

Romans 12:1-2

by Doc Greenway

The sermon emphasizes the importance of growing up in Christ, living a life of consecration to God, and experiencing the fullness that He alone can impart to us.

Duration: 54:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:1, Romans 12:1-2

Topics: "Romans"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of experiencing the power of Christianity rather than just explaining it as a philosophy. He uses the analogy of a rose bush to illustrate the principle of giving oneself unreservedly to God. The preacher encourages the audience to offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God and to be transformed by renewing their minds. He also highlights the significance of the word 'therefore' in the passage from Romans, indicating a link between what has been discussed before and what is to come in the epistle.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. It would be such a simple thing tonight to take up that word and occupy the next 60 minutes, and then we wouldn't come to the end. But this phrase, grow up, caught my mind.

And this is what the Apostle says, But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him. Not merely growing up, but growing up into him. In all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplier, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Although there is a general application in the word, God speaking about a company, God speaking about companies, the initial impact of this word is very personal. My anointing has been upon you to do wonderful things in your life. And God is coming to me daily with this challenge that until it happens to me, it can never happen to the flock under me.

Until the anointing, the new wine, becomes the experience in my life, I can never hope to thrill the flock with words from God's word, because it's yet to happen to me. But when I receive it, I can say, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Hallelujah.

There are certain things that we must do, of course. When I became a man, said the apostle, I put away childish things. In children or in malice, be children.

In understanding, be men. And I believe God is challenging us to know a moment when we can have an experience and we can say, God, I've grown up when I became a man. I can't rightly remember when I became a man.

But I believe that in the things of the Spirit, there's a moment when we know that we've reached a maturity that God can trust us with. Give us the new wine. And we've heard, I suppose that when you get a little older, you know, when the hair begins to turn, you resist change because you're comfortable.

Why disturb me at 58 years of age? Just a few years to go. God, anything else but this. But you see, we're not only living for today.

But God is expecting us to enter into tomorrow. And he's going to change tomorrow as well. Otherwise, if tomorrow is the same as today, we're in a rut.

I believe, brothers and sisters, that God is going to challenge. Well, he is challenging us to expect the unexpected. In the church which Dr. Greenway came from many years ago in Wales, he may not have been in the service.

I wasn't there. It was handed down to me. But there was a certain man who loved to give out the announcements.

And he always ended each announcement with the word, as usual. Next Sunday morning, we'll have the breaking of bread, as usual. Next Sunday night, we'll have the gospel meeting, as usual.

Next Wednesday, we'll have the prayer and teaching meeting, as usual. And on Thursday, the burial of our dear brother, as usual. We don't expect change.

The unexpected. And I believe God is wanting to bring this ministry of the unexpected. I remember being in a meeting in Auckland.

And they weren't, by any means, charismatic. And it was Pastor Castor's father standing by me. And we were singing a hymn about the Holy Spirit.

And it was a tremendously challenging hymn. And he nudged me and he says, wouldn't it be funny if God took these people at their word? They were crying for the Holy Spirit. Wouldn't it be funny, he says, if God took these people at their word? Brethren, God is waiting for us to take Him at His word.

He said, expect the unexpected. Grow up. Take on new wineskins.

Go before the people with the knowledge that something has happened to you. And because it's happened to you, you can transmit it to them. Hallelujah.

There's a little bit of oil on the Welsh wheels. I'd better stop. Praise the Lord.

Well, it's a real delight to have you among us. And we say this from our heart. And we just invite you to minister to us in the name of the Lord.

And we believe the anointing of God is already upon you. Praise the Lord. And God bless you.

Amen. Praise the Lord. Well, I do thank you for your warm welcome to myself and to Ruth, my wife.

And I can say from my heart, too, it is a great privilege and I esteem it a great honor to have been asked to come and to address you in this service. And I believe with all my heart, too, that God has a purpose and a plan, and that nothing ever takes Him by surprise. There's no panic in heaven about any one of us.

God has seen the end from the beginning, and He knows the way that we take. When I was preparing for speaking here tonight, the Lord led me to a certain portion of His Word and to a theme, and I developed it by painstaking efforts of study and expectation and prayer and meditation and so on. And then, yesterday, the Lord said, I don't want you to talk about that at all.

