

The Sweetness of Knowing Christ

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing Jesus Christ and counting loss for Him, highlighting the consequences of not knowing Him and the power of Jesus in the face of adversity.

Duration: 1:40:39

Scripture: Psalm 137:6, Isaiah 35:5, Matthew 5:38-39, Matthew 7:21-23, John 9:25, Philippians 3:7-8

Topics: "Gods Protection", "Christian Zeal"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man who finds himself in a room with a dog after being beaten and tied up. The man is initially afraid of the dog, but as they spend time together, a bond forms between them. Eventually, the man is released and realizes that the dog was a special friend sent to protect him. The speaker uses this story to illustrate the power of God's protection and the importance of surrendering to Him. The sermon also emphasizes the need for Christians to be zealous in spreading the gospel and living for God.

Transcript

Lord, we know that a person can come into the service and pray and not hear anything. But we ask you, Lord, that you would open the eyes of the blind and stop the ears of the deaf, so that you can reach into every heart. Amen.

I want to speak today about the relationship between a person and Jesus Christ. How sweet a thing it is. There are many Christians in this world who have never met with Jesus.

They go to a service, it is preached about Jesus, but they know him only through their head knowledge. And on the day of judgment, the Lord Jesus will say, I did not know you. Some will say we work miracles and cast out evil spirits and that, but Jesus will reply, I never knew you.

They went to services, they prayed, they sang in choirs, not knowing Jesus. They will be exposed on that day. But if you have faith in the Lord Jesus and walk with him, what a marvelous thing it is.

But what things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ. Then we read from the Song of Psalms 137, verse 5. If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her skill.

If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy. Here we read a very deep matter. You heard the choir sing in German.

One thing I crave for and that is to remain in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. The servant of the Lord was at that time in a far off country in exile, in Babylon. And he said, if I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my hand forget itself, or forget its skill.

Actually it is forget itself. If I forget there where God is, let my right hand forget itself. It is not that I should forget about it, but the hand itself forgets itself.

If our right hand forgets itself, it becomes completely useless. It is already corrupt and absolutely dead. And my tongue, let it cling to the roof of my mouth, indicating the rottenness in the mouth.

If you, O Jerusalem, are not my chief joy, let my hand forget itself, or forget its skill. Indicating the deep relationship between a person and Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in our text how he lost everything for Jesus.

He casted aside and considered even his Jewishness, all that was gained to him, to be rubbish. That which was precious to him and of great value, he considered it to be but dirt. I wonder what Jesus Christ means to you.

Can you use the same language of Jesus? What is it that you've lost, or has gone lost for Jesus' sake? What are the desires and cravings that you say, if only I could get this and get that? But if you meet with Jesus, you consider all that to be rubbish, worthless, to lose, to cast aside. Do you know what it is? There has been a series of meetings down in Cape Town with an organization and invited some of our young people and I said, It would be good if you go and you can use my Kombi. On the way they passed by our Smithfield mission station.

But when they went this morning to look for the car, it was gone. It had been stolen. It's lost.

I've lost it. It's gone. Thieves came and stole it.

We just left it in the Lord's hands. We don't curse those who have stolen from us. We said, Lord, work also in their lives.

But the truth is, is that Africa is already cursed because of theft, because of stealing from Cape to Cairo. He counted as lost. Now, as we have lost this, but he counted all things as lost, all those things that were precious to him.

He said they are as they are lost. They are rubbish. Now, some even Christians will give up Jesus for the thing that they make to be their treasure for some other thing.

I want to use now an example from this professor who was at the Cairo University, a very famous university. And among Muslims, this is the ultimate educational institution. How he met with Jesus and what happened when he met with the Lord.

He's changed his name. He got converted in 94. So it's 10 years ago that he got converted.

He's in America now. He can't stay in his homeland. Because their scriptures, the Quran indicates that a person who converts out of Islam to Christianity can be killed, must be murdered.

That is what Islam is all about. In the end, it comes out of hell. When he got saved, he changed his name, not wanting to keep the old Islamic name.

So he's been called Mark, his first name. And he does love that name Mark. It is the author of the second book in the New Testament.

