

Human Rights

by Brother Andrew

Everyone has a right to know who Jesus is, and we must take action to support and help those who are suffering for their faith.

Duration: 1:16:03

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 4:12, Romans 12:15, 1 Corinthians 12:26, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Human Rights"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful encounter with a street child who wandered into their church service. The child, barefoot and filthy, mistakenly believed he was the conductor of the choir. Despite his appearance, the child showed kindness by cleaning wilted flowers and offering them to the speaker. This encounter deeply impacted the speaker, highlighting the plight of street children and the suffering church in restricted countries. The speaker emphasizes the need for action and returning to the principles of God's word to make a difference in these situations.

Transcript

Amazing, you are very prudent people, because the free papers are still there. Now, how do I explain that? This is not Scotland, obviously, because that would have been gone and all the books left, but there is a package there, a dozen or so, and I really want you to take it if you're not acquainted with Open Doors, because then you can receive our news brief, monthly, and other papers, this time there is supposed to be little, or not in this one, devotional for the month of November, prosecution updates, and if you really want to know what's happening and want to get involved, please take one of those packets, write to us for a paper which is free, but it may cost you everything. So there is a risk involved.

I know that young people nowadays like risks, so go for it, but you have to run in that corner and one up here, because tomorrow by this time I'll be on my way to Holland. I'll be speaking this morning, of course, about the subject that is closest to my heart, the suffering church in the so-called restricted countries, but it is living behind so-called, falsely called closed doors. And tonight I want to speak more about that world.

I'll show you, if I were an artist, I would paint it in the most beautiful colors, but I'm not an artist. With my feeble words and my limited knowledge of English, I have to paint you a picture of that world and tell you what God's word says about it. Once we combine what God's word says with the situation in the world, we find ourselves right in the middle to act.

And that may be very surprising. A while ago I took my American open-door director to somewhere in the Middle East to visit the Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, and we had a house meeting. The room was crowded with people, and I was speaking from the word of God and giving my testimony.

There was one particularly, I think, obnoxious guy, big guy, dressed in white. He was a Sufi. He should have been more philosophical being a Sufi, but he was very hostile towards us.

There was one young man on my left. He tried with all his might to convert us, to make us Muslims, to convince us how good Islam is and how we ought to blah blah. And I was just witnessing and speaking about Jesus, Jesus in my heart, Jesus who forgave my sin, Jesus who has given me eternal salvation.

I know it, things that they never know, except when they die in the Jihad. It's the only way for them to know they go to heaven. And then suddenly that young man on the left tried to brainwash us and persuade us.

He jumped up and ran out of the room to some place in the house, and my colleague from America was sure he was going to get his gun and shoot us. So we just waited a little, and then he came back with a stack of papers. There was a correspondence course from Transworld Radio on the life of Jesus, that he had been following and filled out.

Answered all the questions. How mistaken one can be. You think it is a guy who is going to shoot us, but all he wants to know is, tell me more about Jesus, I'm interested.

That's the world in which we live. And I want to stress tonight that mission work stops as soon as we see the world, or parts of the world, as an enemy. Whatever name it has, Islam, or communism, or terrorism, but mission work stops the moment we see the world that way.

Because the moment when we, as individual Christians, see any person as an enemy, and we develop an enemy image of that person, because of his hostility, or his appearance, or his religion, or whatever, the moment when we see him as an enemy, the love of God cannot flow through us anymore to reach that person. We've placed ourselves outside the scope of God's work in that person. Beware! I will speak about that tonight.

Because we want to win the world, and we don't want to keep talking about closed doors, because the problem is, our hearts are closed. Then our eyes are closed, and just like Jonah and Nineveh, he let Nineveh go to hell if it would depend on him, and yet we have to convey the love of God. All that hostility in the world is only a great opportunity to proclaim the message of Jesus.

Now, tonight I want to speak about human rights. There's a lot of talk about human rights. A lot of unrest in the world, including in this nation, is all based on what people perceive as their rights.

They're going to get it. And I have noticed that the more people speak about rights, the less they speak about responsibilities. The Bible speaks about responsibilities.

And yet I believe in human rights. I'm also officially a member, I'm on a committee on human rights with the Soviet Union and the United States. I represent my country, Holland.

But I have for myself, and for using open doors, drawn up my own list of human rights. And I want to go through that list with you tonight. They're very simple.

Number one, everyone in the world has a right to know who Jesus is. Well, that should keep us busy for the rest of our lives. And yet we realize that they can only receive that right if we give up our rights, the right to myself.

Begin to live the crucified life, disregard danger and hardship, and just go because he said go. As Pastor Steven already pointed out, there's no substitute for obedience. There's no substitute for going.

Actually, not even prayer can be a substitute for obedient going. So, everyone has a right to know who Jesus Christ is. And of course, I do base that on the Word of God.

I don't even have to look at that. You all know that. What verse am I thinking of now? That's a good one.

I was thinking about another one. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave.

