

Here We Have No Continuing City

[50-0200, Here We Have No Continuing City, Robinson Memorial Coliseum, Little Rock, AR, 87 min]

L-1 But it's for His glory, that I say it. God bless you.

Now, in the 13th chapter of Hebrews, I wish to read some Scripture, 'cause no service is complete without the reading of God's Word. My word will fail, everybody else's word will fail, but God's Word will never fail. Hebrews 13:10-14.

We have an altar, whereof they which have no right to eat which served the tabernacle.

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.

Jesus... Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

(Now, here's my text.) For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

I imagine my voice has a little blast in there, and I'll get back to... Can you hear all right up in the balcony, up in the second balcony all right?

What I wish to speak on, is "Here We Have No Continuing City," to kinda back up and... And you pray with me. There's no one that...

L-2 I think of when the Abraham left the city of Ur... Era... Ur and the land of Chaldean, he was seeking a city whose Builder and Maker was God. Now, there was something in Abraham that he could see that great city of Ur, and he knew that that very thing that made people colonize together, there was bound to be a city somewhere that was typed off of. And by instinct, or by the leading of the Holy Spirit, he hunted that city whose Builder and Maker was God. And he sojourned in strange land, professed to be pilgrims and strangers, a seeking a city, and dwelling in tents with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so then, we see that city.

L-3 There's no matter how many places you ever roamed, no matter how far you go, there's no place like home. Is that right? How many here today is away from home, let's see your hands, just away from home? Oh, my. I wished I could sing. I'd sing, "We're Pilgrims And Stranger Seeking A City To Come." Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

Let's take a little trip back home, would you like to do that? I believe everyone here would like to take a trip home, wouldn't you, just like to go back home? There's no place that you'll ever go that'll ever seem like that lovely little old city you lived in, or little old dwelling place out in the country.

For myself, I--I want to walk back down the road just this afternoon with each one of you, taking a little evening stroll to review the things over.

L-4 The first thing comes into my mind at this time, is a little humble home built out in the country by the broom sedge fields, and some old apple trees standing around, where my father and mother and their little family lived, a little humble place indeed. The...

We were very, very poor. Daddy had a hard time. He was a--a very poor man. He worked for seventy-five cents a day in--in log wood. My father had a bad habit, drinking. I'm sorry to have to say that, but that's true. And he--he... My father died in my arms. I seen my daddy work so hard, till when he would come in, his--his back would be sun burned until his shirt would be sticking to his back, and mother would have to take and clip the shirt loose from his back. I don't care what he done. He's my daddy. I'm not ashamed of my father. I love my daddy. He's gone on today, but he's still daddy.

L-5 And young people, remember. If you're fortunate enough today to have a daddy and a mother living, love them, honor them. The hour will come when you'll think they're the greatest people in the world, if you don't now. And don't never, little fellows, don't never give this slandering word, "old man," and "old woman." That's not the old man and old woman. That's daddy and mother.

And some of these days when they go out of the room, in the casket, of flowers, you hear them lowered down in the

ground, the pastor say, "Ashes to ashes and dust..." It won't be the "old man" then. There won't be the "old woman," it'll be, "Mother." You'll be wringing your hands and crying. That's right.

Now, while she's a living, give her her flowers now, and give dad his flowers. That's right. Now, and the best flower you could give them, is obey them. And that's the first promise in the Bible, the first commandment with promise, "Honor thy father and mother: which may lengthen the days upon the earth that the LORD giveth thee."

L-6 My daddy worked on a farm. I remember mother... The furniture we had in the house was the old hickory bottom chairs. How many remembers the old hickory bottom chairs, wrapped...? Well, I'm not the only country person in here, am I? And we had an old kerosene lamp with a big old hoot-owl on the chimney. Remember them old owls? It used to be the one I had to clean it, because my hand was so little, I could clean the chimney. And we had an old cook stove in the kitchen.

And pop would cut the wood, and we'd bring it in, and lay it behind the stove. And us little kiddies would help him saw it up.

And we had a--a table. And behind the table was a bench. Daddy took a piece off of a barn, and--and made a--and made a--a bench that we all... We little boys would go set on that. We only had three chairs. And so we would get on...

L-7 And I remember the cabin, the front part of it, it had a floor. It had a ro--room in front and a little half room in the back. And we had one of those little old... We called them monkey stoves, or laundry stoves set up on a stump. And mother cooked from there.

And she'd holler, "Dinner's ready." And my, oh, there's--there's about five of we little Branhams. We'd run in there, and wash our face, and slick that hair down, and jump up behind the table. And one great big old pot dinner, cooked in an old three-legged kettle... How many remembers them? Say, I'd just love to have a dinner out of one right now. And--and we'd...

L-8 She'd take and get beef and make mulligan stew. How many knows what mulligan stew is? I'm not the only Irishman here then, am I? So they'd put the mulligan stew in there. And we had...

My plate was a tin plate. Frankly, it was a big bucket lid that was turned over, so I'd get a good measure every time the cup went down and dipped out the mulligan stew. And we'd baked corn bread in a--in a--a pan (How many remembers old corn bread baked in a pan?), cut it in the middle, put it on.

And I'd set next to daddy, 'cause every person broke his own bread. And so when it come by, I'd break the corner off, because it had more crust on it. It was just so good. And so I sure like that yet. Yes, sir, I sure do.

I've eat in many good places, and some of the best places, I guess, in the nation that minister friends of mine has taken me to dinner, which I'm very, very thankful. But friends, I'd give everything I ever had, or ever will have, if I could set behind that old table one more time and look at my daddy setting there, and eat some mulligan stew with him. I'll never do it no more. That's right. It's done forever. Enjoy your childhood, young people. Love God.

L-9 See all my brothers set around there, the little healthy looking things. Some of them's in eternity. I can never do that no more. For here, we have no continuing city, but we seeking one to come.

I used to see my daddy when we'd come in. He's a little fellow about my size, but strong built. And he would wind up his sleeves like that.

And we had it out to the old apple tree, they had a wash pan setting out there with an old piece of a glass with drove up in the tree, and a towel made out of a meal sack. And we'd go out there and wash at this old bench, and--and--and then we'd clean up on the outside. There's a little bench around the tree.

I'd see daddy when he'd be combing his black wavy hair, and the muscles would just wallow under his arm. I thought, "Oooh, my. My daddy will live to be a thousand years old," I'd think. I admired my daddy. And I'd think, "How strong he is." I said, "My, he'll--he'll live and live and live and live, because he's so strong." He died at fifty-two. For here, we have no continuing city.

L-10 Now, I thought, "Oh, that house. How big." Beneath it was logs. And it been kinda slab board on the outside. I thought, "Oh, how... That house will stand for hundreds of years." Today, there's a housing project there. Here, we have no continuing city, but we're seeking one to come. That's right.

I passed by just before coming here. I'm just so a great swelling in my heart. Oh God, how can just twenty years make such a difference in a place? But here, we have no continuing city. We're seeking one to come. And I thought of daddy. And also, we... I remember every Saturday night, we'd go to town and--and pay the grocery bill. And every time we'd pay a grocery bill, Mr. Grower would give us (the grocery man), give us a little sack of candy. I think our grocery bill run to the extent of three dollars a week. And my, dad only made about four and a half.

L-11 So mom would get some goods at gi... My wife's setting here. I'm afraid to say what kind of goods that was, 'cause I make a mistake on it every time. Anyhow, it's some kind of that little stuff, you know, that they used to make shirts out of.

And I remember one time at my church, I said to... One of the worst I ever was gotten at my church. I was going to have a humble night on Wednesday night, and I said... And my choir was all setting behind me. I said... And that... What... g-a-n-g-h--jan--j--gingham... That's what it is, name--gingham. And I said... And I was trying to think of that. And there's a little place down the road called Gingham--Gingham Colleges. And I'll try to think of that. And I said, "I'm sure to make a mistake when I say that."

So I had a little girl by the name of Irene Wisheart singing in the choir. I said, "Now, Sister Wisheart, when I back back, if I forget about it, you tell me what that was." And so I didn't understand anything about goods like that.

L-12 And I said, "Now, Wednesday night is--is humble night here at the Tabernacle." I said, "Now, all you brothers, wear your work clothes, your overalls. I'm going to preach in my overalls." I said, "You all come out with your overalls. And all you women wear your..." I said walking back.

I backed back, and she said, "Gingham, gingham."

I said, "Your greyhound dresses." And my... And oh, my. That was about the worst I ever was gotten it. And everybody started to laughing at me, and I thought, "Well, I--I guess I done said it." So I said, "Ever what that goods is like's on this little ca--cottage down here"

Then one night, I was--run home. I was patrolling. And I used to carry those great big old red handkerchiefs. When you hunt, you know, you have to have a red handkerchief. And I'd carry one in my pocket.

