

Power Encounter in Papua New Guinea (Part 2)

by David Sitton

The sermon tells the story of the power of the Gospel in the face of great danger and opposition, particularly in the context of tribal societies.

Duration: 59:06

Scripture: Psalm 86:8-10, Psalm 116:15, Acts 26:18, 2 Corinthians 5:8

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a powerful encounter with a woman named Rosa who was practicing witchcraft. He describes how she was dancing, chanting, and trying to levitate a bamboo from a distance. The speaker responds by rebuking her in the name of Jesus and praying fervently. He then shares a story of preaching the gospel to tribal people and emphasizes the importance of demonstrating the superiority of God over their spirits. The sermon concludes with the speaker recounting a controversial decision he made during the encounter with Rosa, which resulted in the loss of some support.

Transcript

If you go to those islands, the cannibals will eat you, sir. Those words were spoken to John Patton, or Payton, as some pronounce his name, shortly before he departed for the New Hebrides Islands in 1857. Anybody remember what the classic reply of John Patton was? Isn't it great? He says, Sir, you are advanced in years now and are soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms.

I confess to you, sir, that if I can but live and die serving the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms. About this same time, in the 1840s, the Gospel made its way into Fiji for the very first time. I love this story.

A large number of Polynesians were converted, and before long, the Lord began to give them a heart and a concern for the lost. They wanted to take the Gospel to New Guinea, because they had heard that there were cannibals in New Guinea, and they themselves in Fiji had been cannibals not very long before that themselves. And these newly converted Fijians, they understood the danger.

They had heard the gruesome stories of the headhunters and the cannibals of New Guinea. They knew that many of their number would be killed. So you know what they did? Each one of these Polynesian missionaries, they built their own coffin, and they packed their belongings in these coffins and they got on these huge, what they called deep-sea canoes, and they sailed for thousands of miles across the South

Pacific, and they landed on the south coast of New Guinea in 1871.

One of these Polynesian evangelists, he expressed the attitude of the Polynesian missionaries as they prepared to set sail. And here's what he wrote in his journal. He said, We died before we left.

And this brother, along with many others, was soon killed by those that he tried to tell about Christ. Many of these early Fijian missionaries became missionary martyrs. And I love one story.

There's many of these stories, but one of the stories tells of how a Fijian evangelist, he was killed and eaten. And when the news got back to Fiji about the slaughter of this Fijian evangelist, one man, the brother of the cannibalized man, he stood up and he said, Now I must go and take my brother's place as a missionary for Christ. And he packed his coffin and immediately left for New Guinea to take his brother's place.

There were several waves of Fijian missionaries that came into the south coast of New Guinea. Most of them were killed either by malaria, fever, dysentery, and a whole bunch of them were slaughtered by cannibals. Eventually, though, after two or three generations of these Fijians, a toehold for the gospel was finally established on the south coast of New Guinea.

Joseph Chalmers, I don't know if you've ever heard that name, he was the first European missionary to ever make his way onto New Guinea soil. He arrived in the early 1880s. He also landed on the south coast of New Guinea, and he also was brutally beaten to death and cannibalized.

Now just a few years ago, I was able to speak at a missions conference up in the highlands of New Guinea, a very strategic conference where a whole bunch of New Guineans were coming together to be trained in order to be launched to the nations, and I had the opportunity to be one of the speakers. And I had the greater opportunity to actually meet, I don't know if it was the great-great-great- how many greats, I'm not sure, great-grandson of one of the men who had actually killed Joseph Chalmers. And this brother told me that when Chalmers came into their village that the people were afraid of him because of his white skin.

Remember I talked to you about that in the last hour? A little bit about the animism of the people, and they're superstitious and afraid, and sometimes they think we're gods or spirits or ancestors returned in the flesh. This happened with Chalmers. And this brother said that they were afraid of him because of his white skin, and he was quickly killed and eaten, clothes and all.

And this brother told me that even months later, the villagers were still chewing on the soles of his shoes. And as he was telling me this, he began to weep as he tried to tell me the testimony of how God in His grace and love had sent one wave of Fijian missionaries to His people, and they slaughtered them. And God had mercy and sent another wave of Fijian missionary to His people, and they slaughtered them.

And finally, on the third or fourth wave, believers came to Christ. And as he was telling me this, and he wept, he bowed his head, and he said, now I want to be a missionary for Christ. I told you already this morning about the five who were killed on January 4, 1956.

I won't go into that whole thing again, except to re-quote Ed McCulley. Even though I did it in the first hour, I wanted to do it again. I just think that this quote is just so powerful.

It's something that I bring to my own remembrance for my own benefit often. When Ed McCulley wrote Jim Elliot, and they were students at Wheaton College in their early twenties, and here's what he said. He said, Jim, I have just one desire now, to live a life of reckless abandon for Christ.

You young people hear this? Listen to this really good. You older folks too, it wouldn't hurt you to hear it too, but I'm going after the young ones. I have just one desire now.

Is this your desire? To live a life of reckless abandon for Christ, and I'm putting all of my strength into it. And then he said, maybe the Lord will send me someplace where the name of Christ is unknown. And four years later, as I told you this morning, he did it.