Was anyone excluded? No, no one. So then, why do we make all those distinctions? Who's in and who's out? God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever and wherever and whenever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life. That includes the everyone, every man, every woman, every boy, every girl who has a right to know who Jesus is.

That includes all those for whom Jesus died on that cross. And if we, through our unbelief or disobedience or sheer neglect and lack of vision, would not reach everyone, then basically it means that Jesus suffered on the cross more than he should have suffered because his suffering did not cover everyone. He left them out.

He didn't, he did. And I so remember the weekly prayer meeting we had in our Bible school in Glasgow where I was together with Malcolm. Every Friday night there was a prayer meeting.

They called it Prayer Battery. And we were supposed to attend and local people would come. And there was one lady, I'll never forget her.

I think she's the only one I remember from that particular group. Miss Clark. Old, poor lady, bent over, short, long, black dress, black shoes and there she came in the prayer meeting every Friday night and she prayed with the others and every prayer, every night, every Friday night her prayer ended the same.

Quoting from Isaiah 53 verse 11 that he shall see the travail of his soul and be abundantly satisfied. That word abundantly she inserted, that's not in the scripture. It was a good one though.

That he shall see the travail of his soul because all our preaching and our ministering is based upon what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross. And if we for any reason leave out the cross in our preaching we deny the people the entrance into the kingdom of God. There is no salvation outside of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And the moment we begin to compromise because of liberal teaching or our own unbelief or because we're scared of the Jews or the Muslims who don't want to hear about the cross that moment we're denying them entrance into the kingdom of God. And I'm here tonight to tell you that the Muslims are open to hear the message of the cross once you have earned the right to their attention. That may need some doing because we have not built up much credit in the last decades.

Until the end of the second world war seven-eighths of all the Muslim countries were colonized by Christian nations. We never made a dent in that situation. Business did, yes.

Hollywood did, yes. Technology did. But not mission work.

And today we're reaping the bitter fruits of that terrible neglect. When you earn the right to their attention you can and should and must speak about the cross of Jesus. Why is there so much terrorism nowadays? The fearful phenomena that seems to paralyze the whole world.

We haven't found an answer yet. Please don't believe that bombing the Tora Bora mountains or Baghdad brings us one inch closer to a solution. We haven't found a solution yet to that terrible threat of terrorism nor to the danger I call it the challenge of Islam toward the world and the church of Jesus Christ.

We haven't found it yet. So let's look at these people as individuals for whom Jesus Christ died and let us be Jesus to them. And I guarantee they won't blow you up.

And if they do then it's too late for me to apologize anyway. It only means you get there a little quicker. What is the problem? I spoke this morning about those churches that were blown up by the Muslims through bombs in the church and one case that I was recently in Babapur, Pakistan.

Half the congregation was killed instantly. You think how awful. Then a few weeks ago that nightclub disco in Bali was blown up.

Hundreds of people killed. And the whole world knew about that one. Very few knew about it.

The church was blown up. And I state here tonight that it is better to be blown up in a church than in a nightclub. So just choose your place next time.

But that's the world in which we live. And the terrorists are so active because no one has yet confronted them with the claims of Christ. That's why they're terrorists.

They have no reason for living. So they found a reason for dying. Not long ago I was in one of our homes.

We have a home in the jungle in Colombia in the midst of that rebel area and the drug trade and the shooting and the kidnapping and the killing. And so many children are being kidnapped. Small children.

Sometimes we managed to rescue one of the girls with her baby. She's only 13 years old. Because the rebels let them go or make it easy to escape when they have a baby.

And they're still children carrying a baby. There's one boy Vladimir. He was now 13 and I hugged him.

He was a killer. In order to get into the rebel movement you have to prove your guts by killing a man. He had already killed a murderer.

13 years. And I hugged him. And I thought, well, if these were my sons and he begged, he said, they have taught me how to hate.

Could you please teach me how to love? And I could expand that statement to all those terrorists that have been taught to kill and to die. Can anyone teach them how to live and let live? Terrorists. They're reachable today.

And I believe if they are reachable, they are winnable. But we haven't made an effort yet to win them for Christ. They're so open.

God's door is so wide open. Let's start with that basis that I tell you tonight. Everyone has a right to know who Jesus is.

It doesn't depend on some overzealous Christians and evangelicals who apply to join a mission and go into the world. It's the privilege of the entire body of Christ to get on with the job. Because they all have a right.

It doesn't depend on a call. It's our responsibility. Let's be serious about it.

And make an impact in this world today. And tell the people who Jesus is. That's point one.

Everyone has a right to know who Jesus is. Point two on my list is that every Christian who suffers for his faith in Jesus Christ has a right to be assisted by the other parts of the body of Christ. Everyone wherever in the world who suffers really for the name of Jesus not for his nationality or denomination but for his faith in Jesus.

Everyone has a right to be assisted by other parts of the members of the body of Christ. And I have a verse for that. And that is what the apostle Paul writes to the Christians in the Corinthians.

