

# On Eagles' Wings Pt 485

by Don Courville

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*The sermon explores the profound significance of the cross in the Christian faith and its power to transform lives through surrender and obedience to God.*

**Duration:** 45:23

**Scripture:** Romans 1:16, Galatians 6:14, Ephesians 2:16, Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 12:2

**Topics:** "Radio Show"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares the story of Edith, a missionary who started a small dispensary in the Belgian Congo with a gift of 10 pounds. Over the course of 20 years, her work grew into a medical crusade operating in nine countries. The speaker emphasizes the power of giving one's life to God and the potential for great things to happen. The sermon also references the story of Joseph from the Old Testament, highlighting the importance of surrendering to God's sovereignty and seeking His guidance in our lives.

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## Transcript

In the day that we're in, we're losing touch with the reality of the cross. They've got a new term out, I don't know if it's a new age term or whatever, called Reality Check. Have any of you heard that one lately? I heard somebody a few weeks ago say, gonna have a reality check.

Well, that was good to me. I used it to share the gospel with that young couple. Well, you want a reality check? Let's check with the Lord.

But this subject of the cross, I believe we've sort of been losing a little bit of the cutting edge of it, maybe a lot of the cutting edge. Maybe it's in the sheath, even. The old sword, the sword of the Lord.

The power of the cross is still there, if we'll use it. The power of the cross in our life will really work a work in our life, if we will listen to the message of it. And I thought I might take you through a few verses just to show you that Paul preached the cross.

Before we do that, let's pray. Father, I humble myself again before You, because I know, like Job, that I am vile, and like Paul, that there's no good thing in me. And the truth of the matter is, Father, You have said that there's no good thing in the flesh.

We are rascals to the core, and like the old song, prone to wonder, that's us. That's me. Prone to wonder.

And I'd like to say I'm more prone to follow, but I'm more prone to wonder. And so we ask that tonight, Lord, You draw us in close to Your heart. We pray for anointing of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for a special touch of Your grace upon us. Now, Lord, You've been speaking to this crowd, and, you know, I wanted to get down to some of the meetings, but couldn't. So You've been working for several days in hearts.

And we just consider it an honor and a privilege to even be here tonight, and much less to be able to share. So we ask for Your grace, that You'd have mercy upon us, have mercy upon me. And I pray for anointing now on my tongue and our ears, that You would minister, that You would speak to us.

We're so dependent on You, Holy Spirit, because the Word tells us that You've been given to teach us. You'll guide us into truth. And so take the time now, Lord, and teach us in Jesus' name.

Amen. I did something I don't think I ever did before this week. I'm always doing things I've never done before, but I sat down and I got out our 1828 Webster's Dictionary.

That's the original dictionary before they've changed a lot of the terms in it. And I looked up the word cross, and I looked up the word crucify. Basically the same word.

Cross. Would you like to know what Webster said in 1828? I don't know what it says in the new ones. I didn't go over and look in the new ones.

But here's basically what it says. It means to hinder, to obstruct, to perplex, to clash, or interfere with. And I thought about that.

That's not too bad. If you think about it, apparently it looked like the cross was hindering Jesus. It looked like the cross was an obstruction in the will of God.

It looked like the cross was a perplexing thing. And it was to the disciples, wasn't it? It looked like it was a clashing. And it looked like it interfered with.

And it really did seem to be an obstacle. Now, I went down to the verb. It means to move or pass from one side to another.

If you apply it like that. And wasn't that what the Lord was doing? He was moving from one point to the other, and He had to cross. That way, by the cross.

Crucify is move or pass from one side to another. And basically all the same of the cross is for crucify. And in design, Webster said the cross had this design.

It was meant to put to death, not to wound. But it was intended for death. When a man went on a cross, there were no games being played.

That man was intended, they intended for him to die on that cross. And just to make sure, if the time limit got too long, they would come along and jab him with a spear, or break the legs, like they did some of the prisoners and things. And they would do those things to make sure that that cross accomplished its purpose.

The only ground for forgiveness is at the cross. You can't work and please God in any way to be forgiven. Because when Jesus died on the cross, He said it is finished.

All that was necessary for us to get back into fellowship with God was accomplished by Christ on the cross. Life only comes out of death. Life only comes out of death.

