

Responsibility

by Don McClure

The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility in faith and the unwavering justice of God towards all people.

Duration: 49:49

Scripture: Romans 3:7

Topics: "Personal Responsibility", "Spreading Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not just being passive listeners of the word of God, but taking personal responsibility for it. He challenges the audience to move beyond criticism and become an active, powerful, and victorious group of believers. The speaker highlights the idea that with privilege comes greater responsibility, and encourages the audience to use their blessings and experiences to serve others and share the message of Christ. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God to work within the church and empower them to fulfill their responsibility in spreading the gospel.

Transcript

Romans chapter 3. What advantage then hath a Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much, every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some of them did not believe? Shall their belief make the faith of God without effect? Pardon me, their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy saints, that thou mightest overcome when thou art judged.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? I speak as a man. God forbid. For then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why am I yet also judged as a sinner? And not, rather, as we slanderously reported, as some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just.

Well, that's so simple and clear we don't even need to comment on it, so let's just close in prayer. No, let's. Father, we do thank you for your word, and Lord, really this very important section, no one will read it if we're wondering, what in the world is this? But yet, Lord, it's very critical, very simple as we look at it, but Lord, the message is very clear, and I ask that you would bring it to us in a simple and clear form, and that we would understand what it is that you want us to know in these very verses.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, as I said, this, although when you read it you're wondering, what in the world is all of this about? But it's a very important little series of verses, I believe, and while we're studying, though it appears to be a little difficult, it really isn't that hard.

At this point, Paul has been laying out over and over, first of all in chapter 1, about just the sinfulness of just natural man outside of God, and then as he gets into chapter 2, he looks at things of the sinfulness of man inside the supposed relationship with God, as the Jews purported to have, when he looked, if you were with us last week, at the Jewish call that God had put upon them as a people, and their claim to be identified with God had resulted in the great confidence that they had within their life, but yet Paul then went on to say, yet there's tremendous hypocrisy within your life, and though you think you have all the ear markings of a child of God by all of the externals, and you have the mark of circumcision, perhaps, and yet if there is not a circumcision of the heart, it's of no good at all. And so here, Paul is now kind of responding to an argument that some have already said there, as he mentioned in verse 8, he says, and not rather, as we have been slanderously reported, as some affirm us to say here, Paul is, some people were saying that Paul was saying certain things that he wasn't saying at all, and so he's really answering a little bit of an argument going on out there a little bit, because one might say at this point, they might almost be able to turn to Paul and say, now tell me, Paul, in other words, what you're saying here so far, all the way up through and including in chapter 2, is that there's no difference between the Jew and the Gentile at all. Is that what you really mean? And here, Paul essentially says, no, I don't mean that, I don't mean that at all.

Well, then if you don't mean it, then what in the world is the difference, in a sense, is what is going on in here? And here, Paul, he turns and he responds, and he says in verse 2, well, much in every way, chiefly, the great differences, under them were committed the oracles of God, the commandments there of God were given there to Israel. And then somebody might say, well, granted though, but what if some of the Jews, given these commandments, disobeyed the commandments, and they were unfaithful to God, and then they came under, I suppose, then therefore, the condemnation of God. But you just said that God gave the Jews a special position and a special promise, and now you're going on to say that for some, perhaps even an awfully lot of them, they're actually under the condemnation of God, whether they're Jews or Gentiles, and so therefore there's no benefits to the position.

And does that therefore mean that God has broken His promise? Does that mean that, essentially, now it's suggested that God is unreliable? God's undependable, in a sense. And Paul, here, his response is far from it. And he's wanting to show here that there's absolutely no favoritism at all with God.

God punishes sin wherever He sees it. Doesn't make any difference who did it. There's absolutely no favoritism at all.

You know, something that I suppose we as human beings have a terribly hard time doing is not showing favoritism. When there's somebody that we care for or loves or is some great benefit to us, whether they've captured our heart or they mean something to us in one way or another, they become part of a favorite list, you know, to us. And there's somebody that we want to protect or ensure or help out in one way or another when difficult times may come.

But as far as God's concerned, He is absolutely, perfectly, totally objective in the sense there of when it comes down to right and wrong or judgment. And the very fact, essentially, what Paul is saying here, the very fact that God does condemn the unfaithful Jews proves that God is just. Proves that God is somebody that He is absolutely without partiality at all.