It's a very clear verse. I will read a couple of those verses. In 1 Corinthians 12 at the end of verse 25 it says that the members of that body should have the same care for one another.

And if one member suffers all the members suffers with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members individually. They have a right to be helped.

And yet how many missions among the thousands of excellent good missions are really reaching out to the suffering church. How many young people in the Soviet Union I don't know, I hope there are not many who has given up their faith in God because in their loneliness the pressure and all the seeming scientific arguments against the existence of God haven't given up their faith. Because they were not helped.

Because nobody came over there to put their arms around them and sit together and share Christ. And then of course a terrible persecution that took place under communism. 70 years of communism.

No historian will ever be able to find out how many millions of Christians were killed. And the terrible persecution that took place until just, well not even till 10 years ago. It's still going on in China, in Cuba, in Laos, in Vietnam, in some of the Central Asian Republics.

Even in Russia itself. Will we ever know why did they fail? If they failed they had the right to be assisted when there was no one. And that makes up the suffering church.

They have a right that says that we should have the same care for one another. Years ago I was speaking with Arthur J. Smith about that situation and he had that great one-liner that no one has the right to hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once. I loved it.

I always did. I loved his books. Passion for Souls and those books.

I even translated them to Russian. Russians love those books. And we were discussing that and fantasizing a bit and see how we could adopt that statement or change it.

I came up with a saying, I said, would you allow me to change it and use that for our mission? Why should anyone have two Bibles if not everyone has one Bible? He loves it. Andrew, go ahead. And so I've often used that statement because I have spoken in big meetings, bigger than this one, from the Bible and the interpreter was the pastor and he had no Bible.

That made me feel very bad. Why should I have two Bibles? Did I say two? Do you have two Bibles? I bet you have three Bibles. I bet you have five Bibles.

I bet you have ten Bibles. I won't go any further because I asked that question in Holland in the church and I went up to 50, there were still some hands raised. Why should anyone have two Bibles when not everyone, especially serving in such a strategic area, from where communism and the revolution and terrorism comes where they could do the greatest job in preventing violence and we don't give them the tools.

They don't even have a Bible. There's something wrong with us. We have a right to be assisted.

Same care for one another. And I see the reports and you can read them. This is a Dutch copy of Open Doors.

It's always about people. When we started this magazine 40 years ago, I said to the editors there must always be a face on the front page, but never my face. But we are a people-to- people mission.

It's people that we want to help. It's people that we want to reach. And in our paper you can read about the work, for instance, that we do in Sudan.

And it's very risky. Actually, our workers don't want me to go there because you have to walk and march 10-20 miles a day in blistering heat, bitten by mosquitoes and they think I'm too old for that. That's stupid.

I'm not too old for that. But it's what they say. We fly in illegally with Russian planes that are illegally filled with Bibles and other things that's needed.

Blankets, medicine, food for a starving population. And then you read all those terrible reports about the slave trade. The Muslim armies from the North invade the South and they raid villages and towns and they take all the people they have in prison, including the children, and they carry them off to the North and then the people are sold on the slave market.

The girls to become eventually sex slaves. The boys, hard labor, chained with iron, chained to the wheelbarrow, just as it was 50 years ago in the Soviet Union. These are the Christian people in the South.

Then it boggles my mind. I read that verse and I think of my daughters. I have two daughters.

And I think suppose they would kidnap my daughter. Just go along with my line of thinking. Suppose they would kidnap my daughter and take her to a slave market and sell her to become a sex slave.

What would I as a father do to get her out of that? Father, can you imagine what you would do? Do you have the guts to think that through? I would travel the world. I would work and speak and write and shout and yell and do probably rob a bank. Anything.

Well, not rob a bank as a Christian but, you know, as a non-Christian I would. I would steal. I would do anything to get enough money and then travel to Sudan and buy my girl back.

I would. Wouldn't you, father? You'd do anything to sell even your own self if you could to redeem your daughter. Why don't we do it for a black girl in Sudan? Is she not our sister in Jesus? That we have the same care for one another? Are we still scriptural people? Do we still live by the truth of the Bible? Or only accept selected verses to speak about my blessing, first blessing, second blessing, third blessing, Toronto blessing, every blessing and we don't take the same care of one another.

And then we still expect God to come down in power with the spirit and give us revival? Forget it. We will not have revival until we obey the principles of the word of God. Have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers all the members suffer with it. Now, there is no clearer teaching in all of the New Testament a teaching that cannot be open to any different way of interpretation than this verse here. Everyone has to agree because it is so clear.

One member of this body of mine suffers the entire body gets into action to support that one member or release it of the pain and duty and heavy carrying. The whole body gets into action. Everything in my body.

My heart, my blood, my muscles, my brain if I have any. Everything in my body to support that one part. And the Bible says well, that's the body of Christ.

What are you doing? They have a right to assistance on the basis of the word of God. The third point I said the first is everyone has a right to know who Jesus is. As an evangelist I like that.