And what apparently seems to be the end, if you take some wheat and you put it in the ground, and it dies, decays, there's a miracle that happens. We can't explain it, but life comes out of that death process. And that's what happened when Jesus died on the cross.

Life came out of that death process. Now, I don't know if I would have any brave little boys in here tonight, but I would like a volunteer. A little guy that would like to come up here and volunteer.

There's one preacher, he had an evangelist in. While you volunteers are thinking about this, I'll tell you. He had an evangelist in, and the evangelist said, what are you going to call these meetings? And the preacher, the pastor said, we're not.

We've had you in here before. We're not going to call it until you leave. Then we'll know what happened.

That's the way it is. You don't know what's going to ever happen. Where's my volunteer? We got one? Okay.

Do we have a volunteer? First one down gets to be the volunteer. Okay, come on. Here's a brave boy.

Hey, nice looking little boy. Hi there. Come on up here.

Boy, what's your name? Tony. Tony? Hi, boy. You're really brave, aren't you? Yeah.

You know what this is? What's it look like? You don't know. This is a crown. A crown.

It's a crown in disguise. Would you like to wear it around your neck? It's a chain, really. Let's put it on.

There. Does that feel pretty good? No? Is it a little heavy? Okay. Want me to take it off? Okay.

Thank you. Now you can go back to mom and dad. Boy, let's give him a hand.

What a brave little boy. Now, would you think this was a crown? He said, no, it's a chain. And I had a hook on it.

I used it to hook a trailer together one time with it. And so I took the hook off and hooked it together. The historian Gibeon says that at one point, one of the Roman emperors that had been captured was brought to his crown and allowed to sit there for a number of hours on his throne.

And there he was, all bound up with his chains on his throne. All bound up with those chains on his arm. There, sitting on his throne.

It was a mockery. They were doing it to have some fun with him. But the truth of the matter is, when Christ died on the cross, if he doesn't get to be the king on the throne of our heart and our life, our Christian life will be one miserable life.

We'll actually miss the point in the power of the cross. And the chain of our own selfishness and our own failure to surrender to the Lord completely. You see, we believe in Him as our Savior.

We trust Him for our salvation. We believe that He died on the cross for our sins. But many times, many times we fail to go on all the way in the teaching of the cross.

Now, what I want to do this evening is take you through and share with you. We'll leave that there in case somebody would like to wear this crown. I'd like to just share with you some things about the cross.

As I did, I went through and looked at some verses on the cross. I know that these verses are in there and I listed them. And I want to just take you through quickly.

And then I want to share a couple of stories with you. One from the Old Testament and one from a missionary's life. But the cross was actually the center part of the preaching in the Bible.

The gospel preaching is always by way of the cross. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is the central thing. And they preach repentance.

Jesus said, go and preach repentance. Many get saved without repentance. They're so-called salvation without repentance.

And thus, you can't really tell if they're saved. But when we repent and we believe, there's a change that happens in our life. In 1 Corinthians 1, 17 and 18, Paul said, For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Did you know that you, if you've been born again, you are a living gospel testimony? You are to be a living gospel testimony. And he said, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. There are things that can happen in our life that will make the cross of none effect.

And he said, for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. As a matter of fact, I was going over these things today, and I listed these four things that the cross will produce in our life.

And I was going to share them with you at the end, but I thought I'd just go ahead and share them with you now. The preaching of the cross will produce and bring you to the place of peace. And if we go through these Scriptures, you'll see that.

It'll bring you to the place of power. Paul said, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. Do you have peace in your life? Do you have power in your life? Third, the cross is the place of provision.

As we have yielded to the Lord, taken up our cross and done what the Lord has said for us, then He has provided. My God shall supply all of your needs. As we have done what the verse says, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things will be added unto you.

And that's what happens to us. As we put the Lord first, continue. It looks like we're going to wipe out, looks like we're not going to make it, looks like all the time, but the Lord is continually faithful.

Sometimes He might drive you a little crazy, He's so late, you think, but He's always on time, even though you don't see Him in sight. He's always there. Fourth thing, the cross is the place of purpose.

Without an understanding of the cross, we can miss out in the meaning of purpose of your life. I've seen some people get so, just so apathetic about life, so discouraged, so depressed, and whatever feeling you want to come to, and it's without the understanding of the cross that these things happen to us. I've got a question, and that's this, have you been crucified with Christ? We're going to come back to that verse in a few minutes, but have you been crucified with Christ? Paul said the preaching of the cross, it's the power of God.

