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Appendix A: Outlines of Selected Sermons

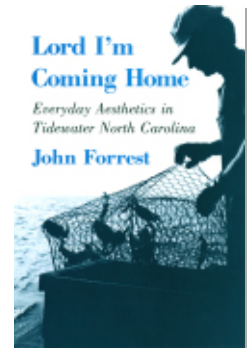
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Appendix A

Outlines of Selected Sermons

Regular Sermon #1: “God of Adequacy”

Text: John 6:5–13 Miracle of the loaves and fishes.

God is a God of adequacy, he makes inadequate men adequate.

God’s eye is on the sparrow.

People try to limit God, but he cannot be limited.

In a play about Truman a preacher wrote to Truman protesting his profanity. The preacher was going to pray that his language improved. Truman replied that he was sure that God had better things to think about. But God cares about everything. God is like a computer. He made the world by commands. When he made the world it was perfect. But humans are inadequate. They sinned and made the world imperfect.

Some people try to put God in a cage. They think that he lives in the church building only. They think that when they leave the building they leave God behind. But God does not dwell in a temple made with human hands.

The preacher’s former church wanted to brick the exterior. Cost \$4,000. They began fund raising. Soon the bricks arrived and work started. Eventually they had a note-burning ceremony. They thought they were inadequate but they achieved their goal.

The preacher was often in financial difficulties as a seminary student. One day went to school with a dime in his pocket. A professor called him into his office and asked about his finances, and asked him how he was going to eat. He replied “I don’t know.” Professor gave him \$50.

Alcoholics say they can quit any time. But they need help. When they admit that they need help they have taken the first step. Becoming a Christian works the same way.

There was once a little girl who would always play the same discordant tune with two fingers on the piano. Once at a party her parents missed her. Found her playing the discordant tune and people laughing. A man came along and told them not to laugh. He sat down with her and created a beautiful symphony. God makes the inadequate, adequate.

Regular Sermon #2: "The Glory of Being Ordinary"

Text: John 1:35-42 Andrew calls Simon to meet Jesus

Andrew is usually thought of as Peter's brother. But Andrew was a charter member of the church. We are often thought of in relation to others. We are so and so's brother, sister, or husband.

There is a glory to being ordinary.

Jesus had an inner circle: Peter, James, and John. They were present on special occasions such as the transfiguration. No one knows why there was an inner circle, but Andrew, who was a charter member of the church, was not part of it. He could have caused trouble in the early church. He could have gone back to fishing. He did not.

We should realize the glory of being ordinary. In a football team one man crosses the goal line for a touchdown and gets the glory. But the tackles and linemen have done their jobs.

Some people think that they cannot do anything special, they are ordinary. Each person can contribute something. There are no small or big Christians. All are the same. Small Christians are those who make themselves that way.

An old preacher in London was told that he had to step down in favor of a younger man. He went to the graveyard and sat on a tombstone. A young man passed by and started talking to him. The young man became a great missionary because of the conversation.

Another young man was wandering the streets of London on a stormy night a hundred years ago. He stopped in a church because of the rain. A layman from the congregation was running the service because the preacher could not make it. That young man gave his life to Jesus that day. He set England alight with his preaching. An ordinary man converted him.

Jimmy Carter, a ginger-haired, freckle-faced boy with buck teeth, was converted by an ordinary preacher.

Andrew was special in many ways. He was the first missionary. He brought his brother to Jesus. You in the church are special, you are not ordinary.

In 1937 Alabama went to the Rose Bowl on a last-minute conver-

sion. An unknown boy came on the field and kicked the conversion. He has never been heard of since.

Some of the preacher's class in seminary are in charge of big churches. He is just ordinary.

Regular Sermon #3: "Nobodies"

Text: 1 Kings 14:1-7 Jeroboam's wife disguises herself

Even the unknown are known to God.