Second is that everyone who suffers for his faith in Christ has a right to be assisted. Helped. Supported.

The other part of the body. This is the third point. That's encouraging.

Everyone who lives in the so called free world has a right to know how God meets his people when they are paying the price and the suffering. And again that's why it's so important that you read our newsletters and our books and I write a lot of others of course in my books. That God is doing something in those prison camps.

In the Gulag archipelago. In the re-education camps in Vietnam. And in the prisons in Saudi Arabia.

And in Sudan. And in Peru. I just visited our brother David in Peru in prison.

He has already started a church in prison. Because God's word is not bound although they may bind the preacher. And you go to prisons.

I've been in a number of prisons in Colombia. In Rwanda. In Uganda.

In Saudi Arabia. Even in Indonesia. And see what God does in those prisons.

We ought to know that a person shut up in prison is not immobilized. Nor is he beyond reach. We can go there.

If you want to. And then you see the mighty works of God. I want to give you a verse for that too.

In 2 Timothy 3. There's a very good verse about that. 2 Timothy 3 verse 12. And all who desire to live a godly life in Jesus Christ will suffer persecution.

You say is that encouraging? Yes. Because identifying with the prisoners and seeing what God does encourages us to pay the price. That's why the overall tolling open doors and all the misery that we deport is always one of it.

The word of God is not chained. God is sovereign. One thing to sing it in a meeting hall where everybody says amen to that.

But see it out in the prisons there. See it where the suffering is intense. See how God sometimes with a great sense of humor works among his children.

Using them. I remember the first time the Lord spoke to my soul about this verse. I was in a communist country in the height of the persecution.

And I was preaching in a Baptist church. The reason I mention the Baptist so often is not because I want to please you because this is a Baptist church, but for the simple fact that most evangelical churches over there are Baptist churches. That's the reason.

I love the Baptist anyway. And one day I was having an evangelistic campaign in a big capital city and there were several other Baptist churches in the city spread out and I was not allowed to preach as a foreigner. So you probably say well Andrew how can you evangelize when you are not allowed to preach? Well that's very simple.

I was allowed to give greetings. And my, I had greetings. Piles of them.

Greetings from my wife and family. Greetings from my Open Doors team. Greetings from my home church.

And I had greetings from the Apostle Paul. And he had kindly written them down for me so I could read them out to the people. I was only giving greetings.

I was not preaching. Then I suddenly remembered a verse in Peter that Peter says, he complains that Paul's epistles were so difficult to understand. He says that.

Therefore it's clear I have to explain Paul's greetings a little. Took me about two hours. amazing how many people come forward when you just give greetings.

To accept Christ. Amazing. Because you don't have to be preached to communicate the love of God.

Anybody can do that. Greetings. Friendship evangelism.

Earn the writer their attention. Offer them a cup of coffee or fix a flat tire as I do for the Muslims that walk over the pavement in my street. Do something.

That makes you friends. And then it's amazing to see. And then the next evening we would be in another church but it was not announced because it was illegal anyway what we did.

And the people were already standing outside of the church building blocking the road and that was attracting the police attention which we were not too keen on. And so we would not announce where tomorrow night's meeting would be but it would be crowded again. Evening after evening, crowded.

And one evening the pastor, Baptist pastor invited us to his home for further fellowship. And we went there with a dozen or so elders and a handful of pastors. And I remember as I entered that house everything looked so poor so totally bare.

There was no carpet on the floor nothing on the wall no carpet no cover on the table just plain wood. And I was reading to them because under communism they were not allowed to touch on subjects like prophecy or Israel or return of our Lord Jesus Christ or being soldiers for Christ the hymn Onward Christian Soldiers was always forbidden in these countries. Lots of subjects I knew nothing about besides not everyone had the Bible.

So I had my Bible on the table explaining things and we were not offered any coffee or tea, there were no snacks nothing, just the word and us. And then suddenly the door opened and first we were a bit frightened, you know you always are in those situations. Police? No.

There was a friend of mine from another country even more restricted more persecution and I had worked with him before in evangelism but he was so effective they arrested him and put him in prison for a couple of years and we thought he was still in prison but he came out free and he walked into the room astonished us by his presence so we all jumped up then we hugged and we cried that's what you do on those occasions and eventually we settled down and sat again on our chair and they expected me to continue but not me here is a man who had paid a price I wanted to learn from him let him speak but he looked at me because he hadn't seen me for a few years but I didn't say anything then at last he opened his mouth and was dead quiet he said Andrew are there any pastors in Holland in prison I

didn't have to think about that one I thought if there is anyone it's not a good one in his country only the good ones are in prison not in my country and so I said no without thinking I was really hurting him he did not understand so as a writer he said why not now I got nervous how can I explain that no pastor in Holland is in prison for his faith so I began to say well we have liberty we can preach our churches are open we can shout on the rooftops we broadcast on radio, television we have bible society, we have christian bookstores we have Sunday school we have child defense we have everything not realizing that everything I mentioned was totally foreign to them and they have none of that and yet the church grows and is crowded evening after evening and I saw that I completely lost my