He said, we preach Christ crucified in 1 Corinthians 1.23. He said in 2, in verse 2, I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It was a central thing of everything He did. In 2 Corinthians 13.4, and I'm just going to hit some of the highlights on the teaching of the cross, but in 2 Corinthians 13.4, He said, For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.

And He was talking about Christ, He said, Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you it is not weak, but is mighty in you. He said, For though He was crucified, listen, He said, Though Jesus was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. This is what I'm saying to you, I believe that we have lost the cutting edge of the gospel of the cross of Christ today because so few people care for Jesus.

They really don't, do they? It's hard to get them to church. Actually, we're supposed to get them saved and then get them into church. That's the right way to do it.

The early church, none of the unbelievers would get in there. They were afraid. But they would get saved and they'd get in there.

But after what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, there was fear. But it's the place of power. In Galatians 5, 11 and 24, it's also offensive.

The cross is offensive. And God will take you through things that others will not understand, that others will maybe not like. I was talking to my wife, we were driving down here.

I said, Boy, it really takes a lot of wisdom to live in the world, out into the workplace, with unsafe people, without offending them, because just being a Christian, you just show up, you're going to be the wrong one. You're the one they'll pick on, whatever. And it really takes the wisdom of God for you to live in a way that it's not you that's offensive, but it's really just Jesus that's offensive.

And that's their problem. You can't help that. But he said in Galatians 2, 20, I am crucified with Christ.

Paul came to the point where he died and he wasn't living his life anymore. And this is the crucified life. He said, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, in His body, in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Now, how many of you know what the next few words are? The next few words are these, I do not frustrate the grace of God. I do not frustrate the grace of God. You know, we can quench the Holy Spirit, we can grieve the Holy Spirit, and we can frustrate the grace of God.

Because we will not take up our cross, as Jesus said, many times we will not experience the power and the reality of Christ in our life. Galatians 6, 12 and 14, a couple more verses just to slip through them.

There is 5, 11 and 12.

In 5, 11, he talked about the offense of the cross. 12, I would that they were... And then 6, 14, he said, but God forbid... Well, he said in 12, as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 14, he said, but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

You go through the Bible. The cross was the central theme. I went through Philippians 2, 8, talking about the cross.

Let's see, there was Ephesians. Ephesians 2, 16, there was a verse, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. There is reconciliation by the cross.

So we have preaching of the cross, power of the cross, the offense of the cross, reconciled by the cross. What's next? You go to Philippians 2, 8, and we have the death of the cross. He said, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

All these things are about the cross. There's a, I sort of stretched this one out, but there's the fellowship of the cross in 3, 8, where Paul said that I might know Him in the power of His resurrection. You never have resurrection power without the cross.

So he said that I might know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. There's the enemies of the cross in verse 18, for many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross. You know where these enemies were? They were right in the church.

They were those that professed to be Christians, but yet they did not let Christ live their life. And thus they became a mockery to the reality of it. There is the peace of the cross, Colossians 1.20, and having made peace through the blood of His cross by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.

By Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. There's the endurance of the cross, Hebrews 12, verse 2, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, what? Endured the cross. I believe sometimes the cross just looks like it's too overwhelming to some of us sometimes.

And we make a juncture in life. Maybe there's a point back 20 years ago where you had a chance. And God laid out an opportunity.

And the thing about it, so many times these opportunities look like a chain. But if we'll take it up and we'll wear it, it'll end up being a crown of glory. I've shared this story many times, but since you're a new group, basically, I'm going to share it again.

About one of the things that I did. That if I had the chance, I would redo it in a second. I would redo it because it had such consequences to it.

It was 1968. I was just coming back from overseas. I'd been over in Turkey in the Air Force.

Been gone from home for almost a year and a half. And we'd left out of Rome. And those Italians, any Italians here? They packed that plane.

And they packed it full of all their salamis and their breads. And we went down the runway. And I'd done quite a bit of flying by then.

And I was getting concerned. I didn't think we were going to get off the runway. I really didn't.

We just kept going and going and going and going. And finally, we lifted off and just barely cleared the trees. They had that plane packed.

