

The Power of One Man's Intercession

by Dennis Kinlaw

The sermon emphasizes the importance of one person making a difference in God's plan of salvation, as it allows Him to act in mercy and redemption instead of judgment.

Duration: 53:14

Scripture: Isaiah 50:9, Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 59:1-2, Jeremiah 5:1, Ezekiel 22:30

Topics: "Intercession"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of one person to make a difference in God's circumstances. He reflects on the difficulty of getting people to change and acknowledges that even God cannot force people to change. The speaker also highlights the importance of righteousness and truth-seeking, using verses from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to support his points. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to be the one righteous person who can bring about forgiveness and redemption.

Transcript

About three or four years ago, I ran across a verse in the Bible that intrigued me. And as I looked at it, you understand what I'm saying, I think, it's sort of like pulling a thread that's projecting and you really don't intend to unravel anything, but you just want to get it out of the way, so I pulled that verse and that thread, then I began to find some others that fitted with it. And I would like to think that I have seen something that is a basic biblical motif that is not expressed in great clarity by being right on the surface of the text, but is underneath the text everywhere, but sort of shows its head at certain points.

Let me read for you the first of these five passages of Scripture that I want to share with you. The first is in Isaiah 50. Three are in Isaiah, one is in Jeremiah, one is in Ezekiel.

You may want to note them down so that later you can look at them with a little more care. This is what the Lord says. The word Lord there is the Hebrew word Yahweh or Jehovah, which is his personal name.

It's not God who is the nameless one who is speaking, it is the God who has disclosed his name to his people. He says, "...where is your mother's certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold, because of your transgressions your mother was sent away. When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Was my arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I drive the sea, I turn rivers into a desert, their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst.

I clothe the sky with darkness and make sackcloth its covering. The sovereign Lord..." Now you will notice what he is saying. He is saying, "...I am the sovereign God.

There is no question about my power. I can speak and the seas will dry up, or I can speak and the Sahara desert will run with water. There is no problem with my power.

I have plenty of that. But I am looking now at my people." He is not talking to the world, he is talking to the people of God, and he says, "...your sins, they comprise my problem. And when I came to talk to you about your sins and to deal with you about your sins, why is it that I couldn't find a single person to respond?" Now you will notice the way he says it.

When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to respond? Do you not respond because you don't think I have the power? Where else are you going to turn? Now let me show you the second passage that intrigued me. It is chapter 59. It begins with a verse that you probably are very familiar with.

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear. Now notice the way he begins.

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. There is nothing wrong with my power. Do you notice how he begins? There is nothing wrong with my power, and there is nothing wrong with my hearing.

I can hear. Now I think implicit in that, God is saying, and there is nothing wrong with my heart. If you would turn to me, I have the power and I have the will.

I'm waiting for the opportunity. Nothing wrong with me, the problem is with you. Now notice as you go down through a description of one of the most graphic pictures in the Old Testament of the consequences of evil.

It is a period when I'm sure that Nietzsche took his line from this passage when he said, The darkness is so great that we need to light the lanterns at noon. Now, the darkness is deep when you need the lights on in full blast at twelve o'clock noon, and that's the kind of picture you get of the people of God. Then he says, The Lord looked, the latter part of verse 15, The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice.

He saw that there was no one. He was appalled that there was no one to intervene or to intercede. So his own arm worked salvation for him.

Now if you will notice, there was the reference to the arm of the Lord in the first passage. There was a reference to the arm of the Lord in the first verse of this text. There is nothing wrong with my arm, my power to save.

So his own arm worked salvation for him and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head, the garments of vengeance, and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak. Now the third passage that I want to mention is in Jeremiah, and it is in chapter 5, beginning with verse 1. He is speaking to the prophet, and he is speaking about the city of Jerusalem and the people of God.

Now you understand enough about that to understand that Jerusalem is God's favorite place in the world. I used to teach Hebrew, and one of the things I found in the Jewish lore was that the Jewish priests, the rabbis, called Jerusalem the belly button of the earth. They said, That's the navel of the earth.