audience so I quit talking and it was quiet for a long time and at long last still looking at me the guy said then Andrew what do you do with 2 Timothy 3 12 and I didn't know how do I know that what we do with the verses I do not know verses about suffering are not our favorite verses we don't memorize them we memorize John 3 16 and Psalm 23 1 and John 14 6 and but not 2 Timothy 3 12 not verses about suffering and paying the price so I didn't know what we do with that verse I opened my bible and that verse I began to read and blushed in that setting I tell you everybody is staring at you and they pin me down on that verse and they have every right to do so and I read all who desire to live a godly life and you know the moment you find a verse that you don't like you turn into an instant

theologian to explain it away listen we do that and I figured Paul was referring to the early church but he says oh so that didn't work and I think well maybe he meant they might suffer but he says they will suffer persecution and as I had no guts to look up I kept looking staring at that verse my eyes fell on a couple of verses preceding this and for myself I began to read quietly totally convicted that you have carefully followed my doctrine followed means observed my doctrine my manner of life my purpose my faith my long suffering my love my perseverance my persecutions my afflictions this happened to me in Antioch

Iconium, Lystra what persecutions I endured and out of them all the Lord delivered me but all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution still

quiet in that room everybody stared at me at long last I knew I had to reply somehow I looked up and said forgive me we do nothing with that verse and I knew there is a whole lot of verses we do nothing with then that verse began to live for me it became a message I read it many many times because I read through the bible every year but it had never become a message to my heart somehow a few words or verses that I pass on to you tonight that you already knew of course you know your bible but they will suddenly become a message of God to you I will not let you go until you act upon it all that want to live a godly life there is a price and the more willing we are to pay the price the greater our joy will become one of my great friends in the Soviet Union in those days was Joseph Bondarenko

have you ever heard that name we have also written about him in the past he was called the Billy Graham of Ukraine the Billy Graham of Russia famous evangelist, Baptist of course and the he said okay I am not used to that thing I may hit it occasionally and Bondarenko was always preaching young good looking fellow full of faith and full of joy he just radiated the joy of Jesus and got arrested for preaching and the first time he was sentenced to three years imprisonment that is a long time for a young man three years imprisonment and he just continued to evangelize because a change of location does not change your ministry he was an evangelist when he was three so he was an evangelist when he was in prison and he continued to lead people to Jesus Christ until the authorities were so angry

with him they threw him out now remember that whenever they arrest you become aggressive try to convert them and they'll throw you out, it's the quickest way to get out of prison or first it's the quickest way to get into prison of course but then it's the quickest way to get out of prison, I've always done that when they arrest me and they do right at the border already I start preaching at them like mad and they get so scared they really get scared something wrong they know that wrong with them too and I tell them that so they never take a big risk with me so they threw Bondarenko out and said don't you preach anymore or we'll come back to you out and he left every so many young believers in that prison so he went out and he preached again and we were instantly we were supporting him

and of course he got arrested again and they took him back and now they made a mistake those Russians, they took him back to the same prison uh uh and as he entered escorted by a gang of soldiers the other prisoners saw him and they greeted him with shouts of joy they said praise the lord you're back and he looked at them in bewilderment he said praise the lord? why? he said well when you were here before you led so many of us to Christ but we don't know the bible you seem to have the whole thing in your head we don't know anything about the wonderful stories of the bible or the doctrines of the church and so we all come together every day we say dear lord Jesus bring Joseph back now what do you say to that? so he said well that being the case praise the lord and uh he continued

evangelizing and many more came to the lord and what else does an evangelist want? preach and see souls come to Christ right? we don't speak about the conditions or the circumstances do we? well maybe anyway there was a great result and the authorities were so angry with that mistake they had made that they shut him up in a cell which was in the midst of a cold winter like here and it was not heated and ice was on the floor and the walls of that cell and it was very cold and they put him in there with a big criminal six foot six huge fellow cruel bad looking and they put him there and they figure the circumstance and that man will finish off his faith and Joseph is not a big man and let's face it when you meet a big guy you are intimidated I am maybe you are not but I am and Joseph was so

he waited until midnight dark and big fellow was asleep and he would slip out of his bed and kneel on the floor and pour out his heart to Jesus one night something went wrong big fellow woke up what are you doing there?

Joseph says I am praying to whom are you praying? I am praying to God for whom are you praying? I am praying for you big man said what?