And as a result, we were running out of fuel over the Atlantic Ocean. And they said, we're not going to make it. We're going to have to make an extra stop.

And so they stopped in Newfoundland. And we pulled in there and gassed up and got on into Kennedy Airport in New York. As a result of that, I was late.

And that had been all right being late except that I had an uncle that was from Baytown, Texas that was meeting me there. And by the time I got to the gate where I was supposed to be, it's hard to get around that place. We just had five minutes together.

And I remember he bought me a glass of milk. First thing I wanted, some fresh milk. And then he asked me this question.

He said, Don, and I was his favorite nephew and he was my favorite uncle. And we'd had a real close relationship growing up. He said, would you stay overnight? He was up there alone working for Exxon Oil Company.

And he said, would you just stay overnight? And guess what I said? You know what I said. I said, no, I think I'll go on. It had just been an extra day.

And so I did. I got on the plane. Man, they were already giving the third call.

I was late. So I rushed off. A number of years later, back in 1974 I think it was, 73, 74, God got a hold of him finally.

God got a hold of him. But it took a severe accident. He hit a bridge abutment down there in Texas.

He'd been drinking and he hit that thing and he split both jugular veins in his head. They went and operated on one 13 hours and another 12 hours. He made medical history because he was the first one to ever live through that type of an operation.

Flew a surgeon in from California. And as a result of that, he got saved. But God dealt with me in such a way as to say this, if I would have been obedient and spent that time with Him, God may not have had to deal with Him in that way.

And I talked to Him about this later and He said, no, no, it wouldn't have been you. But I know what God was saying to me. Just one selfish moment of saying no to the Holy Spirit.

So the cross, Jesus, He endured the cross, despised the shame, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Now that's a few verses on it. There's more.

Jesus said in Matthew 16 and also in the other Gospels that we're to take up our cross daily. Now, let's get a couple pictures of how this looks. Now I want you to ask yourself as we're going along, is there

something that God is trying to say to me? Because I believe we have enough potential in this area here, in this room here tonight.

There's enough of us here. If we would get a hold of the reality of the power of Christ through the cross, it could so change our life, change our family, change our church, change our neighborhood. And what we need is an awakening by the Spirit of God that will change our country and bring us back to the Lord.

But it just starts with me and with you. With each of us. What is God saying to you? Now let me share this story in the Old Testament.

You know the story. It's the story of Joseph. Now imagine you were Joseph.

How would you have liked it to happen to you if you were kidnapped by your own brothers? What would have your attitude been? You know, you see, actually there are many of us that have had something happen in our life that has been a kidnapping in a sense in our life. Or tragedy. Or something happened.

Somebody did something to us and we've been angry at that person ever since. Or we've been bitter and we haven't spoke to them. Or there's been something that's produced a fear in our life that's hindered us from doing what God wants us to do.

Here's what happened to Joseph. He was 17 years of age. He was Israel's favorite son.

It says Israel loved Joseph. And he gave him a coat of many colors. And these things just sort of graded on and they were half brothers.

Joseph and the other brothers. The other ten. And it just sort of graded on these guys because they were so self-centered.

And I'm not saying that Joseph was perfect. It may have been that he could have used a little bit more discretion when he shared his dream because that just really set it off. But anyway, he told his dream how God had spoke to him.

And it says they hated him yet the more. And then you know the rest of the story. But let me give it to you in a way like this.

When Joseph was taken by his brothers, Israel sent him out to go find out how his brothers were doing. When he went out there, and they grabbed him and they stripped him of his coat of many colors, and they threw him in the pit, seven things happened to him in a moment. Seven things happened to him in just one moment.

One brief moment can change our life in the physical realm, our circumstances forever. This is why we have to come to the point where we are resolved that God is sovereign and we are in His hands. And if we don't, we'll end up with a bad attitude about somebody that God's allowed to do something in our life.

Here's the seven things that happened to him. Came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors, that was on him. At that instant, he died to his glory.

That coat was his glory. His father gave it to him. And he wore it with honor and with pride.

He was proud that his father had given him his coat. That's the first thing they went after. If God gives you something, let me tell you, the devil's going to be after it.

And so, I believe that what we have to do when God gives us something is we have to give it back. I had a preacher friend. We spent a lot of time together, a lot of time in revival together.