The fifty churches in the Southern Baptist Convention who contribute most are printed in the *Biblical Recorder*. Top this year was the First Baptist in Hendersonville. Contributions amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars. But the Convention cannot function without the contributions of the small churches.

The preacher once attended a revival where only one small boy came forward. One man said, "The revival was a failure." But the boy became a great preacher.

A woman who wrote biographies of great people was asked who was the greatest person she had met. She replied, "The nobodies."

Once the preacher was in care of a church that had a paraplegic in the congregation. He was the kind of man who did not need cheering up: he cheered you up. When President Kennedy was shot he was at this man's cabin. He said to the preacher, "Who will remember us when we die." The preacher replied, "nobody." The paraplegic died shortly after. Hundreds attended his funeral.

How great we are in the world is measured by the length of our obituary. Most of us will get a one-inch column in the local paper.

God knows what we have done in life. When we come to the bar of the judgment seat he will know what we did and did not do in life. We are not nobodies to God.

It is impossible to predict what people will do in life. Our young people may become famous doctors or lawyers.

Regular Sermon #4: "Bearing Your Burdens."

Text: 1 Kings 17 Elijah at the Brook

God sent Elijah to the brook. He drank from the brook and was fed by ravens. Eventually the brook dried up. Elijah may have thought that he was forsaken by God.

When Jesus was on the cross he said, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Sometimes we think we are forsaken by God. Many people think that troubles are punishments sent by God. God does not bring troubles to punish us, but to shake us out of complacency.

There is nothing that we can do to change God's love. There is not one iota, not one jot or tittle that he does not notice.

God's eye is on the sparrow. How much more important to Him are we than the sparrow. God's love is unchanging, there is nothing that we can do to make Him love us more or less.

A man left prison to attend his father's funeral. His father had disinherited him. He was dejected and wept. He went to a preacher. Preacher said, "God never disowns you."

During Elijah's stay at the brook there was famine in Israel. There had been a drought for three years, just like the drought we are experiencing in Marsh County. When the brook dries up some people do not have the initiative to go and seek water.

We need water. One of our members is sick right now. The doctor said he was dehydrated and had to go to hospital.

When the preacher was in the seminary there were times when he did not have enough food. Unknown people supplied funds for him to get by on.

Elijah had a vision in the temple. He could not see king Ahab.

Sometimes we are blinded and cannot see God.

When the brook dried up God told Elijah to leave. Told him to go to a woman who had just enough meal and oil to make one cake for herself and her son. After that was gone she was going to lay down and die. Elijah said, "Make me a cake first." She made the cake, and her meal and oil did not dry up throughout the famine.

Elijah challenged the priests of Baal. He even poured water on his wood pile to make things difficult. He lit a fire and burnt his sacrifice.

Sometimes our burdens are heavy. Jesus prayed that if there was any other way besides the cross that he might take it. Jesus asks us to take up our burden daily. Sometimes it is light.

A man had a grandfather clock that had run for three generations. The man said to the clock, "You have worked faithfully for three generations. I am going to take off your weights." He took the weights off and said to the clock, "Your burden is lifted." The clock said, "Put the weights back, they make me go."

Regular Sermon #5: "Hang In There"

Text: John 1:12 Children of God

Preacher once saw a calendar in an office with a picture of a cat on it hanging upside down by its claws on a tree limb. The caption was "Hang in there, baby!"

We all have a hand to hang in there with. The hand has four fingers:

First finger—New chance

There was a theologian in the Jewish church called Nicodemus who was very knowledgeable in the law. He asked Jesus how he could be saved. Jesus said that he must be born again. When Jimmy Carter was campaigning for the White House a lot was made of the fact that he was born again.

Second finger—New status

Jesus was in Samaria and went to the well to get a drink. A woman came down and he asked her to draw water for him. She said, “Why do you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, such a thing.” Jesus said, “These differences no longer matter.”