And thus, He is a just God. And if God would might have been expected just to brush over, you know, some of the sins of the Jewish people, and if He had done that and didn't respond to sin, then you'd have one thing. But here, because God was very just in His government, in His justice, it shows that He is absolute and simple and clear in His justice.

He's fair to all. Well, then there's another argument here in this section as well, essentially. And that is, well, then Paul kind of says, the answer in the question, as he says there again in verse 8 there, that we've been slandered, reported, if some affirm we say, let us do evil, that good may come.

You know, Paul is saying, now listen here, okay. Now you're saying on one hand, God is just. And what reveals the justice of God, essentially, is the unjustness of man.

Man, God becomes very holy because He is opposed by the unholiness of man. We wouldn't know God is holy if man wasn't unholy. We wouldn't know God is pure if man wasn't impure.

We wouldn't know that God was so right if man wasn't wrong, essentially. And Paul is saying, well, then here they're saying, Paul said, some are saying that we're suggesting, let's just go ahead and sin because our sin reveals God's purity, God's holiness, God's righteousness. As he has said, some actually are slanderously saying that we are suggesting.

Paul is saying they've never suggested a thing like that. And because some are saying, well, look, if my sinfulness, my weakness, my failure, my impurity, it magnifies God's purity and His holiness, then my impurity really can't be all that bad of a thing, can it? Because it proves, therefore, that God is perfect and He's holy and He's wonderful. I may have done wrong, but nothing but good has come from it in the sense that it shows how right or good or wonderful God is.

And so you can't condemn a man for simply giving God a chance to show His justice. Now some hear Paul as he kind of shows that this is the way some people actually think. Paul turns and, of course, such an argument is absolutely ridiculous.

And just the staging of it sounds, you know, absolutely absurd. And yet amazingly, there's an awfully lot of people that do think that way. There's an awfully lot of people that realize, well, hey, I am a terrible sinner and I do fail, but yet at the same time the terrible nature of my sin actually shows how merciful and loving and patient and kind and graceful God is.

So it actually magnifies that in a sense. But Paul, again, ridiculous. Even arguing a thing like that as if that is going to impress or God's going to say, hey, you were so terrible that you made me really look good.

I got to reward you, you know, or something. That's almost the way, that's what Paul is saying people are thinking. Now as far as the real place and the right place of Israel is that no question about it, the children of Israel are a unique and a tremendously blessed people.

The whole world, of course, had turned away from God time and time again. No matter what it is that had been done all the way from Adam until Abraham, everything of man had continuously failed until God came to Abram. And when he came to him, you of course know the story, you know it well, is that the world was so far from God, but God came to Abram and he said, look, if you will follow me, if you will trust me, if you will put your faith in me, I will make a covenant with you.

And my covenant will be that with your seed, your children, and he took him out and you know the story, of course, as he took him up and he said, look, the north, south, east, and west, this is for you and your seed. And he told him, there he says, whoever blesses you, I'll bless them. Whoever curses you, I'll curse them.

And then he also told him that through his seed with all the nations of the world be blessed, ultimately pointing to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, to come through Abraham's loins. And many other blessings were to come into the world through the loins of Abraham, whether it be the laws of, you know, Deuteronomy, the wonderful things of the Bible that have taught society and taught man how to live and to govern himself as effectively as he possibly can. But here God made some wonderful commitments and he guaranteed their existence.

He says, I will guarantee the national existence of your descendants if you'll follow me all the way to the end when I return. Ultimately, as we don't have trouble putting that, you know, promise essentially together. And so your God covenanted as well with them, though, in these general broad sweeping ways, the promise of the people to the nation of Israel, to the land of Israel, the commitments of, you know, that he has, that he is still in the process of fulfilling this very hour and moving rapidly towards in the last few decades.

But here as we watch this, it's essentially God also told them with his covenant that if they walk with him, he would bless them and he would keep them in blessing. He'd watch over and protect and provide wonderfully for them when they did. But if they turned away from him, he would raise up the nations around him to deal justly with them, to rebuke them, to correct them, to discipline them, to chastise them.

And of course, that's essentially when you pick up the Old Testament, you realize God kept that covenant. You just kind of stand back from the whole of the Old Testament, you realize when the children of Israel lived in a practical, vital, living way before God, his blessing was upon them. Now, all the way through, he kept his covenant, but at the same, you know, with them nationally.

