

Go Not Out Of The House

John W. Ritenbaugh (1932-2023)
Given 20-Apr-19; Sermon #1483-PM

I am going to be giving you a sermon that I have given before so I am sure that it is quite possible that some of you have heard it.

I got the idea for this sermon from a sermon given by David Antion. Some of you may remember him, but David gave this sermon in the mid-1960s. However, I did nothing about the idea that came to mind during that sermon. It was not until 1975 when we were pastoring the Norwalk, California congregations that I began to develop it into its present form. It has gone through several alterations, mostly because of additions that I keep finding that I can add to it. I titled it, "Go Not Out of the House," which is a command that appears in the Passover instructions given in Exodus 12:22.

At the time that I heard David Antion's message, I was most impressed by the practical symbolism in that statement. Now, that thought still dominates my reason for giving this message. My thoughts in preparing and giving the sermon were first about the singular individuals who from time to time gave up and dropped out from attending church.

That came to mind as an important reason for giving the sermon back in 1975. And if any of you were around during that period of history for the Worldwide Church of God, you will probably remember that in 1975 we had just gone through a period of quite a bit of trouble within the congregations, and it was still simmering, boiling, at least a little bit, and I was concerned about people leaving the church.

But I never dreamed at that time that neither the broad departure would take place in the Worldwide Church of God, nor the wide-scale scattering that would take place in the church, nor the mounting spiritual weariness in many caused by constant contact with the major overall decline of morals on the American scene. I never dreamed that it would have that kind of impact where the Worldwide Church of God would actually disappear.

The urgent purpose of the unique command in Exodus still stands to this day, that is, its purpose. And I believe the times in the outside world are more conducive to departure now than when I first heard this subject preached in the 1960s. (Incidentally, I have not given this sermon in person since 1998, although it has been available on the Internet, I think, just about all the time that our website has existed.)

Now, the world forces its influence by being made attractive to such a major misstep in a person's life by Satan and his crew of lying henchman. We are living within a citizenry that is rapidly deteriorating from what it once was, from an unusually moral culture among the nations of the earth. And it held that high regard because there was a much higher level of belief in God in some previous years, and His moral standards held within the Ten Commandments and amplified by a citizenry that believed them, and fairly faithfully practiced them in daily life.

But regardless of what the nation does now, we are called during this period of cultural decline and we must strive to practice a level of morality considerably higher than what the entire nation does as a whole practices.

Today's sermon has its roots in biblical types and symbols. The specific type that I focus on has a principle within it important to retain and to use at all times. We must strive to live at the level that the Kingdom of God does as is required by God.

We are going to begin in I Corinthians chapter 10. We are going to read the first 11 verses in this chapter because it kind of sets the tone for the remainder of the sermon. Paul wrote to these people:

I Corinthians 10:1-11 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all of our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea [bit of symbolism there already], all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. [here is the verse that I am aiming aiming for] Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Try to listen carefully, even though I have already finished reading that. But I still want you to recall what Paul said, basically, there. Paul was explaining why, and at the same time, urging the Corinthians as to why they must believe what is written for them and apply it to their lives.

Now, I am going to give you a one-verse translation and it will be verse 11, and it was taken from the Living Bible.

I Corinthians 10:11 (TLB) All these things happened to them as examples—as object lessons to us—to warn us against doing the same things; they were written down so that we could read about them and learn from them in these last days as the world nears its end.

That translation uses the term "object lesson" in that verse; and we might hear that term used from time to time. But do you know what an object lesson is? It means (quoting my dictionary), "a convincing demonstration or example that demonstrates a principle or ideal."

Now, the type that we will look into today typifies an ideal action we absolutely *must* take if we are going to receive salvation. Paul gave us a running picture of what led to the loss of many of those people who were in Egypt and did not make it very far out of Egypt. Let us look at another place where it says something very similar to this that we have just read, in Romans the 15th chapter. The apostle Paul wrote this in that place:

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Brethren, Christianity can be very difficult and it can be wearying on the mind so that we want to give up. We never dreamed that it was going to be this hard, even if we were very serious about being a Christian.