He was willing to give his life for a handful of Indians. Well, all of that to be sort of an introduction to a story that has happened recently in New Guinea, and the effects of it continue even to this day. We have been dealing with a tribe called the Chambree tribe, and I want to tell you their story.

But to tell you their story, I need to read to you a few verses out of Psalm 86. You don't really need to turn there. You can if you like.

This is representative of dozens and dozens of passages in the Old Testament that I could have chosen, but this is the one I like the most. Psalm 86, 8, 9, and 10. Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord.

No deeds can compare with Yours. All of the nations You have made... What did we say about nations in the first hour? What is a biblical nation? Ethnicity. Not a country, right? All of the ethnicities You have made will come and worship before You, O Lord.

They will bring glory to Your name, for You are great and You do marvelous deeds. You alone are God. What an encouraging text for those of us who believe in our sovereign God, right? It reminds us that His works are incomparable.

His deeds are unmatched. And He has promised, God has promised that He will see to it. And He will bring representatives for His name's sake out of all of the nations and tribes and tongues and peoples.

He's ordained it, it says in Psalm 86. And so we read a passage like that and we almost come out of our shoes really, right? Just in wanting to worship this great God whose deeds are so great and works are so incomparable. And He's a sovereign God.

A great God. No other God like Him in all of the universe. And it just causes us and prompts us to worship.

And yet, this same text, when I read it in New Guinea to Chombri villagers, or any of the other tribes as well for that matter, this same passage will strike terror into their hearts. And before I tell you the Chombri story, if I can just kind of step back and try to help put you into the tribal Chombri worldview mindset, if I can for a moment, to help you understand why this passage would make them fear and tremble. If you are a tribal person, and it doesn't matter if it's New Guinea or North American Indian tribe, or an Eskimo, or an Australian Aborigine, or a Maori, it doesn't matter.

African, it doesn't matter. South America, all over the world. This is true.

If you are a tribal person, you are a spirit worshiper. That's the word animism. You worship the spirits of your ancestors.

You fear the spirits that live in the river. You tremble when you think of the spirits that live in the jungle. You're terrified of the spirits that roam over the swamps.

And in fact, as a tribal person, your entire life is spent looking back over your shoulder wondering, did I do everything just right at just the right time and just the right way? All of the sacrifices, all of the rituals, all of the things that are required of me, did I do it just right to keep the spirits happy? Because if I didn't, the spirits are going to get me. They're going to take revenge upon me in some way. For the tribal person, and it's not really just superstition.

This is really true. And we're going to get into that a little bit as I go through the story. But this is not just superstition.

How many of you know that demonic spirits have power? Good. I see just about every hand go up. I don't have to do any convincing here.

That's good, because they do. And these people believe that the spirits have power over all of their life. Even in practical ways, they can make your fishing to be successful or unsuccessful.

They can make your hunting excursions to be successful or unsuccessful. They can even cause death. Premature death.

And so the spirits are going to get you if you don't do all of these things that you're supposed to do. That's a horrible way to live. And for thousands of years, the lives of these tribal people have been lived under these strict ancestral traditions and customs.

And I'll tell you, sorcerers and witch doctors in Papua New Guinea are almost as common as the trees in the forest. I mean, they're everywhere. Every tribe has many, many people who are able, men and women, who are able to deal in white magic and black magic.

And they know how to get in touch with the spirits. They know how to manipulate the spirits with all kinds of rituals. And they have these kinds of dealings with the spirit realm, I'd say, on a daily basis.

It's not something just once in a while. It's common. This is the common way of life for tribal peoples.

Fears and phobias of every kind make up your existence. And so, when a missionary comes traipsing into your village, preaching about a god from Psalm 86, that here is the god I'm speaking of, a god who is unlike all other gods. He's greater than all of the other gods.

It makes us rejoice. It makes them tremble. Because they hear that and they don't know if you're telling them the truth or not.

They're thinking to themselves, well, what if this god that the missionary is bringing to us, what if he's not more powerful than all of our gods and ancestral spirits? And we give our allegiance to this god. We're going to be wiped out as a people. And how are they going to be convinced if he is or if he isn't? They don't have the Word of God.

And by the way, tribal people are power-oriented anyway. They're not truth-oriented. They don't care about your nice little three-point Bible outline.

They don't care about truth in that way. The thing that they want to know is who is more powerful, your god or our god, and that's the god we want to follow. But how are you going to convince them of that god if they don't even have the Scriptures? That is a big thing you need to be aware of when you go into tribal situations.

They are power-oriented and we've got to learn how to deal with these people on the basis of power. The Apostle Paul said that I did not come with persuasive words only, but with a demonstration, right? A demonstration of the Spirit's power. We're not very good on that in our circles, are we? We're much better with the three-point outline and trying to convince people with rational arguments.

But that's not going to go very far with a tribal person who doesn't have Scripture and who has a power-oriented mindset. He doesn't care about your arguments. And so power is at the bottom line in these tribal societies.

And sometimes, not very often, I mean, the story I'm about to tell you is a really radical story, but this kind of thing has only happened to me maybe three or four times in 27 years. This is not something that happens a lot, but it's something that we pray for a lot. I pray often, Lord, would You orchestrate some sort of a situation? Would You do something? Somehow, in some way, Lord, would You show Yourself to be powerful? Show Yourself to be more powerful than the gods and the deities of this tribe.

