement becomes empty, institutionalised, and essentially a monument - historically speaking - a form without the power, and God's people make the mistake of moving on. This was always the case, and if we go way back to Shiloh in the Old Testament, in the period of the Judges, we see there that God established His work. Shiloh was where the altar was, it was where God spoke to Samuel. Shiloh represented the Almighty; Eli, the High Priest was there, and Hophni and Phinehas were the ministers of the sanctuary - but we see how defiled this house of God had become, because Hophni and Phinehas, we are told, committed adultery and fornication in the very house of God with the women

of Israel.

There was so much defilement in Shiloh that God was brought to the point where He said: 'I can't put up with this any more. This no longer represents who I am, what I stand for. I am finished with Shiloh. It is beyond redemption'. Sadly Eli, the High Priest, was blind to the condition of the house of God. God had written 'Ichabod' across it, 'the glory has departed'. God told him: 'Do not pray for this, do not resurrect it, do not revive it, it does not represent Me any more. I am moving out, I'm going to do a new thing'. And God did a new thing: a new house, it would be a temple in Jerusalem, it was called the Lord's house and His presence would be there. It would represent Him as He is in His glory and character. In fact, you remember, when they dedicated the Temple the glory was so dense that the ministers couldn't even stand in the presence of God. God's altar would be there, it would be a house of prayer - but then the cycle is repeated. The decay sets in again, and we see in Jeremiah's day that the great prophet stands at the gate of the Lord's house, and he cries: 'Mend your ways and I will cause you to dwell in this place'. 'I will not take the Temple off you if you repent'. The people protest: 'The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!' - read chapter 7 of Jeremiah. They were appealing to their traditions, to their leadership, their priesthood, to their building, to their history: 'This represents You, Jehovah!'.

If you were to read Jeremiah 7 verse 12, God says: 'Go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel'. Later down: 'Therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh'. 'Look to Shiloh! What I did to them I will do to your Temple'. God told Jeremiah not to pray for that generation - you look at the book, it's there! Three times God told Jeremiah: 'Do not pray for them, it's over! They no longer represent Me, I need something new'.

Then of course, in Jesus' day, in Matthew 24, what essentially is the same Temple in a sense, representing the same way, the disciples are overawed by the magnificence of the wonderful spectacle it was - the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus has to say to them: 'Do you see this? There shall not be left one stone upon another! This house shall be left desolate to this people, for they did not know the day of their visitation'. Then in Acts chapter 2, God did a new thing.

I want to ask you tonight: do you think God cannot do this today? Do you not think He can do this to our denominations? To our organisations? Well, I think He is doing it! I believe it with all my heart. It is my persuasion that much of the church, particularly in our land, has become idolatrously wedded to something old. I believe we are hindering God doing something new. Now listen: God will do it anyway. You won't stop God! He is doing it - the question is: will you be a part of it, or will you miss it? There is a principle here running right throughout Scripture, listen: the old has to die, and has to be allowed to die, for the new to be born. Out of Uzziah's death came Isaiah's commission, his recommission as a prophet. Do you know what our problem is? We won't let the old die out - in fact, some of us think that we are called

by God to resuscitate the old. Indeed, the concept of revival for many is nothing more, I believe, than a nostalgic romanticism about how things used to be done, the good old days, or 'old-time religion'; rather than a genuine longing for God to do something in our day and for our generation that is fresh from the Spirit of Almighty God.

I want to ask you tonight: are you ready, and are you willing for God to do a new thing? Are you positioning yourself for God's new thing, or are you obsessed with preserving or reviving the old? The old has to die if it's getting in the way of God. Isaiah had to die to his earthly allegiance, and become awakened to a vision of the King of Kings. He had to die to a worldly kingdom, and be born to the kingdom of heaven. Many of us need to die to idolatrous substitutes that we have as Christians. So many good things can take the place of God on the shrine of our hearts, and His purposes for His will in our lives. We are building denominational kingdoms, we are running after significance in education, we are bowing down to idols of doctrinal persuasion, we are obsessed with religious ritual and practice. Not all those things are necessarily wrong, but the problem is: if our heart-affections are attached to those things, they will lead us in opposite directions than of God's will for our lives and our useful effectiveness for Him. If we stubbornly persist, God will force our hand and He will allow the demise of our idol if it is eclipsing His glory.

I talk sometimes to people in the work of God, and they say to me: 'The devil is hindering us' - and often I think to myself, 'No, I think it's God. I think it's God'. The risen Lord Jesus appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos and gave messages to the seven churches in Asia, and two of them are noteworthy in this regard - Ephesus and Pergamos. Ephesus in chapter 2, verse 5 of Revelation, Jesus says: 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent'. Jesus was taking away the light from the witness of that church because they wouldn't repent. Pergamos, chapter 2:16: 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them' - Jesus coming and fighting against people in the church? Yes!

Are you here tonight, and you're involved in the work of God, maybe involved in the Faith Mission, maybe it's just in your own personal Christian experience: do you feel like you are beating a busted drum? You know that expression, don't you? Do you ever feel like that? Flogging a dead horse, breathing into a corpse - could it be, could it be that some of us are trying to keep alive something that God wants dead? Something that no longer represents Him, no longer reflects His glory, or His character, or His will and purposes? Do you want God to do something new? I ask you tonight, do we not need God to do something new? Does the church in Ulster, does the church in Ireland and the United Kingdom reveal the nature of God as He is? Does it represent the character of Jesus Christ, the Son? I mean, is this the best that the Holy Spirit can do?

We have to allow God to put to death whatever He wants. This was Isaiah's preparation for many new things that God was going to do through him in the nation. I want you to turn with me to Isaiah chapter 43 verse 16: 'Thus says the LORD, who

makes a way in the sea and a path through the mighty waters, who brings forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power (They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; they are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick): 'Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert''.

Now, thank God for the past. We need our Christian heritage, we need that link with our history - and the past can teach us. But God's word is very clear that the past must not bind us, and we must always be looking forward to what God is yet to do - that's what verse 18 means: 'Remember not the former things'. Verses 16-18 are referring to the exodus acts of God, what is being remembered in Judaism as we speak at this Passover season, when God delivered the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery and bondage, took them through the salvation of the Red Sea, and eventually into the promised land through the blood of the lamb. The Jews remember this constantly. What God's prophet was saying to the people was: 'I want you presently, today, to live in My power which was displayed in the past. I want you now to live in the reality of the exodus acts of Almighty God'.

Look at verse 19: 'Behold, I will do a new thing' - that probably should be better rendered 'I am going to do a new thing'. The children of God were now in another captivity in Babylon, and God is saying: 'I'm going to perform another deliverance patterned on the exodus. It will sprout out, it shall spring forth, verse 19, like a seed which has germinated, it's time has come!'. He asks the question: 'Do you not see it?', and the inference that He is making is, 'You can't miss it!'. Yet the people of God were missing it, and often do miss what is going on in the kingdom of God - why? Because they are looking backward, they got a crick in their neck to what happened yesteryear, and they don't see what God is doing at this very moment. The emphasis of the prophet here is: 'You're in danger of missing what God is doing, and what God is about to break out, because you're focusing your attention on the past!'. They celebrated God's power in the past, but they relegated God's power to the past! God was asking them: 'Do you want to see what I am doing now?'.

