

When You Don't Know What to Do

by Carter Conlon

When you don't know what to do, come to the cross and trust in Jesus' love and power.

Duration: 46:06

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 19:25-27, Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Need For Direction"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the purpose of believers being left on earth and their willingness to follow Jesus day by day. He explains that Jesus will teach them little by little, building a testimony of His life within them. The speaker highlights the importance of forgiveness and serving God, using the example of Peter. He then focuses on the moment when Jesus tells John to take care of His mother, emphasizing the preciousness of every individual in God's sight. The sermon concludes with a call to love one another and rejoice in the Lord.

Transcript

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Give me much more ability than what I possess and help me, God, to do justice to your word. Let there be a shout of glory in the hearts of your people. And I thank you for it with all my heart in Jesus' name.

When you don't know what to do, John chapter 19 beginning at verse 25, Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple standing by, this disciple of course is the writer, it's John, whom he loved. He said unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son.

Then said he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. When you don't know what to do.

Beloved, in these verses we find among others a young man whose name is John, who like many today his world had fallen apart. He had a perception of life and he had found what he believed to be security. And it was security, he just didn't understand it.

But all of a sudden momentarily his security is taken away from him. Think of young John now in John chapter 13 and verse 23. He's writing about himself and he says, Now there was leaning on Jesus bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved.

Now this young man had found what he was looking for. He's quite content. I found God.

And he knew it. And he so loved him, he didn't care what anybody said. And there are many of you here today that perhaps in the younger years, when you first came to Christ, this is what you were like, you're part of a youth group, perhaps or something like that.

And you really didn't care who mocked you, you didn't care what people thought. But you were going to push in and you were going to hear his heart. And you did get there.

And you did know the heart of Jesus as John did. He was in a position now where the most noble statements of his friends, and those he probably admired had been exposed as hollow. Matthew chapter 26.

I'm just going to read them to you verses 33 and 35. Now Jesus is telling the disciples tonight you're all going to be offended. The scripture says the shepherd shall be smitten and all the sheep are going to be scattered.

But I'm going to rise again, I'm going to go before you. Now they couldn't hear this. And it was so inconceivable to Peter's mind.

And Peter was a strong man, and somewhat of a natural leader, impulsive, but still a leader. And Peter answered and said to him, this is the Christ, though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. And Peter said to him in verse 35, though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.

And likewise said also all of the disciples. And so John's writing this. So he's including, well Matthew is actually, but he's including John is in this.

Now John had a choice in a sense to either believe the words that Jesus was speaking or the words that Peter was speaking. And it proves Peter to be somewhat of a forceful man, a persuasive man perhaps at that moment. And John put his confidence in this man who was a friend and somewhat of a leader.

Because John was just a young, a very young man. Now John must have admired Peter to be drawn in by his statements, considering that his statements were in opposition to what Jesus was speaking at that moment. Now after all, think about it for a moment.

Peter was the one to whom Jesus had given, as they knew it, the keys of the kingdom. Remember Jesus said to Peter, our Peter, I'm going to pound this rock. I'm going to build my church.

I'm going to give you the keys of the kingdom. The gates of hell will not prevail. That's an incredible honor, considering how dull they were in understanding what Christ was actually speaking.

And Jesus of course was speaking on the rock of Peter's statement when Peter said in Matthew chapter 16 verse 16, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. Now Jesus had declared that a church is going to be built on this statement that could not be overcome. Thanks be to God for that knowledge today.

I don't know about you, but I'm really happy about this, to know that I belong in Christ to a church that cannot be overcome because God said so. The one who created the universe with his spoken word, the one who can govern anything by just simply thinking it, said that we could not be overcome. And so let every lying tongue be put to silence.

You will not be overcome if you're in Christ. You'll not be swallowed. You will not be cast aside.

You will not be triumphed over. You're not going down in defeat. You cannot be according to Christ.

You cannot be triumphed over. The gates of hell, the plans of hell, that means cannot triumph over you. Blessed be God.

