

# Servanthood - Walking With God

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on the Lord, prioritizing relationship with God, and embracing full-time ministry to become the church that God intends.*

**Duration:** 57:43

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:11

**Topics:** "Servanthood"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of maintaining usefulness for God. He highlights the theme of the book, which is grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The preacher discusses the apostle Paul's role as an apostle, teacher, and pastor to the church in Ephesus. He also shares a personal experience of setting goals and how they can limit God's blessings. The sermon concludes with a reminder from the prophet to King Asa about the importance of depending on God rather than relying on one's own strength.

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## Transcript

You know, it's a lot easier to get into a mess than it is to get out of a mess. And I have found that it is a lot easier to get people into the church than to get people out of the church sometimes too. And a lot of times, you know, if our motivation is just to get people in, and, you know, we're primarily concerned in numbers, we can actually oftentimes coerce people into church who God really never had intended to be a part of that particular body.

Then try to get them out. We've always prayed. And people come many times to men's prayer meeting and thought, what in the world is going on? We pray, Lord, please keep away from the church those that you know shouldn't be here.

Those that are coming for wrong motivations. Those that you know are not to be a part of the body here. Just Lord, keep them away from here.

So, waiting on the Lord is a very important thing for us as far as our position with the church. Because we oftentimes have the concept that, you know, it's our job to build the church. And we're so busy trying to build up the church.

But Jesus said, upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So, for years and years, I spun my wheels trying to build the church of Jesus Christ. And wore myself out and never did accomplish very much.

And then, I got out of the way and just started letting the Lord build His church. Sort of standing on the sidelines and just watching what God can do. Just waiting on the Lord.

And I found that He was capable of doing a much better job than I ever hoped to do. Ever thought of doing. While we're with you in these next few days, the purpose of our being here is really to just enrichment.

Spiritual enrichment for your ministries. Not going to try and lay a lot of heavy trips on you. Just give you things that will help you in ministering to the body of Christ.

And sort of a time for you to just come and get your batteries recharged. And just to wait upon the Lord. Just to get into the Word.

Just to become refreshed in your whole spiritual walk in life. So, we're just looking forward to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit to each of us while we are here. Because that's what it's all about.

As we are just ministered to by the Spirit of God. And equipped and enabled to go back to the various areas where we are serving the Lord. And to become that servant that God would have us to be.

To me it is interesting that God was so pleased with the prayer of Solomon. Lord, just give me wisdom. That I may know how to really guide your people.

That's my prayer. God, give me wisdom. That I may know how to guide your people.

They're not my people. They're not my flock. They're His flock.

Now, the Lord has me there to watch over His flock. But I'll tell you, I need His wisdom. How to go in and out among them.

How to behave myself before them. Lord, I need wisdom. In managing, overseeing your flock.

There is no biblical concept of the church. That would be complete. Apart from the book of Ephesus.

For, as Paul is writing to the Ephesians. He is writing to the church. Ephesus was the church that Paul himself had founded.

And spent a couple of years in its early development. The laying of the foundations. The people were very dear to the heart of Paul.

The book of Ephesians is. Really brings you into some of the highest planes. Of Christian experience.

The church is God intended. The church is God's purpose. And so in the sessions that I have with you.

It is my desire to have sort of a. Study of the book of Ephesians. Just sort of trying to understand. The biblical concepts of the church.

What God has intended for the church. So that we might become. The church that God intends.