All of us are familiar with the fact that the Bible contains very many symbols and types that contain much instruction. And most of us quickly recognize some of the common ones, such as a mountain can symbolize a nation; sheep and goats, people of various types; a pure woman is typical of the church; and shepherd can be a leader. Now, one has to be reasonably careful when studying because sometimes the symbolism (and there is a great deal of it in the Bible) is not intended by the one who inspired the Bible at that place. And because the Bible means exactly what a term normally means. So it does well for us to explore before leaping to a conclusion—a wrong conclusion.

Now, a fairly good resource for this sort of exploration is *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, that I mentioned, I believe, the last time I talked. But when I prepared this sermon originally, there was no *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, and I had to dig it all out myself.

Today we are going to be dealing with two types that are used as parts of an object lesson. The Israelites literally went through these events, but their intended instruction is also intended for us today, because God has preserved what He taught those people. Now in the future, when those people are resurrected, then they will remember what they went through and those things will become practical spiritual lessons that they lived through, when it was done just before God had it recorded for them.

What sets an object lesson apart is that it contains a lesson that is especially vivid, and at the same time, essential to moral conduct within God's way. What makes an object lesson what it is, is that the lesson is virtually acted out to its conclusion as if it was before our very eyes.

Now, besides symbols, there are also biblical types. We might say that Isaac or Joseph are types of Jesus Christ. A biblical type is a model or an impression, something bearing strong similarity to the person that they are typical of. In biblical usage it is usually a person. Got that? A person is often a type. A person, an event, or an object that foreshadows some spiritual application that usually appears in the New Testament. It may be done in the Old Testament, but it becomes an important teaching vehicle most definitely in the New Testament.

I am going to define symbols a bit more expansively. A symbol is something chosen to stand for or represent something else. Usually, but not always, there is a resemblance in quality or characteristics. A symbol is often used to typify an abstract idea. And when I tell you what a couple of symbols are, you will catch it right away. For an example: A policeman's badge symbolizes authority. We recognize that right away. A nation's flag usually symbolizes characteristics of national pride, something that represents a characteristic of the nation.

And so I think we can find that the object lesson we are going to evaluate has an immediate purpose to provide us with a measure of spiritual instruction that will be very helpful toward the Kingdom of God, if we will just follow through.

Let us go back to the original in Exodus.

Exodus 12:21-23 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. [and here is the verse] And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your house to strike you."

Exodus 12:27 "that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt

when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households." So that the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

At that time, they got the point and it was meaningful to them.

Now, we are right at the beginning of this subject. So what are the lessons that are there for us? Here we are, living several thousand years later, and God has not said to us, "Go not out of the house." Oh yes, He has! It is written and you read it as I was reading it. He said, "Do not go out of the house." That still has application now, many thousands of years later, the same that it had here to these people at the time. What did that do? It saved their lives because they did not leave the house.

The lesson for us is along the same lines and it is for the same purpose. The only difference is we do not literally go out of a literal house, but we do go have the opportunity to take our liberty, you might say, to go out of the house *spiritually*.

What lessons are there for us here? What does it mean? What about the door of the house? Now, it is interesting to note a couple of things here before going on to other verses. In verse 23, there is more emphasis in that verse on the blood and the door than on the house, which this sermon focuses on. Another thing. The term "pass over the house" does not appear until verse 27. But they are all connected as part of the story of the same purpose that was being worked out.

The door in this context represents the entire house. Now, this is not too unusual because we use the term door in much the same way as God through Moses did. Here we say that such and such a person lives two doors away, do we not? We say two doors away, but we mean two houses away. But we say door, two doors away. Or we say that a person sells a product from door to door. You begin to see that these two terms begin to join with each other to accomplish the same thing. God is giving it to him full bore. The idea (I know that you understand this) here is that if the death angel cannot get past the door, he cannot get at the people within the house to harm them.