But at the same time, while he did that, he also said, however, if you just superficially play a game with me, if you look like you're doing something, but you're not, if you're not trusting me, if you're not walking with me, if you're not depending upon me, if you're not rely upon me, if you're following the ways of the world around you and the nations and the people around you, I will raise up those nations or others to judge you and to discipline you. And God, essentially, of course, did all of those things, didn't he? When you just pick up the book of Judges alone and you go through cycle after cycle, it tells us in Judges 3-5, tells us therein the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Termites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and they gave their daughters to their sons, and they served their gods.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they forgot the Lord their God, and they served Balaam and the groves. Now here we have the first of a series of cycles that the children of Israel went through in the book of Judges alone. That here they got into the land, they were so excited to be there, Abraham's great covenant to God, they're in the land, they're beginning to settle in, but as they did, here's all of the enemies of God around, with their idols, with their images, with their wickedness around.

And the Lord had told the children of Israel very, very clearly, you know, he said, you told them, I'm the Lord your God, you'll have no other gods before me. And he had told them, he says, you won't make any graven images, you'll keep the Sabbath, you won't take my name in vain and keep the Sabbath and things. He told them, he says, here's how you will live, you'll have me first in your life, you'll follow me.

And then, of course, he goes on and he says, honor your father and your mother, and thou shalt not kill, and thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not steal, or, there's a couple other ones in there, I don't think I named them all. What covet, or I think I missed, I don't know how many I named. Just pretend I hit ten.

Okay, but the, I think, false witness or something, I can't remember which one I did or didn't. But anyway, the thing he says, here's how you live, this is what I want from you. If you will do these things, your life will be blessed.

Well, the next thing you know, they get in there and they're out committing adultery. They're out there, you know, playing with other idols and images. They're falling down before gods that have no power, no love, no capacity to protect or care, and keep their life in blessing.

Thus, they fall away from God, because it's purely a superficial thing, and judgment comes upon them. And then, when the judgment comes upon them, then they begin to cry out. As God allows, you know, the enemies to come in, essentially, first of all, it was the king of Mesopotamia who came in, but then Othniel came along, as the children of Israel, cry out under this terrible, you know, suffering that they're going through because of Mesopotamia, and then they begin to cry out, and God, they cry out, and God says, okay, you're seeking me, you're crying out, raises up Othniel, wipes him out, gives them a generation of rest.

They're happy, they're doing good, but a little while goes on, and they start looking around, and they see other enemies around them. And then, whether it's Ehud and Barak, you know, that come along next, or, you know, when Moab comes along because the children of Israel are in trouble, or Gideon, or Samson, and Jephthah, or Samson, and--you go home and read your Bible. You need to do this.

I'm still back on that election thing, and I'm not sure who's going to run here. But anyway, the--but here's cycle after cycle after cycle. When they followed God, the blessing was wonderful.

They were at rest, and the positive aspects of the covenant with Abraham was kept. God blessed them wonderfully and mightily, and the covenant was kept. And at the same--and that was a blessing.

That was a wonderful thing. That was a very positive aspect of the covenant. When they turned away, and they went their own way, the covenant was still kept, and also in a positive way.

Whom the Lord loveth, He disciplines, and He chastened. And He would put them through very, very heavy and difficult times because He loved them and because He made a covenant with them. And they went through it, if it was merely a superficial thing, but over and over, cycle after cycle.

And they had--God was working all the time within the children of Israel. If they were on the way towards Him, blessing was coming. If they were on a way, He's pulling the carpet out from underneath them, getting them ready to cry out in their suffering, and in their trials, and their agony, to go and get back right with Him.

Just that simple. Very, very simple in a sense. They had divine help in all sorts of matters, whenever they would cry out to God.

He'd raise up, you know, a Samuel, or He'd raise up a David, or He'd raise up an Elijah, or Elisha, or a Daniel, you know, or somebody else to come along and asked her to do wonderful things for them when

they would seek Him. And at the same time, when they wouldn't, He'd give them an Ahab. He'd give them a king after their own heart.

And off they'd be, and they'd be in trouble. But with all of these covenant promises that they were given nationally, no Jew, no Hebrew, had any personal or special key to heaven. They had absolutely nothing.

They had no lock on it. They had a covenant that God had made in broad strokes on this life, and in this nation, and while they lived amongst it, and how they lived through this life. But they still, every one of them, had to make the same decisions that every human being has ever had to make.

There was no exemption in that, whatsoever. Though they were born a Jew, that did not give them a promise or suggest anything of eternal life. They're just simply born a Jew.

They thought, if I'm born a Jew, I'd need no more. That's all I've got to do. Absolutely nothing else.