I believe - and there is a lesson for us all to learn here tonight - that God is always doing something. He that comes to God was believe that He is - I think there's a sense that that means that He is active, that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Even when it looks as if God is doing nothing, that there is a veritable spiritual wilderness and desert around us, we must believe that He is doing something, even in comparison with the past. The prophet Habakkuk said to the people of God in his day: 'Look around you, Habakkuk', replied the Lord, 'among the nations, and see and be astonished and astounded, for I am putting into effect a work in your days such that you would not believe it if you were told it'. Do you know what it was in Habakkuk's day? God was raising up the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, to judge His own people. Now that was unexpected, wasn't it, that God would judge His people for their wickedness by using an even more wicked nation like the Babylonians? Incidentally, Paul the apostle quotes that verse from Habakkuk in Acts chapter 13, we read of him speaking it at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, and he

applies it to God rejecting - momentarily - the Jewish people, and turning to the Gentiles, leaving the Jews in their blindness because of their unbelief. He did something that the Judaic mind, the Hebrew consciousness, could never have conceived of, and they could have turned up a thousand scriptures to contradict God turning to the Gentiles with grace - He did a work in their day, and they couldn't believe it even though they were told it.

God is working today. 'My Father has been working', Jesus said, 'until now, and I have been working' - God is always working, but listen: if we are preoccupied with how God did it years ago, we may miss it now. Now I want to leave you with three things as I close tonight on how to position yourself for God's new thing. Very briefly: how to position yourself for God's new thing. One: you need to be Christ-centred. That should be elementary, shouldn't it, to the Christian church? But sadly it is not. We need to revive the emphasis that He is the way, He is the truth, He is the life - nothing else, no one else. Truth does not belong to a system, truth does not belong to a religion, it does not belong to a denomination, it does not belong to a dogmatic persuasion - truth is a Person! Jesus! Boy, if our land needs to hear anything, it's that: it's all about how you're related to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the truth. It's all about His Lordship, that you've bowed the knee and you've surrendered your all to the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all about Jesus on the throne - and, by the way, in John chapter 12 and verse 41, John tells us that Isaiah saw the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory, and he spoke of Jesus sitting on the throne, His train filling the Temple, he bowed to Jesus as Lord in Isaiah chapter 6!

Of course, the second half of Isaiah's prophecy is all about Jesus. As a modern song puts it: 'Jesus at the centre of it all' - that's what it should be, Jesus at the centre of His church. Isaiah had to bow the knee, and he had to surrender some idols in his life. By the way, Isaiah has been called the Shakespeare of the Old Testament, and I'm not a Hebrew scholar but I'm told that his Hebrew surpasses the rest of the Hebrew in the Old Testament. He was poetic, a great orator, but you notice when he has a fresh revelation of the One who is the truth - what is it he pleads? His very strength becomes his weakness, he says: 'I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips'. He takes even his strengths to the foot of the cross, and that angelic creature has to take a bloody coal from off the altar and cleanse his lips, cleanse his strengths to be consecrated to Him. We need to be Christ-centred again. To position ourselves for God's new thing, we've got to get rid of all these sectarian denominational idols - they've got to go! They don't represent God, they are not where He is. He's not into earthly kingdoms: 'This is My Beloved Son, hear Him'.

Secondly, we need to have kingdom vision to see the Father's will on earth as it is in heaven. 'After this manner pray ye, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' - that whatever God has already bound, and willed to be bound in heaven, should be bound on earth; whenever God has willed should be loosed in heaven, should be loosed on earth; that we would see His kingdom come in mighty spiritual blessing. Of course, Isaiah's prophecy is all about Christ's kingdom - it's not about Uzziah's, it dies at the very beginning.

I remember hearing, some of you might have been there, Jim Cymbala who wrote the book 'Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire' and several others - I heard him in Belfast a year or two ago at the King's Hall. He told how he went into ministry at first, and an old godly man gave him a bit of advice. He said: 'You will meet all sorts of people in your ministry, but here's a couple of them. You will meet church people, and those are the people who, their church is the best church out of all the churches, and maybe their denomination is the best, the strongest, the most biblical, the most sound denomination - you will meet those people: 'You've got to come to our church'. Then you will meet pastor people, and their pastor is the best pastor there has ever been. He's great at visiting and, boy, you want to hear his preaching! Pastor people'. He says, 'Then you will meet kingdom people'. Are you kingdom orientated? Have you got kingdom vision? That's what we need if we're going to be open to what God is doing. If we're going to be open to what God is doing in the Roman Catholic community, and what God wants to do, we've got to have kingdom vision, and we've got to get Christ-centred.

Thirdly, we need to be willing to change as God leads. Now don't fall off your pew! I know that's like swearing in church at times, to use the word 'change' - it's a dirty word, isn't it? Maybe already - you've heard about a still small voice - maybe you've heard another voice saying to you tonight: 'Boy, this preacher, we thought he was dodgy after the first time he was here, but now we know it! This is dangerous talk! Really dangerous talk!'. No, listen: what is dangerous is the stagnation of creeping death that is in our churches, in our lives, and in our homes!

I know the only thing that likes change is a wet baby, and people say to me: 'Oh, the Lord changes not', but you're not the Lord. Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying tonight, and please don't misinterpret or misquote me. I'm not suggesting that we sell the truth: 'Buy the truth and sell it not'. I'm not talking about change for change's sake. The church is plagued by gimmicks and skits, and foolish fleshly plans and strategies and programmes. What I am saying is: woe betide us if God tells us to change, and we don't listen to Him; or we're deaf and we're blind because we are idolatrously wedded to something that is old. Yes, the new thing will be a rediscovery of the old past, it will be the same old truths, but it will come in a new way! It's right that desperate times need desperate measures, that was always the case, it will always be the case. Who am I to remind you that we need to be radical - how radical, I was thinking about this just down there, how radical was the Faith Mission at its origination? How radical! They lived by faith, that was unheard of largely. Women preached - I mean, how far back are we going here? - women were preaching! They emphasised the baptism of the Holy Spirit - radical, because that's what was needed! The Salvation Army were radical, because that's what God needed. The Methodists were radical, and we need something radical! We need something new.

Well, can I ask you - and I will ask you over and over again in these sessions - when it comes, and I think it is probably already here, springing forth here and there; but when it comes in front of your nose, will you get with it or will you oppose it? Vance Havner once said: 'Sunday morning Christianity is the greatest hindrance to true

revival'. There is so much in that statement. The way we do it, the way we have done it, and Martyn Lloyd Jones was no extremist but he said: 'Fancy upsetting the clock-like mechanical perfection of a great service with an outpouring of the Spirit, the thing is unthinkable!'.

'Let it come, oh Lord, we pray Thee,
Let the showers of blessing fall.
We are awaiting and expecting,
'Tis fire we want, for fire we need.
Send the fire!'

Let us pray. Now, in the quietness, please let's be still in the presence of God. I want to address you individually, and I want to ask you tonight: do you personally need something new? I'm going to tell you, I need something new every day, I need a word from God every day - I'm disappointed when I don't get it, because man shall not live by bread alone, but every word of God is my daily bread. I need to hear from God every day to keep me going. But you know you need something drastic for your Christianity. You know that something needs to happen. Or maybe you're here, and you've been kidding yourself, you've been holding on to a pseudo-Christianity, a semblance of some form, some confession, but there is no life, there is no reality to it - and you know that deep down. Do you need to come to the foot of the cross like Isaiah? Do you need to have your idols die, and God cause them to crumble so that you might see Christ? Do you need to fall at the foot of the cross tonight, and even confess what you thought were your strengths - your pride, your pride of doctrine? You know, pride is the evangelical sin if ever there was one - and I have battleship loads of it. Do you need to confess that tonight? Do you need to confess other struggles that are idols that have gotten in the way of you knowing a revelation of the glory of Christ in your life, cleansing from off of the altar? You might hear the voice of the Lord to you tonight: 'Who will go? Who will go for Us?', and your retort could be, 'Here am I, with all my pride, with all my brokenness, with all my arrogance, with all my deficiency; here am I, Lord; here am I, I give You myself, send me, fill me, cleanse me'.

Is there anyone here tonight just where you are, whether in the gallery or down here below, you would stand to your feet and say: 'Lord, here I am, I want a new thing in my life, I need a new thing in my life, I need a new revelation of Jesus'? Is there anyone just now who would stand to their feet to have dealings with God, and publicly acknowledge their need? God bless you. Are there any just in this quietness, stand to your feet for a new thing.