Now, it is my conviction. That God wants to bless every one of you. And bless every one of your churches. That that is the will. And heart of God. God is just looking. For a place to work. He's just looking for people that he can bless. I do not believe that the lack of God's blessings. Ever stem on God's end. I believe it is the purpose of God. And the will of God to bless you. And to bless your church. And to bless your ministries. More than you ever dreamed. That's why I don't like to set goals. I think they're limiting. Of what God wants to do. I one time had a goal. To pastor a church of 250 people. And goals can be limiting. Putting the limits on what God wants to do in your life. So I think it's important that. We just know that God wants to bless us. And we be open for those blessings of God. Now. The prophet said to Asa the king. That when he was young. And when he was weak. He recognized the fact that he was dependent upon God. Holy, completely. And because he depended upon God. The God that God delivered into. His hands. The great host of the Ethiopians and the Nubians. But he said now. That you've become strong. Now that you've become powerful. You're relying now upon your own strength. Upon the alliances that you have made. And you're not relying upon the Lord. And he said don't you realize. That the eyes of the Lord. Go to and fro throughout the entire earth. To show himself strong. On behalf of those whose hearts. Are perfect towards him. Don't you know that God is looking for people to bless. Don't you know that God is wanting to work. Wanting to demonstrate his power. Wanting to demonstrate his greatness. That God is desiring to show forth to the world. The greatness of his power and love. But what he needs. Is a heart. That is perfect. And the word perfect. Always means complete. A heart that is completely towards him. Now. I believe that this is the only criteria necessary for us. In order to experience the fullness. And the richness of God's blessings upon our lives. Is that we get our hearts perfect towards him. Completely towards him. Jesus said seek ye first.

The kingdom of God and his righteousness. Now he's laying out priorities. And in the ministry one of the most important things.

Is priority. You can waste days in stupid little non-essentials. What kind of doorknobs are we going to put on the cupboards? You know in a committee meetings.

Determining the kind of doorknobs that go on the cupboards. And you can waste so much time in stupid non-essentials. Oh but that color doesn't go well with the car.

You know all of the silly things. You can get involved in. And you can also become involved in seeking first.

Your church growth and development. You can seek first the building up of your church. But if you'll seek first the kingdom of God.

And his righteousness. He'll take care of the rest of it. Don't try to build your church.

Don't even worry about how many come to your church. Well I'm sorry you know. You don't go to our church.

Therefore you know we can't help you. Or we don't minister to you. No you seek first the kingdom of God.

And his righteousness. Get your heart completely towards God. The work that God is wanting to do.

And as you do. When your heart is completely towards him. Then you're going to find.

That your life is going to be a channel. And God is going to begin to flow his love. His blessings forth from you.

And listen. You don't have to worry about building your church. The Lord will take care of that.

I am convinced. That when the church becomes what God wants the church to be. That God will do for the church.

What he's been wanting to do all the way along. Just get your heart completely towards him. All these other things.

They'll be taken care of. But in our misplaced priorities. We are spending so much time in the other things.

We don't have time for him. Or our relationship with him. Let's turn to Ephesians.

And let's begin to read. And to see the biblical concept of the church. As is revealed.

Here in the book of Ephesians. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. To the saints which are at Ephesus.

And to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Now we are encouraged to make your calling and elections sure.

God has called each of us. For a full time ministry. Every person I feel is called of God.

For a full time ministry. Now it may be. That for the time being.

Your salary is paid by Shell Oil Company. Because you got to eat. But that doesn't take away from the fact that God has called you to a full time ministry.

I think that we have made a tragic mistake in the church. In classifying full time ministers. As only those who are paid by the church for the ministry that they do.

Somehow if you are drawing your salary from a church or para church organization. Then you are considered full time minister. But if you are drawing your salary from some place else.

Then you are not really considered a full time minister. Part time minister or whatever. And I think that is a bad concept.

I think that the people need to realize that they are all called by God to a full time ministry. Their life belongs to Jesus Christ. Now everybody has to eat.

So someone may be paying your salary. That is not a church or para church organization. But still your life should be totally given over into a full time ministry to the Lord.

I am serving the Lord. And the people need to have this concept. The fact that they are serving the Lord.

And not to feel second rate because they are getting their salary from some place else. It is an interesting thing that. If a man.

Is a dentist. And he signs up with a missionary organization. And goes down to Central America.

And there he is in a clinic and all day long. He is checking the teeth of the little children or of their parents. Filling teeth and all of this kind of stuff.