That's where heaven's umbilical cord hooks on to creation and hooks on to mankind. In Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the site of the temple. There is where heaven's umbilical cord hooks to us.

Now he's talking about the earth's umbilical cord. He's talking about the best. You miss it if you don't catch that.

Jerusalem. He's not talking about Babylon. He's not talking about Egypt or Rome.

He is saying, Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem. Look around and consider. Search through the squares of the holy city.

If you can find one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city. Isn't that an astounding verse? Now it's astounding in terms of the potential for one righteous person, and it's astounding at the tragic state of the body of Christ, if you'll let me use New Testament language to describe the Old Testament people of God. Now let me turn to the fifth verse, which you probably already have anticipated.

It is in chapter 22 of Ezekiel, and it is the familiar verse 30. I looked for a man among them. There's no gender in that.

He is looking for a human person. I looked for a person among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it. But I found no one.

Now notice the play on one. Notice the play on God looking. And notice how God is saying, If I could have just found one person, I would not have had to have acted in judgment upon my people and upon my world.

Now as I found those verses and began to fit them together, I found my heart responding because I like the notion that one person can make a difference. I don't know about you, but I think there is something in every person made in the image of God that makes him feel or makes her feel I ought to count. I don't believe it is a false pride within a person that makes him feel or makes her feel, whoever it is, that he or she ought to count for something worthwhile.

You've got an eternal soul, you're made in the image of an eternal God, your life ought to count. God speaks and says, One person would have made a difference. I believe one person can make a difference.

In fact, I suspect that every good story in human history started with one person. And what an unlikely bunch. Most of the persons were with whom the good story started.

Now the second thing in this is, apparently, and you know, I had trouble admitting that this is in the text. I had trouble admitting that God needs one person. What's wrong with his arms? What's wrong with his power? He's already told us, There's nothing wrong with me.

Is my arm too short that it cannot say? No, there's nothing wrong with me. Anything wrong with my ear? No, nothing wrong with my ear. I can hear.

Anything wrong with my heart? No. I would rather save you than do anything else in the world. If I ever act in judgment, it'll be because I have no option.

But you see, what's implicit is, he needs one person so he doesn't have to act in judgment. Now, I don't know what that does to your theology, but I dare you to look at the biblical text. That's what I've got to deal with, and I think that's what you've got to deal with.

He says, If I could have found one person, my circumstances would have been different. Now, you know, we very quickly say that God can make our circumstances different. But isn't it a terrifying thing when you think that you can make God's circumstances different? I want to say that shook me enough that it took me a while before I could go the next step.

But the text says, If I could have found one person, my circumstances would have been different. Now, in what way would God's circumstances have been different? They would have been different in that it would have enabled God to act in mercy instead of in judgment. Because if you look in every case, the options are either judgment or mercy.

Now, I do not have to explain to you what the judgment of God is. You read the 59th chapter and you will see. You read any of these passages.

There's one passage which I forgot to give you. It's chapter 63 of Isaiah. Let's look at that for a moment.

It's a familiar one, too. Who is this coming from Edom, the prophet asks, from Basra with his garment stained crimson? Who is this robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? And then the prophet gets a response. God speaks and says, It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.

It is the mighty one and the saving one who speaks. Why are your garments red like those of one treading the winepress? The prophet asks, Why are you, if you're the Savior, why are your garments splattered with blood? And he says, I have trodden the winepress alone from the nations no one was with me. Notice, from the nations no one was with me.

I trampled them in my anger, and I trod them down in my wrath. Their blood splattered my garments, splattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come.

I looked." Isn't it interesting? one gave support, so my own arm worked salvation for me." Now, I simply want to say one person can make a difference. One person can change, and maybe this will be hairiness of you, but let me say it, and if you can find a better way to say it theologically, say it for me. One person can change God's circumstances, and one person can make it possible for God to act in mercy and in redemption instead of in judgment.