So, what I have to say to you tonight is something which I believe that the Lord has given me especially for this meeting. And I'm so grateful to Him for His leading and His guiding and for the consciousness that He never makes a mistake. I've learned now over many long years of ministering for the Lord that it is a good thing to watch which way the Holy Spirit is plowing and then to drop your seeds in His furrows.

It saves an awful lot of time. And so, tonight, I want to speak from the epistle of Paul to the Romans, the twelfth chapter, and the first two verses. Romans 12, 1 and 2. I guess you know them almost off by heart.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Christianity is not a philosophy that needs to be explained. It is a power that needs to be experienced. But the tragedy is that we never experience the power as God intended until we are prepared to give ourselves unreservedly to Him.

Until we are ready, as we have heard tonight, to grow up. Childishness is not a time of life. It is a state of mind.

And if we can come to the Word of God and the work of God with a mature attitude and with a consciousness that He is prepared to enable us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we are well on the way to understanding and comprehending something, at least, of what He is desirous of doing in these last days. Something very lovely about the way in which God comes to us when He wants to impart to us some new revelation of Himself. Not some new truth, because there's no such thing as new truth.

There's only new light upon old truth. But it's glorious when it comes, and we can enjoy the fact of it. And I am quite convinced that unless we are prepared to give ourselves to God unreservedly, without anything being held back, we shall never experience the fullness that He alone can impart to us as the people of God.

It takes empty hands to hold the full Christ. It takes empty lives to hold the full Holy Spirit. And we have to be ready and willing that God may possess all there is of a spirit, soul, and body in a full consecration, in a complete surrender of ourselves to Him.

We may have done this, perhaps, on many occasions. We may have done it, perhaps, twenty years ago or ten years ago or five years ago. That's fine.

But yesterday isn't so important. You can't do anything with yesterday, but you can do lots with tomorrow if God is in control. And we have to understand very clearly, if we are going to go on with God, that there has to be a moment-by-moment consecration of ourselves to Him, with nothing held back from Him.

And I do love the way the Apostle comes to the Roman Christians to say, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, one of the most lovely words in the New Testament, I beseech you, para callo, para alongside, callio to call. It's the same root as the word paracletos for the comforter. I call you alongside.

I call you to myself. There's nothing of apostolic authority in the wrong sense here. There's nothing hard and false and egoistic.

But there's something winsome and gentle and precious and loving and kind and sympathetic and understanding. And God knows we need this in the Church. I beseech you, therefore, brethren.

It's as though He would put His arm across your shoulders. As I remember an elder did in the church that Pastor Pierce was talking about years ago, when I was a young Christian, I thought I knew it all. I've learned since then that there are many things I don't know.

I thought I had all the answers. I've discovered I didn't even have all the questions. But I remember so well he put his arm across my shoulder, you know, and he said, Brother, he said, the Lord is using you now, isn't He? You're able to speak now on a Sunday night occasionally.

I said, yes, and I could see myself in glowing terms, you know, thinking of myself as a Charles Spurgeon at least. Well, I mean, he had to begin where I began. He said, it would be lovely, you know, if only you could break out in prayer sometime.

That's the very thing I couldn't do. I could stand up and preach acceptably, but when it came to praying in public, I found I was tongue-tied. I didn't want to have to make a fool of myself.

And I realized this, but the way that he said it to me, you know, I loved him for it. He wasn't hard and dogmatic and authoritative and making me feel like a little worm, but I was conscious of his love. And he said to me, it's because I love you, my brother, that I want to encourage you to just pray and to be free in the presence of the Lord.

I beseech you. It's lovely, isn't it? When God can come to you like this, to one of his servants, and make you conscious that his compassions fail not, and that gentleness which makes you great is there present, being expressed in loving sympathy and understanding. Well, praise God, you don't feel like a worm then, or if you do, at least you can feel like a glowworm.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren. This word, therefore, is a very important word. It's what is known as an inferential participle, but it's simply a link that joins what has gone before with what is to follow.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren. So something has gone before here in this epistle. Something is still to come, but here is a link.

Because of something which has happened, brethren, I beseech you. Now, what is this something? Well, you know how the epistle to the Romans is constructed. You've got a doctrinal section in chapters 1 to 8, and a dispensational setting, and a dispensational section in chapters 9, 10, and 11.