Show Yourself. Show Your mighty hand, Lord. Would You do it in some way? Now, I would differ from some, some charismatics, who would go in and try to orchestrate their own situations.

We don't do that. I think that's presumptuous and dangerous. But I do pray, and I say, Lord, would You do it? Would You do something? So, with all of that as a background, let me just tell you their story as quickly as I can.

It's a story that started all the way back in 1988. My wife and I and children, we were living in the town of Wiwak up on the north coast of New Guinea. It's even on your map that you have here.

Our little town is right on your map. Right on the Indonesian border, but still on the side of Papua New Guinea on the island of New Guinea. And my wife had a very strange desire.

She had a desire to learn how to play the guitar back in 1988. I don't know where that came from. She had never had that desire before, and she hasn't pursued it since.

But she wanted to learn how to play the guitar, and so I went out into our little town of Wiwak, and I found a fellow who could really play the guitar. And I brought him into our home. And we learned that he was from the Chombri tribe.

Now, we had never heard of the Chombri tribe at this time in 1988. But as he's beginning to teach my wife guitar, we're beginning to teach him gospel. And the Lord converts this guy.

I mean, radically puts a hold on him for the gospel. I mean, radically converted. One of maybe only six or seven guys like this that have been so radically converted.

I mean, it's like they've become like an Apostle Paul look-alike. I mean, this guy just was radical and wanted to go back to his people with the gospel immediately. Now, in the town of Wiwak, there was a little compound of Chombri people.

Maybe 80 or 90 people from Chombri who would live outside of town. They're coming and going these days with canoes and airplanes and all of that. There's a lot of tribal peoples that are always coming to town, but they don't stay.

They come and they look around and then they'll go back. And so you have people coming and going all the time from these villages. But they're very superstitious.

They're very much afraid of other tribes, and so they don't intermingle even in the towns. So they'll come to a town and they'll stay with their group. And so there's a Chombri compound even in the town of Wiwak of about 80 people.

And so as Leo, Leo Wassey, is this young man that was converted, as he's learning gospel and he's telling me he wants to take the gospel back to his people, I said, well, Leo, here we've got 80 or 90 of your own people right here in town. I said, let's go to them. And he was so excited.

And I was teaching him, you know, even how to put a testimony together. Just the basics of how to share the gospel. And he was really excited.

He built himself a little pulpit out of bamboo, you know. He had it all set up. He had a lamp.

And he had his notes. He had his Bible. I mean, he was ready.

And we went out that first night there in the Chambree compound. And he began to try to share with the people what Christ had done for him in saving him. One of his favorite verses is the one about being translated from darkness to light.

That's one of Leo's favorite verses. And he was using that text. And the people didn't like it at all.

In fact, they got angry. And some of the men came up. One of them came up and kicked the pulpit.

And so the pulpit went flying. The notes went flying. Notes scattered.

Bible, you know, lamp broke. End of meeting. But we got back to my house.

And Leo said, no, brother, we're going back tomorrow. It's going to be different. He said, this is great.

This is great. He said, they're going to hear. They'll listen.

Well, it was different, alright, the next night. We went back, this time with no pulpit. He had his Bible here.

And he had his notes. And he had a flashlight instead of a lamp so they couldn't break it. And he began to try to go through that whole thing again and sharing his testimony and trying to share the Gospel.

And this time, they were really enraged that we had come back for a second night. They said, we told you we didn't want to hear this message. We told you not to come back.

And here you are. They beat him up. They beat both of us up.

But they broke his nose. And eventually, some days later, they burned his house down. And they told us, if you persist in bringing this message to our people, we're going to get you.

We will kill you. Well, it may be of some interest for you to know that these people a generation ago were headhunters. Some of the men that are still living in the village today participated in headhunting as children.

It's been some years since they've done it, but it's still very real. Just the belief in it. And there's still a very radical, arrogant, sometimes violent group of people as a tribe.

And it's interesting too, if you know where to look when you walk through the Chambree villages, if you know where to look, you'll still see human heads on the sticks and up in the rafters of the huts. So it's still very much, even though they're not harvesting heads recently, it's still within the memory of some of the people who are still living. In fact, in the villages, when you get out actually to the swamp where their main tribe is, there are five stones that are like six foot tall.

And these stones are the place where when they would go out on their tribal raids and they would kill the men, they would chop the heads off the men and throw it into a bag and keep the head. And then they would bring the bodies and they would drape the bodies over these stones and they would dance and chant and sing and it would just be a worship to the spirits and to the ancestral spirits. Just a worship really of tribal victory and worship to their spirits with these dead bodies being kind of sacrificed to their gods.

Those stones still stand and are still bloodstained even to this day. And so it's a visual reminder that when these people say, we're going to get you, these are people that could get you. That's okay.

I feel the same way sometimes. Well, Leo Wassey though is not one to be deterred even with a broken nose. And so by this time, he was saying, okay, if they don't want to hear the message here in the Chambree compound, let's go out to the swamp.