Are there any who have been involved in the work of God in some form or other, and I know some of you will struggle with what I have shared tonight and in subsequent occasions - that's OK, at least you're listening! But some of you here know what I'm saying is true, and you know it's from God, and you know that your church, your denomination, your organisation, your group, whatever it is: you need something new, and you need it drastically. Some of you here, even for our land, you know we need something new. Would you stand to your feet if you're ready to position yourself

for it? To be Christ-centred, to have kingdom vision, and to be ready to change - whatever that change might mean, as long as it's God asking you to do it, you will do it. Stand to your feet.

Now, you just deal with the Lord, just yourself. Whatever it is, if you need to confess sin, if you need to repent, if you need to renounce any idolatry that there has been - you talk to the Lord there. Do you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit? Come and ask Him, so many of us are operating in the flesh - it's our thing, it's our kingdom, it's our work. The Holy Spirit is brooding over us tonight, and we want to allow Him to have His way in our lives. You bring to Him, even if you're sitting, you bring to Him your need.

In just a moment we're going to sing our closing hymn, but let us pray: Blessed Father, we thank You for Your heart that is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. We have the flavour of Christ tonight, and His walk and His witness on this earth, and surely He was a new thing. Lord, we want to be part of what He is doing today, now. We don't want to be serving the memory of bygone eras. Lord, our people are going to hell in their hundreds of thousands, and we need something new! O God, we cry to You tonight: will You not open the windows of heaven, pour out a blessing. We bless what You're already doing, we might not understand it, we may not be able to just compute everything that You do - but, Lord, we are not You! We don't have to put our imprimatur on it, or our seal of approval. We thank You, Lord, that You can bless those who we don't agree with. O God, we just pray that You will come, that You will come and meet us again, and You will forgive us. We repent, Lord, we repent of our sins as Your people, we repent of taking refuge in our traditions, in our doctrines, in our rituals, in our buildings, in our movements, in our little petty empires. Lord, we repent! We would demolish them, and we would pull them down tonight, and say: 'Lord, lift high the cross! Come suddenly to Your Temple again, Lord, and do a new thing, let it spring forth'. O God, we cry: make a road in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, and come and revive us again that Your people may rejoice in Thee. Meet each one that has acknowledged their need tonight, O come Holy Spirit, and touch all our lives - in Jesus' mighty name we pray, Amen.

Something Old, Something New - Chapter 2
"Messiah's Day"

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Well, good evening everyone, it's a privilege and a delight to be with you again tonight in Bangor. I do count it a joy to address this convention, and a privilege. I hope you haven't had too tough a day today, all your fish and chips and ice cream and lying in the sun! So I hope you don't struggle too much tonight staying awake. It is very warm in the building, so make yourself as comfortable as you can in order to listen for the next while.

Perhaps we could stand for prayer, if you're able to stand, maybe you would stand to your feet. Now I want to ask you a question: are you here to meet God? Are you still there? Are you here to meet God? Do you desire to know the presence of God? Do you want to hear a word from God? Well, let's come, and let's ask Him. I want you please, individually, to ask the Lord to come and meet with you, and meet with all of us together. Would you do that? Let's pray.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we come to You as our Abba Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for the Spirit of Your Son, which rises up within us crying 'Abba', the spirit of adoption. We thank You, those of us who are in the family of God, and we thank You that we know that we belong to You. We thank You, Lord, that we can know that we are wholly Yours, and completely surrendered, and dedicated, and filled by Your power. Lord, we pray that all of us tonight would know the experience not only of being in the presence of God, but knowing what is for God to presence Himself within us and upon us. Lord, together tonight collectively, we come to You and we ask that You would please, in mercy and in grace, come into our midst. We know that You are present everywhere, but: Oh Your presence reveal, we pray, that everyone will be conscious of the manifest presence of Almighty God in this place tonight. Lord, nothing else will do. We don't want good sermons, good singing, good programmes, good convention, Lord, we want You. We want Your presence, we want Your touch, we want there to be signs following the preaching, we want there to be a tangible sense of the very glory of God in the midst. So come, we pray, speak, we pray. O, High King of Heaven, have mercy on our land, revive Your church, send the Holy Spirit for the sake of the children - let Your kingdom come to our nation, in Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

We're turning in our Bibles to Matthew's gospel chapter 9. On Saturday evening I began a theme that I'm going to take right throughout these sessions that I'll be preaching, on 'Something Old, Something New'. On Saturday night we looked at how that was applicable in 'Isaiah's Day'. We saw in Isaiah 6 that, 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord', Isaiah says, 'high and lifted up'. Uzziah had to die in order for Isaiah to see the Lord high and lifted up. We saw a principle there, and we will be repeating it tonight as we look at this principle, 'Something Old, Something

New' in 'Messiah's Day' in the life of our Lord, and then tomorrow afternoon I'll be here at 3 o'clock and I'll conclude this looking at it in 'The Days of Pentecost'. I would encourage you to come along if you can tomorrow afternoon as we finish this truth - but tonight we're looking at it in 'Messiah's Day'.

We're going to read Matthew 9 verses 14 just through to verse 17: *"Then the disciples of John",* that is, John the Baptist, *"came to Him",* Jesus, *"saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?'. And Jesus said to them, 'Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast'"* - I believe that is this present age. *"No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse"* - when you put a patch of new cloth on an old garment, it is unwashed cloth; then when you put it into the wash, the cloth shrinks and rips the old garment. Verse 17: *"Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved".*

A principle I introduced to you on Saturday evening - for some of you at may not have been the first time, but I think probably for many it was - is that the old must die in order for the new to be born. We saw in Isaiah's day, where Uzziah was a strong military leader, he was a great King, he was a strategist, he was a modern man, and we would class him as a godly monarch. But the people, generally, had gotten their eyes on him and off the Lord. There is a wonderful little phrase which speaks of Uzziah in his heyday, 'he was marvellously helped', and we saw how that phrase can be found in the New Testament. There it is in the Hebrew in the Old, but it is in the Greek in the New, and it speaks of the Spirit helping our infirmities - it's in various other places, but we see it in Romans 8 in that regard. So Uzziah was marvellously helped by the instrumentality and the person of the Holy Spirit, but he had been uplifted in pride and God had to discipline him, because he went into the Temple and he offered incense - which was forbidden for a king, only preserved for the priesthood - and God struck him with leprosy. But it wasn't until that great public giant died, that the prophet was enabled to get his eyes back on the Lord. We saw right away a principle: that the old has to die before the new can be born. Later on we read in chapter 43 how Isaiah had learned this lesson so much that he could speak to the people of God in Babylonian captivity and say: 'Remember not the former things, I will do a new thing'.

Historically we also highlighted that this has been a pattern, always, among God's people - right back to Shiloh. In the Old Testament Judges period, that house of God was so defiled that God said: 'I can't put up with this any longer, this no longer represents who I am in my character and my nature. I'm going to wipe it out and I'm going to do a new thing. I'm going to build a new house' - and He, of course, ordered the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. But then again decay set in there, and in Jeremiah's day we saw the cry was: 'The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!'. The people were appealing to how they had this great edifice before them to worship God in, it was meant to represent Him, they had the priesthood, they were

God's chosen people - but God had to say to them in Jeremiah 7: 'Remember what I did to Shiloh, I will do this to you'. God told Jeremiah not to pray for that generation, He says: 'It's all over, I need something new'.

Now we come to Messiah's day, and in Jesus' day the Pharisees, well, of course, they were similar to those in Jeremiah's day. They were always appealing, you remember, 'Abraham is our father, Moses is our great teacher', and they often pointed to the law and the prophets as their warrant to be the people of God and His representatives in that day and generation. They had the history, they had the leadership, they had the traditions, they even had the building of the Temple still, and they were claiming to be the modern day representatives of God. In Matthew 25 the disciples themselves, in the Temple precincts, said to Jesus: 'Do you see this great building, how magnificent it is', and Jesus said, 'Look at this, for not one stone shall be left upon another'. He pronounced to the Judaism of His day that their house would be left them desolate, for they knew not the day of their visitation. In Acts chapter 2, as we will see in more detail tomorrow, God did a new thing.