He loved that name because Mark was the author of that book. And history has it that Mark was the first to bring the gospel to Egypt, to Alexandria. So he was the first apostle to bring the gospel there.

And it is said when the 70 were commissioned and sent out to preach, Mark was the first to go to Egypt. So this man wanted to name himself Mark for that reason. His surname or second name is now Gabriel.

For that is the angel, the one that was sent to announce the coming of the Messiah. So his name today is Mark Gabriel. So he was a professor there at an Egyptian university.

He was also a teacher of Islam. That was his subject, about the history of Islam. He was also simultaneously an Imam.

An Imam is like a priest in a church. He was the priest or the Imam of a mosque. He taught the Quran at the university.

When he was 12 he could recite the Quran by heart. From the beginning right to the end. It was a book that he knew very well.

When he taught Islam, he was troubled. Because of the many contradictions he found in the Quran. In the beginning of the Quran it speaks about the importance of forgiveness and being compassionate, patient.

But then there is another part of it. Where it speaks in a completely different tone. Kill those who are not Muslims, those who are infidels.

For Allah doesn't want any infidel, non-believer in Muhammad to live in this world. That troubled him to find this mistake in the Quran. But the Muslims are courageous.

He was courageous. Before he began to speak out about what was obvious to him. Where he spoke also to his students that here the Quran is going astray.

Some of his students were furious. He said, you are a teacher of Islam and yet you criticise it and say that it's not completely whole in its teaching. And that it's contradictory.

They were infuriated and they said that he was a betrayer of Islam. These students then went and informed on him to the Islamic police that this man is a betrayer and deserves to be killed. And speaking blasphemous things.

Let him be killed. He got a fright. As people entered one night.

About 15 to 20 men heavily armed. They marched into his father's house. His father was a wealthy man with a very nice double story home.

A triple story home. The police came in and were in and out of every room. He could do nothing.

He was caught and he was found in his bedroom. He was then arrested and taken. They said, what have you converted and become a Christian? Now he didn't know anything about Christianity.

He didn't know Jesus. He was just busy with Islam. And so they took him to jail.

In his defense he said, no I've not converted to Christianity. I'm not a Christian. But allow me to speak my mind.

I'm an academic. At least allow me the space to teach that which I must educate the students about. And my mind about it, they beat him.

He was sitting at a table. His interrogator was on the one side, he on the other. There were people standing behind him, gods.

The interrogator said, take his hands and put them, hold them on the table. And when he didn't reply in the way that they wanted, they were very angry with him. The interrogator was smoking a cigarette.

When they held down his hands on the table, one of them, the interrogator then burned with his cigarette, burned into his hand, pressed it in and he bears the scars till today. They said, admit that you've deserted the faith and that you've become a Christian. He said, no I do not admit that because I've not become a Christian.

I've not deserted our faith. The interrogator lit another cigarette. And he burned his lips with it.

And the scars there till today also. They interrogated him in many different ways and they accused him of deceiving them. He said, no I'm not deceiving you.

They then brought an iron stoker, that which you use to shovel your fireplace with. He wondered what they would do with it. He then saw that they had walked in with it being red hot at the end and they burned him in his side.

Muslims are similar to communists. We could say that they are worse but in some ways they are the same thing. He said, if you want to cast me out of Islam then you try to do it but it's not that I am deserting the faith.

Some people suffer greatly for the faith, especially those in Islamic countries. So they took him to another place. Which had a water tank.

They put him into this water tank. The water was ice cold. When he tried not to have to go in because it was so cold, they beat him with a whip.

He tried to get out. They beat him again. Now he suffered from a low blood sugar and because of this extreme cold he fainted.

He woke up in a bed and he found that his feet were bound to the bars of the bed. He had socks on. These were very thick socks like you find sometimes ladies who cook with these pots over fire, they wear special protective gloves.

Now his feet were bound to the posts of his bed and they came then with a rod and then beat him under his feet. The reason why they put these thick socks on was that if you are beaten on the soles of your feet

with thick socks they don't leave marks. They beat him harshly till he cried.

One came with a pillow to hold it over his mouth. He cried again, cried out. Another came with a second pillow so that he wouldn't be heard.

