

Radical Risk, Radical Reward

by David Platt

Following Jesus requires radical sacrifice and giving up everything we have in order to love Him in a way that makes our closest relationships in this world look like hate in comparison.

Duration: 1:01:06

Scripture: Matthew 5:16, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 8:34, Luke 14:25-27, John 14:6, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:9

Topics: "Radical"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the vast spiritual and physical needs in the world, including the death of thousands of children due to preventable causes. He argues that the integrity of one's faith is measured by their concern for those in need. The speaker asserts that if the Bible is true and these needs exist, then there is no time to waste on a comfortable Christian lifestyle. He calls for radical sacrifice and urgency in fulfilling the mission given by God. The sermon also highlights the importance of knowing and loving God deeply, as demonstrated by the example of a man who sells everything he has to obtain a valuable treasure.

Transcript

I'm going to be turning you, giver of every perfect, no one can comprehend your worth. King over all the universe, do you believe in love? It's all about his glory. And I am alive because I'm alive in you.

It's all because of Jesus I'm alive It's all because of the blood of Jesus Christ That covers me and erases this dead man's life It's all because of Jesus I'm alive Church, are you alive today?

Let's sing it again, give her a better breath Give her of every breath I breathe Author of all eternity Giver of every perfect thing Till you be the glory Maker of heaven and earth No one can comprehend your love King over all the universe Till you be the glory And I'm alive because I'm alive in you It's all because of Jesus I'm alive It's all because of the blood of Jesus Christ That covers me and erases this dead man's life It's all because of Jesus Every sunrise into praise The universe cries out your praise I'm singing freedom all my days Now that I'm alive It's all because of Jesus I'm alive It's all because of the blood of Jesus Christ That covers me and erases this dead man's life It's all because of Jesus It's all because of Jesus I'm alive It's all because of the blood of Jesus

Christ That covers me and erases this dead man's life It's all because of Jesus Because I'm alive Open up the heavenlies Let a new sound be released As the waters cover the sea Cover the earth Open up the

heavenlies Let a new sound be released As the waters cover the sea Cover the earth Open up the
heavenlies Let a new sound be released As the waters cover the sea Cover the earth Open up the
heavenlies Let a new sound be released As the waters cover the sea Cover the earth with your glory
Cover the earth with your glory Cover the earth with the sound of heaven All of the earth is yours All the
nations adore you Cover the earth with the sound of heaven Cover the earth You may be seated We are
so glad you're here at the Church of Pinnacle Hills Father, today, in you and you alone In you and

you alone Do we glory In Jesus' name Amen Christ alone My hope is found He is my light, my strength,
my song This cornerstone This solid ground Firm through the fiercest drought and storm What heights of
love What depths of peace When fears are still When strivings cease My comforter My all in all Here in the
love of Christ I stand In Christ alone Who took on flesh The fullness of God in helpless pain This gift of
love In His righteousness Sworn by the ones He came to save Till on that cross as Jesus died The wrath
of God was satisfied For every sin on Him was laid Here in the death of Christ I lay Here in the ground His
body lay Light of the world by darkness slain Then bursting forth in glorious day Up from the grave He rose
again And as He stands in victory Sin's curse has lost its

dreadful heat For I am His and He is mine And born with the precious blood of Christ On Christ the solid
rock I stand All other ground is sinking sand All other ground is sinking sand On Christ the solid rock I
stand All other ground is sinking sand All other ground is sinking sand No guilt in life No fear in death This
is the power of Christ in me From vice was mine To final breath Jesus commands my destiny No power of
hell No skill of man Can ever love me from His hand Till He returns The Lord calls me home Here in the
power of Christ I stand No mortal words can measure The burdens You did take Accepting pain as
pleasure Oh for my sinful sake May I walk worthy of the cross Worthy of the cross May I glory in the
sacrifice You made Lord may I never be ashamed Of the cross that bears Your