He said, my mom is still out there and I've got a hut and that's where I'm from. And so let's just go out to the swamp. And so I went and tried to pick him up on a day with my four-wheel drive truck and we were going to drive six hours to the river and then get in a dugout canoe and go to the village.

We were trying to load his gear into the truck, but the men were just really enraged. They said, we told you not to go to our people. We told you we're going to get you if you attempt it.

And it's kind of humorous now when you look back on it because here I'm trying to load Leo's stuff into the back of my truck and one of their guys gets up into the truck and is throwing things out. So it's a little difficult to load a truck that way. Man, one of the guys actually came right up to me.

I don't know if you've ever heard of a beetle nut. Anybody hear of a beetle nut? That's nasty stuff. It's a nut that they mix with lime that becomes bright red and they chew it and over time, it becomes black.

And so their teeth are just caked in this red, black... It's nasty. And it gives them sort of the same kind of a high as a smoking pot would. They use it a lot for painkillers for all kinds of ailments.

But anyway, this one fellow, as he's throwing the bags of Leo out of my truck, he's got gobs of it in both cheeks and he just spat it right into my chest. And he said, I told you we don't want this message and if you take this message to our people, we will get you. Well, Leo, once again, he just said, forget them.

We threw our bags and we shook loose from them and here we go. Well, we got to the river. We got into a 36-foot long canoe.

It's a dugout canoe, very traditional, except I'm not like the old-time missionaries. I put a 25-horsepower motor on the back of mine. And we made our way up the Sepik River and then across the Chambree Lakes and finally arrived late at night to the Chambree village.

It's actually three villages. The Chambree tribe is not that big. 1,700 people is all that makes up this tribe.

They live in three villages on one island out in the middle of this swamp. We got there and it was late at night and it was raining. And mosquitoes were everywhere.

It was a muddy mess. And it was a blessing. It was a blessing because we were able to sneak into the village without the people knowing we were there.

And we got into Leo's hut and he said, Brother, in the morning we're going to go preach at the market. This guy doesn't give up. The next morning, the sun was up and we start walking to the market and the people see that we're there.

They know who we are and they know why we're there. And they are yelling at us. They are cussing us.

Threatening our lives. They're throwing rocks at us. Even the children, they get on the edge of the jungle with catapult slingshots.

And they're shooting rocks at us with slingshots. And Leo says, don't worry about them. Let's go.

We're going to preach. Well, he started preaching and I started trying to preach and we didn't get anywhere. I mean, within 10 minutes, it was a riot.

About 50, 60 people just circled us and were yelling at us and threatening our lives. And this went on for like 2 1/2, 3 days that we stayed there trying to preach, getting nowhere. The only result we got was rocks.

On the third day, we got in our canoe and we left and we're coming back. And I taught Leo on the way back to rejoice because we were a success. And he says, how were we a success? Nobody believed.

All we got was rocks. I said, no, we were a success. Because for the first time ever in history, the name of our God was proclaimed on Chambree Island.

Remember this morning, the very first sentence that came out of my mouth when I stood here was, Our great God will be preached and He will be praised among all nations. This was step one. He was preached.

He wasn't praised yet by anybody, except us. But He was preached. For the first time ever in history, our God, Jesus Christ, was proclaimed on that island.

Never happened before in history. That's a success. That's awesome.

That's something only a Calvinist can say. You know, the Arminian goes away and defeats in those situations. But I can say, you know what, even if nobody ever believes, my God, He deserves to be proclaimed in that place.

It was a success. It was a success. I said, Leo, rejoice with me.

And we did. We rejoiced. Well, it was about that time, and I've got to hurry through the story.

This is like 16 years of ministry here. We lost our visas. We couldn't live in New Guinea anymore.

We had to come home and base our ministry in the States. Long story. God was in it all the way, as you might imagine.

But I made continuous trips back to New Guinea. In those days, back in the early 90's, I was going two and three times a year, taking teams with me. Medical teams.

Just all kinds of teams. Preaching teams. And we'd show the Jesus film.

And every year, there would be lots and lots of persecution and a little bit of progress. And so, 1990 and 1991 and 1992 and 1993, this is the way it was. I would take teams with me.

We'd make a little progress. But long story short, after six years, all we had was four believers and a whole lot of persecution every time we went. And these four believers were really getting it bad.

Two of the four were women. And one of the four was and is still to this day being continually beaten up and raped by the Chambree men because of her faith. Something that's been going on for a lot of years.

And the others have been beaten up. And it's just been a major, major hardship. And yet, here we're praying all along, Lord, would You do something? They won't listen.

They won't listen to our messages. Lord, would You do something to show Your power? Demonstrate Your sovereignty and Your superiority over the spirits? Lord, do something! Well, in 1995, I think it was 1994 or 1995, I had a team of twelve. And we're going back and going to do the same old thing again.

We chartered an airplane this time and we landed on the grass airstrip at Chambree. And thirty minutes later, after our arrival, a woman died. Her name was Antonia.

And she happened to be one of the four believers, so now we have three after six hard years. Well, here's another thing that tribal people believe. Well, they believe that anyone who dies, they die for a reason.