And--and one night, I run in and... We lived in a little two room cabin. And I--I run across the street real quick to church. I was late, and I run across the street real quick, you know, and I dressed in the room and changed clothes. And I was over there just a preaching away, you know, and I got to perspiring. And I reached back and got this handkerchief, you know, and I started shaking it like this. And I looked, and it was that big old red handkerchief. I seen, my little wife looking at me, and I said, "Oh, well." I said, "I'm afraid of them little ones. Afraid I'd swallow it." So I said... There's about two of the worst I ever knew... was gotten in--in--in church.

L-13 But I remember daddy would take us down on Saturday night and pay the grocery bill, and get those--those little old sack of candy. And we had a little old jersey wagon. You all call them out here, buckboards I believe, or whatever. And they put some straw in the back. And it'd be cold, and we'd wrap up in blankets, and--and go down. And it'd be spitting snow. And they'd pay the grocery bill.

And all these little Irish, setting out there waiting, you know, for this candy to come. Then we'd come out, and--and that candy had to be equally broken among every one. If there's one stick over, it was broke into so many pieces. To be sure, every little blue eye was watching right at it, to be sure he never got cheated. So we'd set and eat that.

And I'd play a little trick on them. I'd... Now, we wouldn't eat it, couldn't chew it, because it was too valuable, that old stick candy. I'd... We'd suck on it a little while, then hold it, you know, wait a little while, rest up, and suck on it again.

L-14 Well, I remember I used to play a trick on them. I'd suck on my piece for awhile, and wrap it up in a piece of paper, and put it in my pocket. And I had some from Monday. And I'd suck on it again, and tell all the boys, "Don't you wish you had some?" And I'd just put that piece, and the dirt, and candy, and all of it roll...?... And--and they was good.

And I guess I could go tomorrow and buy a whole box of--of chocolates, Hershey's, if I wanted to. But it would never taste like that. That's the real candy.

And I remember those old days and how glorious they was. And how that going to school... When school days come along, we went to school. We didn't have any clothes to wear hardly to--just enough to--that we possible legally could

go.

L-15 I remember going to school all winter long with one of mom's shoes on, and one of pop's. That's right. I had... We called it a boot-n-gagger. And I had one of mom's shoe on this foot, and pop's. And this is awful to say, but it's the truth. It's the truth.

I remember I didn't have any shirt to wear that winter. And Mrs. Wathan, a rich lady lived up the road from us, give me a little coat that had a little eagle emblem on it. And I'd pull that coat up like this, and go on to school.

I remember setting up there. It got kinda warm, you know. And the teacher said, "William."

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

She said, "Aren't you warm? Better take off that coat."

I couldn't take that coat off. I didn't have any shirt on. So I said, "Why, I--I... No--no ma'am." I said, "I'm just a little bit chilly."

They had a great big old stove setting over there. She said, "You ain't taking a cold. You go over and set by that stove."

My, my. I set there and the perspiration run down on my face. She said, "Aren't you warm yet?"

I said, "No, ma'am." I was plenty warm, but I couldn't take that coat off. I didn't have any shirt on.

L-16 And so I remember that spring when I got my first shirt. I had a cousin, a girl, Lucille Hare, my father's sister's child. They come over to visit. And when she left, she left one of her dresses.

And--and--and I--I cut the skirt part off, and--and wore the top part as a shirt. I went to school. And it had this here little... What is that stuff that runs up-and-down, you know, like that, they put it around the edges of garments? Rickety-rackety? Or whatever the... I missed that. Rick what? Rick-rack. And--and so we--we... All over it everywhere, rick-rack all over it. So that's... [Blank.spot.on.tape--Ed.]...?...

L-17 Down the hill we'd go, rivity, rivity, rivity, rivity. Well, we wasn't sliding like the rest the boys, but we were sliding anyhow. We--we were getting there anyhow in this old dish pan. Well, that was all right, but rat... Some of the boys had sleighs. You see? So after a while, the bottom come out of it. So we had no more sleigh. And we went down the river, and I got me a big old log, put a wire on it, and pulled it up top of the hill. And we'd get on this log and ride, ride down the hill.

I never will forget a event--event taken place there, there's a boy named Lloyd Ford. Brother Graham, ever where you at, my associate pastor's here somewhere. Lloyd Ford, he got him a job. That was in time of the world's war. So he got him a job selling "Pathfinders," or something like that, magazines. And he got to wear one of them Boy Scout suits. And everything was a war then, you know, and army. And oh, how I wanted to dress like a soldier.

L-18 I'd see those soldiers come up from the quartermaster, and go up the road there, just at attention, walking. And at the school, we had an old sassafras pole there, and raised the flag, and those soldiers come by would salute the flag.

I thought, "How..." Oh, my heart just beat. "When I get big enough, I'm going to join the army. I'll get plenty of clothes to wear. And I'll... And if I can join the army." But when I got big enough, I was too scrawny at the--to get in the army. And they wouldn't even take me.

But Somebody accepted me. That's right. I'm in a Army today. You might not be able to see my uniform, but I know it's on anyhow. It's on the inside. I'm in the Army of the Lord.

L-19 And so in the war, I tried to volunteer and everything, but they wouldn't--didn't receive me. So they never even called me. Put me in the minister's class, and just never even called me. I guess my education was too poor to be classed as a Chaplain. And--and then being a minister, they wouldn't... I... They didn't draft me. And so there I was. I was left out.

But somehow or another, and even with my scrawny, uneducated and all, God sent out a recruit one day, and I answered it, and I--I'm in His Army now. And I'm doing the best that I can, to fight the greatest battle that's ever fought, a wage against sin and evil, and for righteousness.

L-20 And I remember I asked Lloyd. I said, "Lloyd, will you give me that suit when you wear it out?"

He said, "Yes, I'll give it to you."

And that was the longest lasting suit I ever seen. He wore that suit, looked like... When I seen him one time, he come

up missing it, and I said, "Lloyd, what about that suit?"

He said, "I'll see if I can find that, Billy." Looked all around. He said, "No, sir. You know, mother patched dad's clothes with it, and the dogs used it for a pallet, and they drug it away." And said, "The only thing I got left is one legging."

I said, "Bring me that."

And so it was a little old stave legging about like that, laced up on the side. So I took that legging, you know, and I wore it around home. Put it on. My, I looked, how good that looked, you know, one legging. Thought, "My, that felt good." I wanted to wear it to school, but I didn't know just how I was going to get to wear that legging to school. So I put it in inside my coat.

L-21 And I was riding on that log one day, and I went down the hill. And oh, I got up and I said, "My, I hurt my leg. Whew. Um." I said... My stockings, you know, and great big holes in them. And I said, "I--I just hurt my leg so bad."

I said, "That just reminds me, I--I--I got one of my Boy Scout leggings here in my coat." I put that legging on. My, I walked into school, you know, kinda limping like, but getting everybody looking at that one legging.

And so I--I had to go up to work the problems on the blackboard. And so that they wouldn't notice I just had on one legging, I stood sideways and put this legging on that side and stood like this, and worked the problems like this. Look out and see if everybody was looking at me, that one legging on. Everybody got to laughing at me. My, I got to crying, so she made me come down. But oh, my. Something there...

I got a pair of leggings today that I'm not ashamed of. That's right: the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And then, many great things happened in childhood back there, that I wouldn't have time to approach.

L-22 One thing not long ago, I was having a revival in Texas. I come home, and... Wife, I, and the baby, we went up the road. And I just so tired, I--I just felt like I'd drop. I just couldn't stand it.

And on the road home, I was driving, and--and I'd go to sleep. And I drive about a couple of miles, then I'd stop. I'd try to sleep, and I'd wake up. And I'd--I'd drive a little farther, and I'd get sleepy, and just almost go off the road. And I--I'd stop. I thought, "This is awful dangerous, but I must get home." And I would lay on the--lay down in my car and try to sleep.

I woke up after while, and you know what had happened? I driving, I'd run off the road, and was way out in a cow pasture, holding my hand out and saying, "Sister, believe it. That's all you have to do. If you're ever get healed, then you believe it." Way out there in the pasture where I'd run off the road, and out through the field there, and--and asleep. And wife and I, there's a great crowd of people waiting there. So we got in the car and went up the road.

L-23 I passed by the old school house; it's gone too, for we have no continuing city.

And right across from there, there used to be Mr. Wathan's chauffeur. And...?... they live there. There's a pump that I wanted a drink out of. And I thought, just like David one time, wanted a drink out of that well. And I went down there to the--and begin to pump the water, and wife and baby and them was picking violets.

