

The Wonderful Love of Jesus

by David Wilkerson

The love of Jesus is everlasting and finds those who are far from Him, and we must appropriate that love for ourselves in order to preach it to others.

Duration: 54:06

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 6:35, 2 Timothy 4:2-3, 2 Timothy 4:5, 2 Timothy 4:18, 1 Peter 3:8, Revelation 3:16, Revelation 3:18

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Christian Witness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares about his recent encounter with two young men, Nicky Cruz and Sonny Argonzoni, who have powerful testimonies of transformation through Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of presenting Jesus accurately to the world, as opposed to the distorted view of a vengeful and judgmental God. He highlights the need for believers to be faithful ambassadors of Christ, showing compassion and love to others. The speaker references the story of the prodigal son to illustrate God's mercy and forgiveness towards those who repent and turn to Him.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing to World Challenge P.O. Box 260, Lindale, Texas 75771 or calling 214-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to your friends. A little more on here so I won't have to strain my voice. Boost me just a little bit if you will, please.

The wonderful love of Jesus. I had two young men and two young preachers in my office this past week. And what a testimony they are.

It was a great joy to have Nicky Cruz and Sonny Argonzoni in my office. Nicky Cruz was the Mamaw gang leader, gave his heart to Christ. He'd been saved 30 years in preaching.

He was one of the key characters in the Cross and Switchblade story. And Sonny Argonzoni was the first drug addict we reached for the Lord when we came to New York City three years ago. Nicky was on his way to a crusade in London.

He travels all over the world preaching to thousands and I'll never forget how the love of Jesus touched him. Every time I go past Fort Greene Projects here in Brooklyn, I get a lump in my throat. I was 115 pounds, 28 years old.

But feeling the love of Jesus just rushing through me that Jesus had for drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes. And I walked into this city, drove in a 1957 green Chevrolet, slept in the car. I sure wouldn't do it now knowing what I know.

But I slept in the car and put newspapers against the window. Found out the worst gang in New York City at that time. In fact, they had over 300 gangs listed by youth department at that time, 1958.

And I went down to find the Maumaus and they were standing against the fence in their red jackets with big double M's. 28 kids had been murdered in 1958 in gang fights. And I remember going up to one young man, his name was Israel, the president of the gang, and he was very kind, shook hands, and said, hey, preach, you're okay.

He listened to me preach for about five minutes. I went to shake hands with Nicky Cruz and he spit on me, slapped my face and said, go to hell. I'll never forget that sting on my face.

And all I could burn out, I don't think I did it in anger, Nicky, Jesus loves you! And walked away thinking, Lord, I know you love him, but I don't know if you can save him. He's the hardest. I don't like to be slapped.

I don't like to be spit on. Nicky Cruz could get that out. It was like a stuck record, broken record, all night long.

Nicky, Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. He hated police, he hated everybody else.

Some of you have heard his testimony. Nicky, Jesus loves you. And folks, to sit in my office and look at that young man on his way to London, having reached thousands and thousands around the world, five girls, five children, I think two or three in Bible school, and all called to some kind of ministry.

Nicky going on with the Lord. All I could say is, Jesus, your love finds them. Your love is everlasting.

Nicky never told me, never knew what the love of Jesus was and what Christ had done for him until his little girl, his first little child came to hear him in one of his crusades. He was telling the story of all the terrible things he did and went home and she wouldn't talk to him. He said, what's the matter, honey? She said, you're a bad man, I don't want to talk to you.

That's not my daddy. And it hurt him. He didn't realize until then how God had changed, how the love of Jesus had manifested itself so much in his life.

Sonny Arkansas, I met 28 years, or 30 years ago, down in Brooklyn under the elevated train right off the Williamsburg Bridge. And I went up to him in front of a pizza shop. And he was a drug addict just waiting for his contact.

Found out his name. I said, Sonny, Jesus loves you. He said, man, get off the block.

My mom's one of those hallelujah people. She's one of those tongue-talking hallelujahs. You sound like one.

I said, yes, I am. But I remember saying, Sonny, Jesus sent me down here because he loves you. Sonny had been in and out of jail, in and out of prison.

His mother would see him dirty, filthy, and ragged on the street and say, Sonny, please, just come home, change your shirt, let me give you a clean meal. He said, Mom, I'll go home. Didn't want anything to do with family.

Had no thoughts of God. Been shot at, in and out of prison. But I'll never forget the day he came, remembering that invitation to come to the center, remembering just that one statement, Nikki, or rather Sonny, Jesus loves you.

His love will find you. And the love of Jesus found Sonny when he came in and heard Nikki preach at our center down here in Brooklyn. And he thought that Nikki, while he was preaching, somebody had gone to him and told him all about it because Nikki was preaching his life.