I think it's time we believe this with everything that's in us. And think about it now, John, this young man, having truly been enamored perhaps in some measure by Peter and by his leadership ability and his forthfulness. And now John, did he see Peter or did word come to him that Peter was now after, of course, the betrayal in Gethsemane when everyone fled, was Peter now keeping himself warm at distant fires and he was living and confessing a denial of Christ? What would have happened in the heart of John when he gets the word that this one man that seemed to have it all together, that seemed to be a leader, this man who spoke things that he believed, even if some of them were not quite accurate, is all of a sudden with all his bravado, he's outside the camp as it is, warming his hands in the wrong place.

And when confronted about his relationship with Christ, he denies it and brings an oath and a curse upon himself in that sense of saying, I don't know the man. How many people, how many young people today run from Christ and his church because of this kind of leadership? Your pastors and elders and leaders and fathers and mothers and everyone is listening to my voice. When you run from God and what God would have you to be and do, you never run alone.

You never run alone. There are many, many people. I can't fathom the numbers of young people who have run from the church, given up on God as it is because of leadership that they trusted, that proved to be hollow, whose claims were false, and they stood and made boasts of strength they didn't have and plans they couldn't fulfill, talked about the leadings of God that weren't the leadings of God at all.

And now when they run, all these young people go with them. And some here today, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You had a faith in God when you were young and it was greatly damaged because you trusted somebody that proved to be hollow and false.

And think about John in this situation. Now what was John going to do? What could he do? I think John, because he so loved God and there are many that you're here today and the reason you're here, there's only one thing left. You do in your heart love God.

I know I'm speaking in the spirit to somebody today. You love him and that's why you're still in the church otherwise you wouldn't be here. There's been so much disappointment, so much chicanery in the people

stand and make vows and just throw them off at a whim when things are not convenient.

And young people look at this and say, well if this is Christ, if this is the church that I've heard about, I just don't want to be part of this. I can't fathom giving my life to this. But John had an inner sense that the whole thing that I've observed may have fallen or collapsed around me, but there's one and I had one time put my head on his breast and heard his heart and I know he's not a fake.

There's one man who cannot lie and that's Jesus Christ. And John did what everybody in our time and generation needs to do. In the midst of all the hodgepodge of religious confusion, John came to the cross.

He came to where God was. He came to where he knew life. It looked like death to him, but there had to be life there.

And young people have a view of the church because the scripture says that that John came and who's there? The only mention is there's there's really three old ladies. There's no offense to anybody who's maybe over a hundred here today, but there's there's and that's young people think of that the church that way. It's just a place for old ladies hang out and pray for their kids.

But John knew there's more to it than this and he came to the cross and let Peter warm his hands at a distant fire with all his hollow boasting and let everyone else do what they're going to do. John was a young man who just didn't care. I'm coming to the cross.

I know that's where the power of God is. There's nobody has ever spoken into my heart like this man did and I'm coming to where he is. Surely there's got to be something there that is the only place where what I'm looking for is found.

I think for a moment with me of John coming back and he's got the courage and I feel in my heart. I've been sharing with pastor Patrick. There's a generation rising that are not going to be ashamed of the cross of Christ.

They're going to come to where the power of God is. Let everyone else play their religious games. They're going to come to where Christ is where the power of God is.

Remember Paul said to those who are perishing the preaching of the cross is foolishness, but to we are saved. It's the power of God. Something of God is found here that you don't find anywhere else.

You don't find it in books about seven and 10 and 12 steps to things. You find it at the cross. And this is where John came to.

I see a generation of young people coming to Christ. Thanks be to God. I see this house filled with young people coming to Christ, being filled with the holy ghost, going on to live for God, going to the mission field, standing in their schools and in their colleges.

I'm ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, the first thing that John would probably become aware of at the cross is the general indifference and outright callousness to this ultimate expression of God's love for all people. It's amazing how even the church, the church professing at least anyway, has cast off the cross in our generation.

Can you imagine the stupidity of it all? It's like a ship throwing away its compass. It's like an airplane throwing out its pilot. And we think this is the way that we've got to reach a generation by throwing the very

power of the church out.

Jesus Christ had the power to destroy all the people that were walking by. And John would have observed this. The high priests are, are wagging their heads and, and railing upon him and others are indifferently casting lots for his garments.

Others are going about their business. And John would know because John was in the boat. John saw this man have the power to stop the wind and the sea.