I was leaning across the old fence, and looking at the old hill there where the school used to be, and the old trees, the sugar maples where we used to tap them and suck the sap on them in the spring of the year, you know, when it was coming up.

And I thought, "Oh..." I could just imagine seeing all those little boys standing lined up there with their hands on one another's shoulders, tramping like this, and the flag up, and we were going in, the teacher with a great big long willow, making us line up just right. And I looked up on the hill, and see the old home where it used to be, and housing project up there. Down here, the old school was gone.

And my, my heart begin to swell up. I thought, "Here we have no continuing city, but we're seeking one to come."

L-24 I remember the boys that I use... I said, "Let me think. Ralph Fields, where's he at? He's gone. Where's Howard Higgins? Dead. Where's my brother? Gone. Here we have no contin... Where's dad? He's gone. Where's Charles? Gone. Where's Edward? Gone." I thought, "O God, and soon somebody look at this ground and say, 'Where's Bill?' Gone." Here we have no continuing city. I begin to think of it. My heart begin to pound.

I remember a little dirty trick that I done my brother there. Don't do anything wrong that you'll ever regret.

I remember one day that mama give us some popcorn to take to--to school with us. We couldn't eat with the rest of the

kids. We'd always run over the hill there and eat, because we--the rest of the children could afford sandwiches.

And we used to have a little jar. In there would be greens and a piece of corn bread laying on the side, and two spoons, and maybe a little jar full of stuff, you know. And--and we'd set and both of us eat out of this jar with this spoon, and eat our bread and pass it back and forth to one another. We was ashamed before the children. And we'd run over the hill and eat behind the trees over there.

L-25 I remember mama getting us some popcorn around Christmas. We had a sack of it, and we took it to school, left it in the cloak room. And here the little dirty trick that I did. I held up my hand. Teacher said, "What do you want, William."

I said, "May I be excused?"

Said, "Yes, ma'am--yes, sir."

And I went out the building, and went out through the cloak room, I put my hand down in that sack and got a great big handful of that popcorn. Went out and stood behind the school and eat this popcorn to be sure that I got my share of it. And I was eating that popcorn. I never will forget. When dinner time come, we went out and got our bucket and got our popcorn. My brother looked in that sack, and about half of it gone. He said, "Say," said, "something happened there, didn't it."

I said, "Sure did." Uh uh-huh. I know what had happened. I'd eat his popcorn. So... But he shared the rest of it.

L-26 And standing there leaning over that fence, I thought of all those things. He's the one that's gone on. He died in the hospital calling for me when I was in Arizona, many, many years ago.

Friends, if I'd a had a hundred million dollars laying before me, I'd have give every thing that I had if I could've took him that handful of popcorn back again. Couldn't do it. He's gone on. And I thought, "How hard he had to live. He died when he was just a boy." And how that we tried to share our clothes with one another. And just before he died, he put his hand over his heart, said, "I will never live to see Bill again." But said, "Tell him he's my favorite brother." And when down there, I was thinking about that then. I started crying. Wife said, "Why don't you come home to rest." And she seen what was going on, so she got me away, and we went on up the road. Life when one is a child; it was boyhood. I'll hurry.

L-27 I was a young man; I--I seen the way women lived. I never did like girls, never did like women, 'cause I--I got enough to see the way they would live. If anything I respect in a woman, is being true. I don't care if she's any--colored, white, or whatever she is; if she's a real lady, she deserves the highest of respects. God knows that. And I purposed in my heart when I was a little boy, that I'd never have nothing to do with women. I'd be a hunter all my life. And that's what I did, friend. And I'd live in the woods, hunt all night. And that's why... That's where I learned God, was by nature. I remember when... Course, when I got to be about seventeen or eighteen then, as all boys, they... Some boy friend of mine, his daddy had a car, James Poole. And he had a little girl he wanted me to meet. And you know how you are. I seen that little girl, and I thought she was prettiest little thing I ever seen. You know, teeth like pearls, eyes like a dove, neck like a swan. Oh, my, just prettiest thing you ever seen.

So said, "She wants to meet you, Bill."

And I said, "Oh." I said, "I don't know how to talk to a woman." I said, "I--I can't do that."

And He said, "Oh, come on."

So I talked to her a few times. And after while, he said, "I'll get dad's old car." And said, "We--we'll take our girlfriends a riding."

I thought, "Well, now that wouldn't be bad."

L-28 So--so we went out. We stopped down there to get some sandwiches. And I went in, and got some Cokes, and some sandwiches, and come back out. And we ate the sandwiches, and I took the Cokes back--the Coke bottles back. When I went back, I come out, to my surprise, my little girlfriend was smoking a cigarette.

Well, I always had my opinion of a cigarette smoking woman, and I haven't changed it yet. It's the most lowest, immoral, degrading thing that a woman can do. I--I'm not here to preach the Gospel in that manner. Your preacher will do that.

But women, if you do smoke, for mercy sake, get away from it. How cheap it looks in a woman that'll smoke a cigarette. My, it's the cheapest thing. I'd rather see her drunk any time.

L-29 And listen. You talk about a sabotage. Don't you worry about Russia coming in and getting us. Russia ain't going to hurt us; we're hurting ourself. It's our own moral decay that's a hurting us. We're--we're corrupting ourselves. Statistics shows by doctors, I believe, that eighty percent of the women that has children that smoke cigarettes, if they'd raise their baby like they should, to the breast, in eighteen months it dies. It kills the baby, the nicotine poison in the milk of the mother. Why, sabotage, fifth columnist...?

I still say, what this world needs today is not a new president, it needs an old fashion Saint Paul's revival, and the Bible Holy Ghost back in the Church again. I believe that's right. Yes, sir. That's exactly what it needs.

L-30 And--and the--the--and the women, how they could smoke. And--and I thought that was terrible to see a woman smoke. Well, that just broke my heart. I just couldn't stand that. I didn't want nothing to--to do with that. So I just--just left her. And so that was the time when the Angel of the Lord appeared to me when... She laughed at me, called me a sissy. She made me walk home (That's right.) from the place. She said, "Well, you big sissy. I wouldn't even ride with you."

I said, "You don't have to."

She said, "You don't smoke?"

And I said, "No ma'am."

Said, "You don't drink either?"

And I said, "No ma'am."

Said, "What do you like to do?"

I said, "Go fishing, hunting." Course, that didn't interest her. So I--I was... That was way I--I thought about it anyhow. And I'm glad today that I did think that. That's right. Amen.

Listen friends. It ain't the robin that pecks the apple that hurts it; it's the worm at the core that kills the apple. That's what. It's sin in our midst is what's a hurting us (That's right.), sin in our midst that's killing us.

L-31 Now, now, I guess you wonder how I ever got married. Well, when I met my wife, she was a Christian girl, very lovely Christian girl. And I was then about twenty-three, twenty-four years old. She very sweet humble character. And I met her. And I--I'd take her to church, and she went to church. And she was a very fine lovely woman.

All these people here, my friends from Jeffersonville setting here in front of me knows her, or knew her, and how a lovely woman she was. She's in her grave today. But that's her body. Her soul's in--with Christ. And she was a very lovely Christian character.

And I went with her awhile. And she come from a good home. Her father, during the time of the depression that that was, he made about six hundred dollars a month. He was a brotherhood organizer on the Pennsylvania Railroad. I made twenty cents a hour digging ditches. So I couldn't marry the girl, I didn't think.

L-32 And I thought, "Well, if I have went with her any longer, I was taking up her time. She was too good of a girl to let go. She'd make some man a good wife." So I had to either just let her go or ask her to marry me, and I didn't have nerve enough to do that. So I guess you wonder how I got... I wrote her a letter, and asked her if she'd marry me. And I said, "Well, I..." Now, it--it wasn't "Dear Miss, will you have me." It was a little bit, what you call, mushier than that. And I--I--I kinda talked to her...

But here... I remember, I thought, "I got to do something, because it's not right to take the girl's time." So I wrote her a letter.

And I went to work that morning; I was working Public Service Company. And I was very nervous about dropping it in the box; it was on Monday morning. I dropped it in the box. And all day, I thought about it. And I thought, "Tonight, oh, oh, I'll hear from that tonight. Her mother will call me up and rake me over the coals." And I went on. That night it was all right.

L-33 And I was to meet her Wednesday to take her over to the church. So I remember, then come on towards Wednesday. And Wednesday night I was just as nervous, I didn't know what to do. I thought, "What am I going to do

when I get up there?" So I asked my mother, "Has--has Hope called?"

"No."

"Did you get any mail?"

"No."