Third finger—New power

In old Israel there was only one man who could talk to God. This was the High Priest, and once a year he entered the Holy of Holies to talk to God. One man talked for all of Israel. Our God is not like that. When Jesus died on the cross the veil of the temple was rent apart. Our God is a personal God.

Fourth finger—New security

When the preacher was a boy in Tennessee he very seldom made trips to the big town. They only went on special occasions, such as to get a haircut. At the barber shop men would tell him about his father, and what a good man he was. His father died the day before he was born. But he has a new father. God is his father. Jesus gave us the power to be sons of God. Having a father means security.

The preacher had a professor who was very thin. When he was a small boy he wanted to cross a railway bridge over a river. The ties were widely spaced and he could see the river between them. He was afraid to cross because he thought he would fall between the ties. His father took his hand and he felt secure to cross.

We are always secure if our father takes our hand.

We do not take God's hand, he takes ours. The preacher takes his daughter's hand when they walk near traffic. If she held him she could let go at any time and run into danger. If he holds her she is always safe.

Our hand to hang in with has a thumb. The thumb allows us to grip firmly. A man's thumb can be severed and sewn back on. Monkeys do not have thumbs. They cannot grip firmly. The thumb is faith. With this hand we do not “hang in,” we are secure.

Regular Sermon #6: “The Plumbline Has Fallen”

Text: Amos 7:7–9, 8:1–3 Amos and the plumbline

God showed Amos a plumbline and said, "What do you see, Amos?" Amos said, "A plumbline." God said, "I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more."

Sometimes a prophet's words are too harsh. A young preacher was starting a new job, and he called to see the senior deacon to ask if he had any advice on sermons. The deacon said that a lot of local politicians came to church so it would be unwise to talk about politics. There were several distilleries in town and a lot of the workers came to church, so he shouldn't discuss alcohol. The main cash crop of the area was tobacco, so he should refrain from comments on cigarettes and smoking. Finally the young preacher asked what it would be safe to preach on. The senior deacon said that the threat of Chinese Communists would be safe, since there were none of them in town.

Many seats are empty in church these days because the plumbline has fallen. The words are too harsh for many people to listen to.

Amos was an unlettered shepherd and a tender of sycamore trees. The trees have to be pruned for the fruit to grow. It is tasteless but a staple food. Despite being unlettered he went to Bethel to prophesy before the great theologians there. He condemned all the countries around Israel. He condemned Damascus, and the people praised him. He condemned Gaza, Moab, and Tyre, and the people praised him. Then he said, "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn the punishment away thereof." Everyone cursed him for speaking harshly of Israel. They told him to go preach for bread in Judah. Some prophets preached for money and they mistook him for one of them. He said that he did not preach for money but because God had sent him.

Daniel Webster did not go to church in Washington D.C. but in New England. He said that in Washington they preach to Webster the senator, but in New England they preach to Webster the sinner.

Today we have situational ethics. Morality is dependent on the situation. God laid down commandments, but they are too hard to bear. More and more people indulge in extramarital sex, and pornography is rampant. The courts can no longer define obscenity.

Amos accused the women of Israel of decadence. He called them "kine of Bashan." They sat on ivory couches and oppressed the poor. Civilizations do not fall from outside pressure but from internal corruption. Amos accused Israel of corruption. He predicted the destruction of the temple at Bethel. He said that jackals would howl there. If you go to Bethel today you will find the temple in ruins. Archaeologists pick over the remains. We have internal corruption in the U.S. A

senator has been convicted of fraud, but he can still serve in government. There should be equality in the law.

God also showed Amos a basket of summer fruit. It was very ripe. God said, "The end is come upon my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more." It is time for the fruit to be picked.

God is going to put down a plumbline and see if your wall is straight. If it is crooked he will tear it down.

Kraft, the founder of Kraft cheese products, was a good Christian. He was once asked to go to Alcatraz to take part in a rehabilitation program. As he walked through a door a man said, "You're clean." He had used an X-ray machine to check for weapons. Later Kraft said, "How much more will God see in you at the judgment."