But this parable of the wineskins that we have read from Matthew 9 shows us that Jesus made clear that He did not come to repair or reform the old institutions of Judaism, but He came to institute a new covenant altogether. The new wouldn't simply improve the old, it would replace it, it would go completely beyond it. He was announcing that the present institutions of Judaism could not and would not contain the new wine. It was not fit for purpose! He would form a new body, the church. I don't believe God has finished with the Jewish people, but at this particular time He is bringing Jew and Gentile together into an entirely new body - as Paul put it in Ephesians 2:16: 'that He might reconcile them both', Jew and Gentile, 'to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity'. Their hostility toward each other is put to death in the church.

But our Lord is teaching in this parable of the wineskins and the cloth that what is old and stagnant often cannot be renewed or reformed. If the vessels are unusable to contain His new work, He must discard them and find new ones. I asked you the question on Saturday night if you were here: is this not something that God can do today with us? Does He not reserve the right to discard us if we are no longer useful, if we appeal to our forms of biblical leadership, our historical heritage, our traditions of worship, doctrine, or practice, or even point to our great buildings and cathedrals, and we infer: 'We are the modern day representatives of God, His character and His nature on the earth' - it is His prerogative to decide who represents Him, is it not?

Now, as you can imagine, in Jesus' day this did not go down well with the establishment - and, I have to say, it doesn't go down well today with the establishment either. But you see this is the dominant theme of the gospels: Christ's rejection by His own people. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. Why did they reject Christ? Because He did not live up to their expectation. He was a new thing entirely, our Lord threw the Scribes completely off the scent. I want you to note tonight, and I want to emphasise this heavily: the biggest opponents to the new thing in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ in His day were the Pharisees. You say:

'Well, I already knew that'. But did you know that the Pharisees were essentially a revival movement? That's right! Theology in Judaism had become generally liberal, the Sadducees' influence - they didn't believe in resurrection, they didn't believe in spirit, demon, or angel. So the Pharisees were a sect, we might call them 'fundamentalists', and they wanted to bring every facet of Judaism into harmony again with the law of Moses.

Incidentally, they were biblically sound to a large extent. Our Lord Jesus, on one occasion, said that they sat in Moses' seat, and He encouraged the people to do what they teach, just don't do what they do. Paul the apostle sided with them theologically speaking as well in some arguments over resurrection and life after death. They taught the two tenants of the law as sacrosanct - to love God with all your heart, and to love your neighbour as yourself. The tragedy was, for this fundamentalist sect of Pharisees, that they had the letter of the law without the power. They had the form without the power of godliness - or, to put it another way, they knew their Bibles but they didn't know their God. I know this, because when their God showed up in human flesh, they did not recognise Him.

In John chapter 5, Jesus said to them: 'You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me'. It's amazing to me how it can often be the most biblically literate who oppose the obvious works of God's Spirit, and often they oppose it on doctrinal grounds - they throw Bible verses at you to give you reasons why it can't be of God. That's what happened to Jesus! Can I tell you: in every move of God, in every revival, that has always happened. People who think they know their Bibles inside out oppose it on doctrinal grounds, and there is an obvious move of the Spirit, but they will give reasons why it cannot be of God. That's what happened to our Lord Jesus.

In Matthew chapter 12 and verse 28 Jesus had been casting out demonic spirits, and this is a sign that the kingdom comes - do you know that? Jesus said: 'If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons among you, the kingdom of God has come upon you' - and by the way, that is going on today in the church of Jesus Christ in our land. There is true deliverance of demonic spirits, and it's a sign that God is breaking His kingdom out upon us - but some folk can't handle it, and they couldn't handle it in Jesus' day. Do you know what they said: 'This is not the Spirit of God, this is the spirit of the devil, this is Beelzebub, the prince of demons'. They accused Jesus of demon possession Himself - and, frankly, those who are moving in this particular ministry today, whilst there is some extremism no doubt, are being accused of doing the devil's work as well.

Ultimately it was this spirit of the biblically literate, the fundamentalist revival sect of the Pharisees - we might call them 'legalists' - it was that spirit that crucified our Lord. Now please, I want you to note this: it is not the biblically illiterate, it is not the half-hearted or the spiritually apathetic and lazy who struggle with God's new thing. It is those who are highly motivated, those who are accurately trying to do everything correctly and biblically, who often confine God into a box and miss what He is doing now, and what He longs to do in our midst in the days to come. Now please don't

misunderstand what I'm saying, there is a need for discernment today more than ever - but this type of fundamentalist legalism is equally as dangerous as any error. We've got to appreciate this: this is not safe ground. You see, the poison of this is that it confines God to work in a way that I am comfortable with. You can't do that. J.B. Phillips, who made a translation of the New Testament years ago, also wrote another book entitled 'Your God Is Too Small'. I have to say today, that for much of what we might term 'conservative evangelicalism', our God is too small. We have confined Him to the concepts of our theological understanding, and we don't appreciate that our God is God, and He must be God, and be allowed to be so. He is unpredictable, He is uncontrollable!

The offence of Christ was: Jesus broke the mould. He was the new thing, and this motley crew of disciples that followed Him were a new breed entirely. The old wineskins of the religious forms of Judaism were bursting under the exuberance of the new living wine of the Spirit in the kingdom of Christ. The Pharisees were a revival movement. Can I say to you this evening that this may be true of movements that have grown out of revival - and I am aware of whose company I'm in, but we must apply it to the Faith Mission, to any mission organisation, to any denomination, many of whom have sprung out of a work of God. One author put it like this: 'Most significant movements start by being a little wild, settle down to respectable middle-age, then - rejoicing in their respectability - relax into a creeping death'. The danger of movements that have known the breath of God's Spirit in bygone days, they have known revival and renewal, is that they can expect God to do it the same way as He did it back then. In fact, worse than that, they can even require that God does it the same way. That itself can be a hindrance. The tragedy is that it can be such groups who actually oppose the new thing, because it's not what they expected, and it's not what God did before.

That same author said this: 'The hostility to revivals is never to the idea of revival - I mean, who wouldn't want revival? The idea of revival is ardently prayed for, but the hostility is to God's answer to our prayers and the unexpected way it is taken. To recognise a Divine visitation we must view it through the twin lenses of discernment and humility. It is easy to recognise it in the books, or in retrospect, since we are usually accepting the view of the writer of a particular history. To recognise it when it occurs is more different. During the revivals of the past 300 years, many Christians' - listen to this - 'were too confused by their wrong expectations to perceive what God was doing'. It passed them by because it was a new thing. Now listen, whenever we think we can second-guess God, I have found in my own personal experience that God just scraps the blueprint and surprises me all over again. Have you found that? You think that you've cracked how He works - whether it's in guidance or something like that - you see, God is God, and we know from creation, you would have seen it in the County Down coast today, He is the God of ultimate variety, and it is the God of ultimate variety who is the God of revival. He's not confined, He's not restricted.

Unfortunately the term 'revival' has often been understood only as a rediscovery of all truths. Now there is no doubt that that is what it is. You find this true in Scriptural revivals, you find it true in historic revivals, it's borne out - and perhaps the most

obvious example is the rediscovery of the book of the law in Ezra and Nehemiah's day, and the subsequent repentance and obedience to what was lost in the congregation of the people of God. It's true that the old paths of God's word, the precepts, the principles of the Bible, they never change from generation to generation. Nevertheless, it is a grave mistake to think that those rediscovered old truths will wear the same old clothes of those who once espoused them. It never was the case, nor ever will be. We do need to rediscover the same truths as in past revivals, there is no doubt about it, but listen: it is wrong to expect God to revive in an identical manner. Also, I think it is wrong to desire God to reproduce an identical revival - it is wrong!