And then, of course, as usual in Paul's writings, you come to the practical section, which is the remainder of the epistle from chapter 12 down to chapter 16. It's practical. And so, if you're looking for what Paul is saying here, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, you've got to go back at least to chapter 8, and there you'll find a chapter that's packed full of mercies.

One thing I've noticed about God is this. He never imposes a duty without He first dispenses a mercy. He loves you into living for Him.

He blesses you into giving to Him. This is God's way. And, Roger, in chapter 8, you have not only the appeal of the apostle Paul, but you have the argument that he raises for complete consecration, the mercies of God.

I can't touch on all of them, but there are some tremendous mercies here. In chapter 8, in verse 1, you have the mercy of no condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

No condemnation, no single hint of condemnation. It reminds me of an old Welsh preacher that I can recall. Years and years ago, he was dealing with this text, there is therefore now no condemnation.

And he gave out the text, and then he stood back. Then he went forward, and he was looking at what seemed to be something on his Bible, staring at it. And then up went his hand, and he came down like this across the Bible.

Nothing, he said. Nothing. And that's what it means, my brethren, he said.

There is nothing here, absolutely no hint of condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Isn't that a great mercy? We have no need to fear God in the wrong sense. We have no need to be afraid to come into his presence, because we know that however we may feel from his standpoint, there is no condemnation.

That's a great mercy. Verse 15, For he hath not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but he hath received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. That's a great mercy, too.

The spirit of adoption. We are Theseus. We are the son, Theseus of placing.

The placing of sons in the body. Not just children in the family, but sons of God, mature, grown up, as we've been hearing tonight. This is a great mercy, isn't it? When you're conscious of your setting in the purpose of God, in the family of God, and that you are heir and co-heir with Jesus Christ, that you have something to lay hold upon because of your adoption by the Spirit of God, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Abba is an Aramaic word. And I think putting the two together, you would say, Father, my own dear Father. And this instinctive cry comes because of our sense of relationship.

And this is a tremendous blessing, isn't it? I realize, when I was talking to someone some time ago, and they said, but you don't really believe that prayer is effectual, do you? I said, thank God, I do. Well, after all, he said, imagine it, he said, if you were a, why, he said, it's like an office boy, he said, expecting to have an interview with the managing director, you don't think you'd take any notice of him, do you? I said, hold on a bit, I'm not an office boy, and I'm not talking to the managing director, I said, I'm a child of God, a son of God, and he's my father, and he's interested in me and concerned about me. And this is a

tremendous blessing, isn't it? The mercy of adoption.

And then further on, we've got something else. Look at verse 26, Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings or sighings which cannot be uttered, sighings that baffle words.

So if there is a power outside us, which is beyond our comprehension, there is a power inside us that can tap those divine resources and bring them within our conscious grasp, this is a great mercy. He helpeth our infirmities. This word is only used twice in the New Testament.

The other place is where Martha said to the Lord, well, tell Mary to help me. It's a long word in Greek, sun anti-lambanetai, sun together with, anti-against, lambanetai lambano, I lay hold. I lay hold together with, against my weaknesses.

Laying hold by the Spirit of God and through the Spirit of God against those weaknesses that we have, especially in the area of prayer, in the sphere of prayer. So he helpeth our infirmities. He lays hold together with us against our weaknesses.

And then he goes on to explain why this is, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with sighings which baffle words. This word intercessions, hyupa and tankhanai. Hyupa means over and above, over and above.

N is a preposition which means sometimes into. Tankhanai means to rescue from the place of distress. So in this thought of intercession, you have the classic example in the story of the Good Samaritan.

Remember how the priest and the Levite, how they passed by on the other side. The priest was rather late for the service in the temple, I suppose, and didn't have time to be bothered. And the Levite, well, he was late for the deacon's meetings, so he couldn't be bothered either.

But then the Good Samaritan came where the man who was wounded was lying. And he hovered above him. He entered into his flight.

He lifted him up, placed him upon his beast of burden, took him to the inn, cared for him, and saw that he was well attended. What was he doing? He was hovering above him, entering into his flight, lifting him away, rescuing him from the place of distress. That's intercession.