name My richest gain I count it all as lost Walk worthy of the cross Had ever love such proving Was ever
love so prized What is all my loving Compared with Yours O Christ Too scarcely worth the gaining This
failing heart of mine And yet for its attaining You paid the price divine May I walk worthy of the cross
Worthy of the cross May I glory in the sacrifice You made Lord may I never be ashamed Of the cross that
bears Your name My richest gain I count it all as lost Walk worthy of the cross By family neglected By
trusted ones denied By better foes rejected Thorn crowned and crucified Earth's hatred and affliction
Impatience You did bear Returning benediction For cross and nail and spear May I walk worthy of the
cross Worthy of the cross May I glory in the sacrifice You made Lord may I

never be ashamed Of the cross that bears Your name My richest gain I count it all as lost Walk worthy of
the cross May I walk worthy of the cross Worthy of the cross May I glory in the sacrifice You made Lord
may I never be ashamed Of the cross that bears Your name My richest gain I count it all as lost Walk
worthy of Worthy of Worthy of The cross Praise the Lord Praise the Lord from the heavens Praise Him in
the heights above Praise Him all His angels Praise Him all His heavenly hosts Praise Him sun and moon
Praise Him all you highest heavens And you waters above the skies Let them praise the name of the Lord
For He commanded and they were created He set them in place forever and ever He gave a decree that
will never pass away So praise the Lord from the earth You great sea creatures in

all ocean depths Lightning and hail, snow and clouds Stormy winds that do His bidding You mountains
and all hills Fruit trees and all cedars Wild animals and all cattle Small creatures and flying birds Kings of
the earth and all nations You princes and all rulers on the earth Young men and maidens, old men and
children Let them all praise the name of the Lord For His name alone is exalted And His splendor is above

the earth and the heavens And He has raised up for His people a horn The praise of all His saints Of Israel the people close to His heart Praise the Lord Praise the Lord Sing to the Lord a new song His praise and the assembly of the saints Let Israel rejoice in their maker Let the people of Zion be glad in their king Let them praise His name with dancing And make music to Him

with a tambourine and harp For listen, let this soak in The Bible says the Lord takes delight in His people And He crowns the humble with salvation Let the saints rejoice in this honor Let them sing for joy on their beds May the praise of God be in their mouths And a double-edged sword in their hands To inflict vengeance on the nations And punishment on the peoples To bind their kings with fetters Their nobles with shackles of iron To carry out the sentence written against them This is the glory of all the saints Praise the Lord Praise the Lord Praise God in His sanctuary Praise Him in His mighty heavens Praise Him for His hacks of power Praise Him for His surpassing greatness Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet Praise Him with the harp and lyre Praise Him with tambourine and

dancing Praise Him with the strings and flute Praise Him with the clash of cymbals Praise Him with resounding cymbals Let everything that has breath praise the Lord Praise the Lord Do you have breath this morning?

Have you ever thought about what it would be like if that last phrase in the book of Psalms was switched around? What if instead of saying let everything that has breath praise the Lord what if it said let everything that praises the Lord have breath? How many of us would be alive right now? If our every single breath was dependent on it being lifted in praise to our God I submit to you this morning that the God who is worshipped in this room is worthy of nothing less than every single breath If you have a Bible and I hope you do let me invite you to open with me to Luke chapter 9 I want you to know how humbled and honored I am to be here this morning I'm humbled and honored by your pastor I want you to know how thankful I am for Ronnie Floyd I want you to know how thankful I am for his encouragement to me, example to me, and not just to me, but to pastors around our country who look to him for leadership and are encouraged and served by him I thank God for your pastor and his influence his influence not only in this church but in a multitude of churches and I want to thank you as a church for your willingness to share God's grace in him with many other pastors and churches I'm humbled, honored, overwhelmed.

