

The First Baptist Church



Dr. Vance H. Havner
1901-1986

Dr. Vance Havner was a native of the Jugtown Community, located in the foothills of Western North Carolina. A major summer event in Jugtown was the annual revival at his old Corinth Church, which he fondly remembered. It was not at one of these services, however, but alone in the woods as a boy, that he came to the Lord. Prior to his twelfth birthday, he began his preaching career, which spanned over 70 years of faithful service. He stated that he never knew the day that he wasn't called to preach.

His educational pursuits began at Hog Hill, Jugtown's educational institution at that time. Later, he attended South Fork Institution, Boiling Springs High School (now Gardner-Webb College), Catawba College, Wake Forest University, and Moody Bible Institute.

Dr. Havner's first pastorate was at the Salem Baptist Church in Weeksville, N.C. Later, while pastor of the First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., he made the decision to become a full-time traveling evangelist. It was while Dr. Havner was pastor of Salem Baptist Church that his first book *By The Still Waters*, was published. His list of published books now numbers 38, the last of which entitled *Playing Marbles With Diamonds*, was released in January, 1986. In addition to books, many of Dr. Havner's writings have appeared in Christian periodicals. These writings have appeared in Christian periodicals. These writings have brought encouragement, guidance, and blessing to thousands of readers.

One of Dr. Havner's earliest meetings was at Florida Bible Institute, where he met a "very gracious lady", Sara Allred of Greensboro. They were married in December, 1940, Mrs. Havner accompanied him on many of his trips and was his constant helpmate until she developed a serious illness in the spring of 1973 and died in September of that year.

Dr. Havner's ministry took him throughout the U.S., preaching to many denominations, ranging from the smallest group to the largest assembly. He was a well-known conference speaker, and was active in the Southern Baptist Convention, having spoken a number of times at their state and national meetings. In 1973, he was selected "Preacher of the Year" by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He constantly proclaimed the Word of God through his pulpit ministry, and led untold thousands to a decision for Christ and to a deeper spiritual dedication.

A SERVICE OF CELEBRATION UPON THE
HOME - GOING OF DR. VANCE H. HAVNER

Presiding and opening remarks	Dr. T. W. Wilson Billy Graham Association
Special music	Miss Risa Poniros, Soloist Mr. David Cooper, Organist
Prayer and remarks	Dr. Alton McEachern, Pastor First Baptist Church
Scripture and remarks	Mr. Robertson McQuilkin, Pres. Columbia Bible College
Congregational hymn	"To God Be The Glory"
Message	Dr. Billy Graham
Special music	Miss Risa Poniros Mr. David Cooper
Closing remarks and prayer	Dr. T. W. Wilson
.....	
Grave-side service at New Garden Cementary	Dr. Alton McEachern Dr. Robertson McQuilkin
.....	

PRAISE-TESTIMONY SERVICE:

A special Praise-Testimony service will be held this evening at 7:00 p.m. at Westover Presbyterian Church. The public is invited. There will be an opportunity for many to share and express God's faithfulness in the life and ministry of Dr. Vance H. Havner.

.....

Due to Dr. Havner's special interest in the preparation of young people for Christian Service, we feel it most appropriate that memorial gifts be given to the Vance Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 1048, Greensboro, North Carolina 27402.

LET ME GET HOME BEFORE DARK

*It's sundown, Lord.
The shadows of my life stretch back
into the dimness of the
years long spent.
I fear not death, for the grim foe betrays
himself at last,
thrusting me forever into life:
Life with you, unsoiled and free.
But I do fear.
I fear that dark spectre
may come too soon -
or do I mean, too late?
That I should end before I finish or
finish, but not well.
That I should stain your honor,
shame your name,
grieve your loving heart.
Few, they tell me, finish well . . .
Lord, let me get home before dark.
The darkness of a spirit
grown mean and small, fruit shriveled
on the vine,
bitter to the taste of my companions,
burden to be borne by those
brave few who love me still.
No, Lord. Let the fruit grow
lush and sweet,
A joy to all who taste;
Spirit-sign of God at work,
stronger, fuller, brighter at the end.
Lord let me get home before dark.*

*The darkness of tattered gifts,
rust-locked, half-spent or ill-spent,
A life that once was used of God
now set aside.
Grief for glories gone or
Fretting for a task God never gave.
Mourning in the hollow chambers of memory,
Gazing on the faded banners of
victories long gone.
Cannot I run well unto the end?
Lord, let me get home before dark.
The outer me decays -
I do not fret or ask reprieve.
The ebbing strength but weans me
from mother earth
and grows me up for heaven.
I do not cling to shadows cast by immortality.
I do not patch the scaffold lent
to build the real, eternal me.
I do not clutch about me my cocoon,
vainly struggling to hold hostage
A free spirit pressing to be born.
But will I reach the gate
in lingering pain, body distorted,
grotesque?
Or will it be a mind
wandering untethered among
light phantasies or
grim terrors?
Of your grace, Father, I humbly ask . . .
Let me get home before dark.*

— Robertson McQuilkin
1981

***Inspired by a message from Dr. Havner,
in which he talked about getting home before dark.***