And Sonny sat down in his seat because he heard his whole story being told. And Nikki Cruz goes over to Sonny, laid his hands on him and said, God save him and call him to preach! And Sonny thought, me, preach? A drug addict? A killer at heart? Oh, but folks, I set my office this past week. Sonny Argonzoni is not only a pastor, he's a bishop of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds.

They've got churches all over America. In fact, he was in Philadelphia helping set up another one of their churches. In their conferences, they have three, four thousand, all of them converted drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes.

Sonny Argonzoni is a preacher of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because the love of Christ was manifested in him. Now see, there are many of you here tonight, you know what I'm talking about because up here you fellows from the drug life, alcoholics, many of you, not even in Teen Child, maybe other programs.

Some of you here may be in business. You were a drug addict, you were an alcoholic, you were drinking, you were lost, you were hopeless, but the love of Jesus Christ came to you. Manifested itself to you.

How beautiful wasn't it, the love of Jesus, when you first heard of it. What a thrust of glory when you realized that in spite of what you'd done, Jesus loved you. And you rejoiced in that love.

You went a long time just basking in that love. And then you started going around telling everybody how Jesus loved them. Some of you have been witnessing, you've been saved five years, ten years, but what's happened since then? Many of you have backslidden about the love of Jesus for yourself.

Somehow along the line, you got the idea that because you have allowed a coldness or a failure into your life, that you can preach Jesus and His love to others, but you can't appropriate it to yourself. Now this is where I'm going with the message tonight. I want to talk about His love for you as a Christian.

His love for you as a believer. And for me. You know, I was preaching a number of years ago in Harlem in a street meeting.

And I was going through a very difficult time in our ministry. Very, very difficult. Gwen had cancer.

In fact, I think this was her second cancer she had back in the hospital. And I had the burden of teen child and it was weighing heavy on me. Traveling, trying to raise funds, trying to keep the whole thing afloat.

Centers, cities, all over the country calling. And I was absolutely at the end of my rope at this particular time. And in my burden and in my struggle over... I got so burdened over needs, I went down to about 115 pounds.

Skin and bone. There was no joy because I was so burdened down by the needs of the city. And in that, I shut Gwen out.

And in her pain, she couldn't stand being cut out from my life. I don't think I was a bad husband or anything, but I didn't really bring her into the burden that was on my heart. I should have shared it with her.

And we were going through a rather difficult time. And I remember one day just losing my temper and going off for a street meeting and I felt so dirty and so unclean. Has that ever happened to you? Where, you know, you want God with all your heart, you love Him with everything that's in you, and you fast, you pray, you seek Him, but suddenly, there it is, just like a flood.

It just comes and hits you. It sweeps you off your feet. You lose your temper.

You do something stupid and you feel dirty and unclean and filthy. Well, I had to go up into Harlem and I'm standing there in my pain and I'm preaching my heart out. Jesus loves you.

I don't care what you did. Drugs, alcohol, prostitutes. Come on up, Jesus loves you.

Give your heart to Him. And after I preached this profound message, I thought, how Jesus could love anybody on the streets. I'm standing there after the meeting in despair watching drug addicts and alcoholics with our personal workers drinking in the love of Jesus.

And suddenly, in my despair, with my head down and feeling so low, the Holy Spirit said to me, David, why don't you appropriate some of that love you've been preaching for yourself? Why don't you let me love you? What gives you the idea that you can just preach it and not practice it, not appropriate it to yourself? And friends, from that day to this, there are many times I've had to just step back and say, Jesus, I've been out preaching it. I tell the whole world that you can save anybody from anything. Now, Jesus, come and love me.

Love me. I remember one time, one of Gwen's last times in the hospital. She was so wiped out.

She had lupus. Had about 30 pounds of water on her. And was in the hospital.

And she had said, David, this is enough. I can't. After all these operations, I can't.

This is too much. And she went in the hospital just at the end of a rope. And I went to a hotel room near the hospital.

And I said, oh God, when does this ever stop? Lord, I love you. I see. There's no... I can't figure it out.

She can't go through much more pain. And you know, I said, Lord, give me something. And you know, it's not a good idea to just say, Lord, give me something and open your Bible.

Because you know where it fell? It fell in Jeremiah. Whoa, whoa, whoa. And I... You know what I did? I closed it and said, no, Lord, not today.

I'm hurting enough. And you know what the Lord whispered in my heart? David, just lay still and let me love you. So help me, the Holy Ghost brought Jesus, His presence in that room, and He put His arms around me and began to love me.

And I said, Jesus, now love Gwen. And then the Holy Spirit put a Scripture, a psalm, so and so. And I went there, and you know what it said? He makes all wars to cease.