I've been a pastor for a little less than four years and I don't have a clue what I'm doing and if you could keep that a secret from the church at Brook Hills, I would greatly appreciate that I don't say that just to be self-effacing, like I really am clueless I'm like Solomon in 1 Kings chapter 3, I'm only a child and I don't know how to carry out my duties Recently my short time as pastor and really even more importantly simply as a follower of Christ I've found myself at what I can only describe as a crisis of belief that has really revolved around the question of whether or not I really believe this book because if this book is true then the ramifications are staggering 6.8 billion people in the world even the most liberal estimate would put the world at about one third Christian and

that's people who claim to be Christian in many contexts that's more of a social or political identification but even if we were to assume that all of these people were actually followers of Christ that still leaves over four and a half billion people who at this moment are without Christ and if this book is true are on a road that leads to an eternal hell four and a half billion people add on top of vast spiritual need and vast physical need in the world, the reality that today today alone 26,000 children will die of either starvation or a preventable disease and this book is clear that in some sense God measures the integrity of his people's faith by their concern for those in need so if this book is true and this is the picture in the world around us

then we do not have time to play

games with our lives and we do not have time to play games in the church we do not have time to waste our lives living out a nice comfortable Christian spin on the American dream not if this book is true we have a master who demands radical sacrifice and a mission that warrants radical urgency so by the grace of God based on the authority of the word of God I want to call you this morning I want to call you to abandon your plans and dreams and possessions and houses and cars ideas of a nice safe middle class American Christian life I want to call you to abandon it all and radical devotion to Jesus Christ for this is the essence of what it means to be a follower of his Luke 9 57 as they were walking along the road someone said to him, him being Jesus I will follow you wherever you go and

Jesus said to him foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head to another he said follow me but he said Lord but first let me go and bury my father and Jesus said to him leave the dead to bury their own dead but as for you go and proclaim the kingdom of God still another said I will follow you Lord but first let me say farewell to those at my home Jesus said to him no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God isn't this a strange passage doesn't it seem like Jesus is trying to talk these guys out of following him I remember the first time I ever heard this text preached I had just moved down to seminary in New Orleans to study under a preaching professor named Jim Shaddix and a couple weeks after I got

there Dr.

Shaddix invited me to travel with him to an event where he was preaching to students and so I went with him I sat there in the front row and he stood up in front of this group of students and the first words out of his mouth he said to this whole crowd of students he said my goal tonight is to talk you out of following Jesus my eyebrows shot up I thought what like I've just moved my life to study under a man who tells people not to follow Christ this is not what I had envisioned and so he preached this text exactly as it is and in the end he invited students who wanted to follow Christ he said if you want to follow Christ I want to invite you to come down to the front and to my amazement students started pouring down the aisles and I sat there thinking huh it works like tell them you're going to talk them out of following Jesus and they will respond in droves so I decided I was going to try it I was preaching at a youth event the next weekend and it was a little different text but similar and so I stood up and the first words out of my mouth I said my goal tonight is to talk you out of following Jesus and I could see the organizers of the event in the back kind of raise their eyebrows but I thought don't worry I've seen this done before I've been in seminary a couple weeks now like I know what I'm doing so I preached and in the end I invited students to come down to the front if they wanted to follow Christ apparently I was more successful than Dr.

Shaddix was no one moved and I stood there at the front alone for a few moments until the leader of the event came and took the microphone from me and told me it was time to call it a night never been invited back to that particular place I had successfully persuaded every single teenager in the room not to follow Christ doesn't it seem that's what Jesus is doing he's so unlike us isn't he we'll do any and everything we can to draw the crowds but Jesus whenever the crowds got big he'd say something like John 6 surrounded by crowds unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you that's weird now you can imagine the look on the disciples faces as they roll their eyes we're never gonna get on the list of fastest growing movements if you keep telling everyone to eat you

this doesn't work in Luke a few chapters after this Luke 14 verse 25 large crowds were following Jesus and so he turns to them his opening line is if anyone would come after me he must hate his mother and father wife and children brothers and sisters imagine following an obscure religious teacher him turning around and saying if you're gonna come after me you need to hate your mom and dad wife and kids he just lost most of us at hello very next verse as if that was not enough if you're going to come after me you must deny yourself take up your cross and follow me now we for great reason have reverence and respect for the cross in this room we've gotta put ourselves in the shoes of these first century hearers they listen to this pick up a cross pick up an instrument of torture imagine