Now, there are, you probably do not understand this, but I am going to teach you something here. There are Jewish scholars who insist that originally the

Passover lamb was also slain right in the door. Think about that. If you saw the movie about "The Ten Commandments," they did not kill the lamb right in the door there. They just killed it somewhere else and then when it was convenient, they splashed the blood on the lintel, the doorposts, and so forth.

But archaeologists have even found ancient art that show that very thing being done. The lamb in Egypt being killed in the door and its blood in those pictures is not caught in a basin. They kill the thing and the blood runs right down into the threshold. In those days, they did not have paving, they might have had some stone walkways that went through the door and into the house, but most of the houses were not that way. They just had a dirt path leading up to the door. And what happens when you have a dirt path leading up to the door, it becomes a little alley or little place where the blood can collect there and it can also pool there as well.

I am giving you something here that is speculative, but I am also giving you something that may have some truth to it as well; and it is very possible that some of the Israelites actually did that. They killed the lamb right in the doorway. Now, what would that accomplish? The blood would pool into the depression, right where the doorway was. And then what happens? You have blood on the ground, you have blood on the doorposts, you have blood on the lintel, and therefore there was blood surrounding, making sure the demon cannot get inside the house. So there is a possibility that some of the people did that very thing and nowhere in the Bible does it say that they *had* to do it that way or the way we would have seen it more likely done in a movie version.

Incidentally, there is something more to add to this. The Hebrew word for basin and threshold are exactly the same word. How about that. He said catch the blood in the threshold or catch it in a basin, either way would have been correct. And not only that, when the Greek scholars translated the Old Testament into what is today called the Septuagint version of the Bible, they translated that word threshold and not basin. So there is a possibility; I am teaching you something new here. It is not something our salvation depends on. But it is a very interesting possibility and very likely that it could have been done. So if this speculation is true (and I personally think there is a

fairly strong possibility because of the spiritual picture that it gives us), so that the way into the house was completely surrounded by the blood of the lamb.

Now, for what abstract reason were they not allowed to go out? That is what God said. Do not go out the door. And we might add to this, Why not until morning? We will not spend much time on that. Go with me to Psalm 105, verses 23 through 38. I am reading a good portion of this for good reason.

Psalm 105:23-38 Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham. He increased His people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies. [God did that.] He turned their heart to hate His people [turned the Egyptians heart to hate His people], to deal craftily with His servants. And He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen. They performed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they did not rebel against His word. He turned their waters into blood, and he killed their fish.

Their land abounded with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and lice in all their territory. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He struck their vines also, and their fig trees, and splintered the trees of their territory. He spoke, and locust came, young locusts without number, and ate up all the vegetation in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He also destroyed all the firstborn of their land, the first of all their strength. He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among His tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them had fallen upon them.

Now, suppose you were an Egyptian citizen at this time. You are going to have to put yourself back into that situation where all this that I just read to you was going on. What if you were an Egyptian and not an Israelite during the period Egypt received the plagues? Well, I am going to suppose. We are going to call our Egyptian citizen, Joe Egyptian. He witnessed Egypt's devastation firsthand and those plagues were not puny, insignificant events done in a corner at all. Joe Egyptian surely must have heard of the

confrontations between Moses and Aaron and Pharaoh, and the plagues that followed immediately on the heels after a confrontation that he may have heard of. The timing led people to an obvious conclusion, that is, the timing between Moses and Aaron's visits and so forth.

Let us go back to verse 27 again.

Psalm 105:27 They performed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

I want to tie this to Exodus 9, verse 20 because of something that God said just a little bit earlier. This is the way it was put at this particular time. That is, something that he said just a little bit earlier that we read back there in Psalm 105.

Exodus 9:20 He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh [remember we are talking about Joe Egyptian here] made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses.

