

Living a Life of Sacrifice

by Francis Chan

Francis Chan emphasizes the importance of living a life of sacrifice through boldness and love, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 30:59

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39, Acts 7:54-60, Philippians 1:15-21, Philippians 1:27, 2 Timothy 1:7

Topics: "Sacrificial Living", "Bold Evangelism"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of boldness and courage rooted in the spirit of power, love, and self-control that God has given believers. It highlights the need to focus on genuine love for God and others, rather than just going through religious motions. The speaker encourages a deep intimacy with God that naturally leads to courage and boldness in sharing the gospel, inspired by the example of Paul's unwavering commitment to Christ even in the face of adversity.

Transcript

You know, last week we talked about courage. I don't know if you remember, you know, we talked about the pastor that knocked the guy out and everything. And we talked about just this spirit of boldness.

And again, when I hear messages on evangelism, like when I've heard those messages, I walk out and a lot of times I feel guilty. And that's not what we want. The idea is not, did I say idea? Wow, the idea is not to play Holy Spirit and make people feel guilty.

Like I shared, I think a lot of us already feel the guilt. What I wanna do is get rid of it. Because, and the reason why we feel the guilt is it says in scripture, it says in 2 Corinthians 1.7 that God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power, of love, and self-control.

That means when you became a believer and God's spirit came into you, that spirit inside of you is this spirit of power. It's not this scared, oh, I'm worried about this, worried about that type of spirit, but it's a spirit of confidence. It's a spirit of power, it's a spirit of love, it's a spirit of self-control.

So whenever, because the Bible says that we become a slave to that spirit that's in us. So it's this idea of whenever we go against this spirit, it's almost like that slave is beating us with this conviction. And so that's why when we feel fear, something in our spirit just isn't right.

We just go, man, that's not the spirit that's in me. I'm a coward right now, and so now I'm feeling this conviction. Why? Because that's not the spirit that's in you.

The spirit that's in you is this powerful spirit. It's this courageous spirit, it's this loving spirit. And it's this whole idea of living boldly is something that I think that those of you, or I know that those of you who are believers, you want.

It's this desire that's in you, it's this spirit that's in you. He's made you to be that way. And so when you chicken out of things, it bugs you inside because you know, yeah.

What did I say, 1 Timothy? 2 Timothy. What's that? Oh, I said 2 Corinthians? Okay, 2 Timothy 1.7. Sorry, okay, going way back. Let's start over.

2 Timothy 1.7, God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and self-love, nevermind. Okay, here's the thing. Okay, here's what I'm getting at.

When you're alone, okay, not when you're at church, not when you're with your family, not when you're with other Christian friends, not when you're at a Christian concert, whatever else. You're alone and you've got this book with you. And it's just you and this book.

Do you feel peace about your life? Think about that. Because I noticed that for a lot of years in my life, I would feel peace when I was surrounded with other American Christians. I would feel peace when I was in fellowship with other people.

But when I was alone with this book and it was just God and I and I'm reading this scripture, I didn't have complete peace because I'm looking at what the Bible calls me to do and how it calls me to live. And I would look at the way I was living and looking at the way we do church and I'm going, ah, I'm just not there. I just don't feel like, I feel like a lot of times I'm playing a game where I'm doing like a watered down version of this book.

And I wasn't real honest with that. And I think sometimes we know the right things to say in church and the right things to say in a Christian environment. And yet when we're alone, we're not at complete peace.

And that's what I'm talking about. The spirit that's in us that's bugging us saying you ought to be more bold than this. I gave you a spirit that wasn't fearful, that wasn't timid.

I put this spirit in you that's this powerful, this powerful spirit, this loving spirit, the spirit that has absolute self-control. And so when you're alone and you're dealing with God and His word, you know inside there's more. Like that song we just sang, there must be more than this.

I know it, I know in the very core of my being and that spirit that God put in me that I could be more bold than I am. I could show more love than I do. I could have more self-control.

And even though I get around other Christians who tell me, well, you know what, you can't be perfect. And you know what, everyone struggles in that area. I go, no, inside I know I have more power than this.

I have this spirit of self-control. And yeah, well, everyone does this and everyone lusts and everyone has a little bit of pride. You know, all those things don't really comfort me when I'm alone with the Lord because inside of me there's this spirit that says, you know you could be more courageous.

You know you could be more bold. You got more power in you than that. You got more love.

Everyone says, oh, you don't have to forgive that person. You don't have any love left. You know what, God understands.

He wants you, on and on and all these nice little, cute little Christian sayings. When the reality is is when you're alone with God, you go, you know what, I was destined for more than this. I could say more, I could love more, I could show more self-control.