Now, what are we dealing with here? I think the thing that we're dealing with is that it is not easy to get people to change. I've decided that not even God has an easy time getting anybody to change. I used to think it was just me.

I knew if Elsie would listen to me for ten minutes, I could straighten her out. If she'd just sit down and listen to me for ten minutes, I could straighten her out, and I tried it several times with a magnificent lack of success. It's interesting, it's not easy to get people to change.

Then I found myself with five kids, and now we have 16 grandchildren. How do you get them to change? How do you get them to come to the place where Jesus Christ is the passion of their hearts? How do you get them? You can't force them. You can't persuade them.

You can't buy them. And I've decided, now, you may have trouble with my language. If you do, forget about my language and try to think of the truth underneath.

God can't even force people to change. If he could, the cross wouldn't have been necessary. That's the reason he says, anything wrong with my arm? Nothing wrong with my arm.

I have all the power to change everybody in the world, but how do I get them to change? I can't sit on my throne and zap them and transform them into holy people. How do you get anybody to change? It isn't easy. Now, at that point, as I wrestled with that, I raised the question, if he's looking for one person and one person can make God's circumstances different, what kind of person is he looking for? And I found something that intrigued me.

It's in that verse 16 of chapter 59 where he says, I looked for an intercessor. The translation which I have says, one to intervene. And I read that and I thought, ah, he's looking for an intercessor.

What is an intercessor? I'm an old Hebrew teacher, so you'll forgive me if I use that. And you don't have to be smart to learn Hebrew, it's Greek you need to be smart to learn. Hebrew is a picture language.

If you liked Peanuts and the Funny Paper, you'd make a great Hebrew scholar, because behind every word there's a picture like that. So I was reading through that in the Hebrew and he says, I searched and I couldn't find anyone. I was astounded.

Isn't it interesting when the All-Knowing One is surprised? Isn't it interesting when omniscience is astounded? He said, I looked and I was astounded that I couldn't find one person. I looked for a, and the Hebrew word is mafgia. Now, if I had a blackboard, I'd spell it for you.

You may want to write it down. M-A-P, and a P after a vowel in Hebrew is pronounced like a P-H. If you want to say M-A-P-H, okay.

Then G and a long I, like the I in machine, and then an A, and then a Hebrew consonant we don't have in English which is an abdominal grunt, an I. And the Hebrew word is pronounced something like mafgia. Now, in Hebrew every word, at least 85 percent of the words, are based on what are called triconsonant roots, consonantal roots, where you have three letters that have a basic idea in them, that picture behind them. And the root in this is P-G and then that abdominal grunt, I-N.

And the Hebrew verb is pagat, and it means to meet. You put the M in front of it and it means one, a person, and the A after it means who causes. That's very simple, isn't it? An intercessor, that's what you expected.

One who causes to meet. So God says, I'm looking for one person who can cause me in my holiness and my power and love to meet these who are in their sin and their lostness, their blindness and in their trauma, because sin always brings trauma. So I thought, yes, that's what he's looking for, one who can bring them together.

Now, as I read that, I remembered something. The word pagat does not occur a great many times in the Old Testament, but it occurs twice in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. And so I thought, wait a minute, I ought to look at the 53rd chapter of Isaiah.

And so I started reading. Do you know what I read first? Who can believe it? It's too good to be true. Now, your translation probably says something like, who has believed our report? But what it means is, I've got something to tell you that's too good to be true.

Who could believe it? What is it? The arm of the Lord. To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Do you know what he's going to talk about in the rest of Isaiah 53? He's going to talk about the arm of the Lord. Do you remember he said, My arm is not shortened that I cannot save? Nothing wrong with my arm.

Isaiah 59 said, When I could not find one, my own arm brought salvation. With that in my head, I went through the rest of Isaiah 53, and the word pagat occurs twice in that chapter. Once it is in verse 12 of 53, the last sentence of verse 12, where he speaks and says, I'll give him a portion among the great, he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors.