"Well, maybe it hung up, and didn't even get out of the box." So I thought, "Something's happening here."

So I went up, and I--I blew the horn outside. And so she come out. She said, "Come in."

And I thought, "Oh, oh, going to get me in there where her mother is now, and then I'm really going to get it." So I said, "Are you about ready?"

She said, "Let's walk to church."

I thought, "Oh, my." So I said, "All--all right." And I went in.

And Mrs. Brumbach looked at me, said, "Hello, Bill."

I said, "How do you do." So I was just nervous as I could be. So I thought something's going to happen any time. You know how you feel when you're under them strains.

L-34 So we went on out and went to church. Honest, I didn't even hear what Brother Davis said that night. He just preached away, and I--I--I didn't know what he said. I was scared something was going to happen.

And I'd look at her, and I thought, "Oh, my, ain't she pretty." And I... She's going to tell me this is all of it, sure as the world, 'cause I could just tell that I--I'd knowed she was going to tell me, "Stay home after tonight." So I had it all fixed up what she was going to tell me, and I...

And after church was over, we started walking back, a pretty moonlight night. We was walking down the street, and I looked up to see the moon shining down through the bushes, went on, you know. And I look at her and I thought, "My, I'd hate for this to be the last night, but I guess this is it." I walked on, you know, and I said, "How are you tonight?"

She said, "Just fine. How are you?"

I thought, "Hurry up, lady. Tell me something, I--I--'fore I faint. Don't get too close to home." We walked on a little farther, and I said, "Humph, sure a pretty night."

She said, "Yes, it is."

I thought, "Well, why... Hurry up; say something." You know, women can just keep you like that anyhow, you know, under that suspense.

L-35 And I walked on; I thought, "Well, she getting pretty close to home." I said, "Uh, uh... Did uh... Did you get any mail this week?"

She said, "Uh-huh." That was all.

And I said, "Uh, did you get my letter?"

She said, "Uh-huh."

My, oh, my. I was certainly burning energy then. And I said, "Well, uh..." I said, "Did--did you read it?"

She said, "Uh-huh."

My, I--I said, "What'd you think of it?"

She said, "It was all right."

Whew, my. And I said, "Did--did--did you--did you--did you read all of it?"

She said, "Yes, I read it all."

I said, "What'd you think of it?"

She said, "It was all right."

Well, we got married. There it was. I don't know how; we just got married. So...

L-36 My, the next strain come when I had to ask her mother and daddy. Well, I knowed it was appropriate to do that. So I never will forget Charlie Brumbach. He may be setting right here this afternoon for all I know. And her mother was a very prissy sort of a woman. Fine woman, but she belonged up in the ranks, you know. And so Charlie was just a good old humble brother.

And I--I thought I'd better ask him, and let him ask her. He's a... And so I thought I could get by with the man better than I could talk to the women anyhow. So I said...

One night I was leaving, Hope said, "Have you asked dad yet?"

And I said, "No."

She said, "Well, you--you ought to."

I said, "I know I should, but I'm not..."

Hope said, "I think it'll be all right."

So when I went to leave that night, he said, "See you later, Billy."

I said, "Humph, Charlie." He said... I said, "Could--could I talk to you just a little bit?" He would said... I said, "Come out here just a minute." Walked out on the porch, and I was just sweating and shaking. He said... I said, "Charlie," I said, "I--I want to ask you something."

He said, "Oh, you can have her, Bill. Go on, just be good to her."

Oh, my. I love him to this day. I said, "Charlie, I can't make her a living like you do. I can't give her clothes like you can buy her. But I promise you this: I'll love her with all my heart. I'll work till my hands bleed to make her a living. And I'll be as true to her as I know how to be."

He put his... He was a German. He put his big hand over on me. He said, "Bill, I'd rather you would have her and be good to her, than somebody that had a lot of money would treat her mean."

I said, "Thank you, Charlie."

L-37 We got married. We didn't have nothing to start housekeeping on. Only thing we had... I tell you what we had: A little old place where I rented; my rent cost me four dollars a month. And I went into a little old place there, and somebody give us an old fashioned folding bed. You remember that old folding bed? Straw mattress, straw tick on it... And then... And we had a little old table we bought from Sears and Roebuck, and chairs; we had to--to paint it ourselves. And--and so I painted it. And we had two linoleum rugs, got from Johnny Jobbers. That was just a second hand place down into the, Jeffersonville. I said that John Jobbers so they could catch get the benefit of it. And so we got... I think they cost a dollar and a quarter apiece.

And I went over to Mr. Webber's; he was a junk dealer and bought a--a cooking stove. And I give him a dollar and something for it, and I had to pay a dollar and seventy-five cents for grates to put in. I got an icebox from Public Service Company for fifty cents, one they took in on swap. We went to housekeeping.

L-38 But friends, it was just as paradise on earth. We had each other. I'd become converted in that time, become a minister, and was preaching, and I loved the Lord with all my heart, and we loved one another. And that's all we cared for.

And listen. Happiness does not consist of how much the world's goods you own, but how contented you are with the portion that's allotted to you. That's right. Remember that. That's all we had. We were happy and lovely. I had a little church there they built for me; the little Tabernacle stands today yet as a memorial. And we all great crowds of people come from far and near, around the country to hear the simple Gospel. And we were just doing wonderful.

L-39 And I remember a lovely little boy was born into our home. I call him Billy Paul. I want him to be with me in the next meetings at Carlsbad, as soon as I leave Arkansas here. And so, he's fourteen years old now. And a little later on, eleven months come along, another--another lovely little sweet thing by the name of Sharon Rose.

Just before Billy was born, we had saved enough money, till I was, wanted to take a little time off. And we... I went up to Dowagiac, Michigan, to a--a meeting, and the--with an old man that had white beard and white hair, by the name of John Ryan.

And so I went up there. And on the road back, coming back, I seen a sign, great crowds of people everywhere when I passed through Mishawaka. I thought, "What are those people." And I went over there, and there's some of them in T-Model Fords, and some in Cadillacs. And they told me that they were... I couldn't get nothing to, no place to stay. And they said you're--you're... There's a conference going on here. The Pentecostal people are having a conference. The--the P. A. of J. C., I believe it was, P--P. A. of J. C. denomination of Pentecost called that.

L-40 Well, I seen all kinds of people. I thought, "Well, that's a religious meeting. Believe I'll go in."

Well, I never heard so much noise in all my life. So... Oh, church manners, they didn't have it. They were screaming,

shouting, and carrying on. I thought, "What in the world?" I looked around there, and they got a tabernacle...

Some of you might know the man's name. His name's Rowe, Reverend Rowe. Anybody here happen to know Reverend Rowe? And a... Yes, someone here knows of him. Reverend Rowe, it was in his church.

Well, they were just clapping their hands, and carrying on, and dancing. And why, I said, "My, isn't that horrible, people dancing in the church?" I said, "Well, that's a shame." And I was setting in a seat of the scornful, sure enough. So I thought... Something though kinda got a hold of me a little bit. And I thought, "Well, now."

L-41 I'm counting my money. I had--I had two dollars and fifteen cents left. And I went out and got... Thought, "Well now, I can't stay in a tourist court, 'cause I ain't got the money. But I'm going to stay over. Just got enough money to buy my gasoline to get home." So I went out that night and slept in a corn field. And I knowed I, but I didn't have very good clothes. And the next morning, why I went to the service.

And that day, oh, my, ministers preaching... And how I noticed, that night they called, said, "Every preacher come to the platform." Hundred and fifty, more preachers come up to the platform. They was having a conference, international conference. They was all setting on the platform.

He said, "We haven't got time for all of you testify." I went up. He said, "Just say who are and where you're from."

And it come to me, I said, "Evangelist, William Branham, Jeffersonville," set down.

Well, come to find out, I was youngest minister in the group of them. So then that night I thought... They had a... They was bringing all kinds of preachers. And they chose an old colored man to bring the message for that night: real old, just a little rim of hair around his head. He had an old preacher's coat on, had velvet collar, kinda a cut-away coat. Poor old fellow come out to the platform like this. And oh, I felt so sorry, I wanted to get up and help the old man. And he come out...

And they had to have the conference up there on account of not having it in the South, 'cause they had both colored and white to--together.

L-42 And the old fellow was standing there, you know. And all the ministers that day had been preaching on what Jesus done and so forth. But he never taken... He took his text from over in Job somewhere there where it said, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world, and when morning star sang together, and sons of God shouted for joy?" Well, where the ministers was bringing the activities of the Church on earth, he went up into the heavens back yonder and come plumb back down about ten million years before the world was ever formed, and come back down the horizontal rainbow with him.