Because the mission board back here is paying his salary. We say well he is a full time missionary. A full time minister.

Now we have a man who is up here in the states. He loves the Lord. He has a home Bible study in his house.

He is teaching in the Sunday school class. He is helping in the church. He is witnessing all the time.

But he spends his days. Filling teeth. Pulling teeth.

And all. And we say well no. You see he is not a full time minister.

Because his customers are paying his salary. The patients are paying his salary. Well in reality he may have a more valid full time ministry.

In that he is a drawing out from the funds of the Lord. We need to get away from this idea of full time ministry or part time ministry. And know that each of us have a full time calling to serve God.

No one has been called to serve God part time. We have all been called to serve the Lord in a full time service. Now Paul an apostle.

It might well be Paul a service station attendant. Paul a fisherman. Paul a carpenter.

By the will of God. Because the Lord knows people have to live in houses. And people have to eat food.

Whatever you do in word or deed do all to the glory of God. If I am just a farmer. God needs farmers.

People have to eat. If it weren't for the farmers I couldn't be doing what I am doing. I would have to be out in the fields growing my own food.

So God has a place for each man. And no one should feel like a second rate servant of God. Just because he doesn't have a pulpit ministry.

Or just because he isn't drawing a full time or a salary from a church for our para church organization. We are all full time ministers. Now of course Paul has always been my model.

He said be ye followers of me even as I also am of Jesus Christ. And he has always been a model for me. And I was always encouraged that Paul was willing and able to go out and make tents.

Though he says Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Even as an apostle of Jesus Christ he could draw a salary by making tents. Now while Paul was in Ephesus.

It was there in Ephesus where they came and they took from Paul. It says handkerchiefs. The word is actually sweat bands.

Because Paul was working. And he had a sweat band around his head. And they'd take these sweat bands from Paul and lay them on the sick.

And the people would be healed. Now that doesn't sound as glamorous as a little piece of cloth with perfumed oil. But to me it's glorious to realize that here's a guy willing to get in and sweat.

To provide his livelihood. But yet during the siesta time in the afternoon when people took time off and just rested. Then he would be teaching the word of God.

Come evening he'd be teaching the word of God. And so to the Ephesians Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Now he tells us in the fourth chapter that God has placed in the church apostles.

And then he has also placed prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers. And as we look at Paul's life he actually wore many hats. The hat of an apostle for sure.

There were other times when he wore the hat of a teacher. To the church in Ephesus he was its pastor for a time. He began his work in Ephesus in evangelism.

And he surely exercised it a prophetic ministry among them speaking forth God's truth to them. Now I believe that there are ministry gifts. And I believe that the listing here is of ministry gifts.

That men have been called of God as apostles. Called of God as prophets. Called of God as evangelists.

Called of God as pastors. Called of God as pastors teachers. And these are the various ministries or administrations within the church.

Along with governments and helps and so forth. And I believe that for each of these callings there are certain gifts of the spirit. That enable us to fulfill that particular calling.

That God has placed upon us for the ministry that we have. And I believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to enable us and to empower us. To fulfill the particular ministry that God has called us to fulfill.

And thus I think for a pastor teacher. The gift of the word of wisdom. The word of knowledge.

Prophecy. Very important. For an evangelist perhaps the gift of faith.

The working of miracles. The gifts of healing. Gifts varied according to the calling of God upon our lives.

For that place of ministry within the body that we are to fulfill. So Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. To the saints which are at Ephesus and.

Notice he doesn't limit it to just the saints at Ephesus. And to the faithful in Christ Jesus. I believe that if there is a theme that runs through the book of Ephesus.

It is in Christ Jesus. And thus Paul introduces the theme of the book very early. And if you are going to ever make a thorough study of the book of Ephesus.

It is important that you underline every time he makes a reference to the relationship. In Christ Jesus. In him.

By him. For him. Through him.