And he said, Don, God has taught me to hang on to everything I have like this. Because so many go through hanging on like this. But if you'll hang on to it like that, if God wants you to keep it, you keep it.

If God wants you to not have it, He'll take it. Right then, he died to his glory. Then what else? They took him and they cast him into a pit.

When they threw him into that pit, he died to his youth. He was 17, and then he was 30. Thirteen years of his life into the pit, into the dungeons, into the prisons.

And then Potiphar came along and he took him out. But he died to his youth. How would you like to have that section of your life taken out? From 17 to 30? You say, not really.

And just go to jail. Well, he died to his youth. And then also, he died to his ability to save himself.

There's nothing he could do. He was a prisoner. He was a captive.

He had the chains. He wore the chains. But because he wore the chains, he'd come out with the crown.

And if you won't take up your cross and let God put a chain on you for a while, you'll never have the crown. Something else he died to. He died to his rights.

What kind of rights does a prisoner have? Someone said many years ago, a man on a cross, he's only facing one direction. He has no further plans of his own and he's not turning back. No plans of his own.

That gets us in a lot of trouble. Because we've got some plans and all of a sudden, something comes along and changes and we get, hey, who told you you could do that? And it shows us right away that we're not on the cross. That we're not submitted to the Lord.

And instead of saying, oh, my plans have changed. Okay, Lord, You must have some different directions for me. But instead we get bitter, we get angry, we get upset.

We call it, we've got other terms for these things. Like, you know, we've got the term of new morality. The old term is sin.

We've got all these new terms for things. Well, I'm just a little impatient. I didn't take all my vitamins this morning.

I've got a hormone imbalance. I've got all this and that. And sometimes we have some physical things that affect us.

But He died to His rights right then. A prisoner has no rights. Paul said he was a prisoner of who? Of Jesus.

I mean, if you're the prisoner of the Lord, then He's your warden. And I would rather be the prisoner of the Lord than the prisoner of Satan. And the Bible tells us that Satan will try to take His captive.

He's going about seeking whom He may devour. As a matter of fact, He cannot get into your life. He cannot get into any area of your life unless you give Him that right.

Because you're a child of the King. Did you know that? The Bible says don't give any place to the devil. And maybe tonight God might speak to you about some area that you gave ground to the devil.

And God is saying, confess it and let's take it back. Ask God to take it back. Something else He died to.

He died to His freedom. And you say, well, that's pretty obvious. And Reuben returned into the pit and behold, Joseph was not in the pit.

But you see, Reuben intended to come back and get him out. He went along with the scheme until he could come back. But God was in this.

And Reuben didn't get to get him out. And Reuben thought, well, this will just be a temporary thing until I can snatch him and we'll get him back home to Dad. But he really died to his freedom.

Now that could be a hard one because we like to be free. He died also to his family. His brothers, that was it.

Their relationship was over. And his brothers were good relatives of that little brat. So he died to his family, but there's one more.

And I believe this is the hardest and the deepest one to die to. You see, all these lessons are found in Jesus Christ also. He took off His robe of glory and came down and walked among us as a man.

And He went through all of these lessons. He gave up His rights. He gave up His freedom to come down and die for you and me.

But this last one that Joseph died to I believe was the one that just literally ripped his heart out. And that was this. He had to die to his father's love because Jacob, oh Israel, and Joseph were just like that.

They were together. And the other brothers couldn't stand it. But they had a spirit within them that was the same.

And that's what binds together is the same spirit. Other spirits separate. And so he had to die to his father's love.

And I believe that was the hardest one there was to die to. As a matter of fact, I believe personally, and we'll get this theologically straightened out when we get to heaven, but when Jesus looked into the cup and He said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. I don't think it was the fact that He was going to die for all of my rotten sins and your dirty, rotten sins and all of the filth that was going to be placed on Him as He became sin for us.

When He said, Father, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless... And if He hadn't said nevertheless, we'd have been in trouble. Because God would have answered that prayer. Not My will, but Thine be done.

Thy will be done. I believe what it was in the cup that He dreaded the most about the cross was that when He died on the cross for your sin and mine, for one terrible moment in eternity, He had never known a moment, a second, out of fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And when God the Father turned

His back on Him and He became sin on us because God could not look on that sin that He was going to pay for us, He turned His back and He said, Oh my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? At that moment, He paid the price for our sin.