And here, Paul is wanting to say, that's your problem. That is your problem. Like many people in the world today.

I wonder how many of us here, or how many may be listening, actually believe. If you ask, are you going to heaven? You listen to Gallup polls and these things. I don't know how they come up with these numbers, but tell us that somewhere, 80 some-odd percent of the United States believe they're going to heaven.

Well, I don't think most of them live around here. You know, if they are, they certainly don't. They're in another state.

Maybe they've all moved out because of the election. I'm not sure what's going on here, but it's something there, that the tragic thing is that there's an awfully lot of people thinking they're going to heaven. And yet, at the same time, when it would talk, or suggest anything of a personal relationship with Christ, the Lordship of Christ, the surrendered life to Christ, no, I'm just going to heaven.

I've already decided that. I planned it out. On what basis are you going to heaven? Well, because my mother took me to church when I was a child, or I got baptized, you know, or I've been confirmed, or I was, you know, took communion, or I have church membership.

I know the Anglican Church in England, they literally call it the first, the Church of the Four Wheels. I read a thing when I was over there many years ago, the Church of the Four Wheels, and that's because they wheel you into the church four times during your life. When you're a little child in baby carriage to be baptized, and then there's, then they bring you in to be, wheel you in to be confirmed, and then they wheel you in for your wedding, and then they wheel you in and out for your funeral.

But people just think, if I've been there, if I've been to the Church of the Four Wheels, I'm going to heaven. If I have done certain things in an awfully lot of people, literally hundreds of millions of people, I'm convinced, actually think they're going to heaven because the same ways, the same reason the Jews thought they were fine. Because there was a reality of God's blessing upon their life in many ways.

I think most people should think, actually, well God has blessed me. There's an awfully lot of people in the world that you would really look at them and say, and they would believe deeply, God has blessed me. God has provided for me.

God has taken care of me. Therefore, God must love me. Therefore, my confirmation or my church membership must have taken effect, because I know God is a good God, and He seems to love me.

He seems to take care of me. Well, He does love, and He does take care of us. But also know this, the rain falls in the just and the unjust.

God waters all of the earth, and He allows everyone to grow, and how He protects you and I, every one of us, the greatest heathen and the greatest, you know, saint, constantly through our lives. But to take the fact that God has this commitment to care for us does not mean I care for Him. It does not mean I have surrendered my life to Him.

It does not mean I've entered into a personal relationship with Him. And Paul, as he said in the previous chapter, you may recall, he told Israel, he says that, you know, that your circumcision, it means no effect unless you have a circumcision of your heart. Unless there is that personal interaction that you have surrendered your life personally to God.

And you may have the law of God. He told him in the previous chapter, you may remember, you may be a light to the blind. As he said, he says, you may be able to make your boast in the Lord.

And knowing that you know the more excellent ways, he told them, you may be a teacher of babes, as he says. But if it is not in personal relationship and faith in Christ, it means nothing. Absolutely nothing.

And all the things that they, that the Jews had, of course, in the Old Testament, the church seems to have replaced in the new, in terms of ritual. All of these things that people can depend upon. And here Paul believed, on one hand, yes, the Jews had a very special place with God.

And in the Old Testament, no, I think, student of the Old Testament could for a moment argue with that. But the difference here that Paul is arguing, and what I think is so critical for us to look at a little tonight, is the issue is that Paul looked at that special place. And Paul said that special place is not one of privilege.

It's one of responsibility. And there's a huge difference between privilege and responsibility. Paul looked at the Jews and he says, you have been entrusted, he tells them there in verse two, you know, committed the oracles of God.

That word oracles is *logia*. But it suggests in his most, believe my most, literally the Ten Commandments, but also going out to the to the commandments of God in general. And here God entrusted the commandments.

He took these commandments, he says, I've entrusted to you. That is not merely a privilege. He looks at it and he says, that is absolute responsibility to look at those commandments and say, this is how I ought to live.

This is how I need to respond. And here Paul looks at them and he says, you are a special people in a sense. God said under the children of Israel, you are a special people.

But therefore, you must live a special life. He looked at Israel, I am going to give you great privilege, but the only way that privilege will be of any value is when you respond in personal responsibility to the privilege. And here those privileges incurred responsibilities, not exemption from them.

Sometimes I think, well, because I'm a church member, because I go, because I give, because I've done this, because I've done that, and I'm related to so-and-so. I was confirmed, or I was baptized by Chuck Smith, beat that one, you know, or whatever else, you know, it may be that happens here, no matter how, whatever has occurred as a privilege, which I think that's a privilege. And I hope it is, I was.