I said, that's it, that's it. He's making all cease. I ran to the hospital.

Gwen was dressed. She said, David, I'm healed. I'm getting out of here.

Let's go home. I have victory. This is the love, the absolute love of Jesus Christ being manifested.

The Bible said the husbandman that labors must be first, partaker of the fruits. You can't counsel other people that they are loved without appropriating that love for yourself. Now, there are some of you here that love Jesus dearly, but you're not persuaded that Jesus Christ loves you.

You preach to others. You picture yourself, though, as having failed the Lord and He's cast you aside as a result of it. I want to speak directly to you tonight.

I really believe God put this in my heart and that's why I struggled so much with all the imps of hell to get through. I was laying on my face last night and God began to speak clearly to me. To speak directly to those who'd be here tonight who felt that you've let the Lord down.

You feel you've let the Lord down. You've not lived up to the standard you've heard preached in this pulpit or wherever it may be. Now, friends, if you've been coming to this church, we hold up a high standard.

We preach a strong message of righteousness and holiness. And many of you feel that you can't live up to that, that you've failed the Lord somehow. It's not that we've been putting a heavy trip on you.

We're trying to preach what we believe is the standard of the Word of God. But in your striving to be more like Jesus, you've failed the Lord. You've sinned somehow.

And you've sinned this evening with failure in your life. You have tripped. You have fallen.

Satan has bruised your heel. Now remember, that's what the Scriptures... It was richly said that the serpent will bruise your heel. And when a serpent bruises your heel, it does not mean you're damned or you're lost outside of the love of Jesus.

He's bruised your heel. But there's healing for that. But now you're here tonight and you're living with guilt and condemnation.

You can't see how Christ can still love you because deep in your heart you know you may have grieved the Holy Spirit. You somehow walk right into the devil's trap. Or you're still in the satanic snare.

But I want you to know, friends, and listen closely, you and I were reconciled to God when we were still enemies. When we were out in sin, not even thinking of God, Jesus loved us. Let me read it to you.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For God commended His love toward us. And that while we were yet sinners, yet sinners, we weren't even thinking of Him.

When you were out there, do you remember when you were out there? Do you remember when you had no time for Him? Do you remember those days? And the Lord said, even then I loved you. Even then you were reconciled to Me if you would have only repented and come. While you were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life. The Lord said, if I loved you when you were out there not even thinking about Me, do I not love you now when you're going through a struggle? When your heart still loves Me? Now I'm not talking about those who have just put God aside, they've given themselves over to their sin, they don't want anything to do with God, they're not interested in repentance. I'm talking about Christians and others who have backslidden somehow.

In fact, the closer you get to Jesus, the least thing will seem big to you in the sight in your own eyes. You'll feel the grief of having grieved the Lord. Now I don't have anything profound tonight, but I want to share just a few things that the Holy Spirit's putting in my heart about His love.

First of all, God wants us to be fully persuaded, fully persuaded that nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. I want you to go. Let's go to Romans 8. Why don't you go to Romans 8. 8th chapter, verse 38.

Beginning to read, do you have it? Romans 8, 38. Oh, I love the word, don't you? For I am, this is Paul speaking, I am persuaded. I'm completely convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing shall separate us from the love of God. Now that's the truth that the devil doesn't want us to be convinced of. He doesn't want you to hear that.

He doesn't want you to know it. Because, I want you to know something. If you can come, if you can get a hold of this truth, you can come through any trial, you can come through your temptation you're going through now, your trial, you can come through any failure, and be more than a conqueror, if you're fully persuaded that Jesus loves you.

Look at verse 5. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For it's written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. You're conquerors through the love of Jesus Christ for you.

Look at me, folks. The cry of this book is be rooted and grounded in love that you may be able to endure. You may be able to stand in a troubled time, rooted and grounded in love.

I'm afraid we're not rooted, we're not grounded in the love of Jesus Christ. Many of us, we're afraid to appropriate it. Philippians 1, 6, don't turn.

So being confident of this, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perfect it to the day of Jesus Christ. When you came to the Lord, now listen close to me. You came to the Lord, he decided he'd not let you go.

Listen to me now. You came to the Lord, and it was known in heaven and hell, and earth, that Jesus paid for you with his own blood. And he put a stamp on you, and he engraved you in the palm of his hand, and he said, Devil, this child belongs to me.

Now no matter what problem you're going through, no matter what failure you're at, if you'll confess it and repent, you'll come back by his love. You'll be drawn back by his love. You'll be drawn back by his precious love.

He that's begun a good work in you will perfect it to the day of Christ. He's not going to let the devil interrupt his work in you. Satan's lying to some of you right now.

He's trying to tell you that Jesus has given up on you. He's telling you that Jesus is mad at you. That you're just wicked and evil.