following an obscure religious teacher in the 21st century him turning around to you and saying if you're gonna come after me you need to pick up your electric chair and follow me it's creepy and then at the end of that passage he says if anyone would come after me he must give up everything he has so give up everything you have pick up an instrument of torture and hate your mom and dad wife and kids that's a lot different than admit believe confess and pray the prayer few chapters later a young man comes up to him eager to follow him he's influential he's rich if anybody needs to be in we've got to get this guy in think of all he can do for the kingdom unfortunately Jesus did not have the personal evangelism methods that we have developed today so what has to be the classic example of

letting the big fish get away he looks at this man and says go sell everything you have and give it to the poor and the man walks away this is where we put ourselves in the shoes of these first century hearers let's really ask the question what if Jesus had said these things to you or me what if he had said if you're gonna come after me you need to hate your mother and father wife and children what if he had said you need to go and sell everything you have and give it to the poor you must give up everything you have would we still be here and this is where we come face to face with the frightening reality ladies and gentlemen Jesus has said these things to us he has told us to give up everything we have he has told us to love him in a way that makes our closest relationships in this world

look like hate in comparison and he could tell any one of us in this room to go sell everything we have and give it to the poor but we don't believe this we take texts like these and we say well what Jesus really means was and this is where we need to pause because this is where we start redefining Christianity according to our preferences according to what fits with our lifestyles we take the Jesus of the Bible and we begin to twist him into a Jesus that we're a little more comfortable with a nice middle class American Jesus who doesn't mind materialism who's okay with nominal devotion a Jesus who wants us to avoid any kind of dangerous extremes in the world and for that matter wants us to avoid danger all together we take Jesus we begin to craft him into our image he begins to look like

us and think like us and talk like this and here's the frightening reality when we take Jesus twist him into our image then when we gather together in rooms like this in churches and we sing our songs and we lift our hands the reality is we are not worshipping the Jesus of the Bible we are singing to lifting our hands to ourselves and we think we're worshipping Jesus I'm convinced we desperately need to look at scripture and see Jesus for who he is not for who we have created him to be and ask ourselves are we really following him and so I want to ask us this morning three questions based on these conversations with these three men that I think will help us to examine whether or not we're really following the Jesus of the Bible question number one are we choosing comfort or are we

choosing the cross are we choosing comfort or are we choosing the cross Luke 9 51 is a shift point a transition point in the gospel of Luke Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem Luke tells us he resolutely set

out for Jerusalem and that's a shift point because from here on out throughout the rest of the gospel of Luke Luke is going to remind us that Jesus is on a road that leads to the cross that he's headed to Jerusalem where he's going to die on a cross and so Luke 9 57 when it says they were walking along the road this is a road that in context is leading to a cross and a man comes up to him and says I will follow you wherever you go really and we find out in Matthew chapter 8 verse 18 and following this man was likely a religious teacher Jesus warned us about guys like this in Mark

chapter 12 verse 38 through 40 guys like this will attach themselves to other religious teachers in order to advance themselves that guys like this will use association with another teacher as a means to an end and so he comes up and says I'll follow you wherever you go I can almost picture Jesus pulling this guy to the side putting his arm around his shoulder and saying okay I want you to look down the road that I'm headed on I want you to look past all these crowds I want you to look past those crowds that are waving palm branches and singing my praises I want you to look past that intimate meal with my disciples you look past all of that and you will see a cross and by the way there are no holiday ends between here and there you follow me I am all you've got I am not a means to an end

Jesus says I am the end and when you come to me you have everything you need or want such that the basic need of shelter is negotiable because you've found everything you want and need in me this is a significant word for us in our day because we are tempted at every turn to look to Jesus as a means to an end come to Jesus we say come to Jesus and get forgiveness come to Jesus and get heaven come to Jesus and get your best life ladies and gentlemen the reality is we come to Jesus to get God not stuff God help us we have taken evangelism and offered your gifts and left you out of the picture the reality is we need God and all of these things flow from God but he is not a means to more stuff for us I look at my own life if I could just be totally honest my wife and I were living in New