And that's what the Spirit of God does for you and for me. And isn't that a great blessing? A great mercy? The mercy of intercession. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Verse 31. What shall we then say to these things? Oh, we could say plenty, I'm sure. If God be for us, who can be against us? And I used to think, well, that's great.

God's on my side. I'm not going to worry about anything or anybody. And then one day I was looking at it again, and I saw it wasn't that at all.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Again, this preposition, hupo, over us. If God be over us, who can be against us? Kata, bearing down upon us. If God is over us, who can be down on us? The devil can't, because he's got to get through God to get at us, if we dare to believe it.

Isn't that a great mercy? Well, I mean, I'm only a little mighty, and the devil is mighty, but God is almighty. And if he is over us, well, then we are safely protected. What a mercy.

Verse 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, and so on, and so on, and so on? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded 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.

Amen, and amen, and amen. This chapter begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation. What a wonderful chapter, and what great mercies these are.

All right, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about it? What does the Apostle say that we are to do? I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. This is what we are to do, and this is the action for which the Apostle calls. He's made his appeal.

Now he calls for action, and this is where the rub comes, doesn't it, very often. How many times have we said, I could never, never, never hope to get on that altar. It's too costly.

It's too painful. Couldn't do it. Cheer up.

God doesn't ask you to do it. God doesn't ask you to do that. What we are told to do is to present our bodies, and this is a Levitical term, really.

Present, para esteni. Para, alongside, esteni, from tetheni, to set, to set yourself beside God's altar. That's what he asks us to do.

We are not asked to put ourselves on the altar and to stay there. We are asked to bring ourselves beside the altar and lay there, and let the high priest lift us up, and take us up that incline, and then lay us on the altar of sacrifice. Thank God we can do that.

We can present ourselves. That's all we are asked to do, and if we are prepared for it, then the great high priest who is Jesus Christ, our Lord, will do all the rest, and he does it in such a wonderful way. He understands us.

He knows the breaking point of our human endurance. He knows that we are frail, and human, and just as dust. He knows all about this, and he knows how to deal with us personally and individually, and thank God when he does the work, it will be done properly.

Present your bodies, a living sacrifice. I'm glad it says your bodies. I'm glad it doesn't say your spirit or your soul.

It may be a bit too mysterious, but these bodies, well, I understand this. I understand it only too clearly. Some people have trouble with what they don't understand in the scripture.

I get trouble with what I do understand. That's what gives me trouble, and I understand this. He wants my hands to work with.

He wants my feet to walk with. He wants my tongue to speak with. He wants my eyes to see with.

He wants my ears to listen with, to the heart throbs of a sin-sick, weary world. He wants my brain to think with, if you like. He wants me to give myself to him, that he may come in to indwell me and make this body of mine his living temple.

The Father doesn't want this body of ours. The Savior has a body of his own, but the Holy Spirit, he wants to make these bodies into temples that he can control. Temples where his presence is known and felt.

When we are told in 1 Corinthians 3.16 and again in 1 Corinthians 6.19 about being temples of the Holy Ghost, it isn't the Charon, the outer coat that is mentioned here, but the Holy of Holies. Can you grasp it tonight? That the Spirit of God wants to make these bodies of ours into a Holy of Holies. And in the Holy of Holies, only one voice was heard to speak.

One light was seen to shine. One will alone was known to operate. One priest was seen to minister.

And this is what God is expecting from you and me, that as we present ourselves to him, that the Spirit of God may come in to take control of us and to manifest his presence through us. And remember, he does this not primarily that he may bless you. He's not interested in blessing you.

He's not interested in anything primarily, but to glorify and magnify and exalt Jesus Christ. That's what he's concerned about. And if we are willing to allow him to have this rightful place in our lives, then we can be sure that if our desire is the same as his, if there is not only a mutual pooling of our resources, where I bring into the partnership my yielded personality, and he brings all the resources of his divine equipment, not only that, but there will be a mutual exalting of the Savior.

And to the extent that my desire coincides with his, that Christ shall be magnified. He's going to bless me. He's going to use me.

He's going to confirm my testimony. He's going to endorse what I say. He's going to be with me every step of the journey.