You'll never amount to anything. You'll never be holy. You'll never be clean.

You can hear Brother Bob preach. You can hear me. You hear Gary.

You hear one of the pastors preach. You say, I'll never. I can't measure up.

There's no way I'm going to measure up. Everybody else is measuring up, but I'm not measuring up. Have you ever sat here thinking you're the only one going through problems, the only one having a problem? Anybody sitting here right now thinking you're the only one with failure in your life? You say, but listen, are you going to do one of those TV evangelist things on us? No, I'm not.

I'm not standing here in any known failure in my life. But there are some of you sitting here now and the devil is lying to you right now. He's saying, see, you tried and you can't make it.

Bob hit this so strong this morning. And here you sit, wondering if you should even go on. We've had people leave this church.

They have absolutely quit on the Lord because they say, I can't make it. I will never measure up to what he wants. I want you to know that God's given you a word.

You can take it right to the devil, and you can throw it right at him just as Jesus did in the wilderness. And the devil is going to run. It's right there in the 8th chapter of Romans.

Look at it. The 34th verse. 34th.

Who is he that condemneth? Well, you know who that is, don't you? Were you condemned this afternoon before you came to church? Have you been sitting here during the worship being condemned? We've got a condemner who stands before the throne of God, accuser of the brethren, trying to accuse you, saying, you'll never make it. But who is this that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. You stand right up against Satan.

And you can say this with everything you... I refuse your condemnation and your lies. Jesus paid for my sins. I repent.

Jesus loves me. I'm on his mind right now. In fact, devil, right now, when you're accusing me, he has me on his mind, he has me on his lips, he's talking to the Father about me right now.

He's talking to the Father about me. This very moment, he's interceding before the Father. And you can tell the devil that.

Glory be to God. And then you can quote him this scripture. I write unto you that you sin not, but if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

You go back to him, you say, Father, I've sinned. I've had four children, and I never kicked them out because they failed me. I took them aside, sometimes I had to take them to the woodshed.

Sometimes I had to spank the meanest out of them, but all along they were my children, and I loved them, and the only reason I spanked them was for their own good. When did Jesus throw you out? Tell me. When did he write a bill of a divorce? I divorce you.

Go on out on your own. When did he do it? You can't tell me when he did that. He said, I'll never leave you.

I'll never forsake you. I'll go with you to the end. I'm going through you with your troubles.

I'm going through your trials. Hold fast. Now it's one thing to be persuaded that... Just hold steady, please.

It's one thing to be persuaded that Jesus loves you when everything is all right and well, when you've got victory in your life. Brother, will you hold steady. The Holy Spirit... Brother, you're out of order.

The Holy Spirit will not tell people under a message of love that they're being damned. I reject that in Jesus' name. Hold it.

All right. No more interruptions. The Holy Spirit does not interrupt Himself.

All right. God... And I know now more and more why the devil fought me tooth and nail on this. God's going to have it said tonight.

Hallelujah. Hold steady now. No more clapping.

See, it's one thing. It's one thing to be persuaded Jesus loves you when all is well, when there's victory, but to be persuaded is love when there's failure and defeat in your life. Now, notice a very interesting verse, Romans 8, 35.

Look at it. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Now, who is a person, isn't that? You know who that is. That's Satan.

But then look. Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sorrow? Now, those are things. That's not a who.

Those are things. Who is it that brings these things on us? Satan himself trying to bring all these things to rob us of the love of God. But I notice, look down in verse 37.

May in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Hallelujah. Now, to separate us, who shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ? That word separation is to isolate.

In other words, to make you feel like an island of rejection. That you're not loved. And I'll tell you what the devil does.

He'll first try to strip you of love of those around you. He'll try to interfere in the love of your family. Interfere in the love of your friends.

And try to isolate you. In fact, the separation means to put a great gulf between it and isolate it as an island. Some of you are sitting here right now knowing what that means.

You have felt rejection. You felt isolated. And you feel just what they felt in Israel.

It says, but Zion has said, the Lord has forsaken us. And my Lord has forsaken, forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her own womb? Yea, they may forget.

Yet I'll not forget you. Behold, I've graven you on the palm of my hand. Your walls are continually before me.

And then in Hosea it says, I will heal their backslidings. I will love them freely for my anger is turned away from him. Hallelujah.

Friends, God wants to heal every backslider here tonight. He wants to offer you His love and to heal that backsliding of your heart. Now, the Holy Spirit has really been putting me under conviction about the danger of presenting Jesus as a hard man.

Do you remember that parable? There were three servants that were given talents. One was given ten, one was given five, and one was given one talent. And the man who had the one talent went and hid it in the earth.

And one day the master comes and calls into account. And he said, I want what I gave you. I want my return.

