

Audio Sermon: One Thing You Lack

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the need for a total commitment to God, leaving behind all attachments and possessions, in order to enter the kingdom of God and experience eternal life.

Duration: 1:24:25

Scripture: Matthew 16:24-26, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 9:23, Luke 14:33, Philippians 3:7-8

Topics: "Total Surrender", "Eternal Life"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the radical call to total surrender to God, challenging listeners to go beyond mere religious practices and partial commitments. It highlights the need to give up everything that possesses us, including secret attachments, in order to enter into eternal life and experience the powers of the age to come. The speaker urges a deep, irrevocable, and final commitment to God, acknowledging the difficulty and opposition such a decision may bring, but emphasizing the transformative impact it has on one's life and relationships.

Transcript

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For more messages, log on to our website, www.SermonIndex.com. Now here's today's program. We love you, Lord. Thank you for being an extraordinary God, for the privilege that is ours to be sons and daughters of the Most High.

Call to your service. This is too much for us, Lord. We cannot leave hold of it.

Thank you, Lord, for this life, for this high way. May we enter it tonight, Lord God, with a bang. May there be such a response from your people, such a totality, such a letting go of every restraint, such a coming in to the deep and the authentic place that shall change everything, all of the balance of our days.

My God, may you lift your trump to your lips tonight and give such a blast by the breath of your life that it shall waken the very dead, that it shall stir those who are asleep to great wakefulness. My God, how we want to hear your voice in your urgency for this hour. Come, my God, speak, Lord, speak, for your servants are hearing.

Thank you, Lord. We want to be changed, radicalized. Come and give us that word, Lord, that call, and we'll thank you and praise you.

Have your precious way. You'll be all praise and glory, honor and acknowledgment, now and forever. Amen.

Bless the Lord. Testing, one, two, three, four, five, six, good. My text tonight is Mark, the 10th chapter.

It's an episode that is described in three Gospels, familiar to us all, which we think is not appropriate to us all. The story or the account of the rich young ruler from verse 17 of Mark 10, and as he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and began asking him, good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.

And he said to him, teacher, I've kept all these things from my youth up. And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, one thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give it to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven and come, follow me.

But at these words his face fell and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus looking around said to his disciples, how hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at his words, but Jesus answered again and said to them, children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich young man, for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And they were even more astonished and said to him, then who can be saved? Looking upon them, Jesus said, with men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God. Peter began to say to him, behold, we have left everything and followed you.

Jesus said, truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mothers or father or children or farms for my sake and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred times as much more in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions and in the world to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last and the last first. Amen.

I think it's altogether significant that this Jewish man, who is evidently religious and ethical, outstanding in the quality of his life, who has kept the commandments from his youth up, doesn't just come in a kind of passive or casual way to Jesus, it says that he ran, that he knelt. It's quite respectful, almost spiritual, and yet that's exactly the point, that you can have all these things going for you and yet miss it. The entry to the kingdom is the entry to life.

A lot of us are in a much lesser place because we have not understood the totality, the radical demand, the utterness of the whole commitment to God that constitutes entry into the kingdom and also entry into life. There are more of us in this room tonight and certainly in Christendom who have sadly and mournfully turned away than we ourselves realize, and yet we're physically here. And even complimenting ourselves about the quality of our commitment and our discipleship.

I'll tell you, I really need a Holy Ghost assist tonight. If God be not with me, if God does not make these words penetrating, this will be a colossal flop. And I'm not concerned for that in terms of reputation sake or

anything like that, I'm concerned for your sake.

Because if this flops, then you are condemned the longer to remain in a condition that is something less than kingdom condition. And this is a frustration and something with which I have lived for years that continues to mount in my spirit and for which I am choked and spluttering and I cannot find words or expression. I know it in my spirit, my heart knows it.

The totality, the depth of God's call and I know in the same breath how many of us have missed it and have not understood it. Because the world has not schooled us or prepared us for such an understanding. And in all of this frustration, nothing compounds it more than our frequent use of the word commitment.

It's ironic that though we speak it, though we use it, we don't understand it. We're partial, we're inadequate. We don't know what the totality is of God's requirement for kingdom entry.

And rightly did Jesus say, with man it is impossible. I want you to know that this call is so searing, so total, so other, so beyond any capacity that we have in ourselves in terms of discipline or commitment or idealism or dedication or consecration that with man it is impossible. If you have a religious walk, by whatever name you call it or describe it, New Testament charismatic, that you have made possible by virtue of your determination, your ability, your devotion, you are not in the kingdom.

I want to tell you that the kingdom is the kingdom of heaven. And heaven is the place of eternity and eternal life. It's altogether other, it's supernatural, it's beyond us.

And many of us are therefore living beneath the kingdom reality. We're in the temporal world, albeit we're religious, we're dedicated, we have handsome vocabularies, we give generously and we do all these things, we have not yet entered into life. If we knew what the cost is, we would turn away.

They were astonished at this saying. Who then can be saved? One thing you lack, there's an expression that we have in the Jewish lexicon, that's a shot in the kishkas, that's in the solar plexus, that's right in the gut. Did you get that? One thing you lack, pow! You may have many things going for you, you may give the appearance of and even in your own thought think yourself dedicated, but one thing you lack.

I think last night as I showed the slides and saw again the faces of these precious East German saints, or the ones in Egypt living in that clamor and noise who will soon be experiencing hot persecution, to see the quality of their life, the intensity of their being for God, and then to be brought back again into the American milieu and religious environment, the contrast is quite sharp. We just don't know what totality means. This one thing you lack is totality.