I have been so cruel to you you pray for me Joseph says because God loves you Jesus wants to save you make you a new man big fellow jumped out of bed knelt next to Joseph and within five minutes accepted Jesus Christ and Lord the Saviour you can do it and these two became a terrific team in the prison Joseph quietly speaking about Jesus big fellow saying get on your knees accept him wonderful team terrific so effective then of course the authorities were really mad at them they were then put in a cell cold unheated cell but there was no bed no blanket no food no water they were shut up there to die because the entire prison authority gang and government were scared stiff of people who love Jesus more than their own lives and the two managed to stay alive and stay awake for a while one day

maybe two days just walking and holding each other until they couldn't stand anymore they said to each other let's lay down and go to see Jesus big fellow said I will lay on the floor and Joseph you lay on top of me maybe my body will keep you warm and alive maybe you get out and can preach again whatever happens I'll see you in heaven when we meet Jesus so they lay down and authorities noticed that they had given up the battle to live and to survive so they walked in picked up Joseph by now he had a heart condition and tuberculosis he would never preach anymore written off finished so they threw him out and when I heard that Joseph was out of prison in those terrible conditions I quickly traveled to Russia the first time ever that I smuggled money I never do that but I did for Joseph to

buy him food medicine, clothing traveling expenses because I knew what he would do and he did and a few months later we had word that he was getting married he found himself a beautiful bride by the name of Mary quite appropriate Joseph and Mary I've heard that before it's almost Christmas think of them and they got married very secret there were only 2000 people at the service because they couldn't pronounce it but there was a guy with a camera who made color slides and I had a series at home or in my office in Holland very poor quality but terrific pictures you see that big happy crowd singing rejoicing, listening to the preaching and then you see the picture Joseph very serious looking of course black suit and then next to him Mary long white dress behind him the best man, big fellow

six foot six just thrown out of prison he made it he made it later a few months later the news was that they had killed him on the street they would not risk anymore putting that man in prison and Joseph spent another three years in prison until the day came that I was standing at Joseph Red Square in Moscow in front of the mausoleum where Lenin is buried giving out scriptures and preaching ten years ago God offers them tremendous opportunities and only God knows how many people are in heaven because Joseph was willing to go to prison we ought to be so grateful that Paul was willing to go to prison so he could write most of the New Testament it would be very thin if Moses had not gone to prison that's the way it is people living a scripture life they should know what's going on in their

mind and in their experience another fellow that I knew his name is Zia he was Afghan believer and I met him the first time years ago in Kabul when I was preaching there he was blind he sat at the front row the only church Afghanistan ever had it was bulldozed by the Russians and now God is building his church again but not with bricks and stone people who come to Jesus Christ it's a tremendous hunger for God in

Afghanistan first baptismal service I had with Afghan believers there were 12 and they said there are 24 more on the waiting list I said I have no more time I have to run unfortunately that was the truth and fortunately I am a Dutchman I can get on the KLM plane and run after baptismal service but that is still life there and they said there are 24 more I said well I have to come

back so I came back I baptized the 24 they said under there are 85 more I said will it never end they said no there are several hundred more in Afghanistan you got to come back and baptize us because we want to follow Jesus it's very difficult God is doing in those very adverse circumstances and I was there and I said Zia he said there is a refugee like millions of other Afghans did and he was caught in Pakistan and put in prison first he got married with one baby I think a girl then his wife was pregnant and they arrested him and they tortured him and they killed him in prison it was my first friend whom they killed in prison in Pakistan I have now three friends that were killed there and while he was in prison his wife gave birth to a baby boy and she called him Light Light it was a

very secret gathering where I dedicated the baby and God gave me word that one day he would bring the Light back to his country Light is his name and incidentally he lives in Canada pray for him I have lost contact with him I don't know where they live but Afghanistan needs him because they have a right to know who Jesus is and we have a right to know how God meets the need of those in prison even when they pay the ultimate price of laying down the lives for Jesus like Heiko whom I spoke this morning Victory I was in Pakistan not long ago and they had arrested one of my friends, a pastor in the Anglican Church, an evangelist and he had led so many young Muslims to Christ he became a danger to the regime he married them he baptized them so they put him in prison and the whole month he

suffered in that prison and then suddenly they released him and I just happened to be in town when he came out so the next morning I said Ejaz we must have breakfast together man tell me about your experience what did they do to you what did God do for you his eyes began to beam with joy he said 108 prisoners came to Jesus that's not a bad average for an evangelist in a month two dedicated their lives to full time service if they ever get out he said all night people are lining up in front of my cell that I pray for their healing he was dead tired after a month of that a ministry like you wouldn't even have in your own church day and night God uses people in prison God uses people in their ministry and in their gifts so we had good breakfast and I just rejoiced together with Ejaz I went

to my room I always have to stay in a hotel unfortunately because it's still then and now even more too dangerous to stay with people and there was a phone call this is a strange story but it was the Ulama the head guy of all the Muslims in Pakistan 140 million Muslims in Pakistan he was the boss he was very sick he asked if a brother could come and pray with him I said sure that's our work to be pleasant to people but remember he was the head Muslim responsible also for the persecution and the killing of my friends and the imprisonment of the man I just had breakfast with this morning then I had an idea I told Ejaz I said Ejaz I'm going to pray for Ulama and I want you to come with me to pray for him he said I come so when we came to his office in the main mosque the king's mosque that

has meetings every Friday with 100,000 Muslims in one meeting there he was in his office and he invited lots of other leaders from different Muslim sects and teachers and high ups in the Islamic world there and we sat together and again I opened the only book I have I spoke about Jesus and I answered many of the questions and then I said now we will pray and I kept my strongest teaching for the prayer time I'll tell you why you may even want to apply it sometimes in your own experience here once you start to pray with a person you can tell God a lot of things that he already knows but they don't know it yet and that's what I do

with the Muslims you see because they are very reverent when we pray we always stand up we never close our hands like those stupid Christians do they don't expect