And you know what he said? Master, I knew thee that thou art a hard man. And I was afraid. And I went and I hid my talent.

And I was on my face before God. And the Lord was saying, David, there's something you're not hearing, there's something you're not seeing yet. And I want to tell you, I don't believe you can be a holiness preacher of any kind.

You can't be a preacher of righteousness unless you're teachable. And I'm telling you now, God's telling me I've got a lot to learn. And I confess it before you here now, and I'm not trying to be sentimental or put attention on myself.

But God began to say, there's so much yet I've got to learn before I can be a shepherd to the sheep here even. All of us as pastors are open that God would teach us. But I got to thinking, the Lord was showing me, what kind of teacher did this man have? The other two served the Lord with joy.

They had no problem. They made their investment. It was a glorious experience.

But this man comes, and he said, boy, you're hard. And he was afraid, and he hid his talent. Who was his teacher? What kind of message did he sit under that made him see Jesus as hard? Because Jesus is the master here.

Brother Bob, he felt the same grief that I felt one time when some people that sat under his teaching had gone to a pastor and tried to correct him as if they knew it all now, because they'd come into a holiness message. And Bob was alarmed, and he got on the phone, and he said, tell me, did my preaching produce that in you? And there was terror in Bob and my own heart. Are we going to preach a message that would produce that kind of thing? Are they misjudging what is being said? I got to thinking, Lord, what kind of a pastor, what kind of a teacher, what kind of a message was he sitting under that he perceived Jesus as a hard man? That Friday night, a young pastor met me back, I don't know if he's here tonight or not, and tears in his eyes, visiting from another state.

He said, Brother Dave, I've been preaching holiness in my church, and I preach it hard. And he said, the people are not receiving it, and they're leaving left and right. But I can't compromise on my message.

And I felt pain in my heart, because all over the country now, there's a message of holiness coming forth. There's a message of righteousness. But folks, too many are preaching it as hardness.

They're not presenting Jesus in fullness. I remember something Bob told me that changed my life. He said, David, when we preach holiness, we must never veil Christ.

We must never veil the mercy of Jesus Christ. But you see, I don't want to be that hard man, or that man that preaches a message that pictures Jesus only as a hard man, because that produces fear, and fear has torment, and then people go and hide, because they feel they can't make it. I don't want to be one of those preachers.

You know, there are times when I have to preach a strong message, a prophetic message especially. I know that there are some people that are out there, they want to say, yeah, preach it, brother Dave. Get it.

Hit it. Hit it. It's almost like a cheering section.

Hit it. And sometimes, I know there have been times I've been carried up in it. I confessed to Bob today about a time down in Georgia.

I was preaching at a camp meeting two years ago, and on that campground, I saw these great big satellite dishes, and you know my hatred for television. The superintendent of the movement there was great big, biggest dish I ever saw. And I'll tell you what, I got up there in that pulpit, and boy, I skinned him alive.

By the way, the Lord doesn't want hides, He wants souls. You know, skinning. I'll tell you what, I thundered, and I... Ever since, I've felt the pain for what I did.

And later, some pastor said, boy, you were hard, brother Dave. But you know, there were some people in there just fed something, and then they wanted to hit it. They wanted hard, hard, hard.

Now, I'm going to tell you now, I'm not going to compromise on my message. I'm going to preach it. But there have been evangelists, you know, that have preached a hard message, and you were there, watching either on television or something.

Yeah, they're... Give it to them. That's right. They'll say, I'll not compromise.

I'm going to preach and tell it like it is. But I've been hearing the Holy Spirit say to me, David, how are you presenting me to the sheep? Are you showing them my mercy, and my love, and my long suffering, along with my hatred for sin? Are you making them afraid, so afraid that they'll hide? And I want the Lord to help me preach holiness stronger than I've ever preached it, but I want to preach it with brokenness? I want to be like Paul, who said, I came to you like... in the tenderness of a nurse. I'm going to read it to you.

Paul said, but we were gentle among you. Even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our very souls, because you were dear to us. I confess to you, I've never known that.

I'm beginning to know it. I've never passed. I've been an evangelist.

And I've thundered all over the world. I don't think I know what it's like to be a nurse, to look out over a congregation of people living in a wicked city, hurting, carry all kinds of burdens and garbage from your past. And I want to see you walk in holiness.

In all the past, we want to see you walk in holiness so much. Now, I can't speak for Bob. I know these men.

Bob has a tender heart. Gary has a tender heart. I need this.

I need to have that gentleness as a nurse, cherishing their children, not trying to spank them, because there's a sickness, there's a disease, there's sin. And Paul is saying, I came to you people. My dear sheep, as a nurse cherishing her children, so being affectionate and desirous of you, we're willing to impart to you, not just the gospel only, but our very souls, because you're dear to us.