He was beaten till he fainted. When he woke up they were still beating him. Some wives say, I can't be a Christian because I have this husband who is so difficult and so harsh.

No, you're just playing around if you say that. I've heard of a husband also saying, I can't be a Christian because of this mad wife of mine. He should rather put on a skirt.

So they beat him and they continuously beat him. He passed out and woke up again. And then they untied him and removed the socks and they said, stand up on your feet.

He said, I can't get up, I can't stand. And they beat him with a rod. They beat him continuously till he attempted to stand up.

His feet felt dead. And then there was a long passage and they said, run down it. He asked them, how can I? They beat him with a rod again.

He began to run. When he got to the other end they said he had to run back again. And then when he arrived he had to run again.

He didn't know what their purpose was in making him run. But it is said that if a person is tortured by being beaten on the soles of his feet, if he's made to run, it stops the swelling of his feet. After that, they then took him to another building.

To another place where there was a tank of water. They had to climb up with stairs, a step ladder. It was a water tank and there were no windows or anything.

It was only the hole right on the top. They escorted him right to the top of the step ladder, then they said, climb in. When he put his feet in, he felt it was water.

He said to himself, well they're definitely going to kill me now, I'm going to be drowned. So they said, go in. And they beat him again.

Till he got in. When he stood in the tank and the water got right up to his face, he felt his feet on the ground of the tank. He had thought that he would just drown.

It was dark at night. And when he looked at the water, it seemed like something was in the water. On top of the water.

They were big rats. You do get mice and you do get these smaller rats, but then you get these huge rats. And as he was standing there, these rats had been put in so that they would eat his head.

You say you're so brainy, let these rats eat your head. So they did so, they got in the tank, and he was standing there. And one of the rats couldn't see this, because it was so dark.

And he couldn't see what was inside the tank. Then he came out of the tank, went inside, went back inside, And he said, there's more, there's more. And they killed him.

And he writes that one of these rats nibbled at his ear, another stood on his shoulder with its paws up on his head. He knew he was going to be eaten by these rats. To whom should he pray? Because he was so depressed and so disappointed by the Quran full of lies and contradictions.

So he went to South Africa to study the Quran. And he found that the Quran was full of lies. About Christ and Solomon.

So he went to vote in the ANC. And he found that the Quran was full of lies. So he went to study.

And he realized also that in this country, this government supports the idea that in classrooms, in public schools it must be taught that all religions, including Christianity, they're just exactly the same as other religions. You vote for the ANC, which is the government. You will stand responsible before God for this which seeks to destroy Christianity.

On the Day of Judgment, we'll hear what is said. Whether the Quran is just like the Bible. And children are taught in schools these lies.

So to whom should he pray? For he had seen that Allah was just nonsense. He thought, am I to pray to the God of Israel? The God of the Jews? Or the God of the Christians? Or to a cow like Hindus? He said, He said, oh my creator, I don't know who you are. I don't know you.

but please help me. He said a miracle happened. That whole night none of the rats bit him.

He said the rats came to him and they nibbled at him. They were like pleasant kisses. They scuttled over his head and nibbled at his ear, but not one of them bit him.

It was pitch dark in that tank. The next morning, he heard them opening the covering. When they opened it, he saw light and said, well, it's daylight.

I haven't died. So my creator, the creator of heaven and earth has kept me, protected me. And the jailers were also astounded that he had survived.

They pulled him out. They said a special friend of yours wants to see you. You don't know him, but he says that he knows you.

He thought, well, maybe it's my mother or somebody, one of my said your friend is here and they opened the door. He was escorted on either side by guards. When he looked, it was a huge dog and they locked him up with this terrifying dog.

He was shocked. He thought, well, now I'm going to be torn to pieces by a dog. He didn't know Jesus.

He didn't know the father of our Lord. He said, Oh God, I don't know you. I don't know who you are, but please work.

He went into, he went straight to the back of the room, into the center of the room, sat down with his legs crossed. And the dog came and sat in front of him and just stared at him. He looked at it, stared at it.

They stared at each other until the dog stood up and circled him, went around him as he followed it with its eyes and it was looking at him as it went around and around. After a long time, the dog came and sat next to him. By then he was exhausted.