That tells us something, that there were people among the Egyptians who were making the connections, connecting the dots correctly between the visits of Moses and Aaron and the plagues. In other words, the Egyptians were receiving the equivalent of news broadcasts, with the help of God, giving them understanding that there was a connection going on there. These things were not being done in a corner and God was not hiding His participation in what was going on. And the connection to the Israelites being there in Egypt and the treatment they were receiving from the Egyptian people, and especially the governing body, was beginning to be made by the Egyptians themselves. God does not do things in the corner. He does not hide Himself from what is going on. He makes sure that people know that there is a connection between what is going on in the public and what is happening being occasioned by the people.

Exodus 9:20-21 He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. [When the people heard that the Moses and Aaron were visiting the Pharaoh there, it got their attention. And not only that,

the man on the street heard enough to know almost exactly what was going to happen. They took their livestock into a protected area.] But he who did not regard the word of the Lord left his servants and his livestock in the field.

And guess what happened to them? Well, their livestock died.

Now back in thought to Psalm 105, verse 27. That is the one we just transferred from. That verse can be translated in this way, "The words of His signs." The His is God. "The words of His signs." In other words, the words that He gave were delivered through Moses and Aaron to the Pharaoh and his advisors, and what happened then afterward were signs. And so the words that forecast or prophesized that this was going to occur is translated there, or can be translated, "the words of His signs."

Now, this demonstrates God's mercy even toward these rebellious Egyptian people. God warned the Egyptians, spoken by Moses and Aaron, which preceded each and every plague. The Egyptian man in the street was hearing some news reports. And so it makes one wonder whether Joe Egyptian heard in advance the final warning regarding the slaying of the firstborn of both man and beast. At any rate, the dread of Israel was on them because God's acts were in them in behalf of Israel. And if Joe Egyptian chose to leave Egypt with the Israelites, and *many* did, because they figured it was in their best interest to do so. And God allowed it, He permitted them to go out with the Israelite people. Joe may have heard then, maybe, of the lamb's blood, the doorposts, and the lintel.

God's plagues on Israel's behalf surely made one wonder openly about safety. Since they were getting broadcast, they knew that things were happening and that there was a connection. So I am sure then that Joe Egyptian, if he heard whenever the Israelites were actually released, and he connected the dots, and knew that he had made a right choice.

Now, just a bit earlier I said in reference to Exodus 12, that door was put for or represented the whole house, a person going door to door, house to house, or whatever, and that it was not necessary for the entire house to be painted with blood. So the literary device used there is a figure of speech called metonymy. That is a good word to learn, a descriptor. Grammatically, it

indicates one thing is put for another. We follow, again, the same practice in our time. It happens almost every day. You hear metonymy. Though the word is never used, you are being taught about them.

For instance, we use White House to represent the government or the president. We say White House, we know exactly what we are talking about, what the conversation is. We use Washington for the entire nation. That is a metonymy. National pastime, we might use it for baseball. The Kentucky Derby is coming up, and what do we call? Turf. People who are familiar, they understand they are talking about horse racing.

Now, metonymy is often used in the Bible in reference to the term house. In this sense, the thing containing or holding. This is going to involve the rest of the sermon. So this word metonymy is nothing to just toss off because of the word house that I am teaching here on.

So metonymy is used often in reference to house, and in this sense, the thing containing or holding, that is, the house is put for or represents the thing contained within it. Now what is contained within a family or within a house? It is a family.

The English word house has a very interesting origin. According to the book, *The Origins of English Words*, by Joseph Shipley, the word house is derived from a root which means hollow, cover, hide, or conceal. That is what a house does. A house contains what is inside of it, it covers what is inside of it, it hides or it conceals what is inside of it. What is it? A family.