It's wrong for many reasons, but I'll give you two. It's wrong from the human perspective - what do I mean? Well, I mean this: what sufficed to revive the church in 1859, or in the Hebrides in the 1940s, will not suffice to revive the church of the 21st-century and awaken the world that we presently live in - it's not going to work. Some of you are oblivious to the absolute nuclear meltdown of evil that is around us, and the grip that it is getting upon people, even the people of God - how they are in a snare, bound by Satan to do his will. We need a new thing, and the church needs new tools - now, I don't like that terminology, because we don't want to formulate things, but we need new ways of reaching people in the power and demonstration of the Spirit; and we need new insight and new understanding. I would vouch to say that in every historic revival, whilst old truths that were lost were renewed again, there was some aspect or some light cast on a new revelation from God that was the real impact and impetus behind the momentum of that awakening.

I had not planned to say this tonight, but I believe that one of the new things that is sparking here and there, and needs to more, is the power of deliverance and the healing work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our brother quoted 1 Thessalonians 5, the closing verses - The Message, which is not a translation it's really a paraphrase, but in that portion he renders it like this: 'The God of peace wants to make you holy and whole; put you together spirit, soul and body, fix you' - do you know something? You can preach holiness till the cows come home, but unless there is wholeness you will never know holiness. There are folks who want to be whole in their mind, or they want to be whole in their heart that is broken, but you cannot be truly whole unless you're holy - the two come together. We need to be preaching the complete Gospel - more than just a ticket to heaven when you die, but this life that is abundant now that is free, and that can transform; not only give you this confidence of peace with God, the slate is wiped clean, and I'm justified as a guilty sinner, but knowing that God can fix my head, He can fix my heart, and I still believe He is able to touch and fix bodies.

I thank God for that revelation of the demoniac. You see that man, and that's the way our society is today - but listen, forget about society, this is the way the church is: we don't know what to do with it, we've tried everything. Like this man, he had to be thrown onto the hillside in the middle of a graveyard among dead things, they were effectively putting him in a padded room and throwing away the key - they had no answer, society, even when they bound him with chains, he broke out of it. They had no answer for a man like this, but Jesus is the answer for the world today, and Jesus

made a beeline for that man. Incidentally, the devil tried to stop Him - there was a Satanic storm on Lake Galilee on the way over. If you don't believe me, look at the Greek, and you will see that when Jesus rebuked that storm He used the same terminology He used for rebuking the demons, because the devil didn't want to let go of that man. But when he saw Jesus, he ran at His feet, and Christ delivered him. He sat at Jesus' feet clothed and in his right mind. There's a lot of believers, and they're not spiritually clothed and they're certainly not in their right mind. The new thing - I've been doing missions, and I continue to do them, but you know the church needs missions for Christians, the church needs hospital depots, clinics, where the saints of God can get fixed - spirit, soul, and body - in order that God can empower them to reach this world.

From a human perspective we need something new, but from the divine perspective God is the God of the original, He is the God of the new thing - and though, obviously, there are great similarities shared in every revival, not least the fundamental doctrinal truths that are celebrated, each is original in its own right. Each has had features and peculiarities that were special to them, and we must face facts tonight: the new thing will be new! So I ask you again, as I asked you on Saturday night, and I will ask you probably tomorrow afternoon: are you positioned to receive, to embrace God's new thing, or are you idolatrously wedded to something old?

Arthur Wallace, in his little book 'In the Day of His Power' on revival, said: 'If we find revival that is not spoken against, we had better look again to ensure that it is revival'. Every revival was slandered, and much opposition to revival is based not only on some kind of warped fundamentalist view of Scripture, but on a wrong notion of order, a kind of religious spirit that thinks that we should be a certain way, and God does things a certain way, and if anything happens outside the clock, or if anything happens outside of my conservative sensibilities, or out of the ordinary, or breaks loose of the prayer-hymn-announcement-sermon sandwich it's not of God! I quoted to you Vance Havner on Saturday night, that the biggest obstacle to revival today is Sunday morning Christianity. One author put it like this: 'We have a wrong notion of order. If we insist that revival must be decent and orderly, as we define those terms, we automatically blind ourselves to most revivals. Revival stirs our hearts when we read about it, but would we perceive it of God if it broke out noisily in one of our own services or meetings?'. Would we recognise it?

We can read about Wesley's meetings and Whitefield's meetings, about people being slain in the Spirit - you see, some of you talk about these things, and you've never read about it. People falling under the weight of the Holy Spirit, they talked about falling into trances in the aisles of the churches. There were supernatural phenomena, there were signs and wonders - but, you see, if it broke out in your church, if it broke out here tonight, could you handle it? The revival that accompanied Evan Roberts in Wales, 1904-1905, was one of the greatest revivals in modern history. It spread right across the world - now it died out very quickly, unfortunately, but it had a global effect that we are still feeling today. But it was denounced by a Congregational minister by the name of Peter Price. He called it a sham, a mockery, a blasphemous travesty of the real thing - and what makes it more sad was, that Peter Price's own

church in Dowlais had experienced a move of God and been blessed with revival just a number of months previously in 1904. Price clearly objected to Roberts' style, and even some who were sympathetic to Evan Roberts would agree that there were some excesses that accompanied Roberts everywhere he went, but unfortunately Price overplayed his opposition. He could not see the hand of God in what he disagreed with. Can I repeat that? He could not see the hand of God in what he disagreed with.

Can God move outside your convictions? Can He? You don't know? Would you allow Him? Would you give Him permission? Would you? To move outside your convictions? Warren Wiersbe once said: 'It never ceases to amaze me how God can bless people that I disagree with' - but He does! The more proud we become, the more He will. Dr Forbes Winslow was a psychiatrist in Evan Roberts' day, and he took a different line of attack against Roberts. He said: 'I would have men like Evan Roberts locked up as common felons, and their meetings prohibited like those of socialists and anarchists as being dangerous to the public'. There were four doctors who signed certificate of Roberts' physical and mental health, he was sane and he was well, but it was jibes like these - these cruel attacks by Peter Price, his brother in Christ, and other enemies of the Gospel - that almost broke the evangelist. By the spring of 1906 - 1906, one year after the move of God - he had retired out of public life entirely.

Oh, there are many other stories, Whitefield and Wesley, I have mentioned them already. Of course, they were originally in the Church of England, Whitefield stayed there, and of course Wesley was the founder of Methodism. This is 200 years previous to Evan Roberts and the Welsh revival, and yet they were opposed by the establishment - do you know why? Because they were field preachers, they preached in the open air. The accepted wisdom of the ecclesiastical establishment was that you had to be in a pulpit in a consecrated church, but they broke the mould and they suffered for it! Indeed, Whitefield had tracts written against him at Cambuslang in Scotland, and Cambuslang had known revival, the breath of the Spirit, but they accused him as being 'a limb of antichrist' because he belonged to the Church of England! The Presbyterian could not see the hand of God in what he disagreed with in the Anglican, but as I said on Saturday evening: if we're going to position ourselves for the new thing, we need to get Christ-centred, we need to have a kingdom vision, and we need to change to start to see things the way God sees them.

Sure in the 1940s Duncan Campbell was accused of hypnotising people - did you know that? I even read, I don't know, it's maybe fanciful, but I even read that when he arrived on one of the Isles on one occasion, someone said: 'He could not be God's man, for he has brown shoes'. Did you ever hear that one? Now I have brown shoes on tonight - it doesn't make me God's man, but I tell you: that's the way some of us can be, we can be as stupid and petty as that. But, you know, he was opposed by the ministers of the established church for preaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit - and I hope I don't need to remind you that it was his preaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that lit the flame of revival. More of that tomorrow.