But anyway, the whole thing is, is it ought to result in a responsibility. Here God looked at the children of Israel and all of these visitations that he had, one after another, upon the children of Israel, miraculously, from Othniel through Samson, through Jephthah, and everyone in between. These unbelievable works of Gideon and the Midianites, unbelievable things where the children of Israel were in trouble, and they would cry out to him, and these awesome visitations and works of God to save them again, and again, and again.

It wasn't to be a privilege. It was to result in a responsibility, in that their life would respond to what God had done, and it didn't, over and over again. God would bless them.

He would save them. He would do wonderful things, and yet they would, they'd come back, and their tendency was, are we privileged or what? How many of you got a Samson, you know, wiping out the Philistines? How many of you got a Gideon with 300 that take on 120,000 Midianites, huh? How many other nations have a David that has killed his tens of thousands, or an Elijah that calls fire from heaven? How many, you know, when you look at these things, are we privileged? But Paul's whole issue here has had nothing to do with your privilege. If you know your privilege, it has a direct connection to personal responsibility.

When God has done something for somebody, the effect and the reality of that, of the sense of that privilege, ought to result in a responsibility. Myself, I grew up, you know, I didn't come to the Lord really until I was in college. I thought I was kind of a Christian, for the typical reasons, born in America.

I have a mother, eat apple pie, believe in God, went to church in Christmas and Easter at least, and snuck out most of the other times I went. But actually I stole my offering my parents gave me and went bowling a lot of times, but until we got caught, then the offering dried up. But anyway, the thing is, I thought all this time I'm a Christian because of these things.

Meantime, and it wasn't until one by one my family is really getting saved, coming into a personal relationship with Christ, and then they had the audacity to start telling me I was the Christian. Who do you think you are? Telling, you're the one that spent years telling me I am one. Now you become a different weirdo and you try to tell me I'm not, because I believed you what you told me I was.

Now you changed. And the thing is, is that then finally as I'm saying they're coming to the realization, I have not surrendered my life to Christ. I've been to church, I've done all the little checklist of things.

And then when the conviction started hitting, then I came to Christ, but still for a time I fiddled around. Went back and forth, you know, to fraternity stuff and gotten, you know, just the same old worldly lifestyle. Until actually December 6, 1966, I was riding in my little Triumph Spitfire, a little 1,440 pound sports car, down Walnut in Pasadena.

And coming the opposite direction was a 1959 Oldsmobile 98 with a drunk behind the wheel who decided he owned the whole road. He came across the double line and we had a head-on collision. And at that point, this poor little, poor, poor little Triumph, it did not triumph that night at all.

It was total defeat for the Triumph. And it was totally destroyed. It even looked worse because it got fire.

But God allowed me to get out of that without so much as a scratch. The police didn't even believe I was actually, could have been in the car. And long story there, we won't go into it now, but it's something there that, in fact, even my mom and my sister, when they heard somebody called, said I'd been in an accident and seen my car, and they came up and they thought an ambulance was taking me off.

They're over in the corner, it was quite touching. They're holding each other, hugging and crying. At that point, I thought, man, they do love me.

This is nice. Because I'm over there, they didn't recognize me. But I went home that night.

I went home that night and threw, and something hit me that had never hit me before. And that was a sense I knew, like I had never sensed in my life, God had saved me. Not only the realization of the eternal life through Christ, but in a sense there, seeing His hand upon my life.

He had, there was a work of covenant love that He had preserved my life somehow or another. I almost felt immortal. That's not that I could go out and do anything foolish, in that sense, but there was a sense of privilege.

There was a realization, God, you have saved my life. There is no question about it. And that privilege resulted in responsibility.

That night I knew my life has got to change. My relationships have got to change. My behavior has got to change.

The privileges that I've had so far, thinking I was a child of God or a Christian or whatever else, whether I was or wasn't, and I do believe I had received Christ earlier than that, but no one else would know of it. By my life or my behavior, I just merely lived a privileged life with no responsibility until I realized real privilege on that December 6th. And then, that night, I realized there my life belongs to God.

It isn't mine. It's been bought with a price. I have no right to run it on my own.

And I found a sense of responsibility, not just privilege. And here, this is something the children of Israel rarely seem to sense this. All God's deliverances, all their head-on collisions with one nation after another, after another, after another, and they'd cry, and God got them out alive.