He became drowsy and slept. He slept for a long time and then as he woke up, he noticed the dog sitting in the opposite corner. When he awoke, the dog jumped up and came to him as if they're greeting him good morning.

Then he heard people approaching and they opened the door. And I saw him whole and complete, the dog not having eaten, bitten him. One of the guards said, there is some amazing power protecting you.

Whatever it is, it is a special force. Another one said, no, it's just the devil. He's a Satan.

And so they took him out and then they transported him to another jail where there were two terrorists who were in that jail for murder. Because terrorism is part and parcel of Islam. The Quran also says that you don't worry if you kill an infidel, it's not you who have killed him but Allah.

Some cars have bumper stickers saying Islam for peace. That is absolute nonsense. The religion of Islam is not about peace but about killing.

It is a religion of the sword. And so they put him into the cell with these murderers and one of them asked him, what brings you here? He said, well, I really don't know. They questioned him and they continued asking him questions.

And the guards had hoped that these murderers would kill him because anybody that kills a person called a betrayer of the faith or one who converts out of Islam can be killed. When they asked the jailers why this man was there, they were told he has betrayed the Islamic faith. They were very angry and wanted to kill him and he thought, well, now I'm going to be murdered.

But God protected him. God looked after him. The Bible says in Isaiah 49, can a mother forget its nursing child? Even if it does, I will not forget you.

Look, he wasn't even yet a believer but God's protecting hand was already upon him for the Bible says that God chose us even before the foundation of the world was created. Now to make a long matter short, they took him and transported him to another jail south of Cairo. And he was to be put there to remain in jail for the rest of his life.

But his prison warden was one who wasn't very enthusiastic about Islam. He wasn't a fanatic. And he saw the hand of Jesus even though he didn't know him yet.

He thought, I'm going to die in this prison. But after it had only been two weeks in jail, when his mother and his relatives not knowing where he was, whether he was dead or alive, one of the members of parliament of Egypt returned from an overseas visit. He was the brother of this man's mother.

When he returned to Egypt, he immediately got a phone call from the distraught mother who said, I don't know where my son is. For two weeks he's gone. And she wept and wept and wept.

And she spoke to her brother. Now this brother was an important parliamentarian. He said, sister, leave the matter to me.

Two days later he got a knock on his door and he was told, here is your uncle, your mother's brother, and he has your release papers. And so he got out of jail and he was rescued. He said, oh my God, I don't know you, but I thank you that I've seen your hand.

I thank you that I've seen your hand. A few days later then, his father was informed that the police have investigated the son who has been accused of betraying the Islamic faith by people at the university and it's been found that the accusation was untrue. And the father was so delighted.

He said, well, I thought so. I've only one son who is like this, who is even teaching Islam and is a professor thereof. All the other children and brothers hadn't studied like him.

And then his father said, you just forget about those at university and those who accused you. They're just doing it because they're jealous of you. He said, son, you can work for me in my factory because he had a leather jacket factory and different clothing articles for men and women.

He said, my boy, you can work for me. He worked for his father for a year. But he was very depressed because as he writes, we Muslims cannot live without our God, without Allah.

And you see what a challenge that is for us Christians. He says, we Muslims can't live one day without Allah. But we Christians, we can go and backslide for months and years.

But Muslim cannot. I noticed that in Mshali where some Muslims had hired a flat, an apartment just below us. The women completely covered themselves with their Islamic garments.

And the men with their white gowns and that. They hired the flat that was closest to the sea. And the men with their white gowns and that.

They hired the flat that was closest to the sea. And these Muslim men and the boys, they then knelt facing the direction, quite openly and publicly, in the direction of Mecca and prayed, bowing themselves many times down. The women, of course, were to one side and as they discriminate in Islam, they were inside.

And they put Christians to shame who are embarrassed about their Jesus in public. As if though some Muslims will go to heaven and Christians like you go to hell. They were quite unconcerned about passes by and they just continued with their worship and their jalabas.

I also saw it. And saw for himself, saw for ourselves. Their faith, which is really nothing.

And they worship it and are so zealous for it. But we Christians who treat the faith as if though it's dirt. Now back to this man, he felt terrible and after a year he was suffering from daily migraines.