Orleans when Katrina hit and it took out our house and all of our stuff we lost everything and yet we found ourselves at a point where we were trusting in the sufficiency of Christ in a way that we never had before rid of the stuff in this world and yet within a year I had gone to pastor a successful church in Birmingham Alabama and I had more stuff than I ever had before and I was filling my life with more comforts in this world more things and looking at a church where we were engrossed engrossed in things and spending millions on ourselves and programs and things and comforts somewhere along the way and I look at texts like these and realize where have we gotten the idea that Christianity is about attaining stuff for ourselves Christianity is about abandoning ourselves and look my life

in a church that God entrusted me to pastor and I realized somewhere along the way we had taken that which is radical about our faith and replaced it with that which is comfortable and filled our Christianity with stuff everywhere stuff that blinded us to the sufficiency that is found in Christ alone what if you strip all the stuff away and the things away is Christ enough for us and I go to our brothers and sisters in other contexts in the world and I spend time with brothers and sisters in underground house churches in Asia who have nothing who meet in secret late at night at the risk of their lives we first time I ever met some of these brothers and sisters was in this country and just in the providence of God they orchestrated a meeting with the leaders of a house church network they

asked me to come and teach them the word the next afternoon and so I thought we would go have a nice little quick bible study got there and 8 hours later we were still going strong just diving into the word these brothers and sisters meeting if they were caught they would be imprisoned at least if not worse they said we want to get together and do this again tomorrow maybe tomorrow morning I said ok early morning bible

study they said no early morning to late evening bible study long story short for the next week and a half from 8 to 12 hours a day was in these underground locations with these brothers and sisters they so hungry for the word we were walking through Nehemiah I was showing them Nehemiah 8 the importance of the word of God in the middle of the people of God gave them some

background history on the book of Nehemiah afterwards we took a break one of them came over to me and said we have never heard all that background history about the book of Nehemiah and all this book means would you be willing to do that for us with all the books of the Old Testament please I said that would take a long time they said we want to know we want to know God and His word and we'll leave behind everything the next two weeks to know it so the next day we started background history of the Old Testament and started walking through every single book just imagine walking through the book of Song of Solomon with a bunch of Asian believers and just praying that they don't ask any questions what does this mean it doesn't matter move on move on next book next book we got to the next to

the last day we were finishing that we had one full day left and so I walk in the next morning I don't know what to teach we've been through Habakkuk what else is there to cover and I start teaching on something and a guy in the back raises his hand and he said teacher we have a problem I said what's the problem he said you've taught us the whole Old Testament but you have not taught us the whole New Testament I said are you serious he said we like the New Testament today please and so for the next 11 hours we walk from Matthew to Revelation they love this word it means something to them and it is sufficient for them imagine going to a worship service not all day training in the word but just a worship service late at night and you put dark pants and jacket with a hood on over your head

and you crawl into the back of this car and you drive into this village and you get out under the cover of darkness and this Asian believer meets you there your hood over your head with a little flashlight and you follow this believer down this path and you lead into a small room I mean nowhere close to the size of this stage maybe just a little here 60 believers crammed in on little stools or on the floor one little lightbulb hanging in the middle they worship for 2-3 hours at the risk of their lives we get that picture one little lightbulb hanging in the middle what can we do how can we send them some resources how can we help them ladies and gentlemen I'm here to tell you this morning that the Holy Spirit is doing just fine in that country without all of the resources we surround

ourselves with somewhere along the way they've gotten the idea that the Word of God and the Spirit of God are enough to accomplish the mission of God and they are the question is is Christ sufficient for us if so then why are we running after all the stuff this world has to offer us why are we in the same pursuit for more pleasures and bigger houses and nicer stuff in this world and why are we filling the church with it if Christ is sufficient let's show that He is sufficient a wealthy doctor in our faith family came to me he sat down we were studying some of these texts he sat down with me and he said Pastor I think you are crazy for saying some of the things you are saying I said ok he said but I think you're right because it's not you that's saying these things it's Jesus that's saying

these things he began to talk about how he was selling his house and downsizing selling his cars he began to talk how can I best spend my life for the glory of Christ and he says with tears in his eyes he says I start to think that I've gone crazy but then I just realized that Jesus is enough for me and my family and I want Him to be made known among all the peoples of the world He is enough He is He walked that road to that cross and there He made a way for you and I to be reconciled to God and to find in God fullness and satisfaction that frees us from the pursuit of better and bigger things and pleasures in this world Will we,

are we choosing comfort in this world or are we embracing the cross of Christ?