Paul then added, we exhorted, and we comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father to charge his children. No wonder Paul's message of holiness was received. It wasn't rejected.

People didn't walk out here, because he said, when you received this word of God, which you heard of us, you received it. Not as word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God. I told this young preacher, what I want to tell every preacher of righteousness and holiness in America, if you're going to be preaching a strong message, preach it through brokenness, preach it through tears.

And folks, that's what I've asked God to do for this pulpit. You may have heard people say, Times Square Church, you go down there and you just get beat. No, you don't get beat here.

You won't get beaten here. Because God's breaking this ministry. He's breaking the hearts of the pastors, telling us that we need to be like Paul.

We need to share with you as precious children. Not trying to rip you. Not trying to drive you.

But to go to the throne of God. Touch His righteousness. Touch His holiness.

See a vision of Jesus so clear. And then come to you and say, Here He is. In all of His love.

He hates sin. And that's why we preach so strong about it. We feel His wrath against it.

And we don't want you to be damned. We love you too much. But to do it as a nurse.

To do it as a father looking with love to His children. And I confess before a holy God I've not had that! I've not had that! But I want it. I want it.

Make Jesus, present Jesus in His fullness. Sometimes we're like the man who was forgiven a great debt. Then we walk right out and choke somebody! Who's not living up to our standard.

The Bible says of Jesus, For He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is also merciful. That's Luke 6.35. Jesus is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.

Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is also merciful. James said, The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercies. Well God's showing me.

He's pounding in me with love. He's been speaking all week to me. So strong.

How serious this matter is of how we present Jesus to the world. How we present Him. Paul said, We are ambassadors for Christ.

Do you know what that means? We represent Him. The only thing the world is going to see of Jesus is what we show it. What we show the world of Him.

There's a, down in Brazil. I think it's in Brasilia. There's a cathedral.

And there's a, one of those glass windows, colored glass, leaded glass windows. And it's Jesus. You see all these people kneeling before Him.

And Jesus is standing with a great big club in His hand. Ready to smite them. And that's the vision of Jesus.

That's the perverted view of Jesus. And those people come there with that great fear of this man in heaven with a club over their head. God's Word says He is very pitiful and of tender mercies.

And He's saying if you're going to witness out in the street, are you going to counsel anybody? If you're going to talk to people about Jesus, you've got to be a faithful ambassador. You've got to represent me for who I really am. And what the Word says, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another.

Love is brethren. Be pitiful, be courteous. Be pitiful, be courteous.

1 Peter 3.8 You know, much of the street preaching here in New York City is very discourteous. Very discourteous. It's confrontational.

It's mean. Sometimes it's ugly. I would imagine we've got 10, 15 street preachers here tonight.

But if you're a street preacher, if you're a witness, or you are a counselor, you've got to understand what the Holy Spirit's saying tonight. Be careful. This is an awesome responsibility.

How you present Jesus. Are you presenting Him in His fullness? Or are you just showing one side of Him? You know, Steve and I were walking down 42nd Street a few weeks ago. And Steve was carrying a briefcase.

And this street preacher, good gracious heart, up on 42nd Street here in Broadway. He stopped. I just stopped to listen.

And he said, look at this. Two, me and Steve, two computer junkies. They've got their computer with them. They're so hooked on computers. You know what was in that box? A microphone. This microphone I have right here.

With a big box that we carried in. Computer junkies. They're so wrapped up in the world.

I mean, he stalled at us. To hear that, dear brother, we were headed right down to hell. Sliding right down on our computer.

We were tempted to open the box. What are you telling the mouth of God? You shaking an accusing finger in their face. And this Lord who is very pitiful of tender mercies, are you making Him out to be a monster? Are you? I don't want to misrepresent Jesus anymore.

Be ye also pitiful. Be courteous. Now, look, the Bible said, those who sin must be rebuked before all.

That's 1 Timothy 5.20. The Bible said we have to exhort and rebuke with all authority. Titus 2.15. Unruly mouths must be stopped. You've got to rebuke them sharply.

Titus 1.13. But we're also commanded to rebuke with all long-suffering. Now, that word long-suffering means very lenient, patient, and understanding. You know what the Scripture said? Street preachers listen.

Witnesses listen. Counselors listen. Preach the Word.

Be instant in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, which means counsel, with all long-suffering. You're to do it, but you're to do it with pity, compassion, and long-suffering.

Paul preached with that long-suffering. He said, I obtain mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. Do you know that you're a pattern of His long-suffering? Come on now, tell me it wasn't His long-suffering that found you.

How patient has He been with you? That's what God told me about television, too. You know, last time I talked about television here, I did it with the tears in my eyes. I did it with a broken heart.