He said, oh God, creator, I'm living without you, you creator of heaven and earth. When he went to the chemist, as he used to do weekly to go and get headache pills. A lady pharmacist said to him, professor, what's the matter? You don't seem to be well.

He says, indeed, I'm really unwell. For I don't have God. Allah has disappointed me.

He says, for a year I've lived without Allah. And he writes in his book, you Christians don't realize how seriously we take it. It is ingrained in us, it's in our blood, our religion.

And he said, I'm troubled more than anybody else in the world. I have no God. This lady said, but haven't you been a professor at this prestigious university? He said, yes, but I'm disappointed.

She said, but your father is this respected businessman and your family is so well to do. He said, yes, that is all true, but I've lost God. Where is God to be found? She went into the chemist and came back with a

new testament for him.

She said, Mr. so-and-so, I ask you, before you take the pill or take the headache pills, read this book. Take it and read it. And when you've read it, then you can take those pills.

And so he took it. And opened it. When he was back at home.

And he opened at the place where it speaks about the Sermon on the Mount. And he read from there. In Matthew 5. Where it says, he said, you've heard it said of old, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

But I say to you, do not resist evil, but if you are struck, do not repay evil with evil, but rather turn the other cheek. He said, for the first time I beheld Jesus, I trembled all over. He said, at that place when I heard these words, where Jesus said, you've heard it said, a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye, but I say to you, turn the other cheek when you're struck.

For the first time in his life he met with Jesus. He saw Jesus in these words. He says, there's no verse in the Quran like this.

Nobody has ever spoken like this. His whole body trembled, he shook. He says, I was in the presence of Jesus.

No man has ever spoken like him. He felt that he was in the presence of the Holy of Holies. The whole night he read the book.

And what does this book mean to us? What does it mean to you? You follow a worldly girl. You live like a heathen. There is no fire inside.

His son fled for his life hearing bullets fly by him and he was he just survived that's how fanatic the Muslims are if one of the children becomes a Christian the father will kill them but you may have a child and that child turns its back on you on Jesus Christ and you'll side and compromise and stand next to your child and John I'm a Suleiman Umar in gun yabba if Ula tell up Suleiman got a winnum Christos Ali our wins in Luto we are we are defender we are Vega on a walk oh my SM so boogie Lucho so look one Christians we are sing about a loan Banga Banga she say no fire nurse as you know Lilo and we say we are right Jesus is the Messiah not Allah not the Quran sissy kosher booty would chase you on Messiah I will see a new Allah we Bible axilo Nicole on booty what a bonga G you got that

the wahoo mobile who best one I got cool not that they were and he just thought when he was fleeing about his sister because he had a very good relationship with her she didn't live far away maybe just half a mile and he ran for his life to assist it she says what's wrong brother he says dad wants to kill me what do you what he but why not you ask him and then it knocked at the door but no nose so my daughter my daughter open the door what you are daughter guys fooling young I want to kill your brother you fooling bull alum for in open the door that I can go in fooling young who's a new man what Baba what you tattoo up as she said father he's not here what to call a fool and if you don't open he said I want to kill him what Baba I get cool up she said he's not here they are Kasha undata

and so he was able to escape and hide why what he Baba went in John I keep in dot I know me for the wee blala pet his car when she opened here he was with his weapon saying I want to kill your brother what he Baba Cola Cola Baba he's a figure Kaya Sangha Numbini she said dad calm down let's have a family discussion about this we saw the father went back home the engine young little if you zoom young missing

in Google that they were walking to my car what only visum tolling who was later go here and then he asked his sister when the father had gone please go home go into my bedroom and take out my visa because I cannot survive here in Egypt get some more clothing for me and bring it here which he did his mother also added money to it and so the sister gave him these things and off he went

in a car he prayed and said where must I go the Lord said go to South Africa he had to cross different countries ended up in Morocco and then ended up in the Congo after three months he was in the Congo amber wasn't young as in touch who might figure a call what cooler he became ill there you may learn with malaria buffoon are you talking about a loss I keep eating they sought an Egyptian doctor which they found who diagnosed a very bad form of malaria predicted that you'd be dead by the morning said he cannot live you cannot survive when you in this stage of malaria that night sorry that evening the next morning he was hailing hearty he got up exclaiming touched him why a messiah he was able to travel up and down in the Congo and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah that no one is like unto him