Fundamental question. Second, are we settling for maintenance or are we sacrificing for mission? Are we settling for maintenance or sacrificing for mission? Second God, Jesus initiates the conversation with, He says Lord let me first go and bury my father Scholars who have studied this passage a lot more than I have debate whether or not this guy's dad had actually died yet or not Some believe his father was about to die He simply wanted to go back, spend those last few days with his dad and then when he died to give him a proper burial which is obviously something he would want to do but even deeper than that was one of the highest of religious and social obligations that you would honor your father in his death.

To not do so would be to shame him Others believe his dad had just died, he's just heard this news wants to go back and bury his father The first time I ever did preach this text I was preaching at a conference and I flew home and as soon as I got home I got a call from my brother who told me that my dad, best friend in the world had just passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack and I cannot imagine in those moments hearing Jesus say let somebody else do the funeral there's more important things for you to do Isn't that brash? What does that mean? Clearly it means that when you follow after Christ there is a responsibility and obligation that supersedes the responsibilities and obligations you would most want or feel like you need to do in this life. There is an urgency to give yourself to something greater the proclamation of the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth There is no room here for settling for maintenance mentality in this life There is only room here for sacrificing our lives and our resources to accomplish a mission of proclaiming the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth This is the essence of what it means to follow Christ, brothers and sisters This is not a call to be a missionary This is a call to be a Christ follower We say things like well I'm not called to foreign missions. Don't say that.

As if foreign missions were an optional program in the church for a faithful few who are called to that No! Global mission is the purpose for which you have breath at this moment You are created, every man and woman in this room created and saved by God's grace to declare God's glory to the ends of the earth God help us we've taken the very purpose for which we were created and turned it into a program in the church No! The reason God has given us the gifts He has given us the resources He has given us, the talents He has given us, everything He has entrusted to us is not so that we might indulge in the pursuits of this world. A nice house a nice car, a nice family, a nice life, a nice retirement, go to heaven when we die. That is not the point the purpose for which we have breath we have been given life so that our lives might be spent on this earth for the proclamation of His kingdom to the ends of the earth.

And that looks different in all of our lives. I'm not saying that we're all supposed to move overseas I'm not counting it out, but I'm not saying that's for sure. I know there's some people in the church I pastor that would like to see me living in another nation.

I fully realize that. But, here's the reality what happens when the mission of God is not just for pastors or missionaries, but it's for every single follower of Christ. What happens when Danny, a college student in our faith family comes to me, he just graduated, and he said he had two offers put in front of him.

One was a high paying job at a nuclear engineering plant. He said more money than he thought he'd ever make. The other offer was the school wanted, the university wanted to pay for him to continue to go to school.

So I said, which one are you going to take? He said, I told them both no. I said, are you crazy? He said, here's what I'm going to do instead. He said, I found an engineering ministry where I can go alongside

churches in third world context where they do not have water and people are starving.

I can help construct engineering projects to make water available for them. I think I'm going to spend my life there. I'm not saying, I want to be careful here, I'm not saying nuclear engineering job would have been bad, continuing education would have been bad.

I want you to look beyond that to the heart here. The heart is my life is created for something much better than a high salary or prestige in education. My life was created to make the glory of God known to the ends of the earth.

He emails me from Uganda a couple of weeks ago. He's loving spending his life for the sake of God's glory. Businessmen and women in our faith family who are selling their houses and downsizing who are spending their lives leveraging their businesses for the sake of God's glory going to the ends of the earth.

Senior adults like Ed and Patty in their early seventies who over a four month span were home for eleven days and it's not because they were cruising and fishing in their retirement it's because they were spending their lives for God's glory and disaster relief and here and in Sri Lanka and Nigeria Ed was in Nigeria sleeping under a bus in the middle of rebels fighting doing disaster relief. He said, Patty usually travels with me but she doesn't like sleeping under buses in the middle of rebels. That's understandable Patty.