And there's a lack of peace. And yet you know those times when you're walking, right? You're walking in the spirit, you're in that zone and you go, okay, this feels right. This is right, this is right.

I have peace before God because we can fool people. I can lie to people all day long. I just can, I just know the words to say.

But there's just something about that peace when you're alone with God. And let me explain something too about this peace because you may go, oh, no, I think I'm at peace. There's a big difference between having peace about something and ignoring something.

In other words, there are certain things that we are convicted about. And if we just don't think about it, we don't feel any shame, we don't feel any guilt, we don't feel any conviction if we just don't think about it. Then suddenly someone causes you to think about it again and those feelings come up.

And so you know what you do is you just ignore it, you push it away. But I'm telling you, there's a big difference between peace, having peace about something and ignoring something. Because I've ignored things in my life.

And there is this false sense of, oh, I feel better, I feel better, I just don't need to think about it. Let me just pretend. No one's going to hell.

Hey, it's a happy place. You know, let me just ignore, ignore, ignore. And there's other times I just deal with things.

And I come to terms with God and I genuinely feel peace about it. And so let's not kid ourselves into thinking we're at peace with something when the truth is, is we just ignore certain things in our lives and we choose not to think about it. And you know what, we can go other places.

And that's what the Bible says. You know, we studied that passage in 2 Timothy 3 and 4 about how in the end times people are just going to walk away and try to get their ears tickled. I want to hear things, you know, that bring me peace.

I don't, I want to ignore those other things. And so if you're going to address this, this, and this, I'll find somewhere else to go. Because I want to ignore that.

I want to ignore that. I want to ignore that. Rather than say, no, let's just deal with it.

Inside of you, there's this spirit that just wants to break out that has so much power and so much confidence and so much courage. And that's who God made us to be. And that's what I want about this.

A lot of times when I hear a message on evangelism or courage, I would just try harder. You know what I mean? It's like, okay, I'm going to be more bold this week, right? I'm going to just start telling people about Jesus on. And I would try and try and try and muster up because I wanted this.

I wanted to do this. But you guys, if we do that, my concern is is that we can just go out these doors and start doing evangelism rather than truly being men and women who love people so much and love God so much. We got to bring it back to those two commandments that Jesus says sums up everything.

Loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Because the truth is, isn't it true that the most courageous times in our lives are the times when we're closest to God? I mean, when you sense, even for me, like when I'm in this room and I don't think about you guys too much, I mean, I think of you in the sense of, okay, I love these guys and I'll give them a message. I want to care for them, I want to build them up.

But when I can get kind of beyond you and try to imagine God himself in this room and I think about my creator, I think about the one who gave everything for me, I think about this one who's sitting on his throne and he determines whether I live through this and I just think about him and I think, okay, God, I'm gonna say whatever you want me, and if I'm close to God and I'm thinking about him, man, then I will say anything. It's just when I take my eyes off of him and I look at you guys and go, ooh, if I say this to him, I wonder if he'll come back next week. If I say this and she's in the room, I wonder if she'll come back.

Ooh, she might be offended by this. Oh, that might bug her. That's when I start thinking about these people.

But if I'm in love with, see, it all comes back to loving God and loving people, doesn't it? Because if you're in love with God, you're going, God, I care about you. I just want to give a message that you care about and I don't care if people hate me. It's about you.

I love you with all of my heart, all my soul, all my mind. So whatever happens, happens, but I'm gonna love you. And you, I think that we've all, maybe not all of us, but I think a lot of us have been in that zone before where you go, God, I just love you and I'm picturing your presence with me on the stage, in this room, and I'm your created being and I could care less about anyone else.

It's you. Yes, I love them and I want to see them come to know you and everything else, but it's you I want to please. Man, that's such a great way to live, isn't it? You know, those few times in life when you just go, God, I am just in a zone.

I see you. You are there. And that's when we're courageous.

It's not about mustering up courage outside of God. It's about this intimacy with God that creates a courage. See, that's what I see in Stephen.

Remember the story of Stephen? Stephen in Acts chapter seven? Acts chapter seven, when people are about ready to kill him? And what does Stephen say? It says, in Acts chapter seven, verse 54, it says, when they heard these things, they were enraged. So Stephen is preaching and people were enraged, the Bible says, and they ground their teeth at him. Okay, that's never happened here.

I mean, it has with certain individuals, but not as a whole. I mean, there's times, man, I'll be talking and I'll just see certain faces just going, you know, just seething and it's great. And he just says, everyone is

grinding their teeth at him, but he, but Stephen, he doesn't back off.