But now the next part is where the word occurs. For he bore the sin of many, and he caused to meet, is what the Hebrew says, for the transgressors. Now, your translation is, probably he made intercession for the transgressors, he caused to meet.

But the verse that really turned me on is the sixth verse, and it's one you're very familiar with. I don't even have to tell you what it says, but hear it for a moment. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned every one to his own way. That's the description that you find in each one of these contexts, where man has turned to his own way. Now, how do you get him to change? Now, the rest of your verse probably reads something like, and Yahweh, or Jehovah, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all.

Do you know what the Hebrew says? And Yahweh has caused to meet in him the iniquities of us all. And a light turned on. I used to think intercession was going down my prayer list, but the one God was looking for was one in whom the needs of a world that was lost, and God in his holiness and his adequacy, where one person in whom those two things would meet.

It wasn't what he said. It wasn't an external act. It was an inner condition of the heart, where the need of the lost and the adequacy of God and the holiness of God met inside that person.

Now, I hope you will hold that as we keep moving, because that's the crux of it, which may seem trivial. It isn't trivial to me anymore. It may seem obvious.

It isn't obvious to me anymore. I'm trying to walk around it and see what is there and what is implied. But then I noticed something in Isaiah 59.

He said, I looked for somebody to intervene, to intercede, a mafgia, and I couldn't find one. I was astounded that there was no one. So my own arm wrought salvation.

Now, another light turned on. It's interesting when God couldn't find one, what was his solution? Do you know that when he couldn't find a person, what he had to do was become one? When he couldn't find one,

he had no option, or if he did, we don't know what it was. If he had another option, the option he chose was that when he couldn't find a person, he became one.

There's the whole story of the incarnation. Now, I want to shake you up a little bit. I come from a very liberal background where I was convinced that Jesus was a man and that was all, and I never expected to meet a person who believed in the Deity of Christ.

I believe in the preexistence of Christ. I'm an Orthodox believer. I believe in the virgin birth.

I believe in the resurrection. I believe in the ascension. I believe in his second return.

I believe in all that. I believe there's an uncrossable line between the Creator and the creature, never crossed except at one point, and that was in Jesus Christ. But I want to say something.

Salvation doesn't come from above. The Savior comes from above, but salvation comes this way. In fact, when the salvation came, it came so much like you and me that the religious leaders said, Lookie there, he's like one of us, he dies.

He's not God and he's not the Savior, he dies like one of us. And it was just like when he was born. They said, Mary's son, just like one of us.

It took a divine revelation for Anna and Simeon to know who he was. And when he came, when salvation came, it came this way. Salvation doesn't take place on the throne.

It takes place on a hill outside of Jerusalem in the body of the arm of the Lord, the eternal Son who has become one of us. It's interesting salvation can't be handed down. We've never learned that.

We Americans would like to go to the world and hand it down to everybody in the world. We who are saved would like to hand it down to these poor, miserable, lost people. But salvation is never handed down.

It goes this way. When he couldn't find one, he became one. Now, what did he do? He bore us.

He bore us. It's interesting, the strongest word in the Old Testament for forgive is a word which normally is translated to bear, which means you have problems knowing how to translate it in the Old Testament. You remember the 32nd Psalm, Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

You remember that introduction to Psalm 32. But when it says whose transgressions are forgiven, what the Hebrew says, it has a passive participle of the verb to bear. Blessed is the man whose transgressions are borne.

Somebody else has taken them. Now, that's what he did. He took our need, he took our sin, he took our estate, he took our circumstances, he took us into himself.

And our need, our lostness, our blindness, our deadness, he took into himself, and in us that deadness met the life of God. Now I want to raise a question. How do you think David Livingstone opened up Africa? I don't believe it was with his feet, and I don't believe it was with his mouth.

I think it was in his heart. Do you know where people come from? They come because somebody bears them. And if somebody doesn't bear you, you'll never be born.