This one thing you lack is the centrality of God in everything. Somehow he's there in our vocabulary, but he's not there smack dab at the very heart and center of all our being. There's a centrality of God that is the kingdom call and a totality of God and a finality in God that comprises that one thing from which many of us have mournfully and sadly turned away, though we are yet physically present.

This one thing you lack is the key to kingdom entry. I looked up in the dictionary today, totality, centrality, and finality. Totality is the quality or state of being that is total.

It's not just a momentary thing that you flirt with on occasion. It's a condition of being, a state of being, a permanence, a quality that is total, whole, full, entire, utter, without any qualification. Where do we ever see that? Where do we ever glimpse it? I'll tell you that it's embarrassing if we have to go outside of

biblical or scriptural models and find it in the world.

But can I read to you something that I hope will prick our hearts? I am quoting from none other than Muhammad Ali, the former heavyweight champion of the world. If the Lord wants to ever give me a little bonus, a little privilege, let me be used to bring that man to God. He has such a potential.

There's something about that guy, irascible though he is, egotist though he is, there's an integrity and something in that nip and whoop and woof of his soul that I'd love to see redeemed for the kingdom of God. I think one day he's going to come. May it be so.

May you pray for him. May you take him to your heart. This is a man who knows what dedication means.

We who have watched his career as a young kid coming up through golden gloves and a great splash that he made and a tremendous talent and brilliant ability that he had and his whole, at the crest of his life, he lay aside his profession because he would not give himself to the Vietnamese War. He was an objector and therefore he lost his ability to participate in sport. At the prime of his life, he gave that up because he could not give himself to what he thought was wrong.

He's a man of scruples and a kind of an integrity that is compelling and very rarely to be found in saints, let alone in men in the world. Then he came back later on and resumed his career and fought his way up to the top again and then lost it. And then at a time when men surely should have retired, he wanted one more crack because he was the kind of man who could not live the rest of his life in retirement as one who has lost.

He could only retire under one condition, as a man who retired as the champion. I think it's for that reason we don't see many great boxers and many great anythings because in this age of affluence and ease, we don't know what that kind of determination is that enables us to pursue and to win a goal. We're not fitted for hardship.

We've been soft and been indulged by the character of our own generation. So it's rare to find such a one as this. I picked up a Sport Illustrated magazine when he was preparing for this final championship fight and he was describing the regimen, the discipline required of him to train for this final fight.

A man at that time, I think already about 36, 37 or 38. He's talking about his miles of jogging and running every day and he writes, I want to stop but I can't. My chest burns, my throat is dry.

I feel like I'm going to faint. My body begs me to stop but I make myself run another mile. Two more miles up those dash, dash, dash hills.

Pain all the time. I'm in pain. I hurt all over.

I hate it but I'm taking it. I'm making myself suffer. I have to suffer.

I know this is my last fight. It's the last time I'll ever have to do it. Just a few more weeks of pain and suffering to live good all the rest of my life, to always be champion.

What then shall we say? What then shall we do that we shall live good all the rest of our eternity? That we shall not live with some mixed feeling about ourselves that when we had the opportunity here in this earth, we gave God something less than the totality of all our being because we did not want to stand the pain. We did not want to endure the suffering and the other consequences that would come with this kind of

total commitment in all our being. You know where I wrote this little passage? In a book by Rosh Maneek called Love Not the World.

In a final chapter called The Powers of the Age to Come, and I want to quote now from him where he says that we have had only a limited seeing. We talk about witnessing and that kind of thing but there's something required of us which is much more. That the church has a definite responsibility before God to register the victory of Christ in the devil's territory.

If there is to be a testimony to the principalities and powers of the impact of Christ's sovereignty through his cross is to be registered in the spiritual realm, it can only be as the judicial foothold in our hearts of the pretender in the race is met and by that same cross removed and repudiated. For God's object is still that man should have dominion. Our work for him does not stop with proclaiming a gospel that was designed merely to undo the effect of the fall, marvelous as was that undoing.

God wants us also to take us back further to Genesis 1 itself. He wants us in Christ to regain the moral dominion over his foe and thus effectively to restore the earth to him. This is surely why as Paul tells us the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.

The gospel of salvation is necessary and vital in order to meet man's need but if as God's servants we are only laboring for others we are missing God's first aim in creation which was to supply not merely man's need but his own. I think it's altogether significant that this young man, religious and ethical and moral who ran and knelt to him that his first question centered yet in himself. What must I do that I might obtain eternal life? If your religious life still has as its center an I, if you're still looking for a gratification not sensual, not carnal but spiritual or that pertains to things of your life or even your eternity, you have not yet come to the place of utterness and totality in God where a profound substitution has got to take place where your first question and your central question and your abiding question is not what pertains to your I but what pertains to him.

Not what I must do or what I must obtain but what must you have? What pertains to your glory? What are your needs? What are you waiting for in the consummation of the ages? So long as there's still an I that is the hub of our life, however spiritual, we've not yet come to the totality, to the centrality, to the finality that marks real kingdom entry. Thus if today we are going to meet God's need we must go a step further and deal with Satan himself. We must steal back from him his power, evict him from his territory, spoil him of his goods and set free his captives for God.

The question is not merely of what account are we in the winning of souls rather is it of what account are we in the realm of principalities and powers and for this, Watching Me says, there is a price to pay. All this pain, all this suffering, one more mile. It is often possible to move men when it is quite impossible to move Satan.

The plain fact is that it costs much more to deal with Satan than to win souls. It demands an utterness of spirit God would. I'll tell you what, if I could but give birth to one such phrase as that, I'm ready to retire.