Regular Sermon #7: "The Devil and His Works"

Texts: Job 1:6–8, 2 Corinthians 2:10–11, 1 Peter 2:8 Satan's works

God made hell for the devil and his angels. Satan was an angel who fell from heaven. God does not put men in hell, men put men in hell.

The devil is walking in the world, the world is his province.

This dominion will be taken away from him eventually. The devil knows that ultimately he will be destroyed, and quakes in fear.

The devil tricks you and makes sin attractive. The devil makes people follow false religions. He made nine hundred people take poison in Jonestown, Guyana. He made people kill their children in Guyana.

He makes people follow the Rev. Moon. Moon's followers are brain-washed and have to be deprogrammed.

The devil tells you that you know enough about the Bible. He will tell you not to attend January Bible study classes because you already know enough. The preacher once quoted the Bible to a friend when he was a seminary student. The friend said that he must really know the Bible. Preacher replied that he hardly knew anything. We all know the famous quotations, but we do not know everything.

The devil will tell you not to give to the building fund. He will tell you that the church has enough money. He will tell you not to give to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

The devil persuades you not to come to church. Some people are at home today nursing hangovers. If it were advertised in the papers that the church had to be closed there would be an outcry. The outcry would come from the people who never come to church.

The devil is in control.

Special Sermon: Thanksgiving

The Thanksgiving story is well-known. In the winter of 1623 the new colony had very little food. They expected a supply ship any day. When a ship arrived it carried twenty-three more pilgrims and no supplies. These pilgrims came to have religious freedom.

In the first winter Governor Bradford went to the seed store and gave each member of the community five grains of corn per meal.

That winter there were more crosses in the cemetery than people in the community. In the spring the game returned, fish returned, and they planted crops. They had help in survival from the Indians. Next fall they had a bountiful harvest. They held a big feast to give thanks. Bradford put five grains of corn at each place. He said that each grain was a blessing.

We can count five blessings of our own:

#1 American flag

The flag stands for freedom and democracy. The right to vote is very important. Some people do not vote because they do not think that their vote is important. We may have only one vote each, but sometimes that makes a difference. Remember countries that have no free elections.

#2 Medical technology

Preacher did the rounds of the hospitals today. There is suffering there. Medical science has made great advances.

Preacher's father died of blood poisoning. At the time the doctors shook their heads because there was nothing they could do. Now the cure for blood poisoning is routine. Polio, chicken pox, and pneumonia are no longer feared.

Missionaries work in primitive villages where there are no doctors or nurses. All they have are witch doctors.

#3 Free enterprise

In America anyone can start a business. This morning the preacher's son worked on a school assignment to design a letterhead. Used "Greg's Optical Service" for the letterhead. One day this may be a reality. He can be an optician if he wishes. In Russia people are assigned jobs according to aptitude tests.

#4 The Bible

Two weeks ago the preacher was in a motel room in Raleigh. On the bedside table there was a Bible open to Isaiah 40: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God." Gideon's Bibles have a note in them saying "if you want a Bible take this one."

#5 Jesus Christ

Jesus died for our sins. He took on his burden even when the world rejected him.

These are our five blessings. Count your blessings.

Special Sermon: Christmas

Texts: Isaiah 53, Micah 5:2 Prophecy of a Messiah

Isaiah is the greatest of the prophets. He foretold the coming of Jesus.

Imagine the desert in Arizona or Death Valley. There is no water to sustain life. Yet Isaiah said that out of the desert would come a shoot. That was to be the Messiah.

The Jews do not believe that the Messiah has come. Sometimes their theologians gather to predict when the Messiah will come.

Some time ago they gathered in Jerusalem to wait for him.

Jews get involved in Christmas but they say “Merry Xmas” X means “unknown.” But the Messiah is known. He has already come.