And yet, somehow or another, they could come out and say, hey, is it great being a child of God or what? Golly, is this wonderful. You know, it's some sort of an idiot without the realization ever of personal responsibility. I owe my life to God.

And instead of being filled with a sense of awe, as they should have been, a sense of blessing, as they should have been, a sense of responsibility. They just said, we're privileged. We're fine.

Luke 12:48, Jesus said, But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given from him, much will be required. And to whom much has been committed of him, they he will ask more.

The Lord looks there and he says, the more privileges you've had, the more blessings I put in your life, the more times my hand has been upon you, and you've known it, the greater the responsibility. And so with

us, just the children of Israel, as Paul is pointing out here, are we merely sitting here tonight and saying, I'm privileged. I'm going to heaven.

My name's in the Lamb's book of life. My sins are forgiven. And to realize who he ever lives to make intercession for us, he presents us faultless.

And we go in with all these unbelievable privileges, and how they ought to hold us in a sense of awe, in a sense of absolute blessing. Look at what God has done for me. And we ought to be ones that we can't even believe it.

The thing is, it might be good sometimes for us even to look at our life. Where have we been in this life? What has God done for us? What are his blessings that he has put upon us, as with the children of Israel, where his hand and making them so special, and the covenant, and the promises that he'd given to them. If it's something there that if God has blessed us, do we sense responsibility? And blessings sometimes come in odd forms, by the way.

I look at somebody like Corrie ten Boom. And here, some of you have been around, and you heard her. She was here years ago and spoke.

And a wonderful, amazing woman. Absolutely astounding woman. She came here and spoke when I was here back in the 70s.

And I'll never forget, because Chuck was busy doing something, so he asked me if I'd sit with her. And I sat with her for about 40 minutes, back in Chuck's office, and just talked. And there, as I sat with this woman, there was a sense in her life of not just surrender, not just devotion, not just an awe of God, but one of the most awesome people I'd ever just sat and talked with.

And here was a woman, on one hand, her life, you know Corrie ten Boom, I'm sure well, in Nazi Germany, taking her and her family, and the terrible suffering that she went through in the prison camps, and watching family die, and relatives die, the loss of virtually everything, and then the continued suffering she lived under, and crying out to God. And yet, as God met her, and said, and did wonderful works within her, bringing her through it, and she came out with that suffering, not just with the privilege of God's blessing, in keeping power upon her life, it resulted in a responsibility that she spent the rest of her life, wanting to tell the rest of the world, don't wrestle, just nestle. He's sufficient.

He's powerful. And she had an authority, like few people, if you ever heard her, you read her books. That's responsibility.

It just did, it isn't just, wow, I got out of the prison camps alive, Jesus, you saved me, thanks. But rather than that, even her suffering, in having God bring her through, resulted in responsibility. I'll spend my life serving, surrendering.

I think sometimes, when you look around here, we, and how many of you have sat under tremendous teaching? Tremendous teaching. I think I, in, you've sat, if you've been here for very long, you've sat under probably the greatest, one of the greatest teachings in the last six months anywhere, since I've been here. Ha, just kidding.

No, you've been, I mean, if you've been here for the last 30 years, you, you've been, you've been sitting under the greatest, perhaps, teaching in the country, week in, week out, month in, month out, year in, year

out. And what do you do with it? What do you do when much is given? Do we sit there and say, hey, look at me, I've been sitting under Chuck Smith for 30 years, how about you? Listening to your radio wackos, you know, or something else, and we think, look at this, I know the Word, and I'm strong, and I'm good, and I know all these wonderful things. Well, Paul says, there's a responsibility that comes out.

Remember when I spoke to the men's ministry, and I first got here, and they're kind of looking at me, and I'm looking at them. And they're staring back and forth, saying, well, I've already heard Chuck teach this, let's see how you do with it. You know, you know that feeling? I don't know if you know you, I don't know if you know that feeling.

It's not a feeling you really cherish. You know a whole lot, in a sense, there, but I, and you can just see, you know, all these critics. And I found myself looking at those guys, and say, if you're a good critic, then I'm not, my job here isn't to try to re-teach it to you again, but I want to find all the ways I can to see you do it.

You may not like me for it, but I want to find, you know, this ought to be the most powerful, active, victorious group of men in the country. You ought to be on fire. You, you ought to be men that in the coming years, we can take and use you to turn the world upside down.

And you can say, wait a minute, I just, I just sit in the pew and criticize. You know, now you want me to do something with this. That's what Paul is saying.