You don't have to go everywhere with Ed. But here's a couple who has said that their last days before they see their Savior's face are not going to be spent on living out the end of an American dream. Their lives are going to be spent before they see their Savior's face making his glory known to the ends of the earth.

So what happens when every single follower of Christ in this room, not just pastors or missionaries, every single one of us is giving our lives with radical abandonment to proclaiming the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth. The very gates of hell cannot stop the advancement of that kingdom when we sacrifice it all for mission. Oh God, help us to realize what the ramifications of affirming that might be for our lives.

Third question. Are our lives, this is really the key, are our lives going to be marked by indecisive minds or undivided hearts? This last guy simply wants to go back and say goodbye to his family. And Jesus says no.

Why? Jesus knows that family affections are strong. All the questions he would get from family, sure this is wise, where are you going to find a wife, what kind of career path is this? Questions that college students get all the time from Christian parents when they begin to consider how their life can be spent for God's glory in all nations. Questions that we will all get in the Christian community if we decide to sacrifice our lives for the mission of Christ.

And what Jesus says to him is he says when you follow after me, you are not just conquered by a superior devotion, mission, you are captured and captivated by a superior affection. And your love for me supersedes any affection in this world. You want me and you follow after me with supreme undivided affection.

Undivided hearts. This is the essence of the gospel. It's our brothers and sisters that I mentioned in Asia who when we gather together to study the word, before we get into the word they would say we need to pray first.

They would talk about the struggles they were experiencing and the threats they were hearing from the government or this or that and they would fall on their faces. Remember the first time they just fell on their faces. They began to pray and audibly weep before God for an hour.

Sweeping and crying out God we need you. God we love you. You are more important than our lives and even our families and the risk that's involved here.

We love you. And they would audibly weep. I know preachers have a tendency to exaggerate but this is no exaggeration.

We would get up after times like that. I'd look around the room and just see puddles of tears on the floor from people who have given their affections over to God. And you would think well they're just an emotional people that's just the way they act.

On the contrary these people live in a country where everything is about saving face. You don't show emotion like that in public. These are people who are passionate about their God and we think well you can't get carried away in emotions and leave truth behind.

Absolutely you can't leave truth behind but when you know God truly you will love God deeply. Your heart will be captivated by Him. This is the essence of the Gospel.

Matthew 13 44. A man walking in a field he stumbles upon a treasure that is worth more than everything he has or could ever have put together. So what does he do? He covers it over.

No one else sees it. And he goes back and he sells everything he has. The text says he with gladness sells everything he has.

People coming up to him saying you're crazy why are you selling everything you have? He says I'm going to buy that field over there. They said you're nuts you're going to buy that field? And he smiles, looks at them and says I've got a hunch. Because inside he knows he's not losing anything.

He's gaining everything. He has found something worth losing everything for. Ladies and gentlemen we have found someone who is worth losing everything for.

Do we believe that? Do we believe that Christ is more worthy more valuable and a greater treasure than having the next and bigger thing. The next and bigger accolade. Are we willing to sacrifice all of this? And in doing so know this is really not sacrifice.

This is just plain smart. Because Christ is that good. I received a letter from someone who had been attending our church when we were walking through texts like these.

It's a little long but I think it's worth it. I want you to hear what he said. Dear Dr. Platt and the church at Brook Hills.

I assume based on what others have said about you and the faith family at Brook Hills that you are accustomed to receiving complimentary letters. I hope that you will indulge me as I write to you from a different perspective. My letter is a complaint.

It is intended to enlighten you as to how your radical actions and teachings related to God's word have been destroying my life. And probably the lives of others like me. Let me explain.

I was raised unchurched by loving parents who are perfectly content with their lives. The worldly perspective I grew up with allowed me to see the hypocrisy in the lives of the few church going families to which I had been exposed. Thus as I grew into a worldly man I found myself on the path to the American dream.

This path as far as I could see did not go through or even near a church. I went to college and then grad school. Married a kind and beautiful woman.