John would know that with a spoken word, actually three words, Lazarus come forth, the dead man, four days dead, came out of the grave. He knew the power of this man had, and he would be aware of it. And here he is on a cross and humanity is indifferent and mocking him.

He has the absolute power to destroy them. John would have known, he had to have known that a spoken word from Christ could have taken the breath from every one of them because it's recorded even in the garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers and priests and such like came and they said, we seek Jesus of Nazareth. He said, I am he.

And the scripture says, as soon as he said it, they all fell backwards to the ground. He was in absolute authority. Nobody was taking his life.

He was laying it down. He could have taken their breath from them at that moment. And John had to have known this, but yet he's not destroying them.

He's letting this mockery run its course. And what would be the reason Luke records it in chapter 23 and verse 34 of Luke father, forgive them for they don't know what they do. Peter, the apostle in the context of why God is withholding the day of judgment and second Peter chapter three, verse nine, he says, the Lord is long suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

And John had to see this. This is the power of God's love. I'm looking at, this is a love that I don't know anything about.

I have an under an inkling of it. I thought I knew it with my ear pressed against his heart, but I'm viewing now a love that staggers my imagination. The God who created the universe is allowing himself to be mocked for the sake of one soul or two or three that will receive him as Lord and savior.

He withholds his hand of judgment because he's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable love. We can't ever mind the depths of this love of God.

And John had to be there. And when we come to the cross, that's where we, that's the one place we begin to understand this love of God until we see the cross. The love of God is only a concept.

It's only a word. And it's defined by how society loves and how you love and your own strength and how other people love. No, no.

When you get to the cross, we see a love that has nothing in this world of it. It's supernatural. It's sovereign.

It's divine. That's the love that lets you and I walk in our ignorance every day and our indifference to the things of God. When we should be judged, we're not judged because God loves us and is not willing that any should perish.

Thanks be to God for his love. If it weren't for his love, I wouldn't be standing here today. If it weren't for his love, you wouldn't be sitting here.

We'd have no song. We'd have no hope. We'd have no future for our families.

If it wasn't for the love of God, thanks be to God for his unspeakable love. Hallelujah. No wonder if we have such a thing as a crown, when we get to the throne of God, we will get these things off of our heads and throw them at his feet.

Shouldn't shout so hard. I'm talking about love. It's kind of love.

Secondly, John sees that forgiveness is already taking place. It's not just something that's coming in the future. It's already happening.

Luke chapter 23, verse 43. He hears Jesus say to the thief who just said, Oh, remember me when you get to your kingdom. And he said, today, you'll be with me in paradise.

I believe the sense started coming into John that what appeared to be a tragedy was actually causing a stir of unspeakable joy in heaven. You become aware that something is happening here. That's much deeper than what I see with my natural eye.

There's something so central to the heart of God that's transpiring here. Anybody who's attuned to it begins to hear the singing in heaven every time a sinner repents. And this was the first really at the cross.

Can you imagine all heaven been waiting for this for how long? We don't know if there's even a measure in time and all of a sudden the first one comes through as a thief. Praise God. The first through in through the gate, New Testament blood having been shed for a thief.

Thanks be to God. That's gives me hope. Hallelujah.

The stir of unspeakable joy as we've experienced just an inkling of it today. But as heaven stands and every created being stands and whomever is around the throne stands and there's a shout of joy such as we've never heard. You imagine that thief when he died and all of a sudden he's ushered in and he's number one under the New Testament.

He's the first guy in. You talk about love. You talk about a testimony for all of eternity.

Praise God. And lastly, in Luke chapter 23 in verse 46, John would begin to see that the power to perform all these things that he's witnessing comes from an abandonment and a trust to the will and the ways of God. He hears Jesus say, Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit.

And John, there has to be a revelation that the power to do this, the power to love like this, the power to forgive like this, the power to simply be put to death as it is by an indifferent society has to rest in a confidence that God is able to sustain me. God is able to give me life. It's the cornerstone, folks.

That's the very reason why when we believe in Christ, we cannot be triumphed over by any power of evil, because the one in whose hand we are is well able to keep us. Come what may, come what difficulty, come what trial. I am according to Christ and you are sealed in the hand of God, the father, and no man can take you out of God's hand.