And that word nasa can be translated just exactly that way. Do you remember Paul said to the Galatians, My little children, for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. Paul said to the Galatians, My little children, for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.

He bore those Galatians in his soul. It wasn't his mouth, it was his heart. I don't think it's an accident.

When the English came to get David Livingstone, the Africans said, You can have his body, but you're not going to get his heart because his heart belongs to us. I think it was in the heart of David Livingstone that the liberation of Africa started. He bore that continent in his soul.

And in that bearing, something began to happen in that great dark continent. I'd like to ask you this morning about the question whom you're bearing in your heart. Now that brings me to this.

Do you know, I'm convinced that nobody in himself can change. I think that's what the doctrine of original sin teaches. We are dead in our trespasses and sins.

If you have a good thought, it didn't originate with you. If I have a good thought, it didn't originate with me. All goodness comes from God.

All love comes from God. If I ever have a loving emotion, it doesn't come from me. We're dead in our trespasses and our sins.

How do you get a dead person to come alive? I want to say it isn't easy. I want to say it always starts in somebody else. I now am convinced that the key to change in any human being rests in somebody else's hands.

The key to you is in somebody else. The key to me is in somebody else. Nobody ever starts on his own.

Forget about our American individualism. You see, the redemption of the world didn't start with the world. It started in the heart of God that sent Jesus to Calvary.

And it wouldn't be any chance for any of us if it hadn't been for what started in the heart of the Father and was worked out in the body and heart and life of the Son. And through His turning the key for us, the possibility of salvation came. And now He looks at you and me and says, as the Father has sent me, I'm sending you.

I'm convinced the key to every person rests in somebody else. And the key to somebody rests inside you. Now we can't change on our own.

People need to change. The key is in somebody else. That brings me to this.

Do you know I believe before anybody else can change, you've got to change? Because the thing I notice is that before God asked me to change, He changed. That changes the relationship between the saved and the lost, doesn't it? We could straighten the world out and it wouldn't take us long to straighten the world out. We could tell them very quickly, couldn't we? And we've done it for all these hundreds of years.

But as it were, it never comes that way. You never changed until God changed. I know that He's the Eternal One and doesn't change.

You work out your theology around that. But I know that the God who rests in Mary's arms has taken on a different circumstance from the God who sits on the throne. I ran across a verse from a Wesley hymn about five years ago I'd never seen before, a Christmas one.

Our God ever blessed with oxen doth rest. That's not where you expect to find the Eternal One, is it? Our God ever blessed with oxen doth rest is nursed by His creature and hangs at the breast. Isn't it interesting when the whole of creation rests on Him and then He decides to be dependent on one of us? If I knew how to preach that, we'd all just get out on our faces.

Before God asked us to change, He changed. And the potential for change in us started in the heart of God. Now I want to say I believe that's the way interpersonal relationships work.

You can't preach people into the kingdom. You may need to preach. You can't force anybody into the kingdom.

The key to it rests in one who opens himself up or herself up to bear somebody else. That helps me understand something that I've wrestled with for years. Did you ever wonder why God needs to pray? I went to a friend of mine one day and said, Why does God need to pray? He said, God need to pray? He doesn't need to pray.

We're the ones that need to pray. I said, Well, that's not what my Bible says. He said, What do you mean? Well, I said, There is that passage in Romans 8 where it says, The Spirit intercedes for us.

I think that's prayer. The Spirit prays for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. I said, Why does the Spirit of God need to pray for me? But as I had worse, it says in that passage in Romans 8 and then again in Hebrews that He, the Christ, ever lives to make intercession for the saints.

And that's what He's doing at the right hand of the Father now. He, the Eternal Son, prays for me. Now, I used to think that was the Son of Mary.

I don't believe that anymore. I don't believe you can split it that way. So when I pushed my friend, he said, Well, that passage in Romans about the Son, that's the Son interceding with the Father for us.