The prophet Micah predicted that Bethlehem would be the place where the Messiah would come from. The verse “But you, O Bethlehem Ephratha, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel” is the preacher’s favorite verse in the Bible.

Bethlehem is like Tidewater. It is too small to be on the map.

Tidewater is not on most maps. The preacher had friends come to visit who called from the next town because they could not find Tidewater on the map.

Isaiah says “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.” This passage predicts the suffering of Christ.

There has never been a time when God and Jesus did not exist.

They existed before time as we know it existed. We should not say that the Son was created, but simply, “He was.”

Jesus was born of Mary. Mary went down the road and was met by an angel who told her she would bear the Son of God. She said that she was not worthy. When she was heavy with child she visited her cousin Elizabeth who was also pregnant. The child leapt for joy in Elizabeth’s womb.

The coming of John the Baptist had been foretold by Isaiah: “A voice crying in the wilderness, make straight the paths of the Lord.” John baptized Jesus in the Jordan. He said that Jesus should have baptized him.

When Jesus was born he was laid in a cattle stall. The angels chose to tell humble shepherds the good news. Shepherds were of a low caste despised by the Pharisees. The Pharisees said they should be killed.

Wise men came with gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The tradition of giving gifts has continued but now it is too commercial. Too much time is spent on material things and not enough on the central message of Christmas.

Revival Sermon #1

Texts: Exodus 14:10–13; Philippians 4:10 Revival and salvation

The preacher always wanted to be a pastor, not an evangelist or a missionary. When he was in high school he came forward and took the preacher's hand and said that he wanted to be a pastor.

It is not his purpose to go back to Tennessee and say that he has brought twenty-five people in Tidewater to Christ. The revival is for Tidewater Baptist church. It should be the purpose of everyone in church tonight to get everyone in Tidewater to the church.

Tidewater is not insignificant. People open hamburger stands on roads that have less traffic than the one that passes Tidewater Baptist church.

The preacher wants people to come to Christ. Once knew an old colonel who did not know Christ. He often went to his house and told him he wanted him to come to Christ. One day he said to his wife, "Pray for me because I'm going to save the colonel." He went to the colonel's house and asked his wife where he was. She said, "In the garden." He took her by the shoulders and looked into her eyes and said, "Stay in the house." He went to the colonel and said, "I love you." He said, "I am not here to talk trivia to you, I want to know if you love Jesus." The colonel said "Yes." The preacher asked him to confess his sins before Jesus. The bible says we must confess our sins out loud. As the colonel confessed his sins a tear fell on the preacher's sleeve.

Preacher took out a New Testament from his left jacket pocket.

He had written the names of all of the people he loved but who did not know Christ in the fly leaf. He read the names. He challenged everyone in the congregation to write three names in their Bibles.

A man in deep despair went on a world cruise. He stayed in his cabin all of the time. No one saw him except the people who brought him his meals. One night a cry echoed through the ship: "Man over-

board.” He went up on deck. All was confusion. He went down to his cabin, picked up a flashlight, and thrust his arm out of the porthole. The light fell on the man overboard.

That was not chance. It is not chance that people are born and brought up in Tidewater.

Life was hard when the West was opening up. A family in North Dakota had a son who one day felt a sharp pain in his abdomen. They took him to a pharmacist, the nearest medical aid. He said, “Keep going, the boy has appendicitis.” They traveled by wagon until they reached a doctor. By that time the appendix had ruptured, and he was several weeks in hospital. The doctor said that he would be a long time recovering and may never be strong.

While he was recovering he went into the attic of his father’s barn and found something his father had brought from the old country: an accordion. He pushed and pulled on the accordion until eventually sweet sounds came from the barn. That was Lawrence Welk. God has designs for all of us.

In 1970 Apollo 13 was spinning toward the moon. Suddenly they radioed to earth, “We are in trouble.” Earth radioed to them, “Look out of the window and find a star.” You are never lost if you fix your sight on God’s creation.