Hallelujah. Paul says in Romans chapter seven and verse 18, he defines the human condition and the human condition, Paul says, is defined by the knowledge of what to do, but the inability to perform it. And that's the human condition.

When you bring that into religion, you have a human condition who now knows more of what it's supposed to do and is less able to perform it. But the cross clearly brings us to the place of understanding the power to do and be is given to us of God. We're not called to clean up our act.

We're called to let the one who triumphed over hell and the power of sin come into our lives and let him from the inside out begin to make us into a new creation. That's why it's good news, folks. There's no other reason.

It's good news. Praise God. I don't have to do this in my own strength.

Yes, my will is required. My heart is required to want to walk with God, but he gives me the power to perform as it is everything he asks me to do. We find that at the cross.

You don't find that in seven steps to better Christianity. You find it at the cross of Christ. The cross is God's display to the whole world of power of God, the power to love, the power to forgive, the power to walk as a new creature alive from the dead in Christ.

Oh, God, help us to understand these things again. So here John stands. He's at the cross.

And what do I do now? Everything I thought was stable has become the opposite. All that I felt I placed my trust in has changed. Yet at Calvary here, I know is found life and the reason for which I was born.

Whether or not you understand it, the reason for which you was born, you were born is defined by the cross. You find it at the cross. What a foolish church age we've been to leave these truths to the side.

We ask ourselves the question, did John have an inner cry? As you have today, Oh, Jesus, did you come to church today? Just like John went back to Calvary and say, Oh, Jesus, please just talk to me. Please tell me my future. Tell me what to do.

What is my life going to be? Where are you going to take me? What are you going to do through me? Just tell me what to do. I don't know where to work. I don't know who to marry.

I don't know who to stay married to. I don't know. I don't know what to do.

I don't know what to do with my children. I don't know what to do with my neighbor. I don't know what to do in my job.

I just don't know what to do. So Lord, can you just please show me the future? Take me 20 years down the road. Show me where I'm going.

It'll help me. Please, Jesus, just speak to me. And I can see John standing at the cross and most likely didn't vocalize it, but in his heart, Oh, Jesus, please one more time.

Help me in my struggle. Tell me what to do. I don't know what to do.

I don't know where to go. Everything has failed me. I'm confused.

I can't follow Peter. He's warming his hands and cursing with an oath that he never knew you. I can't follow that man.

Everyone else is run. I don't even know where they are. There's three older women here.

God speak to me. I need to know. Tell me what to do.

Now Jesus clearly could have told him, well, John, you're going to have quite a life. You see, you're going to travel. You're going to preach in churches all throughout parts of the world.

You're, you're going to, at the end of your life, I'm going to send you to a Greek Island and in maybe not telling all the details, but in, uh, in that place, you're, you're going to be given a revelation. That's going to be mind boggling. Nobody, but Isaiah and perhaps Daniel's ever had a revelation that will ever, ever rival what I'm going to give to you.

It's going to be awesome. John, what's going to happen in your life in the future, but that's not what he does. You see, we'd like to know that.

We always want to know the whole picture. You want to get out of your seat today, come to an altar and just know what's going to happen 60 years down the road. If you live that long, tell me, God, show me the whole path.

I'll, I'll leave my job. If I, if I knew Isaiah said it this way in chapter 28 of Isaiah verses nine and 10, in part in both verses, he says, whom shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? In other words, who will God speak to who will understand the truth. And in verse 10, it goes on and he talks about, it will be those that are young, in a sense, young in their understanding, but young in heart too, as well, who have a trusting heart.

And then in verse 10, he says, precept upon precept line upon line here a little and there a little God said, this is how these are the people I'll teach doctrine to who are, who don't need to know the whole picture, but they have a trusting heart. They know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose. They know they cannot be overcome by the power of hell and darkness.

They know I love them. They know I've redeemed them. They know they're left on the earth for a purpose.

They're willing to follow me day by day. And I will teach them a little bit here, a little bit there, a line here, a line there. I will begin to build in a sense, this testimony of my life within them.

They'll not see the whole picture. It'll be just a little bit. And even today will be just another piece to this life of his testimony.

He's building within you. And John, I'm sure is waiting there. Speak to me.