I said, Well, let me ask you, is he telling the Father something he doesn't know? And he didn't like that. So I said, Is he twisting his arm to get the Father to do something he doesn't want to do? And he liked that less. You know where I am? I think when your need becomes greater to me than my need, there's a possibility of your changing.

And that takes involvement. That takes identification. That takes concern.

You can't do that at all. You can't do that at arm's length and keep your hands clean. I now am convinced there's a mystery in human personhood, and that if you want one person to change, somebody else has got to open the door for the possibility by taking his need into himself.

And when the need of the second person becomes more important to the first person than the need of the first person is to the first person, there's the possibility of change in the second person. Now, if we had time, I could go into what I think all of that's based in the nature of the Trinity. I've decided that to be a person means you're incomplete, and that if you had a perfect person, he'd be incomplete, because to be a person is to be incomplete by definition.

And if you had a divine person, he'd be incomplete, because we had one once, and he said, I can do nothing of myself. I once thought that was the human son of Mary. I think it's the second person of the Trinity.

He said, my Father has life in himself, and he's given to me to have life in myself. Do you notice that the life of the Son comes out of the Father, and the life of you and me comes out of the Son, and the life of the world comes out of us? That's the reason God starts with us. But now, why, how can it be that the life of the world will come out of us? Because, you see, if we're what we ought to be, there's his life in us.

It's interesting, the verses in the Bible that I was not able to look at for 40 years. Do you know some verses I couldn't look at? Well, let me give you the first ones that I could look at, and then tell you the ones I couldn't look at. The ones I could look at, and here's where I became orthodox, when they said to Jesus, if you just show us the Father, it satisfies.

And he said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. And then he said, if you receive me, you get the Father. But if you miss me, you miss the Father.

I came to that, and that was transforming. But I want to tell you what I couldn't hear. Scared me too much.

He said, if they receive you, they get me, and when they get me, they get the Father. And if they miss you, reject you, they miss me, and when they miss me, they miss the Father. Because as the Father is in me, and I'm in the Father, I'm in you, and you're in me, and you're the key to the world.

As I'm the key to you, you're the key to the world. I didn't have the courage to look at that one. But now, how can that be? Let me give you a story.

The women in my life have introduced me to a British lady missionary to India by the name of Amy Carmichael. Many of you, I'm sure, are familiar with Amy Carmichael. You may be more familiar than I. But an amazing story.

When she went to India, the thing that impressed her the most was the state of the girls in India. I wonder if there's a connection between that and the fact that Madam Gandhi ended up as a prime minister. It's interesting how many of these great advances that the world recognizes as social advances started in some unknown Christian's heart somewhere.

She became concerned about particularly the temple girls. You see, in India, when a husband would die, the wife would be burned on his funeral pyre. Because if he died, why should she live? She belonged to him, she was his possession.

But when the mother was burned with the father, then what about the children? No problem about the boys, because they were economically of value. But the girls were another story. They were useless, so what do you do? Give them to the temple.

What would the temple use with girls? Well, you see, one of the ways of worship in those Hindu temples was through prostitution, sexual immorality. And so the temple girls were used as prostitutes. So you had eleven-year-old girls, orphan girls, who were now professional prostitutes in the name of religion.

You can imagine the disease, you can imagine the trauma of those girls. And Amy Carmichael objected, and she said, somebody ought to do something about those girls. And so she began praying for them and

working to extract some of them from the hold of the temple.

She had some success, and that created problems, because the Hindu priest didn't like that. So the Hindu priest decided it ought to be put to a stop. So they went to the Hindu economic interests and said, this lady is upsetting our apple cart.

You need to do something. They said, what do you mean? You are the ones who can do it, because you relate to the British leaders, and the British leaders are the ones who will have to stop her. So the Indian economic leaders went to the British economic leaders, the merchants, businessmen, and they said, you're creating a problem.