We need all our Scripture knowledge and discernment, but wait till I tell you: we need a new thing - and God, I believe, is doing a new thing, I do! I believe, if you've got

eyes to see, you will see it spring forth. Jesus did not come to do a patch up job on Judaism, it needed something new, there needed to be new wineskins for the power, the vitality, the richness, the intoxication of the new wine from heaven. ''For My thoughts are not your thoughts', says the Lord, 'Nor are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts''. We need something new, but let us beware that when it appears before us - whether in our church, in our organisations, or in our community - even if it breaks the mould, even if it's something that historically we may have disagreed with and had our reasons to do so; let us beware that we are not found to fight against God.

The new will not come to you unless the old dies. God is putting things to death. A lot of evangelicalism is crumbling, don't blame the devil, but ask God for the new thing. Let us pray.

Now let us be still in the presence of God, please let us have stillness. I hope that you have heard the voice of God tonight, and I hope that you're conscious of the presence of God in this place. 'Drop Thy still dews of quietness, Till all our strivings cease'. Would you open yourself up tonight to the presence of God? Would you? I have found when you bless the sense of God's presence, He intensifies it. When you welcome His presence, when you seek to preserve and conserve His presence, that's exactly what happens. Do you know what we do in meetings? We rush to the closing hymn, to the benediction, to the chitchat in the pew. Now, please, I could be misinterpreted as dictating tonight, or controlling, and I don't want that - but I want this: I want us to know the presence of God tonight, and I want us, if we should desire to sit in it, and to deal with God, that we should have the liberty and freedom to do it. If you want to talk tonight, you can get a cup of tea across the way, and go to the book room - but could I ask something tonight, could I be bold enough to ask that in this meeting house, that as I close in prayer in just a moment, that there is silence for those who want to wait in the presence of God, those who want to deal with God. If you have to go, you can go, but let us reverence His Holy Presence.

But before I close, is there anyone tonight and you know that you need a new thing in your personal experience, because you're backslidden, you're cold, you've a name that you live and you're dead. You're maybe in the work of God, and you know that you're operating in the flesh; or maybe it's some obvious sin that you yourself need deliverance from - praise God for our brother here delivered from so many things at conversion, but I have to tell you that a lot of people aren't. He has said tonight that it's from glory to glory, it's a process of deliverance is this Christian life. Maybe you're really struggling tonight, and you need to cry out to God. Is there anyone tonight, and you personally need a new thing, and you would stand here feet whether in the balcony or down below, and you would say: 'Lord, please come to me tonight, and do something new - I'm desperate! I need you to break in upon me, religion is not going to do it; 'Read your Bible and pray every day if you want to grow', it's not doing it; three meetings in the week, it's not doing it'. Is there anyone who will stand to their feet, and say: 'O God, I need a new thing', just where you are, right now, would you stand to your feet? Are there any? God bless you.

Are there any who need a fresh touch from God? Are there any who need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, endued with power from on high? Is there only one in the building tonight that that can be said of, that needs a fresh touch from God tonight upon their life? God bless you, God bless you. Is there anyone else, and in a general sense, according to this message, you know that you've been holding onto something old, and maybe the old has been getting in the way of what God wants to do in the new - maybe you have even opposed it yourself? I have done it, I have spoke against some things that I now believe and know are of God. Do you need to repent tonight? Do you need to repent? Do you need to say: 'Lord, whatever that idol is, I'm going to tear it from Thy throne, and worship only Thee'? If you're worshipping your doctrine tonight, even if it's true, it's idolatry. If you're worshipping your denomination, or your church, or anything like it, it's idolatry. It's Christ and Christ alone, He is the way, He is the truth, He is the life. Would you stand to your feet tonight if you know that you want to repent of the old, or you want to let go of it, or you want to be open to the new - whatever - but you want not to miss what God is doing and wants to do in our day and generation. Would you stand to your feet tonight if you want God's new thing? God bless you. God bless.

Whatever it costs, and I'll tell you: it'll cost you, you will lose friends over it, they'll say you're a heretic, they'll say you're ecumenical, you're charismatic, you're starting a cult. You deal with God where you're standing tonight, and even if you haven't stood, and you're sitting and you're open to this, you deal with God. I'll tell you: wouldn't it be great if every spirit of man and woman in this place cried unto God from the depths of their heart right now in this church for a move of the Holy Spirit, a move of the Holy Spirit in our community, a move that will revive and renew the church and see this island on fire for Jesus Christ - that's what we need! Something that goes beyond Catholicism and Protestantism and denominationalism. We need New Testament Christianity, we need the Acts of the Apostles. Would you cry out to God tonight in this place, and say: 'Lord, come, do a work in me, and do a work in us, and do a work in our land'.

You deal with God where you're standing. We're not going to have a closing hymn, I'm going to hand over in just one minute to our brother, and he will close the meeting and give instructions to those who might want counselling. But do you see where you stand, you don't need a counsellor tonight as much as the Counsellor, you deal with the Holy Spirit where you're standing, deal, confess, name what it is that is a barrier, name your idol, repent, ask Him for forgiveness and liberty and deliverance - and ask the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name, to fill you. That was Evan Roberts' prayer: 'Father, fill me with the Holy Spirit, for Jesus' sake' - fill me with the Holy Spirit, for Jesus' sake.

Lord, I pray for each one who is engaged with You tonight by faith, Lord, I pray a deliverance in Jesus' name from whatever is binding them. We bind whatever bind them in the mighty name of Jesus, and we would loose them in the name of Jesus to know freedom, and vitality, and life, and healing, and wholeness, and health in the Gospel. Lord, would you come with that life, that sozo life to explode in their souls.

Lord, let them never be the same again, and break the bondage of the enemy over their life, whatever it is. Fill vessels tonight, cleanse them, and fill them full of the Holy Spirit of God, those rivers of living water, that they would flood out from them to this world around them. Lord, we cry together tonight: oh, we thank You for the former things, we thank You for the blessings, we thank You for the history, we thank You for the heritage, but Lord - we say: do a new thing, and we receive it as long as it's from You! Give us discernment to know the false and the counterfeit. Lord, we pray, how we need something new. Oh, come and revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You.

Something Old, Something New - Chapter 3
"The Days Of Pentecost"

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Good afternoon everyone. Well, what a privilege it is for me to take part in such a service with God's servants - it's very humbling. To bring the closing word this afternoon, and to be a part of this convention in general, has been a joy and delight - and I want to thank you, those of you who did invite me, for sharing and fellowshipping with you this special weekend.

I want you to turn with me in your New Testament to Acts chapter 2. If you have been here on any of the other occasions I have been preaching, I've taken a theme of 'Something Old, Something New'. I want to continue that, and I'm going to trust God to dovetail it together with what has already come before, the contribution of our missionary friends. We look to God to speak to us in the time that is left this afternoon, and really touch our hearts individually and collectively.

I've been sharing with you on Saturday evening and last night, Monday night, that the old must die in order for the new to be born. It was the case in 'Isaiah's Day' that Uzziah the King who occupied such, we would have to say, perhaps an idolatrous place in the hearts of God's people. He had to die, even in the eyes of the prophet he had to decrease and decease, in order that he would see the Lord high and lifted up - Isaiah 6. We saw that that was a crisis in Isaiah's life, the old had to die so that the new could be born - and it paved the way in Isaiah 43 for the prophet to say to the people: 'Remember not the former things, behold I do a new thing'.

Last evening we looked at this principle in 'Messiah's Day', the life of our Lord, where He was a completely new thing - He broke the mould, and he threw the Scribes of Scripture off the scent entirely. They didn't recognise Him as the anointed, promised Messiah. They knew their Bibles inside out, but they didn't recognise their God when He turned up and He was standing before them in human flesh. We saw how it is often those who are biblically literate, or think themselves to be so, who oppose the new thing of God.