I will have counted my life in God as fulfilled. To be the author of one such phrase as that, an utterness toward God, an utterness of spirit God would. Have you come to that utterness? I'll tell you what, when I looked in the dictionaries today I felt like flinging them out the window.

They are grossly and totally inadequate because they are written by men in the world and how shall we expect that they shall divine words like total, sensual, final or utter? There's an utterness that can only be known in spirit that is beyond anything that is partial. What must I do? In another account of this in Matthew, there's even a further little clue. When Jesus said, you need to keep the commandments, you know what this young ruler said? Which ones? Matthew 19, 18.

Which ones? Reminds me so much of the kids that came up to my high school desk every year at the beginning of the new semester. Mr. Katz, what's the minimal amount that we need to do in order to get by? Which ones must I obey that I might inherit eternal life? What's the minimal amount necessary from me? And you cannot imagine to what degree we have been so long steeped in the spirit of that civilization that we ourselves are more minimal than we realize and we have not come to the totality and that utterness in the spirit God would that constitutes entry into life and into the kingdom and is the true meaning of being saved. If your I is still the hub of your life, have you yet come to the glory of the salvation that saves us from I and brings us to follow me? That's being saved.

It takes a crack, a snap, a release, a loosing from the powers of this earth that we might enter into the powers of the age to come now. Who then can be saved? The disciples astonishedly asked, hearing these things from Jesus, and he didn't say, listen guys, cool it, don't get carried away. I'm not talking about salvation.

I'm talking about the issue of the kingdom of God and the issue of eternal life. But he didn't say that. He accepted their question as being fit and appropriate within the whole context of one subject that salvation is the issue of the kingdom.

That the issue of the kingdom is the issue of eternal life. That it is all one issue and the entry is barred or blocked because one thing do you lack. Though you run, though you kneel, though you're fastidious and this and that and you're giving, you do and you believe.

One thing do you lack that keeps you from an utterness toward God that is total, final, central, that is summed up in this searing request. Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven and come follow me. Leave your I and come to me totally, abandonedly, and you shall enter into life.

Go and sell all. Say, Art, are you actually literally saying that this is the kingdom requirement? Yes. And yet I know that the Lord is not asking that the moment that we get home we put our houses up, collect our goods and put it up and give a big garage sale and turn the proceeds over to the poor.

But if we have not in our heart utterly and totally determined that and maybe it's going to require nothing less than the doing of it, then we have not entered the kingdom. They were not yet in the realm of that which is eternal. Maybe we've been too fanciful.

Maybe we said, well, in our hearts we've done it when in fact we have not. It's interesting that in a previous trip to Germany, speaking at a little Bible school there, there was a woman. She must have been between 60 and 70 years of age.

I have never seen a more radiant believer. I almost had to avert my eyes from the brilliance of that face, the light that broke forth in that face. I could not say the same for other of the students.

Some of them looked quite surly at me. But she beamed and drank up every word that fell from my lips. I never saw a more appreciative woman.

And finally when we came to the last session, I kind of just got in contact with her. I said, listen, are you a student here? She said, yes, I almost was floored. I said, what are you doing with all these young kids? Well, she said, I was a dedicated Christian woman and living in a certain city in Germany.

I had my own house, a widow. And the Lord said to me, go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and come and follow me. And she said within 24 hours I had sold my house and every last possession I had to the final picture on the wall.

Then the Lord showed me what to do with the proceeds, who the poor were. Then he told me to come to this Bible school and to take these courses. And when I began that, then he told me what my ministry is to be.

And she said I have never been more gloriously alive and joyous in God since the moment that I absolutely and totally and literally obeyed him. When you meet saints, don't you sometimes get that impression? You just know that they've not come to that place. You know that there's a withholding.

You know that they're partial. They're precious, dedicated in a sense, full of admirable intention, really love the Lord with all sincerity so far as they know their own hearts. And don't feel that the things that they possess possessed them.

Oh yes, if the Lord ever required it, they think they could give it up. But you go out and try shooting your German shepherd as we have had to do here and see how easily you can give it up. It's a lot tougher than your cars, your house and other things.

Whatever possesses you and keeps you from the totality in God needs to be sold. If God has that, he's got the all. Is there something that is a reserve in your life, a holding back, something of which you're conscious? It's amazing that it could be a dog.

But I'll tell you that dog was so beautiful, so impressive, so handsome an animal, more pedigreed and blue-blooded than I myself, that if I had to make a fearful choice between a saint or that dog, I don't know that the saint would have won. But there came a time in the history of our little community here when our dogs began to cut up and become a kind of pack and constitute a kind of danger for which there was clearly only one answer. If you could picture the assembly of us going out with pickaxes and shovels and 22 rifles that day in the backwoods by our place there, dragging the dogs by ropes, you would have seen one of the most melancholy episodes ever to be known in the history of the church.

And I tried desperately to find some alternative to that dog's death. Long-distance phone calling, some hope that someone with a large farm could take him or would need him. No one was there to answer the phone.

No one needed him. There was no avoiding this thing that had to be done. Every dog had to be pulled.

They trembled and writhed because they instinctively knew they were going to their death. It's remarkable how animals have a far more unerring instinct and awareness of the totality of death than we. We talk about having laid our lives down, laid it on the altar, died to ourselves, and we're just kidding.