And about time he got down there, he let out a great big whoop, and jumped up, and clicked his heels together, said, "Glory to God. You ain't got room enough up here for me to preach."

I looked at that. I said, "Well, if That'll make an old man like that act like that, what would It do to me if I got some of It?" I said, "I want some of That. That's what I want. If It'll make an old man like that, well, what would It do for me?"

So I went out that night in the corn field, and I begin to pray. I said, "Lord, le--le--let me get some of that." So I--I said, "You give me favor with them people." And prayed a way in the night, out there in the corn field.

L-43 I took my... had some seersucker trousers. My others was... got all dirty there in the corn field. So I--I laid them on my seat, and took the two seats and put them together out of my car, and pressed my trousers that night. And I had my little seersucker shirt. Nobody knew me, so I just laid it down there. seersucker shirt and little old T-shirt, and seersucker trousers, rather. I laid them down there. Next morning I got up, shined them all up.

Meeting begin at ten o'clock. They had breakfast after breakfast. And I wasn't going to eat with them, because I didn't have no money to put in. I just didn't--didn't eat with them. But they made me welcome and everything. I didn't know no one there, but a little fellow, I forget what his name was. He played a violin, a little curly headed fellow.

L-44 And so next morning, I walked in, set down. And so after while, I looked over and another man come in and set down, a colored man sat down by me and big bunch of people setting there. So I was setting there and this... They said, "We're going to begin the services." And they was talking, making their... selling literature, and whatever they had. And he said, "There was a minister on the platform last night by the name of Branham from Jeffersonville." Said, "He was the youngest man on the platform. We want him to come up and bring the morning message."

Mercy, why, I never even seen a microphone. They had a microphone there. I thought, "What? Well, I couldn't... seersucker trousers and T-shirt." I just hunkered down real low, like this.

He announced again, said, "Anybody know where William Branham of Jeffersonville?" Said, "We want him to come up and bring the message." Fifteen hundred people nearly setting there. Not me, before that. I just set back there. No, sir. This... I was too countryfied to get up there. So I just set there real low. And so... And he announced it two or three times. Said, "Anybody on the outside, we're paging for William Branham."

I thought. Something told me, said, "That's what you prayed for last night. If you want to get acquainted with them people, get up there."

"Lord, I can't do that, seersucker trousers and T-shirt." I said, "Nuh-uh." So I was setting there.

And he... when he announced it again, this colored man looked over at me, said, "Do--do--do--do you know that man?"

Oh, my. Talk about on the spot. I said I had... I knowed I had to lie or--or--or something, or be--tell him. I said, "Look, fellow, look. Now, keep this to yourself." I said, "I'm he. See? But..."

He said, "Well, get up there, white man, get up there."

I said, "No." I said, "I got on... Look at these pants here."

He said, "Them people don't care what you got on. They want to hear you."

And I said, "Look, I can't get up there." I said, "I--I don't... You just keep still."

And he said, "If anybody knows where..."

He said, "Here he is. Here he is." Whew. Um. "Here he is."

I thought, "Oh, my." I could just feel my heart go, and my knees real weak, and my arms looked like they was going to drop off. Well, it just looked like something picked me up, and here I went walking up, just as conscious, seersucker trousers and T-shirt.

I got up there, and I said, "Folks, I don't know very much about..." Before them preachers who could really preach, oh, my. I said, "I just want to say that I--I love Jesus, and--and ah--and ah--and ah..." You know, sort of like that.

And so he said... I started to walk off, and he said, "Well, speak a little for us, Brother Branham."

L-45 I turned over and I said, "I--I--I just don't know what to say." And I happened to think of a text, "And Then He Cried," the rich man that... When he lifted up his eyes in hell. And I took that text, "And Then He Cried." And I got to speaking, and the first thing you know, Something hit me. My, I was lost out of this world for awhile. And everybody got to screaming.

I went outside when the service was over, and a great big fellow from Texas with a... with cowboy boots on, and a big cowboy hat, said, "I'm a preacher."

I thought, "Well, brother, my seersucker trousers aren't so bad after all. He had those cowboy boots and a big cowboy hat, and be a preacher?"

And he said, "I heard you say you was an evangelist. I'd like to sign you up for couple week's revival down in Texas."

I took his name. I said, "Oh, my, Lord. You just doing great things for me." I took that all down, you know.

L-46 A little bitty fellow with these little golf playing trousers on, walked up and said, "I'm from Florida. Like to have you over there for a couple of weeks."

My, I seen they was just common people after all. So first thing a--a indian... A woman come up from the indian reservation, wanted me to go there. Well, I had enough invitations to last me about a year. My, I jumped in that old Ford, and it half backslid, and down the road I went.

I rushed in at home, wife met me, you know, and I said, "Oh, honey, I got something to tell you. I met the cream of the crop." I said, "My, people who just scream and shout and jump up-and-down. They're not ashamed of their religion." I said, "My, the best you ever seen."

She said, "Where they at?"

And I told her. I said, "Looky here. I got a whole string here." I said, "My, I can just preach and preach and preach it. And you know what, they acc--accepted me."

Said, "Is that right?"

I said, "Look. I'm going to quit my job and start right out."

She said, "Well, we haven't got any money."

I said, "How much money we got?"

Said, "We got that twelve dollars in there, payment on the Ford."

I said, "Well, you know, the Bible said, 'Don't--don't take anything when you go.' See? Don't take any script, or if you got two coats, give one to your brother.' He said, 'I--I--I will be with you.'" I said, "That's the way." He said.. I said, "Will you go with me?"

She, bless her heart. She said, "Yes, I'll just stick with you."

So I--I went and told my mama. And mama said, "That's all right, honey. If you feel that."

L-47 Well, I went and had to tell her mother. And that didn't work so good. She said, "William." She said, "She's your wife. You may take her if you want to." But said, "I don't want my daughter drug out among that bunch of trash." Um. Trash?

Friends, I found out this, that what she thought was trash, is the cream of the crop. That's right. And I say that with respect.

Said, "Out like that where all that carrying and screaming and carrying on like that." Said, "Why don't you go on up there and be a pastor. And then someday they'll build you a parsonage, and all that."

That didn't... Oh, my. So Hope begin to cry. And so I said, "Well..."

She said, "I'll go with you."

But anyhow, I didn't want... She said her... how it would hurt her, so I just let it go, went on.

Friend, the little girl that was too good to be with that trash, I buried her just a little after that. Sorrow set in right there.

L-48 I'll hurry just a few minutes I got left, about fifteen minutes. There's where sorrow struck me. Now, you let my... what my mistakes be your gain. You--you prosper by what I had to suffer for. Sometimes you see me standing here on the platform, laughing, that's... you don't know what's beneath there. That's right. I tell you: There's been a price paid that nobody knows but God alone.

Right away, my wife taken sick. First thing, I lost my daddy. I run over to the house to see him, picked him up in my arms like that, he looked up at me like that, he smiled. A doctor had give him a dose of medicine that killed him. One overdose of strychnine for his heart, and it killed him.

'Course, there's nothing said about that. The undertaker covers up the doctor's mistakes sometimes. Nothing I got against doctors, but I say there's nothing said about that.

L-49 But some woman here not long ago trusted God out in California for her baby that died, and every newspaper and magazine packed it across the country. And the same time where one didn't have faith enough for deliverance, everybody criticized that, all the magazines and papers, and God healed thousands, and you--you have to pay them to put it in the paper, or something like that.

But look here. Let me tell you something. The Bible said, "Come, let us reason together." Is that right? Listen. The same time that picture was being packed across the country telling people that Divine healing can't be trusted, and everything like that, the doctor lost thousands times thousands of cases, and there wasn't nothing said about that. Isn't that right?

Listen. Come reason together. Sauce for the goose is for the gander too. That's... And let me tell you, if one person being lost by Divine healing with not enough faith to recover, and is all branded as fanaticism, then if the doctor loses one case, brand it fanaticism. Sauce for the goose is for the gander. Is that right? That's right.

But friends, what medical science and ministers ought to get together and cooperate together, knowing we're all working for the good of the people and for the glory of God, and work together. That's what we ought to do.

L-50 But anyhow, my father, he was killed then by this doctor, give him an overdose of medicine, and it killed him. And right away, my brother was riding on the side of a car, got his neck broke, died in my other brother's arms. My sister-in-law died. My wife took sick, and was...

Oh, the 1937 flood came up and there was sorrow. I never will forget it. Wife was laying just at the point of death. I went and I was praying for her, doing everything I knew. And every time I'd pray, looked like... I went and told my

church. I said, "She's going to die."

Said, "No, that's just..."

I said, "She's going to die as certain as anything."