Now we are going to look today at how the new thing is always a thing of the Spirit, it is always a thing of the Holy Spirit. We're going to focus on 'The Days Of Pentecost', which in effect are the last days. For you remember in Peter's Pentecostal sermon, that he quoted extensively from Joel chapter 2 how, in the last days, God says: 'My Spirit shall be poured out on all flesh'. We are in - whatever your eschatological view is - we are in the last days today. Many of us believe that, as we approach the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be an intensity of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as there was in the early days of Pentecost. But I want you to understand here this afternoon that Pentecost was an entirely new thing. We looked from Matthew's gospel last night at how Jesus said that the old wineskins of Judaism would

not be sufficient to carry the new vigourous, vibrant wine of the new covenant. So there was a requirement for a new temple of the Holy Spirit, that is the church, for Him to pour in His presence, His life.

I want you to look, as we read through chapter 2, to see how you new this was for people in this day of Pentecost. Verse 1: *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven".* Now note this, verse 6: *"When this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused",* there was utter confusion on the day of Pentecost. Don't think for one moment that all of a sudden this was welcomed by the people round about in the community - they were confused. Why? *"Because everyone",* verse 6 says, *"heard them speak in his own language".* Verse 7: *"Then they were all amazed",* there was amazement on the day of Pentecost, *"and they marvelled",* the people were marvelling, *"saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?'".* Skip down just to the second part of verse 11: *"'We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God'. So they were all amazed and perplexed".* This was Pentecost - ditch, for a moment or two, your romantic ideas. There was utter confusion, there was amazement, there was marvelling, there was questioning, the people were perplexed - and look at verse 13, you will see there was ridicule and misunderstanding: *"Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine'"* - they're drunk! In verse 16 Peter retorts: *"'But this is what'"* - or, as the Authorised Version says, I like it - *"'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh'".*

Now can I remind you that this was a familiar prophecy to the Jews. They knew their Bible, they knew their Torah, they knew the prophets, and they knew that Joel had prophesied that in the last day the Spirit would be outpoured. But though they were familiar with prophecy, they failed to recognise its fulfilment. It was the case in Messiah's day, and it is the case in the days of Pentecost, and I would have to say to you that - studying historical revival, and every move of God - that it's also the case whenever the Holy Spirit is poured out in any modern sense. People seem to fail to recognise it, particularly the people of God. You remember Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles, he preaches this great martyrdom sermon before they run upon him and stone him, and he accused the Jewish people of always resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers did. It has been the tendency of God's people right through every epoch, that when God does a new thing, they often miss it and fail to recognise that it is God.

God's new thing will be a new thing of the Spirit. Every new work, every awakening, every revival in history has rediscovered the dynamic of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's Life and in the operations of the church. I have to tell you today, I have never heard of a revival where the Holy Spirit was ignored - and certainly no revival

has ever been when the Holy Spirit was preached against or denied. I know even here today there will be some theological differences concerning the work of the Spirit, but I hope we will all agree today that the dynamic of the Spirit is an essential to utter Christian existence; and indeed an ongoing and deepening experience of the Spirit is vital for personal growth and for kingdom expansion, wherever it is in the world. We cannot do it without the Holy Spirit. Whatever our doctrinal semantics are, it is obvious from a casual reading of the book of Acts, particularly chapter 2: one, that these believing disciples were deficient in power before Pentecost. Jesus told them: 'Don't lift a finger until you are endued with power from on high'. Two, these same disciples were transformed dramatically after Pentecost. Three, they had been equipped at Pentecost with abilities that were essential to fulfil the great commission of Christ.

So we read Mark's summary, I believe, of what is the Acts of the Apostles. Mark 16:20: 'They went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen'. God was with them, and it was marked by the unction - they moved under the anointing of the Holy Spirit in everything that they did. Whatever your doctrinal persuasion is today, and unbiased reading of the New Testament must conclude that the power of Pentecost was that very spreading flame that caused the raging furnace of the Gospel to sweep over the then known world. I want to say to you this afternoon: your Christianity is either supernatural, or it is superficial. You need the power of Pentecost to live your Christian life as an individual, and you need the power of Pentecost to do the work of the Gospel. This truth of the power of the Spirit is at the heart of every move of God - it always has been, it always will be - and God's new thing, it will be right in the centre of it.

I know I might be a bit bold in saying this, but I believe it to be true: the Faith Mission would not exist today - it certainly would not have the illustrious history that it does - if it were not for the foundation of the Spirit's power, if it were not for the adherence to a belief in the Spirit's baptism, or fullness if you want to call it that. Doctrinally and practically it was a necessity, it's your birthright as a movement. I would beg of you this afternoon: don't sell it for a mess of pottage. We need the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost more than ever! It pains me to say this today: revival theology itself is under threat. By revival theology, I mean a belief in an experiential encounter with God personally, and even at a community level. It's threatened, often with an emphasis on doctrine at the expense of experience, or - dare I say - even a denial of experience. On one hand you've got a cold, harsh, new reformed emphasis on the mind at the expense of the heart. Recently I was preaching on the presence of God, and I was challenged that God can only be known in the mind. When I asserted the belief that the presence of God can be actually experienced, I was given a quote by a famous modern preacher who was reported to have said once: 'I have no idea what the presence of God feels like'. On the other hand you've got a form of dispensationalism, which I know very well, that relegates God's power to the past, and says that He will come in great power in the future, and even Satan will do masterful things in days to come before Jesus returns - but where is God's power in the present? Where is the God of Elijah? Does He live today?

In the last days, Joel said, Peter reiterated - the last days are now - God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. I want to ask you today, not only as I have done - how you are recognising what God is doing in the new thing, but how are you recognising God's outpouring now in our day and generation? I know there are counterfeits that we must beware of - but Satan only counterfeits the true. Where is the true? Where is God's new thing? God's new thing is what He did at the birth of the early church. We don't need to get back to 1940s, we don't need to get back to the Reformation, we need to get back to the Acts of the Apostles. We don't need mere human innovation or novelty. This is the route that some churches and organisations are going down. They are contriving new wineskins for old wine. There's nothing new in the Spirit, but there is all new form around it, and it's empty, it's vacuous - and you have to keep changing the show on the bill to keep everyone entertained. But, oh for a fresh wind of the Spirit, oh for the wine of God.

Sadly the word 'revival' can be hijacked by the wildest extremists. New things are claimed regularly, and then they die out within five years or so. But there is the genuine, there is the wind of the Spirit that we need and God has promised, and only the power of Pentecost will do us - but it will bring its challenges. Convention will be challenged, if the old is to die and the new is to be born. I want to highlight, as I close, one aspect in the new church that challenged convention. The first Christians were Jewish, you know, and at the beginning of the church it was assumed that the special characteristics of their ceremonies, their identity would continue. When the Gentiles started getting born again, this idea was challenged, this was an entirely new thing, convention was challenged. It raised the question: should these Gentiles now become Jews? Should they observe Judaism, and how should the Jews relate to the Gentiles in the strict social and dietary laws. You remember what happened: God had to give a fresh revelation. God spoke to Peter on the roof top in Joppa one day, and He gave him a vision: a sheet falling down from heaven covered with unclean animals, and God said three times to Peter, 'Kill and eat. Do not call anything impure that God has made clean'. You remember Peter was given the keys of the kingdom, not only to open the kingdom to the Jews at Pentecost, but to open the kingdom to the Gentiles in Cornelius' house. Peter saw the Holy Spirit come upon them as He did upon the Jews in Acts chapter 2 in Jerusalem at the first, and he says: 'Why should we hinder them being baptised, because the Holy Spirit came on them as He did upon us at the beginning'. He recognised God's work even when it broke his bounds, even when it stretched his confines of conviction. He recognised when God was at work.