God to do anything Muslims pray like this they want to receive from God and I have already adopted that method pray with your hands open God is going to give don't close your hands God so we began to pray and I stood to his left and I prayed thanking God that Jesus was not only the healer he was the savior he was the son of God who died on the cross to forgive our sin and we can love him now expect him to bless us expect him to hear us expect him to meet us at the point of our needs as I was I laid my hand on the Mullah I felt another hand on top of my hand to my right hand I looked it was Ijaz just come out of prison the day before he was also laying his hand on his persecutor that's what God does the doors are so wide open the opportunity is so wonderful if only we come back to the

simple clear principles of the word of God then we find that it is simple.

One more baptism story and then I close with an illustration and we should have time for prayer maybe we have time for questions because I realize I cannot say everything in one short meeting but one of my baptismal services with the Pakistanis not with the Afghans it must have been three years ago when I switched over to the Afghan situation the whole family came from down somewhere in the valley very fertile valley where they grow nuts and fruit on terraced fields because there is plenty of water and it goes down from one terrace to the other you know how that works they grow rice and fruit and everything and they came all the way up to the mountains area where I was having my baptismal service, the whole family and they wanted to be baptized and he said why do you make that long

journey to get baptized there is so much water where you live and there were illiterate people that knew something about the bible that many of us don't know I said why do you come here he said Andrew it's so simple we have a lot of water that flows from terrace to terrace back into the canal gets pumped up, goes back into the terrace waters our fields floods our fields and we work in the water and we have heard in the bible it says be baptized and have your sins washed away and he says well if we wash our sins away in that water and we come back to work tomorrow it means we walk in our own sin in the dirty water that contains our sin and the bible says we should not walk in sin so they said that's why we go to brother Andrew because he has one of those children's swimming pools and he

throws the water away after baptism now it's very primitive thinking but it's very straight thinking you know that after baptism there is a holy wife you can't go back and walk again in your sin and I just love that illiterate people who are so serious about following Jesus terrific and yet here is the great challenge and the last story I want to tell you maybe the last one until I get more inspiration, maybe one more but we were in Albania Albania you must know is since 1967 the first and only fully announced, pronounced atheistic country in the world proclaimed so by the government there is no god or any remnant of any religion in Albania left the government proudly announced that and the whole world took notice and I knew that Albania even didn't have a bible, no wonder communism

becomes so total in its grip it is no opposing force based upon the principles of God why is it possible that a nation in Europe till 10 years ago did not even have a bible, is that astonishing you know how many bible translations there are in the English language, over 440 and there was none for Albania you wonder why there is total communism and now in some countries total Islam or God forbid in some countries total terrorism they don't have access to the word of God to set them free and as soon as the the Iron Curtain fell in Albania a few weeks later we had our first meeting there in the stadium the government had given a

fierce charge because they didn't know which way the nation would turn what way do you go when you have lived for a long time in atheism and nihilism they gave us

the stadium, they gave us the loudspeaker equipment they gave us the state television to televise the first sermon nationwide and I was the first speaker that evening that evening the preacher so the whole nation could hear what Jesus was they were very happy but when I returned home one week we had a number of churches established in Albania especially in the capital city of Tirana people wanted to know about God even as I walked in the street hoping that they would not recognize me from the big rallies and television but they saw I was a foreigner they come to me and say you are part of the God team they didn't have the terminology right you are part of the God team hallelujah that's what I want to be, part of the God team and we went back to Holland and already of course several

missions including ours and others have been working on the translation and within a year we had the first Albanian Bibles printed in Holland 50,000 copies and exactly a year after the first big campaign by invitation of the government they organized a Bible party what did they know they said bring your Bibles but also bring crackers and Coca-Cola and cheese because we want to have a Bible party so we had a big center there cultural center we had a Bible party first copy I gave to the president who was a Muslim he was so grateful never seen a Bible in his life he put it on television second I gave the Bible to the Imam, the head of the Muslims he saw the Bible he was deeply touched, he said oh Andrew, he said please will you never persecute us Muslims because we also suffered under