My babies, both of them were sick, the flood come up and everything, houses breaking over, and rushing, and miles of water sweeping over the country. And they taken my wife out to the hospital, to the government hospital, temporary hospital.

And I was on patrol duty. And I was riding up-and-down the streets, and trying to get the people out.

L-51 And I never will forget, one horrible night. O God, when I think of it, there in that critical hour. I had a--a--a truck there, little patrol truck, and I was taking a boat. And I coming up the--the road. And somebody said, "Over on Chestnut Street, the dike's about ready to break through." And said, "There's a woman screaming for mercy over there, and nobody can get to her."

Well, I was raised on the river, and thought that I was--could do pretty good with the boat. And so I got the boat, and set it in the water, and started off.

And I looked over there and I heard that mother. It was about eleven o'clock at night, just screaming, "Mercy. Help me. Help me." Standing out on a porch.

And I got up there and tried to get the boat across. And went way down and come out the other side, the water sweeping down through the street. I went way back again and tried. And finally, I hit against the post.

And the mother fainted. I picked her up, put her in the boat; four or five little children, I got them in, and went back and finally got to the shore. And just as we got to the shore, somebody said, "My baby, my baby."

Well, I thought the woman left a little baby in there, and back I went. And just as I got over there, I run through the house. Come to find out, her... the baby... the little girl in there about two, three years old, and that's who she was talking about, and I didn't know it.

L-52 And I was over there, and the dike broke through up there on Chestnut Street, poured down, and away went the building. And just as I jumped in my boat, and had to run my hand in the water to jerk the--the rope, or my boat... Then I got out into the stream and couldn't get it started. On down we floated. Got out over on--on Market Street there. Big waves a dashing against the side, I thought any minute I would go to the bottom.

I knew; there in that boat I knelt down. I said, "O God. I know I have disobeyed You."

And I believe friends, if I'd have went on back down there when those people called me in, the gift of healing would've been manifested right there. That was God's program. But I failed to walk in what He told me to do. I listened to what people told me instead of what God told me to do. Don't never do that. You follow what God tells you to do. And then sorrows was on.

L-53 And I prayed. I said, "O God, I know I've disobeyed You. If You'll just help me. I don't want to die. I don't want to drowned out here in this river. Please, God, let this motor start. Will You, please?"

And I'd pull that string, and the ice freezing; and it'd chug a couple of times, and that boat ripping, and jumping, and dashing like that; done got out in the main current. I didn't know what was going to happen to me. And I'd try and try, and it wouldn't start.

And I prayed again. I said, "God, my poor wife laying out there sick. My babies sick, and here me drowned in the river. What, O God, what can I do." And I said, "If You'll just help me, Lord."

And I pulled the string again, and away it went. Oh, my. I started right into the river, out of the river and got on into the--come out way down towards Clarksville. And I come around, and got back up and got to my truck. And some of them said, "Did you know the government just washed out when that dike broke?" Out to the ho--hospital I went as hard as I could.

L-54 I met a Brother George DeArk there. He said, "Oh, Brother Billy (put his arms around me.)," he said, "looks like things are close." He said, "Brother Bill, if I never meet you again, I'll meet you in the morning." That was the last time I seen him in life. That's right. He left a little afterward.

And I said, "Where's Hope?"

Said, "I don't know."

And I run over there, and I met a--one of the officers of the government. I said, "Sir, what become of the hospital?"

Said, "All washed through there."

I said, "Did all--did all them... Did any of them get drowned?"

Said, "No, they went out on a train to Charlestown."

And I run and got in my car and started out the highway sixty-two leading to the little city, Charlestown. And when I got out there, there was about five miles of water done come down through Lancassange Creek and cut it off.

And I went and got my boat, and I couldn't even pierce that water. I'd start through there, and it'd whirl the boat around like this. And I--I set the... at this angle, and just give it all the gas that I could, and hit them waves like that. But it was so rough, you'd come around side of them woods, and throw my boat back down this way, and I come back out down behind the government. And there I was, caught on a little island like. And I'd set there for days upon that island, thinking.

Some of them said the trestles went out from under the bridge up there, and everybody that went on that train was drowned, wife, two children, and all.

I thought, "Oh, God." How nervous I got. I--I walked the floors, I didn't know what to do. I thought, "Oh, what will I do if they're gone."

L-55 And after while, as soon as I could get over--the water dropped enough that they could get me across. I got to Charlestown. I was looking.

I met old--an old friend of mine. He said, "No, that train never washed off." Said, "They went through, but I don't know where they're at."

I went down, the dispatcher told me, said, "A mother and two sick children? I put them off in Columbus, Indiana. But you can't get to them." Said, "The water's cut off this side."

I started walking back down the road, rubbing my hands crying, saying, "Oh, God. Take me. Don't let me suffer. Let... Take me, Lord. Don't let me have to go through this agony."

Walking down the road, and a man drove up to me in a car. He said, "I know what you're looking for." Said, "You're looking for your wife, aren't you?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Don't you know me?" Said, "I--I go with Mary May over there."

I said, "Yes, I remember you."

Said, "Your wife is dying in the Baptist church at Columbus, Indiana."

And I said, "Surely not."

Said, "Yes," said, "She's got tuberculosis." And said, "You wouldn't even know her. And the doctor says she's going to die. She's laying right next to my girlfriend." He said, "I know how to get you there if you want to go."

And I said, "Well, let's go, brother."

And I remember that night when I run into the building up there, the Baptist; they made a hospital. They had army cots everywhere. And I run in there, boots on where we waded the water. And I begin to scream, "Hope, Hope, where are you honey? Where are you?" Just beside myself. Directly I looked over there, and I seen an old bony hand raise up. It was her. I run over real quick to her and grabbed her up in my arms. I said, "Is the children alive?"

She said, "Yes." She said, "I look awful, don't I?"

I said, "No, honey. You look good." I said, "My, you're going to be all right."

I felt somebody tap me on the back. And I looked, and it was a--looked like a doctor. He said, "Come here." He said, "Are you her husband?"

And I said, "Yes, sir."

"You Reverend Branham?"

I said, "I am."

He said, "Well, sir. I hate to break this news to you, but," said, "your wife's dying." Said, "Don't get her excited or anything."

I said, "Doctor, surely not."

Said, "Yes." Said, "She's going."

And I said, "Oh, what is it, doctor?"

Said, "Galloping tuberculosis." Said, "She'll just die right away." He said, "Just--just ma... Just make her feel good as you can." He said, "And both of your babies are sick. I'm tending to them over here in another home."

Well, I went back and told her. I said, "Honey, you look good."

L-56 And a little doctor friend of mine, Doctor Sam Adair there in Jeffersonville. Soon as he'd let me, I brought them back down home. And there, they laid there until the babies got well; the wife gradually went away. Finally we got her in the hospital. I had doctors to come look at her. There wasn't nothing could be done. She took pneumothorax treatments and everything. Nothing could be done.

And I remember standing there, and they bore holes down through her side, and put that tube in there and get collapsed one lung.

Listen. If I had it... She'd hold my hand and cry, and the tears roll down her cheeks. She'd look at me, just suffering. Never done a bit of good. If I had to go over it; I'd never go through with it again. That's right. As she's holding my hand...

L-57 But just to show you, the way of a transgressor's hard. I never will forget. I was trying to work to get the bill paid off. And then all of... One day I was out, and I heard a call come say, "If you--you want to see your wife alive, come at once."

I rushed out to the hospital. I never forget it. I jerked off my hat and throwed it in the truck; I run up through there real quick. And here come little Doctor Adair walking out. God bless his little old heart. He's a--he's a fine man. And he come walking out. We'd eat together, slept together, fished together, just bosom friend. And he come walking out. And he come walking down through the ho--the hospital. I seen him look at me, and I seen big tears drop off his cheeks, and he turned sideways. And I run into the room. I said, "What's the matter, Doc?" I said, "She ain't gone."

He said, "I believe she is."

I said, "Come, go in with me, Doc."

He said, "Bill, don't ask me to do that." Said, "Hope's like my sister." Said, "I--I--I can't go in there. Don't--don't--don't ask me to."

And the nurse come up, said, "Come, Brother Branham." Said, "Here, drink this little bit of medicine."

I said, "No, I don't need it."

He said, "Go ahead, Billy. That'll rest your nerves."

I said, "I don't want it." I said, "No."

He said, "Nurse, you go in with him."

I said, "No, I don't want anyone. I'm going in myself. I'm going in." I said, "I love her, and I'm going in." I walked to the door, opened the door, and there she laid all covered up like this, and blanket sheet pulled up over her face. I'd jerked the sheet down, and my heart just a breaking... I put my hand on her, her perspiration on her forehead kinda felt sticky. I said, "Hope, Hope, honey." I said, "Speak to me once. Well, just speak one time, won't you." I was shaking her.