The only dog that didn't have to be tugged, pulled, or coerced was my handsome animal. His devotion to me, so total, so explicit, he followed with me in lockstep, with his tongue lolling out in quite happy expectation that we were going out for a little walk in the woods, and sat right down at my feet as I dug his grave, looking up with eyes of complete love and admiration and trust, while down my face was cascading a waterfall of tears. More effulgent than any for which I have ever shed for the body of Christ or the purposes of God.

That's where we live, guys. That's where we live. Listen, we're going to be an apostolic people.

We're going to be a kingdom people. There has got to be a death to phoniness. There has got to be a death to gamesmanship.

There has got to be a death to the things that are feigned, to the things that are merely suggestive, to the things that are partial, to being merely verbal, merely phraseological. We have got to pull the trigger. I wish I could say that I had the heart to pull the trigger on my own dog, but I could not.

But a brother with whom I had some tension was willing. And there was the moment that could not be postponed. And you guys who are laughing now, your moment is coming before this message is over tonight.

And the gun went off, and I just looked for a moment. I saw the flecks of blood and the dog twitch and jerk. And then as quickly as I could, I pulled that precious thing into the hole and covered it up.

Tears rolling down my face while something inside with the crack of that rifle and the thing going into that pit and the dirt coming down on that thing I so dearly loved snapped and broke. Some cords of soulfulness, some attachment, something deep, a love of animals, which is maybe in the last analysis, a love of self. A self-pitying thing, the kind of affection that we can get from animals that we cannot get from men that is unquestioning and uncritical and always available, that we need.

And to cut the cord on that is to make yourself once and for all wholly dependent for that provision from God and through God in men. How many of you have been called to that totality? That giving. When this rich young ruler, full of religious intention, really desiring eternal life, full of respect for Jesus, he ran, he knelt, good master, full of compliment and recognition, but not a recognition deep enough.

When he heard that, he turned sadly away. I have an intuitive hunch that there are great numbers in this room tonight who, though you're present, have turned away. And if you've never before been faced with this issue of the kingdom and actual entry, you're being faced tonight in these words, in this message, which is not one that I have chosen, but one which is given.

Woe be unto me if I preach not the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. And I want to say in that same breath that one of the reasons why we have been so long partial, so long inconclusive, so long drifting, aimless, is because we have not had this gospel preached in this way. A lesser gospel has been proclaimed, the gospel of personal salvation, the gospel of the benefits that you'll receive if you accept Jesus.

But have we really heard the radical and total demand of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven? Who then can be saved? Jesus said, hey, don't get carried away. That's not the question. That is the question.

The issue of the kingdom is the issue of salvation, is the issue of eternal life. How may I enter into life? By going, selling, giving, coming, and following all. If it's not total, there's no following Him.

Because He's a total God, calling to total men, totally. And at some point tonight, I was so moved by God, if you had not thought I would freak out, I was going to sing in Hebrew, Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord, which proceeds the statement, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength.

For the first time in looking over these scriptures this afternoon, I was struck by the fact that when Jesus said, Well, do you know the commandments? That He did not cite this commandment, but He began, in my opinion, in a much lesser place. Do not murder, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not bear false witness. He took all of the negative things of the do nots, but He did not take the first and the foremost thing.

Thou shalt love. No wonder the guy could say, Yeah, all these things I've done since my youth up. But this you have never done.

Because had you done this, you would long ago have given your all. But at these words, His face fell. I just want you to imagine tonight that you're not just hearing a message, that this isn't a little convocation preaching, but the Lord Himself speaking to you the same words of the same call, of the same challenge spoken 2,000 years ago to this rich young ruler.

If right tonight the Lord would push me aside and come up to this microphone and say, Do you want to enter into eternal life? Do you want entry into the kingdom? Okay, go and sell all that you have. Give it to the poor. You'll have treasure in heaven.

And come and follow me. How many of you would go and do it? We'd become so message-ized or sermon-ized as if the Scriptures are something for our enjoyment. We're like gourmets.

We like the way this guy preaches or this guy speaks. Wasn't it wonderful to hear him take some notes as if the whole thing is given for our enjoyment and have not recognized that it's given to do in us and to call forth in us exactly what it was given when it was spoken to that man. And his kingdom will not come except through men and women who will go, sell, give, come, and follow with all, with the totality, with the centrality, with the finality that that call implies.

Totality is the quality or state of being total. Where do we know that in this life? Listen, I coasted through schools, through universities, through the army, through relationships. All you need is a little charm, a little glib word, a little ability, a little snow job, a little sleight of hand.

And I graduated with honors. But it never required anything in me that was total. And that's why I want to tell you there's a difference between the kingdom of this present world and the kingdom of heaven.

Because the kingdom of heaven is like the king himself. Absolute. Total.

And you can only come on his terms. If anything is partial, temporary, withheld, given in part only, by very nature of things, there's no way to leave this temporal earth and to come into that eternal place and be joined with him who is a total God and a consuming fire. We may know about him and have a certain dim appreciation, but we do not know him and we're not joined with him and in him because this is the condition for such a union.

All or nothing at all. Go and sell all that you possess or better, that possesses you. Well, it's just a dog.

It's just a family antique. It's just a work of art. It's just a hope for the future.

It's my family or my ministry. All total is a state and quality of being that is full, entire and utter and unqualified without any withholding. Have you come to that kingdom condition? Both with God and with men? Centrality, the quality or state of being central, essential, controlling or directing something to the heart of the matter.

Finality, the character or condition of being final. At an ultimate point. Not to be altered or undone.

Conclusive, the climax of all, irrevocable. You cannot take that dog out of the pit. You don't get him back.