Joe Frazier has always loved the Lord. He always said it was his mother’s influence. In 1964 his great goal was the Olympic gold medal. The night before the gold medal fight he broke the thumb on his left hand. His main weapon was his left. That night he prayed using the phrase, “All things are possible through Christ.”

He asked his trainer to strap his left thumb in his palm. The trainer told him that when he used the left he would pass out with pain. He told him to do it anyway. All through the fight he kept his left by his side. His German opponent was told to stay away from Frazier’s left, so he never had to use it and won by three rounds.

Revival Sermon #2

Text: Acts 9:26–31 Paul’s preaching tour

While in the military the preacher found a circular sent to some of the soldiers. It said, “Take the lock off your preacher’s door and put bars on it. Cancel his membership at the country club. Cancel his engagements in local politics. Visit him in his cell and bring him food. Ask him, ‘Is there any word from God?’ If he does not look haggard from praying and reading the Bible, leave him. Return the next day

and ask him, 'Is there any word from God?' If he looks haggard and says 'yes' he has done what he should." Every preacher should have time to be by himself to study. He carries a briefcase loaded with books to study wherever he goes.

Jeremiah's name if it is translated from Hebrew means "God shoots." Jeremiah was born into a holy priestly family. They lived in a special priestly village just outside of Jerusalem.

One day when Jeremiah was walking God called to him and told him he was to be a prophet. Jeremiah, like all of us, began to make excuses. God asked him to look down and tell him what he saw. He said, "An almond shoot." God said, "I ordain when that grows. I send rain and fertilize it. The same is with you. I ordained that you would be a prophet while you were still in the womb."

He walked a little farther and God said, "What do you see?" Jeremiah said, "A boiling cauldron tipped over from the north." God said, "That symbolizes the nations that will invade Israel from the north. I am going to send you out to prophesy to them. Do not prepare speeches. I will tell you what to say. If you do not say what I tell you I will confound you."

Jeremiah means "God shoots." God shot Jeremiah like a bullet from a gun. We must be fired from God's pistol.

From around A.D. 100 to 300 there was a spirit of evangelism in the new Christian church. People went through the Mediterranean world preaching the gospel. Between A.D. 300 and 600 there was a spirit of missionary zeal. Churches were being set up throughout the known world. Between A.D. 700 and 900 the church almost died. It became like a flickering wick in a wind. The trouble was that Christianity had become respectable. Christians were offered good responsible jobs, and conflicts grew up between their jobs and the church. They had to put so much time into their jobs that they could not attend church. The church almost died. The same thing is happening today.

During World War II three airmen crashed into the Pacific. They inflated their liferaft and took stock. The pilot took out his map and said that they were ten miles from an island, but it was infected with headhunters. They had no other choice but to head for the island. When they arrived they pulled their boat ashore and covered it with sand and leaves. They went into the jungle until they came to a cliff. The first man climbed the cliff, looked around, and jumped for joy. The captain yelled for him to keep a low profile. The second man climbed up and he too stood up fearlessly. By this time the captain was

quaking in his boots, so he climbed up as quickly as possible. He looked around and saw a church. Then he knew that he was safe. We always know that we are safe when we see a church.

A few years ago there was a series of robberies in Ann Arbor, Michigan. All the robberies took place within four blocks. No money, jewelry, or valuables were stolen. The only things that were stolen were bread, milk, and canned goods. The robberies all took place when people were out to the movies or a show. The police staked out the area, and one night saw a shadowy figure leave a house. They followed the figure to the back door of a church where he entered and disappeared. They heard a noise in the steeple so they went up. There was a Chinese boy sitting in the corner surrounded by empty tins, bread wrappers, and milk cartons. He had come to this country but was lost and didn't know what to do. He was in the church but was lost. Many of us are in the church but lost.