There's no such thing as premature death, especially for a young person. Anyone who dies, they assume it's because of black magic or sorcery. Somebody was responsible for it.

And they've got a ritual that they perform to find out who was responsible for the death of that person. And they've got to avenge it to keep the spirits happy. See, everything is entwined with this animism.

And I'd heard about this ritual. I'd never seen it, but I'd heard of it. It's called the walking bamboo ritual.

It means the shaking of the bamboo. And what they do is the initiated men, and by the way, tribal initiation for men, all it is is a systematic way of becoming willingly demon-possessed so that you have access to the knowledge and power of the spirits. That's what tribal initiation is.

And you go through all of these skin cuttings and torture, really. All these things that you go through to become an initiated man. But the initiated men will go into the spirit house, and they have like a six foot long piece of bamboo.

And they will begin to dance and chant and sing. You've probably seen this on the Discovery Channel. Tribes that get all loud and radical and they're dancing.

You know what they're doing when they do that? They believe that they're demon-possessed, but not always. The spirits only are activated when they need them. And when they don't need them, they believe that the spirits just kind of go to sleep.

And so they do these loud dancings and chantings and all of that as a way to wake up the spirits. That's what they're doing. They're waking up the spirits because they have a task for them to perform.

And they'll do this for hours and hours. Dancing and chanting and singing and holding this bamboo and asking for the spirits to come into the bamboo. And the spirits eventually come into the bamboo and they let go of it.

And I'm telling you, you can believe it or not believe it, but this bamboo begins to bounce around under the power of spirits. And eventually, it will point out someone, an individual or someone from a clan, and that person will be killed. How many of you know the devil's a liar? How many thousands of innocent people over the years have been killed? Well, I knew that they were going to do this ritual on this woman who had died because they were going to find out who was responsible for her death.

But I went to Elias. Leo is no longer in the picture. Leo is living in another town.

He teaches guitar. That's what he does for a living. But we had this other fellow who I'm now training to be the pastor, Elias Sarin.

And so I went to Elias and I said, Elias, you and I both know they're going to do that ritual on Antonia. I said, brother, we need to go down there at the end of the airstrip in this little clearing where they're going to do that ritual. We need to go down there and rebuke them.

And he said, oh no, brother, we couldn't do that. He said, they'll kill us. This ritual is not for outsiders.

This is only for our tribe. I said, Elias, we have been praying for six years that God would do something. Maybe this is the time when God will show His power and superiority over the spirits.

I said, come on, Elias, let's do it. Let's go down there. And the reason I was so persistent is because this was a Christian sister.

I felt like I had sort of a right to go down there. They're going to be trying to call up her spirit from the grave to get that spirit to give them information. That is forbidden in Scripture.

And all I can say is that the Spirit of God was prompting me. Can I say that here? That kind of thing? I mean, I believe that that's what was happening to me in the moment. Because I've been in other situations where I didn't pursue it, but I was pursuing it this time.

I just felt like we needed to. And yet, I'm training this young guy to be the pastor. Be one of the pastors.

We believe in plurality of pastors like you have here. Glory to God, amen. And so I'm teaching him to be one of the pastors.

And so I'm wanting to even be submissive to him. Somewhat. We're trying to work through all of those issues.

I'm saying, Elias, if you just don't want to do it, I won't do it. But I said, please, think it through. Maybe this is the time when God... Well, bottom line, I was able to convince him.

He wasn't very happy about it. But I was able to convince him that this is what we should do. So I had a group of 10 or 12 young people from churches just like this from all over the country.

And I explained to them the situation and what we were about to do. And it's a dangerous situation. I don't know what's going to happen.

I've never seen this ritual. I don't know what the outcome's going to be. All I know is that we're going to go down there and rebuke them in Jesus' name.

Isn't that foolish? Even as I say it right now, it just makes me laugh. You know, how crazy the things God calls us to do sometimes are. So we had a time of worship and praise with our team.

And then we walked to the end of the airstrip and there was this big, long log laying there. And I just sat down on the log to demonstrate to the people that I wasn't leaving, that I was there. And whatever was going to happen, we weren't leaving.

And I told my team to sit down. And they all did. And the people were angry.

They were yelling at us and cussing us and telling us to go. But bottom line, it's getting dark now, and they have no choice but to begin the ritual. And one thing you also need to know about the Chambree, they are very arrogant.

One of the most arrogant tribes I've ever come across. They have been telling me at this time in the story, they've been telling me, oh, it's so easy to call up the spirits and to get the spirits to do things for us. It's so easy even our children can do it.

And it's true. They teach their children from the womb how to manipulate spirits. And even at early, early ages, teaching them how to do little white magic and black magic rituals, to begin learning how to manipulate the spirits.

And as they get older, it becomes more and more serious. Even our children can do it, they say. Well, as it's getting dark now and they've got to get on with it, these two young men, they stood up and they picked up this long six-foot piece of bamboo and the guy on the back end of it began tapping on it with a human bone.

The other guy is holding the front and the guy on the back is tapping on it with this human bone. And he begins to chant. And he's talking to Antonia, the spirit of Antonia.