God turned His back, so to say, and that fellowship for a second there was broken that He'd never known. And I believe that was what was in the cup. If Jesus paid that price on the cross for you and I, and we think that price is so, oh well, I can take it or leave it.

You will burn in a fiery hell for rejecting Jesus Christ and for the agony and the pain He went through of suffering on the cross was bad enough, but the agony of being separated from the Father for just a moment of that eternal love was excruciatingly painful. And that's what Joseph gave us a type of. We miss out a lot because we don't understand what the Spirit of God teaches us from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Now, I asked you a question earlier. Have you been crucified with Christ? I am crucified with Christ. Have you really been crucified with Christ? Now, let's bring it down and closing up with this little story.

Back in the late 20's, there was a young lady who was called by God to go to Africa as a missionary. Her name was Edith Moles. She was from England, the London area.

She went through nursing school. She went down into the heart of Africa to work with a missionary by the name of C.T. Studd. By the way, C.T. Studd was such an example to her of the cross.

The Spirit of God used that in her life. And have any of you ever heard of C.T. Studd? C.T. Studd used to be a very influent businessman. There's not a one of you in here tonight, except if you're little, that maybe has not in some way or another been impacted in your life by this man.

Because you see, he was a businessman that invented at one time, and if I'd had time to go to the store, I would have got one, something that you could go from hand to hand in. What is that? A slinky. He invented that thing.

And he gave up his life to go to the mission field to be a missionary. He gave up all of his hundreds of thousands of dollars and maybe millions, I can't remember. And he's on the ship and going to Africa.

And the Lord asked him, what's in your suitcase, C.T.? Well, Lord, I've got the original blueprint of my slinky in there. The original patent and everything. And the Lord said, what you got that for? Well, Lord, it's just in case things don't work out in Africa too good, I could probably support myself.

And you know how the Lord talks to you, huh? Really? And he got the point. C.T., am I going to be all and in all over the edge of the ship it went? You see, the Lord has a way of putting on your life what it is you want to hang on to, to be the Lord of. And because of that, the power of the cross was in his life.

And this nurse working with him week after week, month after month was just impacted and that's the way it will be in your life. And one day, God began to work on her. You know how he does that.

He slips in the side door. Well, what about this area? And that area? Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, yes, Lord. And she was so happy.

I'm surrendered to You, Lord. I'm here to evangelize and we're winning souls to the Lord. Every day, boy, they'd have 300 Africans there at the little mission.

They started off with a little closet of a hut. Ended up they had a 300-bed hospital there. Oh, she was so happy.

And then one day, there were 300 patients and one leper. One leper. And she said, Lord, I came here to evangelize and be a nurse.

I didn't come here to really work with lepers. And this little book tells the story. She said, I had not very long to wait before I had one of the biggest crises in my missionary life.

We were getting on very well one evening at the dispensary. I suppose I had 300 patients. They were all sitting around under the trees.

Suddenly at the back of them all, I saw a leper. I had seen lepers before, but this man was terribly mutilated, led by a small boy and almost naked. His toes and fingers were gone, his feet swollen, no nose, and he was dribbling from his lipless mouth down over his bare body.

I suddenly became contagion conscious. I did not want to touch that man. And I said to myself, Oh, we cannot have a leper here, but whatever shall I do? When everybody had gone, he hobbled around and the small boy looked up wistfully into my face and said, We have come to come.

That was the moral issue I had to face. I could have said, I did not. As I did say to God for the next four days when God was dealing with me, I came here to evangelize, Lord.

I came here to evangelize. All my plans were made and they did not include a leper. Next morning, there they were, with my 300 patients under the palm trees and all my joy had gone.

The leper waited and my joy was gone. There was a kind of shadow over things. You ever had a shadow come over your life? We hoped the man would find out that he had come to the wrong place.

It's often like that. Those who are in need come to the wrong place for we are dried up. And God's Word says that if we are really going the cross way, we will be like a spring of water whose waters fell not.

So we went on day after day, 300 patients, one leper, and no joy. Four days he struggled with it. You know, you can struggle with something four years or 40 years, but until you give up, you never have the victory.