You don't play with little plastic bullets. He's dead, dead, dead, gone, rotting, corrupting the grave. You're never again to enjoy his beauty.

You're never going to have him lolling at your feet. You're never going to look at this painting animal looking you with the eyes of devotion. You're never going to have him back.

It's taken, it's total, it's irrevocable. It cannot be had again. It's fixed, it's final, unalterable.

Once and for all. That's the spirit that this athlete had as he took his weary 38-year-old's legs and pumped up those hills in Pennsylvania because he could not contemplate living the balance of his life as a man who did not live as a victor. He could not retire in the condition of one defeated.

Whatever it required, he must know victory. Have you that total determination? Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who, you? The enemy sees right through us. He knows our partiality, he knows our weaknesses, the inconclusive things, the compromised things.

This is the costly thing, Watchman Lee says. Evil spirits can see right through the witness of men and they can tell when it is compromised by being half-hearted or insincere. In the name of Jesus, come out of him.

Turn up the amplifier, will you? In the name of Jesus. Don't be literal, Tom. We think that by turning up the amplifier or raising the crescendo of our voice that somehow it's an increase of authority.

Not at all. Your authority is not to be measured in proportion to your loudness, but in proportion to whether you are partial or total in God. I have only to hear a man speak once to know exactly where he is.

Whether I myself am to take him seriously or not. And he can be biblical, as invariably almost every messenger of God is. Have a good word, so to speak.

But I kind of nod and I'm not penetrated. I'm not pierced. I don't take the man seriously or his word because I sense the lack of that totality that imparts to his word an authority that is gripping and penetrating.

And I want to tell you that that's the way the world hears us when we witness. They know whether we're playing a little cutesy game or whether we're speaking from such an eternal place of such an authority that compels their attention lest they perish. Somebody take the 22 out and finish that one.

And that's exactly a beautiful illustration. A distraction from the kingdom. Do I dare say the name of Jesus? Shut up.

And will I be heeded has altogether to do with the question whether I've previously pulled the trigger on my own. Jesus I know and Paul I know, but you? Who? Jesus said, the prince of this world comes but he has nothing in me. Isn't that an astounding statement? Talk about a man total.

Talk about the centrality of the father in the conviction of Jesus. Talk about the finality by which everything was given over for the father's purposes. There was no consideration for his eye but only for the father's knee.

The prince of this world comes but he has no thing in. No hanky panky, no footsie, no twinkling eye, no flirtation, no cutting corners, no compromise. Total, absolute, holy, given to God and the enemy knows it.

Come to that place you'll have to pull the trigger on some soft squirming thing that wants yet to retain its existence and be spiritual too. Looking at us, these demon spirits are under no illusions as to whom they can safely defy or ignore and conversely they know perfectly well against whom they are powerless. But the price of this kind of witness to the principalities and powers is an utterness of allegiance to God that is unqualified.

To entertain our own opinions or desires or to prefer our own variant and contrary choices is simply to present the enemy with his advantage. It is, in short, to throw the game away. How sports gives us more apt phrases, more incisive understanding of the nature of true commitment than we use in our religious vocabulary.

A miss is as good as a mile. You ever hear that statement? How many of us in stickball games and softball games and baseball games have taken lusty swings with the bat that if there had been a solid crack of the ball meeting the wood head-on totally, unqualifiedly it was bye-bye baby. But instead, no matter how lusty the swing, because we missed it by an iota, we get a dribble.

A plip-plop-plop down the foul line or a little pop-fly that counts for nothing. The same swing that constitutes a home run or a pop-out is affected, the difference is only affected by one thing, whether it was a true and total contact or being off by just so much. And I'll tell you, that's the difference between the kingdom of heaven and mere religion.

One thing do you lack. A miss is as good as a mile. Without such an utterness for God, nothing can be achieved, for without it we make even God powerless against his enemy.

I say it once again, the demand is very high, and are you and I here on earth utterly committed, utterly given to God himself? And because this is so, are we tasting even now the powers of that future glorious age? Interesting that this whole discussion ends with a reference to, and in the world to come, eternal life. I want to know that if you're of this commitment and this totality, you've entered that world now. You're not waiting to die to enter it.

By that commitment, you have died and entered it. Are you in eternity now? Do you know what eternal life is? Are you enjoying it? Boy, I've never had a night when I've had so many quotations, but I think that we need to hear this. On a chapter called The Nature of Eternal Life by an English divine by the name of John Bailey, which I picked up in a used bookstore in New Zealand, just by faith, it looked intriguing, and it's tremendous.

He writes, the first thing to be noted is that eternal life stands primarily not for a greater length of life, but for a new depth of it. Boring. Eternal life is not something that is measured by longevity.

It's not a quantitative thing. It is a qualitative thing, which we can enter now in proportion to the depth of our entry in truth. It's another quality of being, of total engagement with a God who is eternal, in whose kingdom you come by going, selling, giving, following, coming.

Because to enter into the kingdom of heaven is to enter into eternity, and therefore into eternal life. Now! Go and sell and give, and you shall have treasure in heaven, is a future thing which has present implication now for those who have gone and sold and given. I'm finding men and women stripped in this generation, in this hour.

Remarkable demand of God. Why you don't dare stand to an invitation anymore! God is taking it so seriously. A woman stood to an invitation at a camp where I spoke a week or so ago, and only a few days after her husband, who is separated from her, absconds with her children, kidnaps them, and is now suing for the possession of these children on the grounds that these kids are being raised in a Christian cult by which they do not have adequate education, and by which they're compelled to fast, and many other such slurs.