Oh God, speak to me. I know this is where the power is. Show me, tell me, give me the keys to this power.

Help me to understand how can I forgive Peter? How, how can I go back to serving you? What is it that I need to do? What's my life all about? Show me what to do. Then finally John would have looked and he sees the lips of Jesus, his eyes first looking at him and his lips begin to move. And this is the moment, this is the moment where I'm going to get the revelation of God's plan for my life.

And Jesus looks down at him and he says, behold thy mother. It's a revelation. You know what he's saying? Look after this person who's precious in my sight and now must also be precious in your sight.

This is not just a little old lady at the cross. This person is precious to me. John, I want you to see her the way I do.

I want you to look after her. John, I want you to be there for her. If she needs her groceries carried home, John, I want you to carry them home.

John, John, I'm giving you this person is dear to my heart. And then just before this in verse 26, Jesus looks at Mary, his mother and says, woman, behold your son. And he's saying to his own mother, Mary, love this young man who needs guidance and he needs a compassionate touch.

You see, I can't touch him from the cross right now, but through you, he'll still be able to lean on me and feel my heart. This is the power of the cross. How many kids are coming in here Friday night? They've never known a father.

They've not had normal family in many cases, and they don't know what the touch of God is. But you see, we bear this living Christ in these earthen vessels. We are the church of the living God.

And the Lord says, I can touch them through you. They can hear my heart through yours. You see, this is a revelation.

It's a deep revelation. It's so deep that most people can't see it. Behold your mother, behold your son.

Go with me in the Old Testament. We're going to close with this last book of the Old Testament, Malachi chapter four and verses five and six. I've always wondered about this prophecy because most people who study it seem to agree that it's a duality here.

It was fulfilled. These verses were fulfilled when John the Baptist came as the forerunner of Jesus Christ. But yet the author, the Holy Spirit through Malachi, speaks in the context of the last days.

And so there seems to be a duality as if this same momentous happening is going to happen twice. First, as a forerunner to the physical coming of Jesus. And secondly, as a forerunner to the return of Jesus.

Because in Malachi chapter four, verse one, he says, behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven. Clearly, the Bible, if you truly study it, talks about the heavens being on fire in the last days. Peter says it clearly, everything's going to be dissolved.

Isaiah talks about the people who will be worshipping God in the midst of the fires. It's clearly in the scripture, there'll be a day of trouble such as the world has never known. And all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be stubble.

The day that comes shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts. It shall leave them neither root nor branch. Verse two says, but unto you that fear my name shall the son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

He shall go forth and grow up as the calves of the stall. You will tread down the wicked. There shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.

In other words, anything of wickedness that has come and damaged the body of Christ, the Lord says in the last days, you're going to know it and you're going to tread it under your feet. It's speaking about a theological perspectives that are not correct. You're going to put it under foot.

Remember the law of Moses, my servant, verse four, which I commanded unto him in Horeb with all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet. Now it was a physical forerunner in John the Baptist.

I do believe it's going to be the message of the last days talking about this, the same spirit, the same message that came through Elijah is going to start coming through many in the body of Christ. I'll send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Now here's what this message will do.

And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers. Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. There's going to be as it is in the last days, an absolute breakdown of family.

And we're seeing it now we're living in that day when family is dissolving, it's breaking apart and seemingly losing its protection at every level. Even in the womb family is being attacked as it's never been attacked before. We're seeing family attacked even in the church of Christ because theological perspective in many places is selfishness.

And when you preach selfishness, you're teaching men and women to cast off in a sense, the cross and the love and the forgiveness and the giving of oneself that is, can only be found in Christ. And now we have a generation that are using Christ for themselves. And because of a divorce is rampant, even in the house of God and children are wounded in the house of God.

And leaders are falling like flies in the house of God, because the theological perspective is wrong folks. We've got to come back to the cross. And that's what Malachi is saying.

You've got to hear this now. Malachi is saying in verse six, this anointing of John as it is, is going to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. And what it speaks to me is a last day church that is coming back to the cross because it's at the cross that Jesus said, behold your mother and behold your son.

They're coming back to the cross folks. The church is coming back to the cross of Jesus Christ one more time. Coming back to the cross means I'm no longer living for myself, but I'm living for God.