L-58 Friends, if I'll live a hundred years, I'll never forget what happened. Those two big brown eyes looked up at me. She was so weak she couldn't say nothing. She was smiling. She took her finger and she motioned. And I got down, and she said, "Why did you call me, honey?"

And I said, "Well, they..." I said, "I don't know."

She said, "Oh I--I was in another land." She said, "It was so peaceful. I wasn't suffering." She said, "Great big birds like a great Orion." And she said, "There was man dressed in white, one on each side, taking me to my home."

Oh, friend. There--there's a land somewhere. I believe as she was dying, her eyes just opened up to see paradise beyond. She rallied for a little bit.

The nurse come in. And she said, "Nurse, come over." She said, "I hope when you get married, you'll have a husband like mine."

I said, "Oh, honey, I haven't done nothing."

She said, "Oh, bless your heart." She patted me on the back. Nurse turned around, walked out, crying.

She said, "Bill, I want to tell you a few things." Said, "I'm going." Said, "Don't cry."

I said, "All right."

She said, "Don't let my babies be pulled about from pillar to post." She said, "And some things I got to confess to you."

I said, "What is it?"

She said, "Do you remember one time," and said, "you were going fishing, and--and I called you. And that night we were going to Fort Wayne for a meeting?"

I said, "Yes."

She said, "You went got me some stockings."

I said, "Yes, I remember them."

She said, "Them was the wrong kind of stockings, honey. Them wasn't right."

L-59 Well, what it was, I'd--I'd been fishing. I went up home and we had to go to Fort Wayne. I was going to preach that night at Fort Wayne. Her father lived at Fort Wayne. So I was going up there to--to--to preach, and she... You--you... There's two different kinds of--of--of woman's socks that you buy. One's called a... Name them, somebody. Is it--is chiffo--chiffon? That's right. And what's the other kind? Rayon? Sa... Is it Raymond or Raymond? Rayon? Which is the best? Chiffon. Well, they cost sixty-something cents then. And she was taking a bath, and she said, "Billy, you run down at the--at Penney's and get me some--some socks."

And I said, "All right." And I was going down the street. And she said... Now remember, I didn't know nothing about women's clothes. And she was saying, "Get chiffon." I was going down the street going, "Chiffon, chiffon, chiffon, chiffon, chiffon."

Somebody said, "Hello, Brother Branham."

I said, "Hello, chiffon, chiffon, chiffon, chiffon, chiffon, chiffon."

And I met Orville Spawn down there, and he--he said, "Billy, perch is biting over on the...?... about that long..."

I said, "my..." I got talking to him, and I forgot about what she said.

L-60 Well, I--I wasn't going to Penney's, 'cause I didn't know nobody there. But I used to have a little friend that come to my church by the name of Thelma Ford. She worked in a ten cent store, and I knowed they sold them over there. And went over, the Thelma come up, said, "What do you want, Billy?"

I said, "I want some socks for Hope."

Said, "Now, Hope don't wear socks."

I said, "She sure does."

She said, "She wears stockings."

I said, "That's right. That's right." I thought, "Oh, I've showed my ignorance already." And I said...

She said, "What kind do you want?"

And I said, "What kind you got?"

She said, "I got chiffon and--and rayon..." What's the, rayon the cheap ones? She said, "I got rayon."

I said, "That's what I want. That's what I want."

She said, "Hope want rayon?" I... All sounded alike, rayon, chiffon. I didn't know the different. She said...

"Yes." And--and so she gave me... got them, put them in the sack.

I said, "I want the full style." You know that thing that got the thing behind them, you know, that... I don't know, you know. I said, "The full style" And--and so... Oh, fashion, full fashion, that's what it was. And I said, "That's the kind that I--I want."

And she got them ready for me. She put them in the sack, and it was only about twenty-nine cents.

And I said, "Well, give me two pair of them."

And she said, "Are you sure of that?"

I said, "That's what she wanted."

L-61 And so I went back, and I... Of course, you know how you men like to pop off to your women. And I said, "Looky here." I said, "I'm Abraham's son. I'm a little Yiddish. You go over the river shopping, I'll buy two pair of stockings for

what you can buy one, and have money left." I said, "Just... I'm Abraham's son. I'm know how to do it. You see?" You know, going on like that.

And God bless her heart. She's in her grave tonight, and probably snow over it. But not altogether there. I still think of her. That's right. And she gone on.

And there, when she said she wouldn't have... I thought it funny when she got to Fort Wayne she wanted another pair of stockings. But she was lady enough not to say it.

And she told me. She said, "Billy, I give them to your mother. They was for an older woman than me."

And I said, "Well, God bless you, honey. I didn't know that." I said, "That was all right."

L-62 She said, "You remember that time you wanted to go hunting so bad, and we was at Louisville. You seen that little .22 rifle that you wanted? And it cost three dollars and something to pay down on it, and you didn't have the money to pay on it? It's been about two years ago?"

I said, "Yeah, I remember that."

She said, "Bill, I've always wanted to buy you that rifle." She said, "I won't be with you but just a few minutes longer now." But she said, "When you go home, look up on top of the old folding bed under that paper. I've been saving nickels to buy the rifle." She said, "Will you promise me you'll buy it?"

Oh, my. When I went home and found that two dollars and something laying under there, like to killed me. I said, "Sure." But I said, "Honey, you're not going away."

She said, "I--I hate to leave you." But said, "I must." She said, "I don't mind it." She said, "It's all right." Said, "Now, another thing I'm going to ask you. Don't stay single."

I said, "Oh, oh, don't ask me that."

Said, "Promise me. Promise me that you--that you won't stay single, my children will have a home to go to, not be drug around everywhere."

I said, "Honey, I--I can't do that."

And she said, "Promise me, won't you?" Said, "I--I--I can go a little easier."

And she didn't mind it no more than you mind taking a drink. She said, "I--I just..." Said, "I hate to leave you and the babies, but," she said, "oh, Bill, it's so wonderful to go like this."

And I said, "Well, I will do the best I can."

L-63 And she said, "Another thing." She said, "You realize why I'm going, don't you?" Oh, that's what hurt. She said, "If I wouldn't have listened to mama, and...?... would listened to..." Said, "It would've been different, wouldn't it."

I said, "That's right, honey." I said, "Oh, what will I ever do?"

She said, "Do this. Don't be ashamed of this Holy Ghost religion." She said, "It's the greatest thing in the world to die by it." She said, "Stay and preach as long as..." Said, "Promise me you'll go right out into the fields where we was supposed to go." And said, "Promise me that you'll do everything you can." Said, "And tell everybody, that it's glorious when you get ready to leave here. It's wonderful."

And I said, "Oh, honey. It's so good to see you go like that."

And she said... I--I said, "Where do you want me to place you?"

And she said, "You take me up on the hill."

I said, "I will take you out to Walnut Ridge, and I'll--I'll bury you there at the hill, your body." And I said, "Honey, I promise you, I'm going, if God won't... spare me, I'm going right out into the field, and I'll never stop until the last drop of blood or life is gone from my body, to do, or try to make an atonement." And I said, "I'll do everything that I can to live right; I'll do right." And I said, "Look."

And she said, "Good bye."

And I said, "Are you going?" I said, "Look, on that morning," I said, "so we'll be able to get together now," I said, "i--if... On that morning, I want you to go to the East side of the gate," and I said, "I want you to stand there. And when...?... It'll be terrible down here." I said, "If--if I die before He comes, I will be sleeping out there." I said, "We'll get together. But if I'm somewhere on the field and be taken up," I said, "you go there and wait for the children, and stand there by the side of the gate. And then when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob coming in, start screaming, 'Bill,

Bill, just as loud as you can." I said, "I'll answer you there."

She raised up her feeble hands. I kissed her good bye. That was my last date with her. I'm on my road. That's right. Someday, someday, I shall go.

L-64 When we took her down to the funeral parlor, I went home. I couldn't be satisfied nowhere. I went over to mama's. I just... Oh, I was crying. I went home. And they said, mama said, "Stay over here."

I said, "No, I'm going home." We didn't have no furniture, but what it was was ours. And so I went home to lay down. And just then, Brother Frank Broy come up, said, "Billy, I hate to tell you something, son."

I said, "Well, I was just right there."

Said, "That's not it. Your baby's dying too."

I said, "Can't be."

Said, "Yes, it is."