His hand will be upon me, but only if I am prepared to allow him to have his rightful place and give Christ the glory and the majesty. We are sometimes accused as a charismatic movement of somehow overemphasizing the Holy Spirit and his ministry. Well, I guarantee you, if we are guilty of this, then it's wrong.

It's a wrong thing to do. And overemphasis like that would be a wrong thing. It would be a theological imbalance to begin with.

But I've learned by experience that wherever I've gone, it doesn't matter where the people have been, what church it might have happened to have been, wherever I've gone that there has been a desire that the Spirit of God should be made manifest, inevitably in that place you will find that Christ is glorified and honored and given his rightful place. That's how it should be. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy.

Ah, yes. Whatever comes beside the altar is holy unto the Lord. And holier is not absolute holiness, but relative holiness.

The only one who is absolutely holy is God. But, thank God, we can be relatively holy and there can be a sanctification that we can enjoy, sanctified through the truth. Thy word is truth.

Sanctified by the blood. Sanctified by faith. Sanctified through the Spirit.

The word is the informing agent and the blood is the cleansing agent and the Spirit is the applying agent and faith is the appropriating agent. It's all there in the purpose and plan of God. But, in the end, it is not that we might emerge with an absolute holiness, but relatively holy in the sense that the New Testament speaks about.

Saints in this sense. And, thank God, it is gloriously possible for each one of us to know this experientially. Not simply as a tenet of our beliefs, as a doctrine of our faith, but as a deep-seated, personal experience that we know as positively as we know the night or the day when we gave our hearts to Jesus Christ.

I can remember that night in Wales very clearly when, after a long period of fasting and praying, because I was disturbed about this whole question of sanctification, I remember coming one morning to the Word of God and opening the Bible, just at random, almost, and there in Ezekiel I saw the words, And now behold, this day will I loose the chains that are upon thee. I said, Lord, I believe it. And through that day I prayed and then the hours passed by and I still was conscious that nothing had happened.

And at eleven o'clock that night, I remember kneeling in the kitchen at home, the family had gone to bed, and saying, Lord, you said this day, this day. It's almost up, Lord, but this day and I believe and I'm claiming the promise. And I just raised my hands like that as I claimed that promise from God.

I don't know what happened afterwards, but when I came to, there was a pool of tears where my head was, there on my heart, before the empty fireplace, and I could only say one word, sanctify, sanctify, sanctify. I remember the next morning, I hadn't slept all that night, I was too full of joy. But the next morning when I came down, my mother was there and my sisters were there.

Without saying a word, they said, what's happened to you? There's something different about you. And you know, I couldn't help but think about different people that I couldn't get on with very well. And right away I had a strong desire to go and visit them.

And I can remember going and I just wanted to put my arms around them. And for days and for weeks after that, I was conscious of this deep, sweet, abiding peace of God in the depths of my being. I knew something had happened, something glorious, something wonderful, something out of this world.

Ah, my brother, my sister in Christ, it's for each one of us. It's our heritage if we dare to believe it. This being holy is not simply an expression, a term.

Holiness is not innocence, it is conquest. This is it always. And if we are prepared to know that it is not a state in which we enter, but a standard we take by faith, then we get to comprehend what Paul meant when he talked about reckoning yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.

It's a reckoning of faith which really does take place and does become effective if we dare to believe it. Holiness is counteraction by the Spirit of God against the law of sin and death in our being. And it brings us victory.

Holy, acceptable unto God. Eurasian, well-pleasing unto God. Which is your reasonable service, which is your logical worship, your logical worship.

What is Paul saying? Worship is illogical apart from this complete dedication of ourselves to Him. It's illogical. And what we do when we give ourselves unreservedly to God, when we come and present our bodies beside the altar, what we are doing is so well-pleasing to God because within the very fabric of

creation He has implanted a calvary.

It's there. It's inescapable. Plant a rose bush in your garden.

At once the soil says, I will give you of my sustenance. I will give you of my wealth. And the sun says, I will give you of my warmth.

I will give you of my light. And the cloud says, I will give you of my rain. And it falls.

And then the rose says, and I will give you of my beauty. I will give you of my aroma. I will give you of my fragrance.

I will give, give, give. And this is the law of calvary. And that's why it's well-pleasing to God when at last we come before Him and we say, Lord, I don't amount to very much, but all there is of me.