And he says, Antonia, Antonia, you come on top of the mat, come on top of the mat and I'll talk Shavuot to you. Who said he'd kill you and you'd die? Come up from the grave, Antonia. Come up from the grave and tell us who's responsible for your death and we will avenge it.

Well, it's getting really dark now and I can't see and I don't know what to do. And so I move up really close so I can be close and see what's going on. I'm praying in my heart, Lord, show me what to do.

I don't know what to do. Can I say this also? I don't know another way to say it other than to say, the Spirit of God just came on me and begins to give you, first He gives you boldness, but then He gives you words.

Didn't Jesus promise to do that? He did, didn't He? Oh, it's awesome when it kicks in and really begins to happen.

And also, another thing that kicked in was anger. I was angry because these guys, they are so confident. They're going to be able to call up that spirit.

They are so aggressive and so loud and that's part of the way they work anyway, these witch doctors. They get in your face and they try to intimidate you. And they're pretty good at it.

But God gave me, I think, the right kind of anger. He gave me verses. And as these guys are being loud and yelling out and calling up Antonia from the grave, I just began yelling out verses that God gives me.

Verses like, precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. To be absent in the body is to be present with the Lord. Other verses just started coming out of nowhere.

Just verses, verses, verses. And it was just a real intense time of warfare as they are doing what they fully expected to be able to do. Even our children can do it, right? Calling up the spirits.

But also, as I'm quoting these verses, I'm yelling out things like, in the name of Jesus, we rebuke you. Antonia's with Christ. She believes in Christ.

She's with Christ. You know, that's what the Scripture says. To be absent in the body is to be present with the Lord.

She's with Christ. She's not in the ground. And even the spirits that you're trying to call up, these evil, demonic, ancestral spirits, we rebuke you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that they will not be able to move this bamboo in any way.

Things like that just start pouring out of my mouth and I'm going, wow! Where did this come from? It didn't come from any Bible school. I'll tell you that. Where do you go to get training to deal with witch doctors? South Texas.

It's one of the things on our agenda. So, there was this time of warfare and finally, you know, that bamboo, they're still holding it like that and nothing's happening. No spirit is coming into that bamboo.

And so I'm getting a little more aggressive and I'm saying, hey, this is working, you know. The name of Jesus really works, right? And so you get a little more aggressive. But finally, bottom line, they just got frustrated and this one guy threw the bamboo down and he said, well, the spirits, they just won't come tonight.

And I was just able then by God's grace to step in and begin preaching like Psalm 86. We come in the name of the one true God, the Supreme God, the One who is above and greater than all other gods. The gods of the nations are idols, but our God lives.

And in the name of our God, this bamboo won't move. And just being able to preach like that, God just enabled me to do it. Believe me, it's not completely within my natural ability or personality or anything to be this way.

People that know me marvel at this story actually. But they threw that bamboo down and they said the spirits won't come, and so I did this preaching. But it's completely dark now and the people are really

yelling.

They're throwing coconuts at us too. Now, these are not these little ones. These are with the big green husks still on them and they're launching them.

If one of those hits you in the head from a distance, it could kill you. And it sounded like the people were rushing towards us. And I've got my team here and at one point I turned to my team.

I said, run! And I looked and they were already gone. They were halfway down the airstrip. But they weren't chasing us.

What they were doing is getting more coconuts and they were throwing these coconuts at us and yelling and cursing us and threatening us, but they weren't chasing us. And so my team came back. And so I'm settling them down.

I'm saying, okay, guys, it's not over yet. Keep praying. And I look around.

It was just that long. And when I looked back around... I said, listen, I've got 12 non-charismatic young people that were with me that will tell you that when this woman stepped out of the shadows that we physically felt a wave of demonic power come over us. I mean, it was like a breeze.

You could feel it. And I realized that these two young guys were apprentice sorcerers. This woman had power.

Her name was Rosa. I actually knew her from previous dealings. And from 40 yards away or so, she began to dance and to chant and to sing.

She's gyrating her body and doing all these contortions and getting really loud. And she's trying to levitate that bamboo from 40 yards away. So now I move over here.

And I'm thinking, whatever you did there, do here. You know, that works good. And so I'm just yelling out passages of Scripture, yelling out rebukes in the name of Jesus against her and praying like crazy in my heart because I still don't know how this thing's going to turn out.

There's got to be an exit strategy somehow. And I don't know how this thing's going to end. And again, it seemed like it was an hour.

It probably was five minutes is all. But it was just this warfare where she's just getting loud. Remember, this is what we call a power encounter.

You heard that phrase? Have you heard that phrase? If you start studying missions, you're going to see that phrase. Power encounter. The classic example of it in the Old Testament would be what? Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

And you remember when the prophets of Baal were unsuccessful initially, what they began to do? They began cutting themselves and getting more radical and more loud and trying to do something to make their dead gods come alive. Well, she began to do the same thing. Not cutting herself, but getting more aggressive and more loud and more just trying to do something to move these spirits.

I mean, even our children can do it. And here she is, a second or third level sorceress. Nothing's happening.

The bamboo's just laying there. And the reason is because in the name of this missionary's god, she has no power. And it's giving me opportunity to preach about the sovereignty of God, the superiority of our God over the spirits.