He shows how that the believer's life is totally bound up in the person of Jesus Christ. That we are nothing really apart from him. It is in him.

It is through him. It is by him. It is for him.

That our lives exist. Naturally when you start talking about this kind of a relationship. Your mind must go back to the words of Christ in the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of John.

Where he talks there. About that relationship. Abide in me.

My words abide in you. And the necessity of this if we are to bear fruit for him. And the purpose of the father is not that you just bear fruit.

But that you bear much fruit. Herein is your father glorified. Now God wants to bless you.

God wants to work in your life. God has a work he wants to do. In your area.

In your community. A greater work than you have yet seen. A greater work than you can even imagine.

And God wants to use you as his instrument in accomplishing his work in that community. But relationship is first. And thus your relationship has to be the first priority of your life.

Your relationship with him. And may God while you're here in these few days just really help you to draw close to him. To be open to him.

To get that relationship established so that God can begin to do the work in your life that he wants to do in your life. So that he can do through your life what he wants to do through your life. But here again you have the vertical and the horizontal.

And the vertical is always important. The axis upon which your life revolves. Your relationship with God.

The up and down. This is so vital. Because if this is out of kilter.

Your horizontal plane is going to be out of kilter. There's no way. You've got a fixed axis.

And there is no way that you can have a well-balanced life on the horizontal plane unless you have a corrected vertical axis to your life. Upon which your life is revolving. And thus the problems always come back to my relationship with God.

That relationship that I establish and maintain in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ. As that relationship is right, then this horizontal plane becomes right and I become effective. Because God is looking first of all for what he can do in you.

But God never stops at that point. God is interested in what he can do in you because he is interested in doing through you. But it is important that he first of all work in you.

And when that work of God has been accomplished in you. Then God can do through you what he has been wanting to do through you. But if God started doing through you what he is wanting to do through you.

Before first of all doing in you what is necessary to be done in you. We are all of us so stupid and dumb and flesh oriented. That we go around boasting and prating what we were doing for God and all this kind of stuff.

And just totally blow it. So God works in us first. And this relationship must be established first.

And thus top priority. The work of God in my life. My relationship with him.

The heart perfect towards God. Or a heart that is completely towards God. And this is something that you don't do once and then say well I did that you know already.

Where do I go from here? It is something that you must maintain. It is something that is a continual thing. Paul the Apostle speaking of his own ministry said, I beat my body.

Literally until it is black and blue, until it is bruised. To keep my body under. Lest having preached to others I myself would be set aside.

Put on a shelf. Cast away. No longer fit for the masters use.

Toss it out. It is a vessel that no longer can be used for the Lord. And I look at the broken vessels along the side of the road.

Men who one time had an effective powerful ministry for God. And I realize the importance of keeping the body under. For the body, the area of my flesh, desires praise.

It desires adoration. It desires the glory of man. And if you don't keep the body under, it is going to be doing little antics to draw attention to itself.

As a minister it is important that we be spiritual. But one of the problems is that I like to appear to my people more spiritual than I really am. And thus I like to give forth little innuendos of deep spirituality.

Let little things sort of slip out so that they'll understand how deeply spiritual I am. So they'll say, oh my, isn't it wonderful our pastor is so spiritual. My flesh loves that.

For people to think that I am a deeply spiritual man of God. And so I like to just let it sort of slip out once in a while. Well, this morning as I was in meditation.

I figured it was getting close to morning because I could hear the roosters crowing. The Lord just seemed to reveal to my heart, you know. Oh man, isn't he spiritual? Wow, you know, he's up before the roosters, you know, praying and getting revelations from God.

Wow, you know. What they don't know is that I was stupid enough to have onions on my hamburger the night before and I couldn't sleep. So I was just tossing when I heard the roosters crowing, you know.

And the Lord revealed to me I shouldn't have onions so late at night. But let me tell the story and it's going to come off deeply spiritual. So that people are going to stand in awe and wonder of me.