What we listen to, and what we know, what do I do with it? That's the important thing. Is there a response? When you look at the things of how God delivers, and he cares, and he blesses, and he watch over, and he provides for us, and we're so blessed. Now, am I telling these things? Am I sharing these things with people that don't know it? Does it affect my life? And remember when I, my family, I wasn't saved yet when they started coming to Christ.

Next thing I know, my mother. I mean, there's verses, you know, all over the refrigerator, doing all that stuff, up at the crack of dawn, praying for us as if we needed it, you know, or something, and going through all of these things, sharing, you know, you'd be talking to people all of a sudden, talking about Christ, hey, come on, just invite them to church, let's go, you know, or something, and you know that discomfort when people do that around you, and they get religious when you're not, or spiritual when you're not. And then I remember, literally, my parents emptying the house, living room and dining room, all the furniture.

We had a good-sized living room and dining room. Moved it all the other place, invited everybody in the neighborhood they possibly could. There had to be 75 chairs, and they were filled with people standing around, and they had a friend, Dr. Ralph Byron.

He was chief of surgery or something, I believe, at the time at City of Hope. Brilliant man, who loved the Lord amazingly. Asked him to come, and he shared the gospel with all the neighbors.

Shared Christ with every, and they invited everybody over, had cookies, and here. Because privilege results in responsibility, and that ought to be the most exciting thing in the world. Not condemning, not convicting, as much as inspiring.

And the children of Israel, instead of getting inspired, and getting excited, and wanting to share it, it was something there that they seemed to miss it. And here, if you were here tonight, and your name's in the

Lamb's Book of Life, if you've been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, if right now you know your sins are forgiven, and you know He's coming for you, and you know that He's coming, and He's coming soon, you know, it ought to be, if you were here Sunday morning, and listening to Chuck, and talking about the Lord, when He sets up Zion, which He's doing, and you reveal His glory, and two of His great points in the morning were the personal responsibility, in a sense, both He mentioned personal purity, and the burden to share with the world. Do I have those? Do I have something that says, Lord, take my life.

You have so blessed me. I want You to take anything out of it that shouldn't be in it, and make me available to share with the world the privileges I have, that they can know those privileges, and where it results in responsibility, and that when we sense this, when we realize that, and God, give me that balance, that on one hand, when you and I come in here to worship, our hearts should be filled with privilege, and when we open the word, with responsibility. Give me a word.

Teach me. Strengthen me. Equip me.

Train me. Disciple me. And here, it should result in a profound sense of awe, a profound sense of God, you not only called me to yourself, you have now told me, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel.

See, every one of us, every one of us, not that you need to change your address, but a sense there, or wherever your world is, to look there and say, Lord, use me. Use me mightily. And it's something there that when we realize that, and find that God, He just loves to use us mightily, and wonderfully.

And sometimes, you know, when the children of Israel, when they failed, God would deal with them. But when they turned, He blessed them again, privileged them again. But responsibility rarely happened.

How I would encourage you to look, and God, let me be responsible. That's what happened to the Jews. They sat there, a nation still went before God, with all of the privileges, and very few, a remnant, seemingly, took responsibility.

Lord, take my life. Alan Redpath tells a story that in 1950, when he came to be the pastor of Moody Church in Chicago. At that time, he followed Harry Ironside, who had been there for many years, and they considered themselves, at that generation, the most well-taught congregation in America, and that may well be true.

But he said when he got there, he says virtually the entire congregation sat there and looked at him and evaluated him. And he looked at them, and he spent years, he said, trying to give them a vision for the world that a few got, but many sat. And you know, one thing I will tell you, as he told me a lot of the things at Moody, I'm grateful that here's a congregation that is, to me, is one of the most on-fire congregations in the world, far from dead, far from cold.

When I look at what is going out of this ministry around the world, it's unbelievable. To this, at this very hour, this very time. A few weeks ago, I was down in San Salvador, down there dedicating a Calvary chapel down there, where there's, you know, they started a few years ago with a little one-room house, you know, with a bunch of people doing a Bible study.

And it so outgrew it that the next thing you know that they bought the house next to it, kind of gutted this one, made the house next to it. They're all joined, wall after wall, in these cities down there, they're so poor. House after house, all common walls.