Her children wrenched from her a trial of her faith, only virtually days after standing to a call to total givenness to God without any restriction. Precious couple from our own fellowship, now in London, in their late thirties, and she gets pregnant. Miracle of miracles, whoever expected it! Only to be exposed exactly in that time to a kid in that English slum neighborhood who has German measles.

And after all the tests are taken, both things are confirmed, she's pregnant and been exposed. And the medical prognosis is that whatever will be born of her assuredly runs this 30% chance of being born blind or deformed. And she said, only just the other day I was praying that the Lord would increase my faith.

Better watch what you pray. There's an earnestness with God in this hour, and a demand of God in this hour that makes our deepest kinds of previous commitment seem like kid stuff. We've been games players, verbalizing, having a phraseological Christianity, but have we in fact entered into eternal life, entered into the kingdom? Peter began to say, Behold, we have left everything and followed you.

That's what he thought. He was sincere. In a certain technical way they had left their boats and their nets in their father's house.

The only thing he had not left is Peter. Therefore, he had not left all. And because he had not, he was on a collision course with the ultimate humiliation of betraying the Lord in the night of terror when that deep thing which had not been given over and not surrendered came to the surface to defend its own puny life.

And he had to deny the Lord because he wanted to warm his hands in the same fire with other men who were the persecutors of one whom he called Lord and professed to love. What will we do in this dark night of terror? Though all the world deny you, yet will we deny you never. I'll tell you that our words will come back to haunt us and to snap in our face in a revelation of utter humiliation and failure if, in fact, we have not given all.

And not just that which we possess and things but the whole substance of our life, our being, our future. We have given all, Peter said. We've left everything and followed you.

Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there's no one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or mothers or father or children or farms for my sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he should receive a hundred times as much now and in the present age and in the age to come. Who really has left in the other account

of the gospel of this episode in Luke 18 another very interesting flash there 1829 and he said to them, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come eternal life for the sake of the kingdom of God who has left for the sake of the kingdom of God Some of us have left in part if not wholly for appearance sake or for our own conviction sake or because it's expected of us sake, but have we for the kingdom's sake left all There's a way of yet retaining your wife and your house and your land and your children and having left all for the kingdom's sake which we must find or that wife, that land, that house, those children will in the end make cowards of us all. It's a paradox I don't know how to explain it and yet it's the Lord who is speaking and he means what he says and says what he means There's a way in which a wife can get under your skin and become as soulishly attached to your heart and have so much to do with your well-being, your sense of self your gratification that the idea of forsaking her or property or lands or whatever it is constitutes such a wrench that you cannot and yet I want to suggest that I'm going beyond myself My heart understands more than my mind at this point that somehow the sanity, the health the well-being and the glory of our marriages is waiting for that leaving.

The breaking of that soulish dependency that insinuating within the relationship of subtle and personal things by which we find gratification that keeps us from a total commitment to the king and therefore throws a certain bias and dent into the marriage. There's a health in being able to leave all and come back into that relationship in a freed and emancipated way It's interesting that when Abraham took his Isaac up to the altar which was his all more dear than his own life and until God has that, he doesn't have Abraham He said to the young men, you wait here, I and the lad will go beyond and worship. And it says when he came down from that sacrifice he and the young men went off together and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

I just have a sense that something happened because of the giving up of his Isaac that changed the whole quality of his relationships with those young men who were waiting below before they were lackeys mere necessity servants but with the death of his Isaac he saw them and entered into a new quality relationship with them which was a kingdom relationship. They went off together. I think our marriages are waiting for that to leave it and therefore to have it in a kingdom way Have you given up all? For the kingdom of God, for my sake, for the gospel's sake, for the gospel of the kingdom's sake, that you might come into eternal life and taste the powers of the ages to come now Eternal life has not to do with longevity or timelessness or things that are measured quantitatively It is a qualitative thing a new quality of living and being a new depth and that's why it's the mercy of God to call us to this radical totality because it's only by that that we can enter into this quality of living now that we might be a kingdom people and not only proclaim but demonstrate the gospel of the kingdom of heaven for we dwell there.

You'll have to hear the tape again to get what I'm saying He says that the shortness of the present life is very far from being its most unsatisfying feature A long succession of lives is not necessarily the thing that's going to bless us Nobody ever wanted an endless quantity of life until discovery had been made of a new and quite particular and exceptional quality of life What makes heaven heaven is not that this present kind of existence is going to be prolonged into perpetuity and into endlessness but that we enter into a new quality of being in which there is no shadow at all no darkness at all that is pure joy, pure blessedness utter depth and quality of being in relationship with the God of heaven and with God's heavenly people. That's salvation and what's keeping it from us? That thing that we're not yet totally willing to give An exceptional quality of life is another definition for eternal life Eternal life is the kind of life characteristic of the ages to come. The primary reference is always qualitative and this is eternal life, to know thee the only true God in Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent Now, instead of waiting until we have died Have you

entered into life? What must I do to obtain eternal life? Whatever you can say about this Jewish young ruler, this much must be said.

He knew how to put the very great question forward, whereas we have dismissed the things that are eternal as some kind of secondary consideration for the future and have not recognized that it is the question Not just when you die, but now he who hears my words and puts his faith in him who sent me has eternal life No judgment will be passed upon him he has already crossed over from death to life. Verily, verily, I say unto you the time is coming and now is when those who are dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live Do you think we can bring ourselves to a quality of faith to believe that a message could constitute that kind of hearing?