And subsequently I'm living for other people. And subsequently I'm willing and able by God's grace to forgive those that have wronged me. I'm willing to believe for the unbelievable all around me.

I'm willing to and able to love the unlovely. I'm able to take into my heart, take into my home, take into my bosom, people that I know I didn't care about before I came to Christ. It's a giving of oneself.

That's what's found at the cross. That's where the power of God is. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

I see the church coming back to the cross of Christ. I see an opening of heaven again. I see an understanding of why God became a man and shed his blood.

I see the church rising up and becoming the church of Jesus Christ. I see fathers and sons and mothers and daughters turning back again one to another. I see love in the Christian home and family.

I see husbands turning to their wives and saying the devil is not getting a marriage. He's not getting a home. He's not getting a children.

I'm going to give myself for you and I'm going to love you as Christ loves the church in obedience to the word of God. I see a church rising up and coming back to the cross of Christ. Hallelujah.

By God's mercy and by God's grace, there will be an overcoming church in this lawless last day. Hallelujah. A testimony of the ability to give of oneself for the betterment of others.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

A church age where we'll be able to say it's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. The life I now live, I live by the faith and the power of the son of God who gave himself for me. Hallelujah.

Blessed be God. What a day awaits us. What a day awaits us folks.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. You ask me now, what do I do? Well, behold your brother.

Behold your mother. Behold your son. That's where it all begins.

And if we don't start there, it goes nowhere. Hallelujah. Now you know what to do.

Loving people should not be a revelation, but it is. Herein John said, and let me just read it to you in first John chapter four, verse 17 to 21. Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world.

There's no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And he that fears, might I add in brackets, he that fears people is not made perfect in love. He that fears.

You can't have Christ and live in a bubble. The bubble's got to go and people have got to get in close. You can't have it that way.

Verse 19 says, we love him because he first loved us. If a man says, I love God and hates his brother, actually the word hate in the, in the Greek has the context of indifference. I don't care what happens to you.

All the best. If a man says he loves God and hates his brother, he's a liar. For he that doesn't love his brother whom he has seen, how could he love God who he's not? And this commandment that we have

from him that he who loves God, love his brother also.

And this is where it begins. This is where it begins today. Do this.

You see, if John wasn't, if John would have said, well, you know, Jesus, I've got like, it doesn't fit my image of myself right now. You know, taking this old lady into my house. I appreciate you, you know, appreciate you, you know, but it just doesn't fit my image right now.

And you know, this is a long time commitment. I mean, she could live another 30 years. But that's the human heart.

You know, we like to be moved with missionary stories, but you know, we're not too interested in actually getting involved sometimes. I don't like to tell stories about myself because it seems self-serving, but I want to share this one with you. The other day I was just out walking my wife's dog and my daughter's dog.

I don't own one. I just get to walk them. And I saw a man come out of the police station and he was eating out of a garbage can.

And I didn't perceive him to be homeless. Not that that makes any difference, but just a guy really down on his luck. And he'd been overnight in jail.

And I just walked over to him. I gave him something and I said, here, go get yourself some breakfast. And he turned and he looked at me, he said, God bless you.

And I knew immediately this man had a church background. And I don't remember what I said, but probably something like he has. That's why I do what I do.

And he walked about 20 feet down the street and turned again, unshaven. He'd had a bad, bad, bad night and turned again and said, God bless you. You know, he knew what had come to him had come from the hand of God.

That's why I'm in the pulpit. Does that make sense? It started when I first got saved. And you know, you're saying, God, show me my life.

Oh, what a plan. What is your plan for me? What have you got for me? The very first thing, and I remember it clearly, is Ephesians 5. The Lord took me to Ephesians chapter 5. Love your wives as Christ loved the church. That was the first thing that God asked me to do.

I didn't know how to do that. I was a very selfish man. So I really had to go to Christ.

I had to petition him. I had to fast. I had to plead.

I had to be open to be reprov'd when I wasn't doing this. And I can't tell you how, but I can tell you little by little and line by line and precept by precept, what was a hope became a reality. And then he told me, he says, don't provoke your children to wrath.