Now other familiar words from the same root from which house comes from is "hell." You know what hell is. The word "whole" comes from the same root. The word "holster" that the gun is in, it hides what is in there. The word "helmet" comes from the same root. The word "hutch." Here is one: so does the word "hosiery" comes from the same root. And also the one that we are going to use most frequently or intend most frequently is the word "enclosure." What does an enclosure do? It holds what is inside of it.

You are beginning to get the pieces together. "Don't go out of the house." Do not go outside of the enclosure. Once that blood is on the door, do not go outside the enclosure. It is dangerous out there. Now, you can see in the

same basic usage is that of being a receptacle, a container for something else. House is what? It is the container of a family and its activities. Do not let your family go outside the door, is what it is saying.

Let us go to Genesis the seventh chapter and we will begin to expand upon this aspect of this very important term in the entirety of the Bible. I think you are going to be amazed at how often this inference of what the enclosure is containing within it. We will start off with something very simple and start building toward things that are more abstract. But every bit as important as at the very beginning in Exodus 12.

Genesis 7:1 Then the Lord said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation."

Now, if any of you still have any King James versions, that word household is not in the King James. It just says house. It can be translated either way. House is literally correct. But so is household or family because that is what is intended within the context. It is a metonymy. Noah was not instructed to take the building he lived in into the ark. House, household, or family can be used interchangeably and correctly grammatically, if the context permits. Let us keep expanding on this. We are going to go to II Samuel chapter 7. We will keep adding pieces to this.

II Samuel 7:1 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies. . .

II Samuel 7:4-6 [David was in his own house] But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying, "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: "Would you build a house for Me [for God, because that is what David was proposing to do] to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle."

II Samuel 7:11 "since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also, the Lord tells you that He will make you a house."

Here comes a different usage; because we begin with the dwelling place. But now house becomes an metonymy for something else when God is speaking about what He is going to do. "I will make you a house."

II Samuel 7:16 "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne will be established forever."

Now, we can see that the usage of the word house has become entirely different. It is no longer a container of a family of people. It has become something else. You know what it is? It is still a container, but it contains what? David's family, David's dynasty, David's descendants, who become rulers of the nation of Israel and Judah. I will show you the progression very clearly. God seemingly begins by talking about a structure to live in, the container in David's and then God's—David's family and then God's house. Then God says He will make a house for David. Well, he already had one. It says that in verse 1, he already had one, and it was one that was constructed of cedar, so says verse 2. Verse 16 makes God's point clear by showing that the house that God will make for David is a dynasty of kings coming from David.

Let us now add this in I Chronicles 17, beginning in verse 13. The fact that house is still being used indicates a container of some sort. But now we can see that its usage in the Bible has become an metonymy and it is not holding or containing what it began with.

I Chronicles 17:13-14 "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him as I took it from him who was before you. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever."

You can begin to see that house is becoming something awesomely glorious. We just started with a plain old material dwelling. But God says here in these verses, I will settle him in My house. And incidentally, this is one of the earliest (if not *the* earliest) indications in the entirety of the Bible that God has a house. We are not talking about a building here. What are we talking about? We are talking about a family and that His house contains His Family.

You are beginning to see the shape of this term house is becoming more and more spiritual in nature. So regarding God, His house is His Family Kingdom. It is God's dynasty.

I Chronicles 10:6 So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together.

House here means all his family and attendants that were with him at this particular battle. So the word house can be used in the sense of a structure, a household, a family, posterity, and dynasty. Remember all of this connected to the title, "Do Not Go Out of the House." They are all linked, and I am giving you the linkage so that you see this in this fullness at this time. So household, family, posterity, dynasty.

An example of this would be the title "House of Israel." What does it conclude? It includes all the Israelites, really; the House of Judah, it includes all of them. House now has expanded to where it can include ancestors, descendants, and kindred. And perhaps even retainers and officers as well because of what it said in regard to Saul.

Now, we are getting into some pretty serious stuff because we are going back to the New Testament in I Peter 4.

I Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God [Now we are talking about what? We are talking about a spiritual family. The house includes the sense of family. But the verse here used by Peter ties the term to a spiritual family]; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

So God has a house, He has a household, He has a family, and His judgment, spiritual judgment begins, that is, its point of departure, that is where His judgment begins, at that house. Do you realize the sense of that? Judgment by God begins with us, those who are already a part of His Family. And Peter identifies Christians with God's house by using the pronoun "us." Those who are disobedient are not of God's house. Very frequently, then, the single term house may be synonymous with household, family, church of God, the Israel of God. And that, incidentally, is His house. It is very simply His.

I Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Here, the metaphor shifts slightly but house is still in the picture.

I Peter 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious, but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."

We are identified in I Peter chapter 2 as living stones being built up into a spiritual house. Now, we are not just *in* the building, Peter is putting us as *part of* the building, as a living stone joined with other living stones of which the Christian is partners within the Family.

I found a very interesting comment from Adam Clarke on this verse here in I Peter 2:5. He said, "In Hebrew, with which Hebrew Peter and those he was writing to would be undoubtedly familiar, son, daughter, house, and stone all come from the same root." You know, when God does things, they eventually turn out to be amazing. We started out with a stone structure, a wooden structure, and now we are finding that even within the Hebrew language, son, daughter, house, and stone all come from the same basic root. They are all part of one thing.

Are you beginning to see my title, "Don't Go Out of the House," and how expansive God is on this thing? He keeps adding pieces to it all the time until we see an awesome structure being put together that is what? It is *living*, and

you do not want to leave something that is living, and it is godly. That is what Peter is being used here to do. To make sure that we understand that this is not your ordinary house. This, that began as an ordinary house that people were contained within, they are still contained with them, but it is not only living, it is going to live eternally, and it is all part of the same house.

I will tell you, the way He puts things together, you may have to look for all the pieces and it may take an awful lot of work and time to do something, but there is an awesome lesson here. And we do not find out till we get almost to the end of the book that this house is actually alive. He does not want you to leave that house, does He? Not on your life!

Peter adds, and he clarifies. He tells us we are *being built*. Now we begin to find out that we are part of the house, the very structure of the house. Now, Peter did this by adding this indication of a process and progression to the house so we will understand that we are dealing with a dynamic organism, not merely a man-built structure as a hangover from times past (Exodus 12).

Peter, remember, means stone. Christ is the Rock, and Christ is the chief cornerstone of this house, church, community, family, dynasty. And notice Peter also says everyone is a living stone and that they all have functions. They are a priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices and they are to show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness.

Now, normally a rock is of very little use just lying there out in the field. It is not until it is picked up and used by a builder to be integrated into what he is building that it becomes useful. We are beginning to see why God is stressing so much that this building is alive; and we are finding more and more that is becoming purposeful, that is, to God's purpose. As long as the stone is a part of the building Peter is describing, it is useful then to God's overall purpose. And if it is no longer part of the building, it is not only useless as it was before, but in the metaphor, because it was wrenched from the source of life, its connection to Christ who is the chief cornerstone, it dies a lingering death. That is rather numbing.

But it begins to become clear why I titled this, "Don't Go Out of the House." Are you beginning to see? We have to expend our time, our energy, our thoughts, our works. Everything now is being connected to this house that we are a vital living part of.

Now, we can reach a conclusion here. Since we are part of this living house, there is no such thing as an independent Christian, or an independent Christianity, any more than a single person can call himself a family, a community, or a dynasty.

Let us look at how Paul integrated this concept into his ministry in order to show some of the depth of our responsibility. We are going to go to I Corinthians 3.

I Corinthians 3:9-17 [Paul writes here] For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace [notice that you are God's building] of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work, which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

There are three things in this series of verses that are important for us to remember. We are laborers with God—God is working on the building, and we are working on the building. Do not lose that thought. When this is combined with I Peter 2:5, we find we are not only part of the building, that is, the house, but we are also working in and on the building with God. Now, I know that you probably do not get this yet, but you will eventually, because

this shows the dignity of our Christian responsibility. How many people have God as a coworker?