Got a decent respectable job which allowed me to ultimately buy a house and make maximum contributions to a 401k. My wife and I had a family with two beautiful daughters and a couple of dogs. We were living the middle class version of the American dream.

I was a kind, decent family man grounded in the realities of this world. I was perfectly content to devote myself to working hard to provide the financial resources my family would need. 401k retirement plan, 529 college savings plan, a general savings account and a vacation savings account.

I also worked to provide the necessities of life such as a flat screen TV. My charitable giving could be described as minimal at best. Like many good worldly men devoted to getting ahead in this world, I would find moments of joy when my quarterly 401k statement showed a profit.

I also experienced pronounced periods of stress, disappointment and anger when the 401k dropped when we had to take money out of savings to pay the bills. But I accepted these ups and downs as the reality of life. And overall we were doing okay until one day my wife who I thought loved me told me that she would like to raise our daughters in a church and requested that we start visiting local churches.

Up to this point in my life I had done a good job of avoiding churches and the hypocritical Christians who attended them. I had always felt uncomfortable around them and now in order to make my wife happy, I was going to have to attend a church and interact with those Christians on their turf. I reluctantly agreed and added church to my list of dreaded weekend chores.

Initially our trial run at visiting churches proved relatively painless. The people were nice but the watered down version of the word which they were serving had little impact and left me with no desire for more. My wife who was also unimpressed by these experiences suggested we try Brook Hills because she had heard good things about this church.

Well if attending a regular church was bad, I was sure attending a mega church would be worse. However as usual my wife convinced me and we attended your church for the first time last fall. That day was the start of a process in which you and your faith family have been progressively destroying my life in this world.

The word you served up that day was strong and pure, not like the watered down versions I had received in the past. It had an immediate impact on me and like the most addictive of drugs left me wanting more. We started to attend fairly regularly on Sundays but soon that was not enough to satisfy my growing need for more of this word.

I started buying CDs of previous sermons so that I could get my fix on the way to and from work each day. I started to interact more with members of this faith family who were not only consuming the word but also appeared to be living it as well. This only fueled my desire for more and you and this faith family seemed all too happy to encourage and support my habit.

As I got deeper and deeper into this addiction a side effect known as faith began to grow inside of me. As my faith grew I felt a greater need for fellowship with others suffering with this same faith. All along I was gradually losing my grip on the realities of this world which had been my foundation and I came to Christ.

I cannot believe what this word and this growing faith have done to my life over the past year. I used to avoid church altogether. Now we attend the worship services on Sundays and join a small group that meets for three to five hours every week at a neighbor's house.

I used to avoid Christians who professed their faith. Now I have become one. I stopped saving for the flat screen TV which is just as well since I don't have much time for TV anymore.

I have reduced my 401k contributions and stopped looking at the quarterly statements. I have gone from trying to save as much money as I can to try to give it away for the glory of God in all nations. What is wrong with me? It's lunacy.

What have you done to me? The worldly man I was a year ago would not recognize the man I am becoming. I was a man believing in the realities of this world, living the American dream, saving up riches for a comfortable future and looking for security in a strong bottom line. Now I believe in, pray to, and seek after a relationship with a God I cannot see.

I have found salvation in Christ whom I cannot see. I long for eternity in an unseen future creation. All of this would have sounded like foolishness to the man I was a year ago.

However, the man I was a year ago and the worldly life I knew are being destroyed. I wanted you in the faith family at Brook Hills to be aware of the role you have played in destroying this life. I also feel the need to warn you that if you persist in teaching and living out the word as you are doing currently, then you will likely have a similar impact on the worldly lives of others like me.

I hope you realize that you may have to live with the knowledge of your actions and their effects on the lives of others for all of eternity. I will be there to remind you of what you have done. Ladies and gentlemen, there is another way.

There is another way that says Christ really is supreme. His mission really is the purpose of my life. A way where we let go of the pursuits of this world and the pleasures of this world and the things of this world.

This world has nothing for us. Brothers and sisters, Christ is everything to us. So let's stop the pursuit of this world.

Risk it all and be confident that we have a radical reward in Christ. And even if it costs us our lives, we can know that dying is gain.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22020.mp3>

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