Please take it. Take it, Lord. You've done so much for me.

Your mercies are so real, so abundant to me. Lord, it's the least I can do. Take me.

Use me. Bless me. Fill me.

Have your way in my life, Lord. What else can we say in the light of what He has done for us? Be not conformed to this world. This is the right attitude.

Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Conformed, transformed. Conformed in the very middle of this word is the word schema, which is sometimes translated by the word form.

The word transformed in the very center of this word is the word moffe, which also is translated by the word form, but with a great difference. Conformed means to give an outward expression of a disposition, but in doing so to give a wrong expression, because the disposition that you're expressing is not true to what you are by nature. That's that word schema, pattern, scheme, fashion.

But the word transform, that's to give an outward expression of what is true of you inside. And this word transformed is a continuing thing. It's done by the renewing of your mind, the renovation of your mind, a continual renovating of the whole disposition because of the movement of the Spirit of God in your life.

By so doing, by having your mind renewed and renovated continually, then you continually prove that the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect. You prove its quality. You prove its acceptability.

You prove its finality. It's perfect, telios. It goes the full distance.

Comes into our English language, this word telios in telephone. Telios, distance, phony I speak. Telegram, telios, distance, grammaticos I write.

Telescope, telios, distance, scopio, I see. It comes into our English language in that way. But the idea is finality.

There is something final about the will of God. And when you've given yourself over into the hands of God without any strings attached, when you've done what he asked you to do because of his mercies to you, then and then only can you really prove from experience that the will of God is not something to be

shunned or something to shrink back from, but something that is good and acceptable and perfect. It has a finality about it that is well pleasing to God and to you too if you're a Christian.

Have we ever reached the point, I wonder, where everything that we have, everything that we are, has been given over to God? Oh, I don't doubt at all that we've been filled with the Spirit. I'm not questioning that. I'm very, very sure that you've had experiences of the Spirit of God in your life.

You may have had wonderful gifts of the Spirit, and these have been made manifest, made evident, and that's lovely. I'm not talking about that. Have you given yourself to God? Does he really possess you? Is everything given to him? Every single thing? Is all your ransom being at his disposal? He isn't concerned about human cleverness or human ability or our natural faculties that we sometimes are inclined to boast about.

It may be. I'm concerned about that. But he's concerned about our usability and our availability, not simply our ability.

Have we given ourselves to him? Does he possess us? I was in Huddersfield when I was in the old country the last time for a weekend. And while I was there, I remembered one of Ozzie Sanders' stories of when Huddersfield was just a village, and practically the whole of it was owned by Sir John Ramsden. That's a good English word, isn't it? Sir John Ramsden.

He owned all of Huddersfield, except for one house, and that was owned by a Quaker. And again and again, Sir John Ramsden would come and ask the Quaker to sell his house, because, you see, he wanted to own all of Huddersfield. And again and again, the Quaker would say, No, I will not sell it to thee.

And he was quite dogmatic. And then one day, Sir John Ramsden came again and said, Well, look, if you will only sell your house to me, I'll put a golden sovereign on every tile on the roof of the house. And he looked at him and he said, I will not sell it thee, even if thou didst stick the sovereigns up on edge, he said.

I will not sell it thee. And Sir John stamped down that path and out to the gate and slammed the gate behind him, only to hear the Quaker shout out, Sir John, guess what is it now? Don't thee forget, Huddersfield belongs to thee and to me. Don't you think it's an awful thing when the devil can come to God and say, You know that, Christian, he belongs to you and to me? Oh, yes, there's an area in his life that has never been given over to you.

It's mine. And I have the right any time to ride that chariot into that life and take possession because that part belongs to me. Is there some part in your life which is not given over to him? Have you come to the end of your time together here and you're still conscious of areas in your own life, unpermitted to God, not given over to the Spirit of God? I know that on the mountaintop it's wonderful, isn't it, to have the experience of fellowship with the people of God and to have the times of blessing and to rejoice in his presence and so on.

What about tomorrow? What about coming down from the hill and going down into the valley? What about the needs that are there? Are you going to cope with them? Are you going to meet them squarely? Are you going to be able to do so because it's not you at all? There has been something that has been done in your life which has changed the focus of your faith. For you're no longer self-centered, but you're Christ-centered. There's been a change, a shift of centers somewhere, somehow.