communism he said no man I won't persecute you but I will tell as many of you people as I can about Jesus hoping that they will follow him he said oh that's alright they are not against Jesus Muslims are per se not against Jesus so then after some more very interesting experiences we had a meeting in the military academy where they train all the big officers half of them accepted Christ in that one meeting terrific experiences they were so open and then last Sunday I had a meeting in one of the local churches it was in a rather big hall bigger than this the podium about this size and it was I think in a museum building on the main square in the center of Tirana, the capital city and I was sitting there next to my interpreter a Dutch girl who was fluent in Albanian and he was the music the

band they made noise they already had a nice western concept the more noise you make the closer you are to heaven you know how young people sing nowadays I'm of the old school but I can bear it they were wonderful and here was the choir but the oldest was maybe twelve years old I mean the church was less than a year old and the youngest was four and they were nicely dressed mostly girls, they were jumping and clapping and dancing and the nicest colorful dresses on and they were so joyful they were already singing their native Albanian songs and choruses not translated from English no, Albanian great stuff then my eyes caught a guy standing on the floor filthy, long unkempt hair, never properly washed in his life green t-shirt on and the front was tucked into his trousers the back was

hanging out you could see his bare back barefooted filthy from top to bottom and he thought he was the conductor so he stood here conducting the choir I could have cried when I saw him I turned to my interpreter and said who's that she said that's the street child the streets are full of them they have no one to look after them not even a grandmother to give them a meal they sleep on a bench in the park, they steal to eat and that's all they have I said how does he get in here thinking he's the conductor she said I don't know, he just wandered in we couldn't stop him, now he thinks he's the conductor I said listen I can't preach when I see that guy so I stood up I walked over to him I think he was so close and so far I grabbed him and I felt his ribs protruding so skinny and I carried him

all the way to the back and I put him on the lap of my team mate, the wife of the American ambassador and I said he is fancy, you keep him here, otherwise I cannot preach, I will cry oh boy it never happened to her I think and she put her arms around that piece of filth and I sat again next to our interpreter enjoying the singing of the choir and then something else happened a little girl I think she was only four years old bright little girl, she jumped down walked straight to me laid hands on me and prayed for me because I was the preacher it never happened to me in the free world I was so glad that she cannot read and she didn't have a bible otherwise she would have known that women should be silent in the church but she didn't know that I got a giant blessing and she prayed for me

God's ministry through the list of us she happily turned back then I had to preach and God gave me a word in the spirit of compassion and love many young people came forward to accept Christ and we were all standing here praying for them and I felt a little tug on my sleeve and I looked my boy had broken loose got away from Fancy's lap he also wanted to be prayed for boy he did we sat down and the choir got up again and sure enough the little lad stood there again to conduct the choir I got up, I picked him up I put him right in the middle of the singing kids I said boy, here is where you belong at the end of the service we were standing outside the pavement shaking hands after a while he came out too he didn't shake hands, he walked to my left to my right and there was a heap of garbage

there was no garbage collection of course everybody piled it up where they could and he trotted into that filthy heap with his bare feet and he found some wilted flowers somewhere he cleaned some of them and made a little bouquet climbed back the heap walked up to me and gave me the flowers without saying a word then he turned around and walked back to the park to sleep on a bench to steal their food and I couldn't run after him because I have no team I have no home for street children I have no money to take care of him I just stood there with a broken heart he was a boy that in the course of an hour and a half had influenced my life so greatly and I just saw him move back to the park why why is this world so topsy-turvy does he have no right to a home like we have to an education as we

give our children to warmth and protection to church life, to a bible to education but he will only get his right if we give up our rights our right to self our right to our privileges to our bank account to our position to a million other things only can we give up our rights I want to close this session with reading of a parable that I found in one of Bailey's books it's also a tale, a parable that can be found in the Talmud I'll read it to you a certain man had two sons one was rich the other was poor the rich son had no children while the poor son was blessed with many sons and many daughters like me in time the father fell ill he was sure he would not live through the week, so on Saturday he called his sons to his side and gave each of them half of the land of their inheritance then

he died before sundown the sons buried the father with respect that night the rich son couldn't sleep he said to himself what my father did was not just I am rich my brother is poor I have plenty of bread while my brother's children eat one day and trust God for the next I must move the land to mark as the father said in the middle of the land so that my brother will have the greater share ah, but he must not see me if he sees me he will be shamed I must arise early in the morning before it is dawn and move the landmark with this he fell asleep and his sleep was secure and peaceful meanwhile the poor brother could not sleep as he lay restless on his bed he said to himself what my father did was not just here I am surrounded by the joy of many sons and many daughters while my brother daily

faces the shame of having no sons to carry on his name and no daughters to comfort him in his old age he should have the land of our fathers perhaps this will in part compensate him for his indescribable poverty

ah, but if I give it to him he will be shamed I must awake early in the morning before it is dawn and move the landmark which your father has set with this he went to sleep and his sleep was secure and peaceful the first day of the week very early in the morning long time before it was day the two brothers met at the ancient landmark and fell with tears into each other's arms and that spot was built to new Jerusalem our Jerusalem so much about rights I give it over to my friend and brother Stephen to see what we can do about it alright do you want this thing here?

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