And if I ever tell you again God hates it, I'm going to tell it to you, because I love you, and I'm not trying to rail against you. But I've got to tell you right now, if it weren't for the long-suffering of Jesus, I wouldn't be standing in this pulpit now. Folks, somewhere along the line, I would have turned my back somehow, not on the Lord, but something would have crept in.

My family would have been disintegrated and everything else, but for the long-suffering, I stand here like Paul is a pattern of the patience and the long-suffering of Jesus Christ. How long He bore with some of my foolishness. How long He put up with me, and yet He brought me back to this place that I stand now in His holy freedom.

How patient He's been with you. Why will you not be patient with others then? Why will you not be patient with those that you deal with all around you? Now, truthfully, the love of Jesus never gives up on people. I want to show it to you, Revelation 3.15. Revelation 3.15. I'm not going to preach much longer.

Revelation 3.15. You know this. He's talking about the Laodicean church. Don't you know that's the backslidden church? That's the harlot church? Look at Revelation 3.15. The Lord is saying, And I know thy works, speaking the Laodicean church, that thou art neither cold nor hot, or would you either cold or hot? So then, because you're lukewarm and not cold or hot, I'll spew you out of my mouth, because thou sayest, Thou art rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.

You don't know that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Look this way for just a minute, if you will, please. You see, Jesus standing at the door.

Just look at verse 20. He's already told them He's going to spew them out of His mouth, hasn't He? Now look what He said, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I'll come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Listen very closely to me now. It'd be easy, and I think there was a time in my ministry, I could have stood in a pulpit, and I would have said something like this, Look, there it is in black and white. I'm going to spew you out of my mouth.

Folks, is it in your Bible? There it is. In black and white, I'll spew you out of my mouth. You're compromised, you're backsliding, you're naked, you're cold, you're lost, you're undone.

And God said, I'll spew you out of my mouth, and I'd have been preaching the truth halfway. Because look at verse 18. There's Jesus.

He doesn't want them to be spewed out of His mouth. Look, He's counseled them. He said, Please buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.

He doesn't want them to be poor in spirit. And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. He's trying to cover their shame.

He's not trying to expose anything. He's trying to cover it by His blood. And anoint thine eyes with eyes salve, that thou mayest see.

And for as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent. He's offering mercy.

He's offering grace. And see, if I'd have just come and preached, I'll spew you out of my mouth, I would have had Scripture to prove it. But I would not have preached Jesus in His fullness.

I would have missed. Behold, I stand at the door of your heart and knock. Before I'll spew you out of my mouth, go knock on your door.

Because I really don't want to spew out of my mouth. I want to sit down and eat with you. I don't want you standing naked before the Lord.

I want you covered. But see, we give up on our weak brethren. If we're working with people and they fail us, especially after the second or the third time, it usually, I know, I've said it so many times, look, I've tried, I can't waste any more time.

He doesn't want God. He knows where I'm at if he wants the Lord. I'll be here, but I'm not going out of my way.

I don't think you're going to make it anyhow. Have you said that about your husband or your wife? I don't know what it's going to take. I've prayed and I'm tired of praying.

Man, I've done everything I know how to do. There's nothing left. And most people, we just give up on people.

I'm so glad Jesus doesn't. I'm so glad Jesus didn't give up on Peter. Peter didn't deny him once.

He didn't deny him twice. He denied him three times. He cursed him.

He said, I don't even know the man. I don't know him. But you know something? Peter walked... This is the end of side one.

You may now turn the tape over to side two. He's weeping now. And I can just picture Peter saying, how could I have done it? He told me Satan was after me to try to sift me.

He warned me. I heard the word. I was warned.

And yet, even in spite of the word that I heard, I've been sitting under this kind of ministry, and I went right out and I did something to grieve my Lord. How could I have done it? Does that sound familiar? Come on. Don't hide.

The Holy Spirit knows where you're at. Oh, but Peter... Peter remembers something Jesus said. Peter says, oh, the look in his eyes.

I'll never forget that look. What was that look? It was the look of love. Because Jesus said, Peter... I've got to read it to you.

Peter, I've prayed for you that your faith fail not. And when you're converted, strengthen your brethren. You know what, Peter? You know what brought him back? I'm convinced of it.

Peter's weeping over the hilltops. He's walking up and down the hillside. The Judean said, I've denied Him.

I've sinned. I've grieved the Lord. I shouldn't have done it.

I'm His servant. I've preached His gospel. I've laid hands on the sick.

I let Him down. Oh, but He said something to me. He said He's going to pray for me.

He's praying for me. He's praying for me right now. He's praying for me.

Do you know that He's doing that right now for you? And for me? He's before the Father. He's praying for us just like He prayed for Peter. And then Peter remembers something else.