A second thing to remember. Husbandry is used within that, or field, which once again brings in the element of life. Remember, this is a living building. This can be translated, "You are God's farm." The Williams and Knox translation says, "You belong to God as His field to be tilled." And thus, here is a conclusion that we can reach and it is an honest and correct conclusion: We are not only working on the building, but at the same time being worked upon in a living organism with God as our coworker.

A third factor within that group of verses that Paul wrote there. He says, we are building this spiritual house in this metaphor Paul concentrates on. There is only one foundation upon which this building may be built. This is basic and there better be no misconceptions regarding this. We cannot base Christianity and its salvation on good works, humanism, or science. Christianity begins by passing through the door, surrounded by the blood. It continues on without ever losing sight of that fact. But once the foundation is laid of the building that we are a part of, and we are working on, one must be very careful, that is what Paul is saying there, how one builds. Though there is only one foundation, the superstructure where we build is capable of endless variety. And thus the warning: be careful, do not fall short through sin because we are God's sanctuary. Do not build of materials that cost you nothing, make the sacrifices that builds.

Now we are going to deviate just a little bit because the metaphor changes from a house to a temple. It is still a structure. It is still a container of what is within it. The temple comes from a Greek root which means "to dwell." Who dwells? God does, in a temple. Now, the Temple was seen in the Old Testament as God's dwelling place. It was not a place of assembly for public prayer and reading of God's Word. That is what the synagogues were for. The Temple served, in one sense, only one aspect of His way of life. This becomes very important. The Temple in Jerusalem, the Temple that was the Tabernacle before that was ever built, the Temple was the place of sacrifice. We are getting down to serious stuff here.

We are not only in the building, we are working on the building, we are being worked on while the building is being built. But during the

progression, we become part within or on, we become part of a temple. That is where God dwells and the Temple served one purpose. It was a place of sacrifice. And that is one reason why we are called "living sacrifices," because we are part of that structure.

Now consider the sacrifice Jesus made, first becoming a human and then sacrificing His entire life. That is what Peter and Paul teach. The New Testament church is to do what as? As God's dwelling; He dwells within us. You see how this is all coming together slowly but surely. You do not want to do something wrong with this temple that we are a part of. Let us go to Ephesians the second chapter.

Ephesians 2:19-22 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God [that is pretty clear, the Family of God], having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone [we keep getting elevated, and now we are part of the very temple], in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

In verse 19 again. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, . . ." It is that word stranger, because he is going to show here how close the relationship is—we are with God as a part of this temple that God lives in. A stranger is defined in Greek as a guest in a private family. We are not guests, but we are members of the Family. And then the metaphor once again shifts to a building, a temple, though, rather than a house. Here we see that Christ is not only the foundation, but also we find that He is the cornerstone of that structure.

The verbs referring to the nouns building and foundation, show that once we become Christians, we are placed on a firm foundation and then are being built, growing, constantly being added to and fitted into a temple housing God. That is where God lives, in the Temple. Now, you might recall that in John 14 it states, We, the Father and Son, will come (Jesus said this just

before His crucifixion), and make our abode in you. That is, that the actual building is an ongoing process in progress. And how long has it been going on? Almost 6,000 years now.

So we are not only the house, we are working in and on the house, we are being worked on to make us fit better. Temple, more specifically here in Ephesians, means the inner sanctuary. Listen to this. We are not just part of the building, *we are the inner sanctuary!* The church, and the purpose of all this ongoing work, is that the house might be a place for God to live in and work by the Spirit.

Paul adds another thought to this because this also has a political aspect to it, if I can put it that way. We are citizens of that Family, citizens of God's nation, and citizenship indicates a political entity. This house or building or temple or family is also a community, a kingdom requiring citizenship, and our citizenship, according to Philippians 3, is in heaven. Of course, that is where Paul says this, and we are also called in another place, fellow citizens with the saints.