So they buy one, gut it out, make a little sanctuary, use the next one for Sunday school, and then they kept on kind of growing that way. And here in a couple of years, they had grown to where when I, by the time I went down there, they were in an acre and a half, that they just rented a bare land, that they put a tent on, that would seat 500 people, and they had three Sunday morning services, and all of them were packed out with people standing on the outside. And here they sit and listen to Calvary chapel tapes.

And they've got them down there, it's got a school of ministry modeled after the thing here. Looking there, wanting to reach their community, is their Calvary chapel down in San Salvador, of which they're doing. A couple years ago they started a little outreach church, where a guy went out, they got another over in, can't think of the name, another name.

A city, okay, who cares. They care, but I mean, but I can't think of a name. Zaragoza is the name of the city.

They started a little Bible study there. Same thing happened, the growth, the growth, the growth, until they took over, they built on their little property, a 500 seat sanctuary. I went for a Friday night Bible study and taught, and they said there was as many people standing on the outside as there were inside.

Packed out. And they're looking there and watching these exciting things happen. There's 600 million people right below us here, in Central, Mexico, Central and South America.

Most open, probably, you know, area of the world right now. The potential. And I wonder how many may be sitting here right now, that God's, whether down South, whether over in Europe, and potential over there.

We just did a missionary conference. The exciting things are going on over there. Next month, I'm going down to Chile with Raul Reis and a bunch of other pastors, doing a pastor's conference down there, helping to establish churches.

We're bringing a number, I think there's about 40 pastors, you know, from around South America that want to be equipped and trained and plant Calvary-style ministries, Calvary chapels. And then going over to Russia, and then to India, and looking at these places. Africa, right now there's 90 churches in Africa wanting to affiliate with Calvary Chapel.

I said, what do you, why? You know, or something, and they, because they want the word, and they've looked and say, this is what we're doing. We're getting fed, we're getting taught, just like they do there in Costa Mesa. That's what we want.

People are going out from here. That's responsibility. And that when we look, you know, and realize, God, how can you take and use my life? Affect my neighborhood? What can I do with the responsibility? I don't care if it means just taking my little, you know, apartment and moving a few pieces of furniture around, and asking somebody to come and share the gospel, and send a little note, and make some, bake a cake or two, and invite my neighbors to come and sit down.

Tell them, Jesus Christ is coming soon. He's real, and He loves you. That's responsibility.

Privilege is I just go back home, say, you know, heaven is a wonderful place. I want to go there. And we ought to, and we ought to sing that.

Maybe we should close with that. But before, we should be very privileged and responsible. And we ought to look at our life as even Chuck mentioned Sunday morning.

Purity, personal surrender, personal righteousness, and then being used. That's responsibility. The Jews didn't get it.

They were going around there saying, oh, well, hey, let's continue and sin that grace may abound. Paul later says perish the thought. Let's see what God can yet do with our lives, do with our homes, do with our families, do, you know, in any potential till He comes again.

You look at the great servants of God. They were finer at their last hours than ever. And how when the Lord looks and He says, I'd love to find you working and serving when I come, because you're the greatest and most privileged people in the world.

How about the responsibility? Let's pray. Father, we do thank you for your love and your mercy and your grace. Lord, I thank you that we can come tonight and know our name is in the book of life.

Knowing Jesus, we sing to a savior who loves us, who right now does present us faultless. Whoever lives to make intercession for us, who covers us and covers us and covers us. But, Lord, may we never let your grace be occasioned as be privileged without responsibility.

Lord, I pray that some of us maybe tonight there'd be a sense. OK, Lord, tonight's my head on collision with you. You have loved me.

You have redeemed me. I am your child. There's no argument about that.

But yet, Lord, my life is just going around, enjoying itself, living for my own pleasure, thinking little of the lost world around, very few concerns. Lord, I pray that whatever it is that happened needs to happen for us to have such a great sense of privilege, that it would turn to responsibility, that there would be something within us that says, God, I realize it. It's hit me like a ton of bricks.

Lord, what do I do? I must respond. Lord, may you call us. May you find us a church that is looking around all over the planet, that is still looking for places and avenues and opportunity to go and serve.

And whether it's distant lands or it's the person that works in the cubicle next to us at work tomorrow, to share the privileges that we have had, how you've brought us through our prison camps, through our sufferings, how you have provided for us, how you have cared, how you've watched over the trials you've brought us through, the sufficiency of Jesus Christ time and time again, the times you've saved us, to be able to turn to others. And may that privilege turn into a responsibility. We'll look at them and say, I must tell you.

Oh, I must. Lord, may you work a wonderful work within us. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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