And away they took me out to the hospital to see my little Sharon, my little girl. I couldn't call her... I wanted to call her a Bible name. I called my little boy Billy Paul after me and after Saint Paul. And then I wanted to call the baby a Bible name. And I couldn't call her the Rose of Sharon, so I just called her Sharon Rose.

L-65 And I went out the hospital, and the doctor met me. He said, "Billy, she's dying. Don't go in there."

And I stood there till after the nurse turned her back, and I run down there; and I went down to where she was at. I looked at her. And there the little thing, laying there... I never will forget. She's just eight months old.

And I remember, I used to come home, I... She'd set out in the yard, and I'd blow my horn like that, coming around the corner, and she'd go, "Goo, goo, goo," just reach... I just loved those little fellows.

And she was suffering so hard, till one of them little fat legs was moving up and down in a spasm. And looked like her little hand was a waving. And I looked at her, and I said, Sherry, honey, you know daddy?" And I was trying to make myself strong. And I said, "You know daddy, honey?" And her little lips got to quivering. And when she looked at me, she was suffering so hard till her little eye went crossed.

Oh, my. When I seen that tender little blue baby eye cross... [Blank.spot.on.tape--Ed.]

L-66 I didn't know it then, but I understand now. There's never been a cross-eyed child come in line, but what I think of that. There's never been one pass over the platform but what's been healed too. I didn't know the crushing had to bring it forth. But I never think of it till I see that.

That little eye crossing, and she was suffering so hard. And I knelt down. I said, "O Jesus, please, God. I'm sorry for what I do." I said, "Don't take her from me. I love her, Lord, with all my heart. Please God."

Looked like a big black curtain come falling down. I knew she was gone. I raised up, put my hand over on her head. I said, "God bless you, my darling little sweet angel. I'm going to put you in the arms of mother. And the Angel is coming to pack you home in a few minutes. But someday, daddy will see you."

I raised up my head, and I said, "God, You gave and You taken away. I don't know why You're slaying me." I said, "Yet You may slay me, I'm going to trust You as Job did. I'm going to believe You." And I said, "I... Somehow You're breaking my heart. I don't know how I'm going to hold up any longer." But I said, "God, I commit her little soul to You. Take it, Lord Jesus. Put it on the altar with the mother. And someday, let me come to see them."

And as I did that, the Angels of God sweetly come down and taken away her little breath, and bore her away to be with her mother. I placed her in-- the mother, put them down beneath the ground.

L-67 When I stood there, Brother Smith, a Methodist preacher friend of mine, he got some clods in his hand, walked over there, and I was standing there; he put his arm around me; said, "Billy, brace up, honey boy."

I said, "Oh, Brother Smith, my soul is... Oh, I don't know what to do."

And I heard him say, with them little clods dropping upon the little casket, said, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, earth to earth."

I thought, "God, what can I do?"

Sound like the wind blowed down through the pine trees, it sound like I heard a song saying:

There's a land beyond the river,

That we call the sweet forever,
And we only reach that shore by faith decree;
One by one we gain the portal,
There to dwell with the immortal,
Someday they'll ring the golden bells for you and me.
I turned from the grave, broken hearted, went home; I couldn't rest. Days passed. I could give up my wife, but that... oh,
that baby was the choice of my heart. I didn't know what to do, little sweet girl...
And then I thought, "Oh, what will I do quickly now."

L-68 One day I went... I was working for the Public Service. I climbed up a pole early one morning to--to take off a pole meter. I was standing there, and I was singing:

On the hill far away, stood an old rugged cross...

I was going... And I happened to look, and as the sun come up, me hanging there on that pole working on these cross-arms, looked out on the side, and there looked like my figure a wiggling on that... looked like a cross out there. And I thought, "O Christ of God. Yes, it was my sins nailed You there. I'm sorry for what I done." Oh, I said, "God, how could You ever put up with a person like me. You'd broke my heart, You ground me down. But what can I do?" And I got real nervous. And I had on a pair of rubber gloves. Many of you linemen knows...?... twenty-three hundred. Running right by me run the primary. And I thought, "Looky here. I can lay my hand on that primary. In one minute's time I'll be with Sharon." I jerked my glove off. I said, "God, I've lost my mind or something." I said, "Sherry, honey, I can't stand it no longer. Daddy's coming to be home with you."

I said, "Look at them..." Twenty-three hundred running there, break every bone in your body, electric. I said, "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." And the first thing you know, I was setting down on the ground. I don't know.

L-69 I believe that if that gift hadn't been foreordained, that'd been the end of your Brother Branham right there. But God had something else to do. He had to grind that heart out and let Him know, let me know that He's the One Who rules and reigns.

I went home. I couldn't stand it, couldn't work. Went over to mama's, and mama said, "Honey, come in. Let me--let me make you quiet."

I said, "I'm going home." And I went home. It was kinda cool weather. I took the mail out of the box and went around. I was trying to batch. We didn't have much in our house. I had an old cot setting back there.

But she'd lived there with me. We'd been together; that'd been our--our home. And it... No matter how little it was, it belonged to her and I. And it was us. The whole thing wouldn't have been three dollars worth of furniture. But it belonged to her and I. It was as worth as much as any of the good homes there is in the world, 'cause it was ours.

And I went back there in the kitchen, cold frost coming up through the floor. And I never will forget, I opened up the mail. The first mail I opened up, it said on there, "Miss Sharon Rose Branham." It was her little Christmas saving. The banker knew that she'd never draw it, so... Dollar and eighty cents. He sent it to me. Oh, I just couldn't stand it. I broke down and started crying. It was getting towards night. I knelt down on the floor. And I started crying and praying. And I... Oh, what a hour.. I couldn't hardly stand it.

L-70 I went to sleep laying there. I dreamed. I thought I was out West. And when I was out West, I was walking down through the prairie, and I was whistling that song:

The wheel on the wagon is broken,
Sign on the ranch, "For Sale."

I was whistling like that, and I seen an old prairie schooner and a wheel broke down. And standing there by that schooner, stood the most beautiful blond-headed girl with her pretty blue eyes shining, dressed in white. And I had my hat on... my hat. And I passed by, and I said, "Howdy do, miss," and put my hat back like that.

And she said, "Hello, dad."

And I looked around, and I said, "Dad?"

She said, "Sure."

I said, "Well, young lady, I beg your pardon." I said, "I--I... You're as old as I am. How could I be your daddy?"
She said, "Daddy, don't you know me?"
And I said, "No, ma'am. I'm afraid I don't."
She said, "You just don't know where you are, daddy."
And I said, "Well, I... What do you mean?"
She said, "Where's Billy Paul?" That's her little brother.
And I said, "I--I... What is this?"
She said, "Daddy, on earth, I was your little Sharon."
I said, "Sharon? My baby?"
She said, "Yes, daddy." Said, "Remember, we're immortal here. When we come here, we're not little babies no more. We're all one age."
And I said, "Oh, honey. Are you Sharon?" She said... I said, "Where's mother?"
Said, "She's up at your--the new home."
I said, "A home?"
Said, "Yeah."
I said, "Well, honey, something wrong here." I said, "Branhams never had homes. We're more like the vagabond people." I said that, "We--we don't have no home."
She said, "But, daddy, you got one up here."
I looked around over to my right, and there was a great big beautiful home. And there was lights shining up all around.
She said, "Mother's waiting for you. I'm going to wait here for Billy."
I said, "All right, honey." I took out running as hard as I could, my hat in my hand. I run right up to the step. When I got there, Hope would usually meet me coming out with her arms out. And I went up and run up the steps just hard as I could. And I got top of the steps, here she come dressed in white, that black hair hanging down. She come running up to me, she raised out her arms. I run to her, throwed my hat down, and just knelt down by the side of her. She put her hand on my head. She said, "Bill, what are you worried about, honey?"
I said, "Hope, I can't stand it any longer." I said, "I seen... Is that Sharon Rose down there?"
She said, "Yes, Bill." She said, "What's you worried about? You worrying about me and Sharon?"
And I said, "Honey, I--I just can't stand it. I..."
She said, "Stop worrying." Said, "Don't worry, we're lots better off than you are."
And I said, "That may be so." But I said, "Hope, didn't she make a pretty woman? Aren't we proud of her?"
She said, "Sure." She said, "Aren't you tired?"
And I said, "Honey, I just been preaching and praying for the sick so long." And that's the way I know I'll go. It had to come--it hadn't come yet. I said, "I just been preaching and praying for the sick till I'm so tired I can't hardly stand up."
She said, "Won't you sit down?"
And I looked, and there was a great big Morris chair setting there. And I looked at her, and she looked back at me. Said, "I know what you're thinking."
Down here one time, I... We had them three old chairs, or two old chairs at the house. And...

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