Now let us go to John the 10th chapter, verse 1 because the metaphor shifts. I chose this series of verses because I wanted you to see how flexible this concept is. Remember, I said at the beginning, the word means an enclosure. House means an enclosure. Now we see something here in which the enclosure is actually pretty open. But Jesus taught it.

John 10:1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

John 10:7-10 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved [You see, we are getting all the old pieces of the door, even back from Exodus 12. He is the door.], and will go in and out and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

The metaphor shifts here to a different kind of structure, but we are still dealing with an enclosed structure with a door. Christ is the door to the sheep and the enclosed structure is the sheepfold or the corral. And usually, whether it is a corral or a sheepfold, there is only one door and that is the way it was with most Israelites. The same things keep popping up in order that we might be taught from different angles.

Customarily in Israel, a sheepfold had only one entrance. The sheep were led into the pen for protection at night from thieves and beasts, and a robber would not have the right access through the one door, so if one got there some other way, that guy was up to no good. He was not following lawful methods. So a thief implies subtly, silence, secrecy, and trickery. A robber equals someone who is violent and plundering. Now, those include pastors who promote their own interests and their ambitions. However, in verse 2, He identifies those pastors who became ministers in agreement and submissive to Him.

Let us go to I Corinthians 12. I know I am doing this in somewhat of a scattered way, but I just want you to see how this structure idea was carried through the entire Bible. And though the metaphor may change from time to time, we are still dealing with the same spiritual principles—you do not want to go out of the house. Here, the metaphor changes again. This time it is the human body, and our body is an enclosure and it contains us as a singular individual. But on the other hand, all of these people together make up the church; it is many people but they are all in one enclosure. And what is that one enclosure? It is the church.

I Corinthians 12:12-13 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves were free—and have all been made to drink of that one Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:24-25 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body [the enclosure], having given greater

honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another

I am only going to give you one more here, but it goes on and on and it just forms a very complete picture. Let us go back to the book of Ephesians again.

Ephesians 1:21-23 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Now, we are coming to Jesus Christ's own body as being the enclosure. It is the house. It is not a building like a temple, but it is the body of Jesus Christ that encloses us, in this metaphor that the apostle Paul uses. In this case, the body has a head. Now, the church is not merely an institution but a living organism that functions only by reason of its vital relationship with its Head. Christ is the head, He is the brains. He does the thinking, He does the directing. Paul pictures the risen Christ as being Ruler of the universe. And that powerful Being is shown as a gift to the church, which is His fullness.

Do you get that? Christ is a gift to the church and the church is His fullness! That is what he is describing here in this section. We are, each one of us, individual parts of the Body of Jesus Christ. And Christ views Himself as not being all there, not being whole, not being complete until He reaches the place that the church is full. You understand what I am getting at? All of the parts are together.

So fullness indicates the Body. The combined collection of the members is the complement of the head, Christ. They go together, body and head are incorporated. The body is the completion of His power and glory. The church is not just a people ruled by Him, but a society in living and vital connection to Him. This is, to me, the most touching of all the aspects of this metaphor regarding the portions of the body contained within the enclosure. Because, brethren, I personally believe that this is the church's highest honor, to be made part of the body of Jesus Christ.

It is interesting, because when one reads this and carefully goes through it, it becomes evident that Jesus Christ considers Himself in a certain way as not being complete, as being imperfect without its fullness. We are the fullness of the Body, and together, the Head and the Body become a whole. It is as though each is dependent on the other.

The church is not only filled by Christ with His own life, but also with the gifts and the blessings that He bestows in order for it to carry out its functions. There is given to the church for the church's benefit a Head who is also Head over all things, so that the church has authority and power to overcome all opposition to our function because our Head is Lord of all.