when he came down to South Africa was a way to be like South Africa he spent about three years here in South Africa I'm sorry but he preached and invited Muslims to debate with him openly publicly he was almost killed by Muslims here in South Africa they intended to murder him but God kept him but daily they were off to him then he emigrated to America and it's this book that he's another one after this as well and he said some Muslims got converted here in our country isn't it wonderful to meet with Jesus even if you meet with difficulties and with in jail whatever persecution but if you're with Jesus how wonderful it is I didn't mention the detail that when you read that New Testament that whole night in the morning he surrendered himself to Jesus Christ have you surrendered yourself to

Jesus all you who are here have you given yourself to Jesus or there's some who haven't given themselves to him do you want to give yourself to him what should I say do I need to invite you to stand up and come here to indicate showing us publicly we on earth and to heaven they of your decision if you haven't yet accepted Jesus do you want to receive him and he him being in you the Muslims say that the zeal for their religion is in them and this their religion consumes them we need to have Jesus in us the biggest sea creature is the whale some carve down towards Mexico there they also are known another type down towards the Cape and recently one was seen off the north coast here with its cough remember they are mammals and so they suckle their young when it's time to give birth there are

whales which come down from Alaska down to Mexico to carve after they've carved they swim all the way back to Alaska to go to go down there and to return as 10,000 kilometers and it takes two months the journey down the whale doesn't eat in these two months something for the ladies that are overweight and we meant that they've got stars on our pouches.

It diets for two months it doesn't eat. It gives birth in Mexico and so the cough grows when it gets to a certain stage in its growth and a certain season then all these carves they migrate back to Alaska there where there's ice.

Who has taught these whales? Now is the time to go up north. Now is the time to go south. So we've got many animals and birds that go from one side of this world to the other.

Who tells these birds and these fish now it's time? A cough which was ill of a whale this cough was captured and caged while they worked on it to try and restore its health till it was healthy again. It grew. It was all alone.

And so it was all by itself in this cage and when the time came to migrate north this baby whale this cough began to go towards the northern gate and bump against it. Who had put this instinct within it? Who taught it? It was hurting itself. It wants to go the northern direction.

Who told this baby whale it's time, it's the direction to go that way now? How is it possible that Jesus can teach the whales, the geese, swallows, all different kinds, butterflies, bats to move? Now it's time to move. But He can't teach you to move in the right direction, to go the right direction. Now whether you're white or whether you're black or Indian or colored, doesn't matter whether you're an American, a European, or an African, when Jesus is in you, shouldn't He be able to teach you? That just amazes me.

This Jesus who puts in these creatures this instinct to go up north or to migrate wherever it should go, He who puts this drive within them, can He not put that instinct in you to go the right way, not to go and drink, not to be sexually immoral, not to be one with the world? Children want to go off out of the parents' home into the world. You've got little devils. Don't say they are Christians.

Where's the divine instinct? We say all the Christians are Christians. They are not Christians. They are little or big scallops with the devil in their heart and you the parent can't discern.

May the Lord have mercy on Christians and pity them for they are being destroyed. They are being destroyed by having the world in them, having Satan and not Jesus Christ in them. Jerusalem, if I forget you, let my right hand forget itself.

Should I not remember you, let my tongue cling to my palate, to the roof of my mouth and in its rottenness. And Paul says, that which was gained to me I count but loss. And now you find Christians depressed, burned, they've lost something.

Forget about it. What's getting married? What's having money? Get down to business. Get right with God.

You don't know how much time you've got to live. Make use of it. Spread the gospel.

Bring people to Jesus. Let us bow our heads. Lord, work in our midst that we might be a church which is full of your zeal, burning for you.

People who understand what they should be about and who have knowledge of you and who know you. Lord, you know if there's someone in our midst who's not yet surrendered to you, not yet converted. Lord, we stand embarrassed of our faith when we see today a person converting from Islam.

Lord, wouldn't you work? May your gospel go forth. That your fire would burn in every heart. Amen.

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