And so one day, finally on the fourth night, she said, the battle was fought. Jesus showed me that night from the parable of the Good Samaritan who my neighbor was. Over and over again came the command, and thy neighbor as thyself.

And it was not until I realized that the leper was my neighbor that I could get peace. The next morning, I told the leper that God had been talking to me and had shown me that I did not belong to myself but to Him, and that He was almighty and helped me. So I was going to help him, and he could stay.

You can imagine the joy on that man's face. But I said, you have got to look to God because I have no medicine for leprosy, and I haven't a place to put you in. And don't know how it's going to be done, but God will do it.

And so will you kneel down with me and pray. And so they did. She said, we knelt down together, the man with the swollen feet, the little boy with the wistful face, we talked to our Heavenly Father, and they said,

Amen.

That was the beginning. That was the beginning. From that point on, and she said this, that was the beginning until we are willing to be involved up to the hilt for God, we do not belong to Him completely.

Until we are prepared to be utterly taken up by whatever He chooses to thrust upon us. He chooses to thrust upon us. We are not free.

And we'll have a chain around our heart. We're here tonight to break the chains to set the captives free. You see, that's what Jesus does.

Wherever Jesus went, He set the captives free. And that's how you can tell when the Spirit of God is working in a place, the captives are set free. I was in a church one time working, and the people were leaving.

They were not being set free. And I told my pastor buddy, I'll tell you about a few minutes ago, I said, Wes, are the captives being set free here? And he said, no. He is an exhorter.

And the Spirit of God immediately put in his spirit what he put in mind, what the problem was, and he went after it. God didn't send you here tonight to walk out with a chain. He sent you here tonight to walk out in the power of the cross.

The captives of the Lord may wear a physical chain on their body, but they don't have one on their soul. Their spirit is free. She said, I realized that if I looked after this leper, the little boy, the story, that all this would go out on the drums and the lepers would come from all over the jungle.

You know what happened? They did. And you know what God did? She said, God enlarges our capacity. Not only our soul's capacity, but our mental capacity and our organizational ability.

He enlarges the whole man as we are deeply willing to go the way of the cross. See, God will take you. You wouldn't know it that 30 years ago I wouldn't speak in a group of two.

And there's a lot of other areas too, but I just wouldn't do it. But God, if you give that area that you're so weak in to God, let Him do something with it, He can do something with it. You know what happened to her? She said within 20 years from that little corn of wheat that died and went into the ground, the work spread into, let's see, what was it? How many countries? Let's see.

20 years Edith and her small mud brick dispensary built by a gift of 10 pounds from two blind ladies and forwarded by the mission deliverers, she saw this tiny work of hers in the Belgian Congo grow into a medical crusade operating in nine of the countries of the world. Her death to her own plans. One leper.

Nine countries. Just think what God can do in your life if you'll give it to Him tonight. Let's bow our heads and the kids are going to come and play a song.

Well, let's see. I think we're just going to have the closing song. It's getting a little late.

Ginny's going to play a little bit on the closing song. And I'd just like you to just listen to the Lord. Let's bow our heads and just let's land, but let's land slowly and just say, Lord, is there something there in my heart? Is there something there in my life? Is there a reason there's no peace? What is it? Is there a reason there's no power? Is there a reason the provision's cut off? Would you show me the purpose in my life?

You see, we didn't come here to entertain you tonight, even though we don't mind entertaining, but we're here to do business for the Lord.

And if you need to get downstairs in a room and cry with the Lord, you do it. If you want to come up here, you do it. Nothing matters but you and the Lord.

We don't count nickels and we don't count noses, but what counts is souls. Have you been born again? Could it be that the misery is there because you've really never been saved? Here Nicodemus was, the leader of the Jews, and Jesus said, you must be born again. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, loses his own soul? What shall it profit a man if he teaches Sunday school, pastor a church, be a deacon, be a faithful church attender, if you've never really been born again? And what about our attitudes? Do you have an attitude of obedience? An attitude of obedience rather than an attitude of disobedience.

Wouldn't it be sweeter? I had a couple of little girls that they didn't want to come up and sing against the big crowd tonight. But it shows us that they're not completely surrendered and they're young and get scared sometimes with a lot of people. But as we get older, we need to grow out of that.

How about an attitude of brokenness? Are you broken over your lack of concern for the lost soul?

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