No, they need to stand in awe and wonder of our Lord. And in awe and wonder that our Lord would use such as me to do his work. You see, what we do is we sort of close off from the mind of people the concept that God can use them.

God only uses deeply spiritual committed people. What does that mean? They're never available for God because I know I'm not worthy. I know I don't deserve it.

I know I'm not deeply committed and spiritual and all. And so how can God use me? Well, God bless the pastor and God use the pastor. He's a deeply spiritual man, but God can't use me because I'm not.

But it also comes down then to me. Well, because I know the truth about me. Though they may think that I am deeply spiritual, I know the truth about me.

And I think, well, how can God use me? Because God only uses deeply spiritual people. And as a result, God has nobody to use. Nobody's available.

But if we realize that God is willing to use anything he can get his hands on, that's just available for him to use. And he wants to use me. And he begins by working in me.

Then as he has worked in me, he is able to work through me his works to others. But in God's work, I must remain in that position of spirit, soul, and body and keep the body under. The minute you become body, soul, and spirit, then, man, you're going to get set on a shelf.

You've got to maintain the spiritual balance of spirit, soul, and body. Maintain that usefulness for God. In Christ Jesus, the theme of the book, Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace are the Siamese twins of the New Testament. They are always coupled together. You rarely find them apart from each other.

But they are always in this order. You never read peace and grace. Because that's out of order.

The proper order is always grace and peace. Because no one can really experience the real peace of God until they have experienced the grace of God. Now, I had peace with God years before I had the peace of God in my life.

The peace with God was established years ago when I allowed Jesus Christ to come in and to cleanse me from my sin. I had peace with God. But it took years, years actually in the ministry before I ever experienced the peace of God within my life.

And I never did experience the peace of God in my life until I discovered the grace of God towards me. As long as I was trying to deserve and merit and earn a place in God's kingdom, I was striving and I never did know the peace of God. It was only after I discovered the glorious grace of God and accepted that grace of God that I then began to experience the peace of God.

So, there is a peace of God you can only know once you have really discovered the grace of God in your own life. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, some people looking at the Lord Jesus Christ think of that as his first, middle, and last name.

Not so. Actually, they should have put a comma after the word Lord to get the correct understanding. Lord is not his name at all.

His name isn't Lord. Lord is not a name. Lord is a title.

It is a title that signifies relationship. Jesus is his name. Yahshua.

Jehovah is salvation. Christ is his mission you might say. It's the Greek of the Hebrew Messiah.

The anointed one, his mission. But Lord is his title. Now, there are many people who speak of the Lord.

Use that title as a name. But it does not truly signify a relationship. And Jesus tells us that many are going to come to him in that day saying, Lord, Lord.

A repetition for emphasis. Did we not prophesy in your name and do many mighty miracles? We cast out devils. Lord, Lord, Lord.

We did all these things and he's going to say, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you. He never knew them in that relationship.

He was never really the Lord of their lives. Now, Jesus points out an important inconsistency when he said, why callest thou me Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I command you. Lord is a title.

If I use that title of Lord, then that means that I am the servant, I am the slave. I'm the douloi, the bond slave. He's my kurios, my Lord, my master.

And thus, I have no rights of my own. I can't say where I'm going to serve or how I'm going to serve or what I'm going to do and not do. I've relinquished those rights to my Lord.

That's what the title means. That I've relinquished my rights of self-determination to him. This is relationship.

Relationship is vital. If I'm going to be a servant, the relationship has to first of all be established and it is a Lord-servant relationship. But so many of us are like Peter when the sheep was let down from heaven and he saw all these various unclean animals on it and the Lord said to Peter, arise Peter, kill and eat.

Not so, Lord. I've never eaten anything that is unclean. That's the most inconsistent statement in the Bible.

Not so, Lord. You can't say that. That's a perfect inconsistency.

You can say, not so, buddy. Not so, friend. But you can't say, not so, Lord.