They said, what do you mean? That missionary of yours, she's disturbing the temples. And so they said, what do you expect us to do about it? Well, she's one of you, you've got to stop her. So they said, how can we stop her? And they said, well, we don't know, that's your problem.

They said, well, we'll go to the missionaries. So the British mercantile political leaders went to the British missionaries and said, you've got a missionary that's upsetting the apple cart. And they said, what do you mean? This missionary that's trying to get these girls out of the temple.

And they said, what do you expect us to do about it? Well, if you don't do something about it, we'll force you to. So the British missionaries came to Amy Carmichael and said, you're upsetting the whole world. You've got to stop.

And Amy Carmichael said, but what about the girls? And they said, yes, it's tragic and too bad, but you can't afford to do anything else. You're going to damage all the rest of our work. You're going to damage our relationship to our fellow citizens, the other Britons here, and it's going to upset their relationship with their people with whom they deal, ruining everything.

She said, but what about the girls? In the heat of that, she was working with a temple priest to get a girl out. She thought he's a chief priest in the temple. He's a religious man, bound to be some human compassion in him.

So she went and made her plea. And she said, I could tell by the steely glint in his eye and the look on his face, he didn't have any interest in the girl. He was interested in the money she produced.

The whole world against me. And I went back to my room and got on my face and said, Lord, it's not my problem. I've done everything I know to do.

It's not my problem. And she said, then I saw him. He wasn't kneeling under an olive tree.

He was kneeling under an Indian tamarind tree. And she said, as I looked, I noticed he was weeping. And as the tears coursed down his cheeks, he looked back at me and fixed me with his eye and said, that's right, Amy, it's not your problem.

It's my problem. I'm just looking for somebody who will help me bear it. And Amy Carmichael opened her heart back to the pain, to the rejection, to the vilification, to the misunderstanding, not only from the nationals, but from her own colleagues, both secular and religious, and said, Lord, if it's your burden, it has to be mine.

And that's where the possibility of change in anybody begins. You remember how Paul prayed? I want to share in that I want to be a part of the fellowship of his suffering. Now, I want to say it isn't easy.

And do you know when you've reached that point? I think you never reach it until the welfare of the other person is more important than yours. It was a John Knox who said, God, give me Scotland or I die. It was the Apostle Paul who said, I would be willing to be accursed.

I would be willing to be shut out of the kingdom of God and out of eternal salvation if my people could be saved. It's a Moses who says, take my name out of your book first. Have you seen the little biography of Dick Hillis? Sixteen-year-old kid, out too late, came in one night, peeped through the door and his mother was on her knees praying.

And she was praying, Lord, let me go to hell, but don't let my boy be lost. He spent his life in Christian service. You know, we used to sing in Sunday school a song, give me thy heart, says the Savior above.

No gift so precious to him. You know, I used to think about that and the person who wrote it thought about it in terms of conversion. That song has begun to speak to me in a different way.

I don't believe it's the sinners that we need to raise that question with. I think it's the Christians. We're really willing to give him our gifts.

We're willing to give him some of our time, but we don't give him our hearts. And there's where the battles won or lost. I don't know much about what I'm talking about.

I don't know enough. As I said earlier, I'm trying to skirt the outer edges of it and see through. But you know, I've never seen anybody change that when I got close to it, where there was dramatic change, where there wasn't somebody else who was the key to it.

And you know, I think it's always painful because it always involves a cross. We had a son who was very rebellious. He decided to do in Wilmore on Sunday afternoon in public view everything I'd stood against all my life.

I said, Lord, that's not fair. He doesn't have a right to do that to me. And the Lord said, oh? He said, Ken Law, you're more interested in your public reputation than you are your boy, aren't you? And I had to fight it through and say, Lord, it doesn't matter whether I'm president of Asbury College or not.

It doesn't matter even if I'm a preacher of the gospel. In fact, nothing matters save my boy. Have you ever gotten to the place where somebody else's salvation was more important to you than your own? That's where God got.

And that's the kind of person he's looking for.

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