That's how you preach the Gospel to tribal people. Because they are power-oriented, not truth-oriented. The truth will come.

All of that important stuff will come. But the first thing that you do in a tribal situation is convince them of the superiority of our God over their spirits. Well, at some point in there when this thing was about to end with Rosa, and I've gotten a lot of flack for this.

Actually, we lost some support because of what I'm about to tell you. I was told I was being presumptuous. You be the judge.

I'm just going to tell you what happened. This is seat-of-the-pants stuff. Like I said, where do you go to learn how to deal with this? At some point in there, and again, I believe that I was led by God to say this, but I just yelled out to her.

I said, Rosa! And she stopped. She went silent. I said, Rosa, if you can move this bamboo by the power of your gods and spirits, we will worship and follow your gods.

But if you can't, you need to worship and follow our God. Well, that set her off into a whole other two or three minutes of just trying to get her spirits to do something and they were not able. And finally, she slinked back off into the darkness.

But I knew that there was at least one, if not two or three, other higher level sorcerers. And I called out for them. Because I knew that the conversion of the Chambres is never really going to be real until they're convinced with even their most powerful sorcerer.

I said, bring out the most powerful guy. Send him out. And if he can move the bamboo by the power of the spirits, we'll worship your gods and spirits.

But if not, you need to worship our God. They refused to even bring him out. They wouldn't even risk it.

And this time, I did hear feet running towards us. They were yelling and cursing and chasing us. And I yelled again for my team to run and they're gone again.

But when I yelled, run, this time, there was a fellow. It was the guy that had been beaten on this thing with the human bone. He had a machete in his hand and he was chasing one of our girls.

And when he heard me yell, run, he knew he had me. He heard my voice and knew where I was. And he was between me and the camp.

So he had me. And so he started running right at me with this machete. And I don't know if you've ever had an experience like this or with any kind of a demon-possessed person.

I mean, the big demon eyes. It's a frightening thing, especially when he's got a machete and he's running right at you and he's yelling really loud, You have destroyed the custom of our ancestors. And he's running at me and I'm backpedaling and he swings this machete over my head right to left.

I hear it go over my head. And I'm going back like that. He's going left to right over my head.

He takes two or three really quick steps. He's right on top of me. I can't get away.

And he raises it like that and I'm fully expecting to be slashed in the back. And so I turn away to protect my head. But it didn't happen.

An unsaved chambry man jumped in between me and the machete man. Not because he was a believer in Jesus, because he wasn't at that point, but he did it because three times he had seen the power of our God over the power of his sorcerers. They could not do what even the children can do because the name of our God forbid it.

And he was afraid. He didn't want my blood being shed in his village because he didn't know what my God would do to them. It all comes down to recompense and what are the spirits going to do to us in revenge.

And so he wasn't going to let me be killed in his village. Not because he believed in Jesus, but because he wanted to protect his own skin. And immediately about 40 chambry people surrounded me and walked me back to my camp.

Didn't say a word. Complete quietness and safety. And when I got there, I just fell down.

You read about this kind of thing in the Scriptures. Peter would just fall to the ground. That happened to me.

I just fell. I was weeping. Just facing the grass weeping.

Weeping because at this point, six or seven years of just loving the chambry, wanting them to know Christ, wanting them to be delivered from darkness. You know, the adrenaline rush of almost having your head chopped off. That will add to the tears.

But then also laying there and weeping and realizing that we had just been allowed by God the privilege of being a part of what I think is an incredible, miraculous display of His power. Because I know these people can move that bamboo. I know their children can do it.

But in the name of our God, they were forbidden. And for God to allow us to be a part of that, He did it. We didn't do anything.

We were just stupid tools in His hand. But He used us and He wielded us in that day. Well, the next morning, and I know I've got to close this up, but the next morning, the guy with the machete came.

And they've all got these names that are like this long. You can't even pronounce these names. But they also take what they call Christian names.

And his name is Bob. So we call him Machete Bob. You know, he's become a very good friend of mine actually.

But on this morning, he came and he said, you know, I almost killed you last night. And I said, yeah, I know. But knowing that they are power-oriented, I said, Bob, you know, three times last night, you saw the power of our God over the power of your spirits.

You need to worship and follow our God. Follow the Most High. Well, he didn't at that time, but he became one of my best friends.

Probably my best friend in Chambray. And now, any time we go back to Chambray, he insists that we use his canoe and his boat motor. And he even carries it, you know.

And he's our guide, you know, when we go do our evangelistic treks in other villages. Even though he wasn't a believer, he wanted to be with us. He wanted to be our friend.

So that was the end of a mission trip. Somebody was asking me this morning if there's any openings for a trip to New Guinea next September or October. Anybody want to go to Chambray? Yeah.

Well, that's a mission trip. Okay? So I came back home and went back to Chambray. I'm trying to close this thing up.

I hadn't heard a word about what had happened in Chambray for like ten months. And when I got back to Chambray after this incident ten months later, I had another team with me and I figured, well, we're just going to do like we always do. You know, we're going to worship and we're going to pray and we're going to read Scripture and exhort each other from the Scriptures.

And if some Chambrays come and participate, that would be wonderful. But if not, our team's going to do it anyway. Our God's going to be praised on this island even if it's us doing the praising.