You're no longer occupied with yourself, with your selfish motives, your selfish ambitions, no longer concerned about self-importance. All this self-importance in the church of God, little men with little ideas, satisfied with programs an inch long, who think they are backbones, the axle of the universe, that the world turns around them. Self-importance, self-justification, self-commendation, self-praise, selfishness.

Selfishness is nothing more than the dark dungeon of dwarfed souls. Grow up. We can only grow up as we are prepared to give to God.

That which he asks of us. Are we willing? We may think we are at times, but when the test comes, when the pressure is on, are we willing? I remember Leonard Koot telling us years and years ago when he came from Japan, of a time that he was in America, and a praying family, father and mother, had a lovely daughter, but she was unsaved. And they were so concerned for her.

And they prayed earnestly that God would do something in the life of this young girl. She was on a dance hall floor this night, and she was dancing with her partner. But suddenly, the Spirit of God began to speak to her.

And she stood there, and tears began to form in her eyes, and before she broke down completely, she thrust her partner away and ran out. And he came after her and said, well, what do you want? What's the matter? I must get home, she said. All right, he said, I'll drive you home.

And they drove home in silence. And she came in through the front door into the living room. She knew what she would see, her father and mother on their knees, praying for her.

And she got down with them. And within ten minutes, she had given her heart to Jesus Christ. They were thrilled, absolutely thrilled.

And then she came home from a meeting one night, and she said to them, God has shown me I must go to Bible college and be trained. And they were glad about that too. And so they paid the fees for her and sent her on her way rejoicing, and they were rejoicing also.

And eventually she finished her course at Bible college. And then she came in from the church meeting on another occasion afterwards and said to them, you know, God is directing me to missionary work. Missionary work, they said.

Are you sure? Yes, I'm quite sure. Well, they said, and where is he sending you? We hope it's going to be mission work here in the city, that we can see you often, even if you're not able to live with us. You won't be far away.

Oh no, it's not like that, she said. Where are you being sent? He said, I'm being sent amongst the lepers. And they couldn't believe their ears.

Oh, the way they pleaded with her. It was no use, she was convinced. And then the time came, and in those days, if you visited the leper colony, if you went inside the gates, you were not allowed to leave again.

And they said, well, we are going to go with you, as far as the gates anyway. And off they went, and eventually they reached the compound. And there they saw it before them, a wide white line on the ground, painted.

It was known as the death line. And once you passed over that, that was the end. And there they stood for a while.

And then she said, well, Father, well, Mother, it's time to say goodbye. And she just embraced them, and they embraced her. And then she turned with her face towards the work which God was calling her, stepped over the line, as they sang, God be with you, till we meet again.

And as they were singing, they were conscious that the only time and place they would ever meet again would be in heaven. She went amongst those lepers. She ministered to them.

She taught them. She tried to help them. She lived with them.

She ate with them. She drank with them. She rotted with them.

She died with them. Why? Because she had given herself undeservedly to God. God may never call you to do a thing like that, but he is calling you most definitely and positively to give yourself to him in an unconditional surrender, not emotionally necessarily, but positively and personally, in a consecration that you will not withdraw.

Are you willing? Are you ready? Let's bow our heads for a moment in the presence of God. Lord, we are so deeply conscious tonight of thy presence in this place. We know that God is here.

We have no need to ascend to heaven to bring thee down or descend to bring thee up, but God is here, right here, Lord, and we are here before thee. Now we pray that thou wilt honor thy word and endorse thine essence and imprint what thou hast said through thy word deeply upon our hearts and in our spirits, that there may be a willingness in every life before thee, a willingness to go God's way, whatever the cost may be. May we take the words of thy apostle to heart tonight and remember that in the word of God, in the Bible, the letters may be stationary, but the meaning is progressive.

It comes right down into this meeting here tonight. May we see this, Lord, and may we be willing and ready to give to thee what thou art asking of us so that we shall be no longer children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, that we shall be no longer children who need only the milk of the word, but we shall grow up and become mature sons and daughters of the living God. O God, take us into thy control, we pray, and we will be careful to give thee the praise and the glory in thine matchless name.

Amen.

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