If the Lord tells you to do something, if he indeed is Lord, you have no place of argument, you have no place of question. Yours is just to obey and to do because he is the Lord. Why callest thou me, Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I command you? You're inconsistent.

The Lord, Jesus Christ. This is where I think a lot of people get confused in Romans 10, 9 and 10. As far as salvation and they make salvation actually easier and more simple than it really is.

Though I think most of the time we're making it more complex, but yet. If thou shall confess with thy mouth, your King James says the Lord Jesus Christ. Literally from the Greek it is, if thou shall confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead. That it is actually a submission to myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Which is so important.

And especially if I am marked as a servant of God. What does that imply? The Lordship of Jesus Christ. So above all others, you.

In your position. As a servant should have that Lord concept. In regards to Jesus Christ.

He is the Lord. Relationship. Get that relationship established.

Until it is established you can't go to point B. They are saying now and I don't know how much truth there is to it, but they say that. That you have certain developmental tasks that you must. Fulfill psychologically within a certain period of age.

And if you don't fulfill it for them, then you stay stunted until that is fulfilled. In other words, during your teenage years there are certain developmental tasks. And all that must be accomplished during your teenage years for you to really enter into your twenties.

And while you are twenty there are certain other emotional, psychological, developmental things that need to be established. Before you can enter into the maturity of the thirties. And if you don't accomplish them while you are in the twenties.

You are going to remain stunted in that area of development until that is finally accomplished. You will never be able to mature into the thirties and so forth. In judgment and all.

Until you have fulfilled this twenties developmental things. Which one thing is you are supposed to get married in your twenties. And get that part of your sociological development taken care of.

But you are never going to fully develop beyond that. You grow older and you are still going to be a kid. And undeveloped in a certain area of your structure.

This is what they are saying. I don't know. I do know this.

There are certain spiritual developmental tasks that need to be experienced before you can go any further. And before you can really be effective or go any further in your service towards God. That relationship must be established.

In Christ Jesus. But submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That proper relationship.

And until that is established. You are going to stay in this limited area of service to God. You will never be able to go beyond that particular point.

Until this is first of all established. Now in verse three Paul said, Blessed be God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

There you have it. In Christ. All of the blessings that God has for you are in Christ.

This is the record. God has given to us eternal life. And this life is in the Son.

And thus he who has the Son has the life. You have no life apart from in Christ. You have nothing of blessings of God apart from in Christ.

So in reality it is that then in relationship the appropriating of all that Christ was intended to be for you. All of the spiritual blessings that God has for you never come to you apart from Christ. Or your relationship with him.

God the Father who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Relationship. If I'm going to experience and know no matter what blessing you may be talking about.

It's got to come through that relationship in Christ Jesus. Now notice he doesn't even talk here of physical blessings. He's talking of spiritual blessings.

It is tragic that we so often want to reduce things to the physical plane. As though the physical plane were the more important plane of existence. And many people would opt for the physical blessings over the spiritual.

And I think there's a great danger today in a lot of the teaching of the physical prosperity. They ought to go to Red China and preach that doctrine to the Christians over there. They wouldn't find such a popular ear.

Paul warns us about those perverse teachers that would teach that godliness literally is a way to gain. That's literally what Paul says. Calls it perverse.

That godliness is a way to gain. Hey you want to be rich? You want to be wealthy? Godliness man. It's perverse.

Blessings that God has for us. Spiritual blessings. They are ours in Christ Jesus.

Now as you go through chapter 1 and 2 and 3. You're going to find these spiritual blessings. He's going to start listing them for you. We sing count your blessings name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Hey it really will. You go through and see what Paul pulls out here. Of spiritual blessings where with God has blessed you.

You say oh it's been a long time since I've ever been blessed with God. Oh I feel so dry. I've been blessed.

Hey wait a minute. You're blessed every day. And the first blessing is the fact that God chose you.

And so Paul said according as he hath chosen us. Where? In him. When? That we should be the first fruits and so forth.