So that's what we always do. But on this occasion, about 45 or 50 Chambrays showed up. Now, Elias is an extremely humble brother.

And he hadn't told me anything. And so here, I'm in this meeting. And how many of you know there's a difference between singing songs and worship? Here we start singing these songs and these Chambrays are singing the songs with us and they ain't just singing.

There's a vibrancy to it. And I'm thinking, wow. And they're attentive to the Word.

Well, it dawned on me through the first 15 minutes of that first little service back in Chambray that I'm sitting in the midst of the church. Elias had neglected to tell me that 49 Chambrays had come to Christ. He told me later, he said, well, if I told you that, it'd just be like bringing glory to myself or something.

I'd just let you find out on your own. 49. But that's not even the end of it.

Because now, some other years have gone by, and the number's up to about 89. Almost 90 believers. But there's 1,700 Chambrays.

And so I don't believe that 90 is the full number of God's elect yet. I'm hoping next time I can come back here and say hundreds! Hundreds saved from the Chambray. That's what I want to say.

But I'm rejoicing about those 90. Amen? It's just a tremendous thing. So many other incredible things have happened.

Persecutions and house burnings and people getting beaten up. But conversions and outreach. It's just like reading the book of Acts.

You get both. You get the miracles. You get the persecution.

And that's what makes up life. That is life for Christians and most of the rest of the world. So, let me see.

But you know, it was so amazing. That first moment when I realized I was sitting among the church in Chambray. And this has happened to me so many times over the years.

I never get tired of it. To be sitting in a place with the believers from that place. And you're thinking to yourself, this is the first time ever in history for the Kingdom of God to exist on this island.

That's awesome. You never get tired of that. And by God's grace, we've been able to plant 33 churches in New Guinea over these years.

And most of these churches, almost all of them, are continuing on with the Lord. They're continuing to evangelize and produce their own leaders, their own evangelists, and even their own missionaries. Last time I was in New Guinea, a guy came to me, a New Guinea brother, and he said, brother, I can't explain it, but God's putting a burden on my heart for Haiti.

Haiti! And another thing, and I promise I'm closing, but I was telling these brothers about this training center that we're wanting to start. I've got guys, there's 30 or 35 young people I was telling you about who are mainly from America, but there are some others from New Zealand. I've been going to New Zealand churches, Australian churches, Canadian churches, Mexican churches, and New Guinea churches.

And I was telling this brother in New Guinea, he was a drunk wife-beater when the Lord saved him, and he's become my Barnabas. I never go anywhere in my evangelism in New Guinea without taking Thomas with me. He's just a great brother.

And as I'm telling him all about this training center that we're wanting to start in South Texas, he said, well, brother, what about us? We want to be trained. We want to be sent as missionaries. And so that got me thinking in a whole new way about this missionary training.

I mean, wouldn't it be awesome if this thing really does become an international missionary training program with young people from New Zealand and Australia and the U.S. and Canada as well as from Mexico and New Guinea doing the training in Spanish and Melanesian and in English? Bringing them in. Training them. Launching them to the nations.

I don't know about you, but that jacks me up. That jacks me up big time. Well, I ended this morning, I'll end this one with the same question.

What are we here for? What are you here for? You young ones! What are you here for? Are you believers? Do you believe in Jesus? Have you committed your life to Christ? Has He saved you? Not yet? Maybe? You're not sure? You have? Listen, all of you. You young people. You know, I know missionaries all over the world.

And most of them will tell you that the first hook that they began to get for missions was because of a missionary that took the time to be in their home or to go out and have a meal with them or to speak in their Sunday school class. And they can remember back all of those years to that first time when they

heard about what God was doing among the nations. And I just pray that the Lord is doing something like that here today.

I prayed that before I came this morning when I spoke to these kids, even though it was kind of rowdy and babies were crying and all these things were going on. I said, Lord, just break through all of that. Lord, would You just touch one or two of these young ones? Lord, would You begin placing a missionary burden in the hearts of these young people? What are You here for? You young ones and you old ones? You know what, brother? How old are you? 76? Well, you're not too old.

I had a woman that was 81 that came to New Guinea on a short-term mission. So I've had them as young as 9 and 81. You're not too young and you're not too old.

God's got a place and a part for every one of you. And what are we here for? We are here to see to it as the body of Christ, to see to it that the knowledge of the glory of God goes and covers the earth as the water covers the sea, right? That's it. I don't know of another reason why we're here.

That is the reason why we're here. To see to it from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun that the name of the Lord would be praised. That His name would be made great.

That His name would be made known. That His name would be made famous among the nations. That's what we're here to be about.

And I hope that today is the first in a lot of times that we are together in terms of relationship and what the Lord will have for us and for this church in terms of missions. Anything I can do for any of you guys for missions, you be in touch with me. I've got a sign-up sheet around here somewhere and books and brochures and all kinds of things that I'll leave with you.

But we want you to get on our mailing list. We want you to hear about the short-term missions coming up. I want you pastors to not send me a team, but bring me a team for Mexico and New Guinea or wherever.

Let's mobilize this church for the nations. In Jesus' name.

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