It was something completely new, it was foreign, it was a new creation. It challenged convention, their theology, their interpretation of Scripture, their social and moral etiquette, their idea of order and decency. But you see, when God acts, He tends to push our boundaries. He squeezes us out of our comfort zones. He confronts our concrete mindsets. He provokes our prejudices. As Jonathan Edwards, the great theologian on revival, said: 'A work of God without stumbling blocks is never to be expected'. Almighty God is not restricted to my convictions, my tastes, my ideas. I cannot put Him in a box, and He certainly will not be confined to my theology.

The Jews found this out, and Peter struggled with it, as you can imagine - this new thing. In fact, you remember in chapter 10 and verse 14 - if you care to turn to it - chapter 10 of Acts. After he saw this vision of all these unclean beasts that the Jews were forbidden to eat, and the Lord told him to rise, kill, and eat. He says in verse 14: 'Not so, Lord!'. You've heard the famous story, haven't you, of the girl that came feeling God was calling her to be a missionary, and the famous preacher showed her this verse and said: 'You either cross out the word 'Lord', or you cross out 'Not', but you can't have it both ways'. He is either Lord of all, or you have to say 'Not so'. Peter struggled with this in the early Jewish church, struggled with it - you need to try and get into their psyche. Put yourself in their shoes! If you think the Catholic-Protestant thing is something, you ain't seen nothing as far as Jews and Gentiles were concerned! This went against everything that they had ever known to be true and right. I don't think we appreciate this.

You see, the Samaritans were apostates. It was hard enough for these Jews to hear the parable of the good Samaritan; to see the Samaritan leper turn around and thank Jesus when the others left; to see Jesus at a well with a Samaritan woman who had been married five times and was cohabiting with a man, and she gets converted, and her whole town gets converted - that was bad enough. But now, for the Gentile unclean dogs to partake of God's new covenant - it couldn't be right! Anybody who knows their Bible would know that that was wrong! But it was God. They had their prejudiced spectacles on. Can I say to you - and I have learned this the hard way myself, and I'm sure I'll learn it a lot along the way - a knowledge of the Bible without a personal knowledge and experiential knowledge of God will become perverted. Let me repeat that: a knowledge of the Bible without a personal experiential knowledge of God will become perverted.

When we turn to Acts 15 we find that the Judiasers were torturing these new Gentiles, and in verse 19 the NIV reads: 'We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God'. The question begs: how do we make it difficult for people from other societies, from other cultures, even in our own province, how do we make it difficult for people to come to Christ? The only restrictions that were put upon these Gentiles are found in Acts chapter 15 verses 28 and 29, which was abstain from idolatry and immorality. The introduction to that precept was this: 'It seemed good to us, and to the Holy Spirit' - but it's the other way round, they said: 'It seems good to the Holy Spirit, and to us' - the Holy Spirit first. They went on the guidance of God, and they didn't lay upon them any unnecessary burdens.

This was a new thing. The problem came later in the Galatian church. The Galatians embraced the Judiasers - and this is ironic and tragic, because we read in the epistle to the Galatians that Peter, who opened the door of the kingdom, who was the instrument of God's Holy Spirit in the new thing for the Gentiles to receive the Spirit, he actually stumbled at the offence. When there were visitors who came from Jerusalem from the apostle James, Peter, who had been eating with Gentiles, stopped for fear of what they would think. Big Brother was watching - the fear of man brings a snare. Paul the apostle had to rebuke Peter to his face, that he was putting restrictions on the Gentiles that he didn't even take upon himself.

I have spoken about something old that needs to die, and something new that needs to be born - and the new will not be born, although it is coming in pockets around us, we will not enjoy it unless we are prepared for the old to die. Is there something old in your life that needs to die? Is there idolatry there? Is there a fresh wind of the Spirit, a breath of the Spirit? You could have consecrated yourself at conventions like this a hundred times, but unless you know the power of the Spirit - consecration is your part, but the Spirit's empowerment is God's part.

We need a new thing entirely. There is a new thing happening all over the world - praise God for what we have heard. We need a new thing here. I'm told that a lobster grows by shedding its own skin, and before they shed the old skin, they grow a new thin layer of skin beneath the old. They moult approximately 25 times in the first 5-7 years of life, but you might say that the skin changes - it's DNA remains, its nature is always the same, but the skin changes. So must the skin of the church change, and if she doesn't shed her old skin she will die - and I believe the old skin is dying. It's not completely gone yet, and some of us are trying to hang onto it, we're trying to breathe life into a corpse. We have a name that we live, but we are dead - and the sooner the old dies, the faster we can have a resurrection!

Do you know what the popular definition of insanity is? I think Albert Einstein said it: 'Insanity is doing the same thing you have always done, the same way you have always done it, and yet expecting a different result' - madness! But there is a new thin layer growing, it is growing, but the old needs to die. It's not strong enough to break forth yet, but it is growing - the question is: will you and I be a part of God's new thing?

Let us pray. In just a moment I'm going to hand back to the chairman, but listen: please let us be still in God's presence. Some of you are here just for a convention, but some are here to meet God, and some of you have met God. I want to address first of all in this missionary meeting those for whom God is doing a new thing, or maybe reviving something He spoke to you in the past but He has come in a fresh way to you this afternoon. It's like the Acts of the Apostles, it's the Damascus call, and you have heard 'Come over and help us' from these dear brothers and sisters sharing with us today. God has come, like He came to Isaiah, and after He has torn down your idols, He has said: 'Who will go for Us?'. The Triune Godhead wants to commission you today. Is there anyone in this building, and the new thing of God in your life is a call to the field? Would you be man or woman enough just now to stand to your feet, and respond to God, and say: 'I will go, I will go'? Just where you are, would you be willing to stand to your feet and say 'I will go', just now where you are? No token gestures, we're not interested in numbers just now, we're interested in reality. God bless you, God bless you, is there anyone else? The only pressure we want you to be under is the influence of the Holy Spirit. Is there anyone else who will say 'I will go. If You send me, I will go'? May God make you a Mary Slessor, an Amy Carmichael.

Is there anyone who is involved even in the work of God, and you're not baptised with

power from on high. C.T. Studd once sent a message: 'Send me no more missionaries that are not baptised in the Holy Spirit'. Are there any who need that filling, that enduement? I'm not talking about consecration, I'm talking about God's empowerment. Who would stand to their feet? It's not for missionaries, it's not for evangelists and pastors, it's for Christians - you cannot live the Christian life without the power and the dynamic of the Holy Spirit. Put whatever tag you like on it, you can't live without the Holy Spirit. Would you stand to your feet, and by faith engage with God and claim by faith what He has promised in the Gospel? Who will stand to their feet and claim that baptism of power, that fullness of the Holy Spirit for life and for works? Just stand now. God bless you. Take it by faith, just the way you get saved, you take it by faith.

I spoke to the young people the other evening, it's Luke 11:13: 'If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!'. Just ask Him, and believe that you have the things that you have asked of Him, because you ask according to His will. Don't look for feelings, don't look for phenomena. God will witness to you in your heart as He sees fit, but you take it by faith and believe God. I hope all of us here today - I'm not going to do any more appeals - but I hope all of us here today, in our hearts, are standing, positioning ourselves for God's new thing wherever it is, but especially here in Ireland.

Father, I pray that those whose ears are open to hear what the Spirit says to the church, that You will cause the seed of the Word to be pushed deep down into their hearts. Lord, that from this fertile soil this afternoon, that a mighty move of God will spread not just across our land, but across Your world. O Lord, lift our eyes to the hills, from whence comes our help - but lift our eyes to the fields which are white unto harvest. May Your enablement and the great need, meet today in each of our hearts - and may we go knowing that 'All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth', our Lord Jesus says, 'Go therefore'. May we go from this place today, missionary or not, the Lord working with us, signs following. Lord, behold their threatenings, stretch forth Your hand to heal, that signs and wonders might be performed in the name of Your Holy Servant, Jesus - for His glory we pray, Amen.

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