But chosen in him before the foundation of the world. The first spiritual blessing that you have is that God chose you. You ever wonder why you weren't born a Chinese? One in four are.

The odds for you being born a China man were much greater than being born what you were. Had you been born in China. And reared there.

It may be that you would have never known about Jesus Christ. But God foreknew you. And he chose you.

That you should be in Christ. Before the foundations of the world. I think that the scripture utterly repudiates this doctrine that is being propagated in some of the areas of YWAM.

Of the limited knowledge of God. That God doesn't know if you're going to be saved or lost until you make up your mind for Jesus Christ. And God doesn't know what you're going to do until you make up your mind to do it.

God didn't know Adam was going to sin until Adam sinned. Took God by surprise. I can't accept that.

Because God chose me before the foundations of the world. Now a lot of people get upset with God for choosing. But goodness.

I want the power of choice. I like to choose the people I'm going to be with. When we were kids, you know, we used to play scrub football.

We'd choose up teams. And I quite often was, you know, the captain. I got to choose my team.

And I like that power of choice. And you know what? I always sought to choose winners. When I was making my choices.

I'd always try to choose the guys that were the best. You know, you're not going to deliberately choose a loser. That's sort of dumb.

Now, God chose me. That excites me. He's not going to choose a loser.

And so it's thrilling to me that God chose me. It's a blessing to me. Chose me before the foundations of the world.

Now, herein. We enter into a realm that we do not understand fully. Now, one of the problems in the ministry is that people expect you to know all that God knows.

And to understand God. And thus, so many of the questions that you are being asked to answer are questions that begin with, Why did God? And I've come to the place when a person says, Why did God? I say, don't ask any more. I don't know.

I don't know. I don't know the why's of God. God said I wouldn't even know them.

He said, my ways are not your ways. They're higher than your ways. They're beyond your finding out.

Now, when I was a young minister, I felt it very important that I know all that God knew. And I was at least able to give an answer for every question. I used to try to answer the most difficult questions.

In fact, in my own life, I was trying to answer questions that were in my own mind. Then if God chose me, where did my choice come in? If He chose me before the foundations of the earth, then why did I have to choose to submit my life to Jesus Christ? If I was predestined by God, according to His foreknowledge, then what part do I have? And for years I sought to understand the place of human responsibility in the plan of God. When I'm looking at one side, the sovereignty of God, He chose, He ordained, He called, He predestined.

And then I looked at the other side, choose you this day, and the human responsibility, and I could not put them together. I could not reconcile them. I could not reduce them to my understanding until one day in frustration, I put my Bible down and said, God, I can't understand it.

And I was disgusted. Hours and hours I wrestled with these things. And the still small voice said to me, I never asked you to understand it, I only asked you to believe it.

And from that day I've not sought to understand, I only believe. You say, well, but how can, I don't know. Well, what part does your choice have? Well, it has a part, I'm told to choose, therefore it has a part.

And I've chosen. Yeah, but how can you choose if God has already, I don't know. I know He chose me before the foundation of the world.

But that doesn't, no, I can't understand it, and I don't. I believe it. I believe both sides.

Of the truth. But I believe by faith, not by understanding. But by faith.

Now, faith is believing what I don't understand. Reason is understanding what I understand and what I believe. But faith is believing though I don't understand it.

Now, God has called me to faith in some areas. I don't understand where these truths meet or balance. I believe they do.

But I do believe in what in my mind are irreconcilable positions. Now, I don't have to understand them to believe them. I need the faith to believe that God said it.

And He definitely said it. So I believe it. And God is honored by my believing in faith, what I don't understand.

Don't try to understand the whole thing, you never will. There are going to be areas that God is going to leave, deliberately leave, where you're going to have to just, by faith, believe them. In order that God might be honored by your faith.

We'll get on into this in our next lesson as we look at the blessings that we have in Christ. These spiritual blessings, how glorious they are. This is the end of side 2 and the end of this message.

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