And it took me a while to learn this, but I wanted to learn it. And he was teaching me, you've got to come out of yourself. And it's got to be about people around you, starting first in your home.

And then from the home, it moves into the larger circle as it is. The greatest revelation of anything that he's given me to speak on today is just behold your mother and behold your son. Now I've got an altar call today that the Lord's given me.

And it's for people, firstly, who are afraid to be loved. It seems rather odd, doesn't it? But many people are. You've trusted, it's been abused, and you won't let anybody close because you're actually afraid to be loved.

But perfect love will cast that fear out. Will it happen immediately at this altar? Probably not. But little by little, line by line, person by person, interaction by interaction, you'll begin to change.

And then there's a second type of person who's afraid to love, because there's a vulnerability in loving somebody else. And it doesn't always work out the way you want it to. Think of all the people that stood before the cross.

It didn't all work out the way that God wanted it to. Not every soldier came to Christ. One did, I think, and not every Pharisee turned from their sin.

It didn't all work out. But for the sake of those that did turn, it was worth it. And if you reach out to people and become vulnerable, it won't all work out.

Some will spit in your face. Others will abuse you. But is it worth it? If 10 people spit in your face for the one who doesn't and turns to Christ, I want to ask you a question.

Is it not worth it? And do we turn away because we have one or two bad experiences? I don't think so. Working with people is the hardest thing that you and I will ever have to do. A minister said one time, if it wasn't for people, I would love preaching.

But God takes you beyond that. Takes me beyond that. And what is a theory becomes real.

We find it at the cross. I want to give an altar call, especially for those who are afraid to be loved and for those who are afraid to love. That today you'll just do the first things.

Just do this first thing and say, Lord, you put some... Now, I want you to be careful because we have people that attend this church that work the generosity of the believer. There are frauds. If a mouse falls in a cookie jar, it doesn't make him a cookie.

And there are frauds here, probably this morning as well, that when they hear a message like this, they'll go and they'll start giving you a big sob story about all their financial needs. And they work the church. When they're done working this church, we find them, they go to another.

So you have to be discerning. I'm not talking about being generous to the frauds. I'm talking about having an open heart and the Holy Spirit guiding you and helping those who truly need help.

Father, I thank you, Lord God, for simple yet profound revelation. Oh, Jesus, bring us back to the cross. I pray, God, with all my heart, that in our generation, hundreds of thousands of your people will come back to the cross of Christ again.

And we will find your heart there and we'll find your power there and we'll find your purpose there. And we will begin to walk with you again. God, turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the children

to their fathers and to their mothers.

Give us a largeness of heart that we can care for these young ones that are coming into this house. Oh, Lord, help us. God, you've worked in us a great measure of compassion.

But Lord, we want the fullness of what you have. Thank you, Lord, that John obeyed you. And because of it, you gave him the revelation.

And when we obey you, you will give us the revelation, Lord. God, I thank you with all my heart. Help those who need your help this morning.

Help us to accept love and to be able to give it in the strength of Christ. I ask it in Jesus' name. As we stand today in the annex, if you would step between the screens in the main sanctuary, the balcony, if you'd like to come to this altar, if the Holy Spirit is drawing you, let's all stand together and we'll pray.

God, spoken to your heart, if you're backslidden, come home. Backslidden means you've drifted, you've run from God. Come back.

Just come back home. The Lord will receive you. Let's worship.

Praise God. The Lord will never ask you to do anything that he won't give you the power to do it. He'll give you the power to receive his love and he'll give you the power to be an expression of his love.

Now, you may have little or no background in understanding these things. John didn't at that moment either, but he just simply obeyed it. And it's amazing when you consider that Jesus had physical brothers, sisters, but he didn't entrust his mother to them.

And there's a reason. That's like you and I can say, well, you know, the state will look after all these people. And the Lord says, no, you, I've given it to you to do it.

Praise God. Hallelujah. I'm gonna lead you in a very simple prayer.

You've heard the word and I don't need to re-preach it. I don't need to re-preach it in a prayer either. Pray this with me.

Lord Jesus. Thank you. Amen.

Let's be back at three o'clock and six o'clock. Go rejoice. Just go rejoicing.

Love one another. God bless you. This is the conclusion of the message.

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