Jesus said, I'm going to be converted. I'm coming back. And when I come back, I'm going to be an example to my brothers.

Strengthen your brothers. I'm going to be an example of His grace. Can't you say that right now to yourself and to the devil and the whole world? Yes, I've grieved Him.

I've sinned, but I hate it. I despise it. And I know He's interceding for me right now.

And He's saying, you come back to Me. And when you're converted, I'm going to make you stronger. And I'm going to use you.

You're going to be a testimony to Me. And to your brothers. Hallelujah.

What kind of love is that? I'm going to close in just a minute. Remember the prodigal son who just took his belongings and went off and he wound up in a pig pen eating the husk of the pigs? You ever been there? Some of you are there. I have to close now, but this is where the Holy Spirit has brought me for tonight.

Please hear me. And I'm not going to do it psychologically or sentimentally or anything else. But I ask the love of Jesus to make it real.

Do you know that whole time that prodigal son was out there feeding the pigs? What was his father? His father was looking for him. Waiting for him. See, the Lord won't force Himself on you.

But he's waiting. All you have to do is like the prodigal son, come to the end of yourself. Say, look, I've had it.

I can't carry this guilt, this condemnation. And more than that, my father has everything that I need. Do you know that father was praying for that son? According to the Scripture.

If you put everything else together, you see the picture? Composite picture. One day he gets up and he comes back. And that's what God wants you to do tonight.

You in the balcony here, down on the main floor. You have that burden on you. You've slipped away from the Lord.

Your heart's grown cold. You're under condemnation and guilt. He told the woman, I don't condemn you.

Go sin no more. Where are your accusers? He's not your accuser tonight. He's your Savior.

He's your Savior. So this boy gets up. And he heads back home.

And before he even gets there, his father sees him and runs after him. Do you know that's Jesus? That He comes after you. You take one step to Him, and I mean He'll come to you.

The father didn't even go up to him and says, you spit on me. Look at it. I told you it would happen.

I knew you'd do it. There was a streak in you. It's been there all the time.

You're a brother. You're an older brother. You ought to be like Him.

Stay right here faithful. Let's know what He told him. What did He do? He fell on his neck and kissed him.

He saw his dirty clothes, and He said to His servants, take those clothes. Put new clothes on his back. The Lord said, I'm going to make you a righteous person.

I'm going to clean you up. The Lord's master said, take off those filthy shoes. He put new shoes on him.

And the boy said, but I'm not worthy. Father, I failed you. I've sinned against you.

I've sinned against God. I'm not worthy. In other words, let me stay out here until I work my way in.

I've got to earn your respect now. No, the father said, right into the house. And he had a feast with him.

Put on a feast. Why? Because the prodigal son could say, I've sinned against God. I've sinned against you.

And I'm not worthy. And when you come to that place, then you come to the feast. He doesn't want you just camping outside.

He wants you at his table tonight. Kill the fatted calf. He says, come on home.

My son who is dead is alive again. Hallelujah. Some of you have been dead.

God's going to resurrect you tonight. Hallelujah. Well, I told you, it's very simple.

Bow your heads. Oh, Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit.

Show us your love tonight. How you're reaching out in love tonight to say, if you'll get up out of your despair. If you just get up out of your flesh.

Get up out of this thing that has a hold of you and come to me. I'll receive you. I'll make you righteous.

All you have to do is get up and come. Lord Jesus, I feel your love tonight for this people. Truly you love us.

You love us with an undying love. Holy Spirit, just come and put your arms around the sinner here tonight. Put your arms around the backslider.

Put your arms around those that are struggling with the weight. Saying, I can't take it anymore. I'm bound by this thing and I want to be free and I don't know how to get free.

Lord, put your arms around them. And by your Spirit, just draw them. And tonight, break every chain that binds them and set them free.

If God by his Spirit has touched you tonight. And the Holy Spirit has said this message is for you. And you've been backslidden in the heart.

Or you're carrying a load of sin or guilt or habit. And you say, brother, I want to come home. I've got to come.

I need his love tonight. I'm tired of sin. I want to repent.

But I want to be restored to his love. Let's all stand, please. So people can get out of the aisles.

Up in the balcony, go to the steps there. Come down either side of the steps down the aisle. You're in the main floor right now.

You feel the joy and power of Jesus Christ. You feel his love tonight. Step out of your seat and come and let us pray with you right now.

The Lord wants to put his arms around you. He wants to break every habit. He wants to set you free.

He wants to plant his kiss upon your neck. Wherever you're at, up in the balcony here on the main floor. Get out of your seat.

And come and just stand here. And say, Jesus, I'm coming home. I'm coming back to your love.

This is the conclusion of the tape.

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