The blowing of a kind of trump and the sounding of a kind of call that the hearing of it and the responding to it will bring us from death to life from sleep to wakefulness has eternal life He has already crossed. He who hears my word and puts his faith in him who sent me If you give up all that you have and come follow him, what about the future? What about the fear? What about the insecurity? Shouldn't you have something laid aside for the rainy day? What about the uncertainty of the future?

Shouldn't we have some cushion some condition, something that will not make us utterly, totally, abandonedly dependent on him? You know what faith is?

Exactly that total and unqualified abandonment on him I don't know what's happening in your life as I just review my own depression baby scarred by poverty knows what want means finally to make it as a teacher tenure, cannot be fired annual wage increases medical insurance, retirement benefits, annual wage increase all these kinds of things that come with the security given in the world and for the Lord to say come follow me give up your own house, small and modest though it is, to come follow him for a hundred bucks a week in Jewish missions, wondering whether you'll ever be able to stand on a street corner in New York City on a soapbox and preach the gospel to Jews and what if it doesn't work and then what and that was what, 14 years ago and to see the successive things that the Lord

has since done no longer to be connected with an organization no longer to have a salary no longer to have a fixed income no longer to have retirement benefits, no longer to enjoy medical insurance or any such thing and increasingly and totally and finally and irrevocably to be utterly dependent on him are you coming to that? maybe the better question is are you willing so to come? or do you want to clutch and retain what is the foundation of your present security and yet be spiritual and yet speak lofty things and yet talk about the body of Christ and God's kingdom purposes in the earth and you yourself not to have entered that kingdom because you are unwilling basically, deeply, irrevocably and finally and totally to go sell, give, come and follow that you might have entered into life

he speaks about people who have, he says in them the spirit of the risen Savior works already they have mounted with him from the grave they have risen out of the darkness of doubt they are in the brightness and sunshine of the day in which God is ever light their step is as free as if the clay of the sepulchre had been shaken off their hearts are lighter than those of other men and there is in them an unearthly triumph which they are unable to express they have risen above the narrowness of life and all that is petty and ungenerous and mean, they have risen above fear they have risen above self they have entered into life it has been a kingdom come they have the witness in themselves, the kingdom witness for them heavenliness has already begun within the soul their immortality lies in

union with him who is the object of their affections and they seek no other he is their assurance, their trust totally, finally eternal life is a life of this quality the present life has always been held to be a time of testing and of preparation the enjoyment of eternal life in the future has always been made conditional upon the use we make of the present only those whose lives are now lived in such fellowship with God as earthly conditions permit can look forward to the fuller fellowship hereafter, I would make one exception I would strike out as earthly conditions permit, earthly conditions do not permit earthly conditions are opposed to this kind of totality the earthly spirit and mind and mentality will cry out fanatic madness, going too far it does not permit this kind of whole

giving if our consciences tell us anything they tell us that it matters eternally what we do with our lives now the eternal issue is before us now eternity has to be taken into our present consideration now the knowledge of the eternal and eternal life has to be effectual now there's an actual place of entry it's called salvation it's waiting for a certain totality from us which many of us have not yet given have you for his sake left all? for the kingdom's sake? or maybe I ought to put the question another way, for whose sake have you not left all? for whose sake have you not sold all? for whose sake have you not given all to come and to follow? surely the issue in the last analysis is your sake or his sake houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms a hundredfold

along with persecutions not so much from the world but from other Christians who think you have gone too far why do they persecute you? why do you make them boil? why do they find something growing in them that is an irritation and vexation with you who are a kingdom person? because it shames them because it scandalizes their present Christianity because it really reveals to them what the true commitment to the king is it shows them that they are yet outside the kingdom if only you were not there to confront them if only your example was not a burr under their saddle if only they could continue to persuade themselves that they're wholly given to God and look what they're tithing and look what they're donating and look how they open their homes to meetings and look how often they attend

the youth thing or this that or the other but your total kingdom consecration, the all the finality, the totality of it angers and irritates them and will engender in time to come and even now, a persecution if you have not experienced persecution, it is ipso facto evidence already that you are living beneath the kingdom level if the single greatest scandal of modern Christianity is the absence of persecution which indicates that our Christianity however much we adorn it and however much we applaud it is something less than the entry into a kingdom of heaven in the earth an exhibition now of the powers of the age to come that broil men up into an anger which vents itself as persecution the Lord came and stood before you tonight and he loved this man it says looking at him Jesus felt the

love for him and said to him and I know that that love is consciously sensed here he loves us, he sees that we rush to him and that we kneel before him, that we sing before him but he knows also to what degree we have been partial withholding, conditional that we have not come to this absoluteness to this totality he loves us but he knows that he cannot make the condition easier he cannot be more accommodating, he cannot bend his rule or his requirement kingdom salvation, eternal life requires totality or it cannot be emptied one thing you lack go and sell all you possess and that possesses you and give it to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven and come, follow me I don't know where it was in the point of my own Christian walk that I said yes to this I don't know that the Lord

ever faced me in any single moment maybe what it is is the sum total of all my obedience over these 17 years but I know what it has done it has taken me out of the world out of security, out of profession out of

houses, out of cars out of bank accounts it has been a stripping and a stripping and a stripping till even the Lord fingers a dog till there is nothing left till your script, till every soulish chord is broken and it's interesting that from that time forth came an increasing awareness and consciousness of the kingdom of heaven the Lord then began to give messages and revelation and insight increasing authority and power in the speaking of them doors of ministry opening which we were privileged and as I said last night we were not worthy to untie the shoelaces of those to whom God

had called us minister because we pulled the trigger because the Lord fingered that one thing one thing you lack what's the one thing? so I want us to bow our heads before God many who are first will be last to their eternal embarrassment and shame that they were content eternally to live as losers get buyers compromisers whose earthly presence never constituted any big thing for the kingdom of God oh they attended meetings and they were consistent in services, gave of their tithes but their lives never affected anything in this life that touched eternity they had not tasted the power of the ages to come they had not entered into eternal life themselves, they were yet on the other side where things are yet partial, conditional qualified withheld a black man could not live like that

whatever it took he had an utterness towards his goal for which he churned his aged legs and bore the pain in his chest he could not retire a loser how shall we live in any lesser way for the kingdom so precious God Jesus come with the finger of your spirit and touch that deep single thing this one thing that we lack this one thing withheld this one thing reserved this thing that has kept us from a final total irrevocable whole utterness toward God no matter what the consequence no matter what the persecutions, no matter what the misunderstanding, no matter what the fears, no matter the insecurity how can we say other to a God who says come follow me and I believe Lord that this message tonight is that calling, I'll just take the liberty as your minister to say that if there are those who

are coming and who are following on the condition that God has made clear a totality an utterness toward God that is uncompromising and single-eyed complete may mean the giving up of your intentions for marriage, future family, whatever it shall mean in His good pleasure you come in that kind of total surrender all, you might find yourself as me, being required to give up your 17 room house where it's equivalent your car or your cars your security or your dog it's all or nothing at all I know you've come to altars and you've cried tears and you've made dedications but I believe there's an earnestness in God tonight with which we cannot play it's a once and for all if you and your heart are determining you're ready to go and sell and give and come and follow, I want you to put down before

the Lord not to turn away, settle something, go on your knees or on your face and let Him have all I want to spare you the humiliation of a Peter who was so quick to say, but we've given all to follow you when all he gave up was the outward thing and the physical thing but yet clutched his own life and it shamed him in a betrayal have you given all? do it pull the trigger satisfied with anything less than heaven come into the kingdom this is more than charismatica, this is more than correct doctrine convictions and notions of the body of Christ there's an earnest God calling earnestly a total God calling totally who needs not to repeat himself, settle something tonight now both for time and for eternity that there might be in the earth a kingdom come a people who have tasted and are

living in the powers of the age to come now, and who can say to the prince of this world you have nothing in me, the weight of this break upon your consciousness this is too much I cannot my wife my home, my children lands with men it is impossible but with God it is possible if you have been playing a kind of religion that you can perform of yourself you have not entered the kingdom you have not faced up that

God has called us so radically beyond any ability of ourselves even to respond you have not understood the call flesh cannot make it it must shrink, it must recoil it must turn away all we can do is fall at the feet of him who calls us and say of myself I cannot but with God it is possible all our running for some form of spirituality is the avoidance of this call we want it on our

terms but we are unwilling to come to the total God in the total way that he requires and we need to face that and come we don't have to run to Vancouver's or conferences or any such place in the hope of some kind of titillating new revelation of something spiritual there is a cross there is the Jesus of the cross there is the God of truth there is his single and one call if any man would come after me let him deny himself you can come to the end of your search now tonight, right on this bare wooden floor by saying in a total way to a total God I surrender all thou art God and I am yours on your terms it will save you you'll enter into eternal life into the joy of his kingdom he cannot make it easier or open any other door than this this is the gospel of the kingdom of heaven that needs

to be proclaimed with an authority and a power by those who have themselves entered into eternal life who then can be saved with man it's impossible but with God down on your knees in your helplessness and your weakness and your compromise and vacillation and inconclusiveness and say Lord I cannot but with God my faith is such that I am persuaded that this is not mere service, mere message mere invitation, mere response I am fully persuaded that the issue of eternity is being decided now eternal issues are being decided now as well as the whole fulfillment of the balance of the lives of people in this room it says that many who were first are last not a few, many, you know why? they were partial don't be among that many let yours be a kingdom life and decided now that means you give to

God the full right to expose you to German measles in your pregnancy the full right to have your children taken from you the full right to be submitted to accident or suffering or trial or the denial of husband or family or children all are you settling that now? something being decided now both for time and for eternity men who would otherwise have been at the periphery of the purposes of God, have been quasi entertainers and showy Christians doing something tonight in their hearts and on their knees that will put them in the forefront of the apostolic kingdom purposes of God don't turn away that I can say such things to people who have given \$6,180 tonight for the anastasia for the ship and feel that I've not made a mistake in the message this is a handsome and noble giving and yet

however impressive is a God who wants to go far beyond this I'm not talking about sums or totals a quality of being that is eternal and is lived in the now by those who have given all I wish I had oil, I just feel like anointing people in their foreheads and sealing them for the kingdom of heaven once and for all, sealed for the kingdom kingdom sons and kingdom daughters who once and for all determined wholly unequivocally totally I surrender all anybody have any oil in the room? that's just how foolish I feel tonight precious God Jesus if you're not the one speaking if this is not your cry and your call what a travesty let alone that we should add to it by presuming to anoint people in your name as a seal my God for entry into the kingdom of heaven and into eternal life that they might

taste now and exhibit now the powers of the age to come that eternity shall break into time because of a hot commitment that is total final, central and once and for all so my God honor this honor this may it burn into the forehead may something be registered in heaven may something be changed from this night on thank you Lord and end the shallowness, the superficiality to flirtation to any of the kinds of things to which we have given ourselves because our German shepherd was yet alive thank you Lord seal us up for the kingdom of heaven's sake thank you for your call we turn not away our prayer is that you have been

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