He doesn't go, ooh, I'm bugging people, I'm making a man. No, he goes, but he, full of the Holy Spirit, full of the Spirit, where he goes, you know what? I got that spirit of power in me. I'm gonna say it, I'm gonna say it.

He was full of the Spirit. He gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he says, behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

But they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and rushed together at him. They cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And when he said this, he fell asleep.

I love that. Here's this guy. Man, he's just laying it out.

And people are hating him, so angry. They're chasing him outside the city with rocks. And now they're just pelting him with rocks.

And, but Stephen's just focused. He goes, guys, I can actually see Jesus right now. You don't get it.

You don't get it. I actually, I physically see him. It's like God just opened my eyes and I can see him in heaven now.

I'm seeing he's sitting there by the throne. And at that moment, he's going, I don't care. Throw rocks at me.

Do whatever you want. Do anything you want. I don't care because I'm so close to Jesus right now that I can even see his face.

And people are throwing stones at him and he's being stoned to death. And he's going, I don't care. And he goes, Jesus, take my spirit.

He's just in his own world. See, that's courage. Where's that courage come? Because he could see Jesus.

If we could see him, if we were so close, like Stephen, so filled with the Holy Spirit, that courage is just gonna come. So the whole idea is not go out there and be more courageous. The whole idea is fall in love with Jesus so much.

Get so close to him that you can see him and you sense his presence and you're so in love that you go, God, I don't care what's going on around me. These people are yelling at me. They're throwing rocks at me.

And then he says, and Father, don't forgive them. Don't hold this against them. They don't see you like I see you.

Where have we heard that before? It's just a powerful moment. He was so close to Jesus. He was just like Jesus.

He could see Jesus. So as we talk about being bold and courageous, understand this is not about being tough guy and going out there and saying, I don't care, I don't care. It's about I am so close to Jesus that I'm in my zone and I'm so comfortable right now.

I'm so at peace. I'm just kind of, I remember one time I was speaking and I gave a message that was a little harder. That's every week.

But this, I remember this lady came up to me afterwards, just encouraged me. She goes, just keep preaching. Just look over their heads.

Look over their heads. Look over, look above them. Look above them.

I'm like, right on. You know, what a great statement. Like, she just goes, just look over their heads and just look at God.

Just see him there. And then just say whatever you need to say because God's there. See, that's when we're courageous with people, isn't it? When we're not so into ourselves and insecure.

But here's the thing is everything in the Bible comes back to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind. And love your neighbor as yourself. Love your neighbor as yourself.

See, the idea is not going out and just preaching to people. Because the idea is loving people so much. Like, in the core of your being, you just hurt for them.

You weep for them. It bugs you. You love them so much that you can't help but tell them about Jesus.

Because many of you have experienced, we've all experienced life without this intimacy with God and life without this peace and life without this spirit and the zone we get in. And it's like seeing people that we care about and loving them so much that it's like, ah, I don't even have a speech plan. I just gotta say something because it's coming out from inside of me.

Scripture constantly emphasizes the heart, you know? Scripture speaks against heartless religion. And just doing these acts because we're supposed to. Everything Jesus talked about was what was inside of you and how it's coming out and how God gave you the spirit of love.

This love toward God, this love towards other people. And so out of that spirit of love comes these words. Otherwise, we just kinda do things.

We do church. Hey, let's do community. Let's do evangelism.

Rather than in my heart, I'm just so in love with God and so in love with you that I don't have to try to create community. I just go, man, whatever is mine's yours because I really care about you that much. It's not forcing people to give away their possessions.

It's going, no, I genuinely care about that orphan. So I don't know what else to do but to give. I'm not doing it to earn something.

I'm not doing it to be religious. I just genuinely love that kid. Why is that so hard to believe? God gave me that spirit of love and suddenly I love these people and I love the poor.

I love those who are needy and it's just, it's coming out from me rather than this religious, hey, look at what I'm doing and all these good things I'm doing. See, I think that in the Christian world, so much of our failure in evangelism comes from a lack of sincerity. When we talk about evangelism in churches across America, we have little tracks, we have formulas, we have speeches that we memorize.

Do you think people can't see through that? You think they can't see through a rehearsed speech and a few points and an outline that you were taught in an evangelism class? Where they go, oh yeah, I had some guys knock on the door doing the same thing to me a while ago. No, no, I'm not one of those, I'm one of these and we're in a different group that, you try to explain everything or whatever but the truth is people can see when you do something out of a sense of duty and they can also see when you look into their eyes and you genuinely care about them and you're not just giving them this speech rehearsed. Maybe you don't even have the words to say, you're just crying like an idiot and going, man, I just gotta tell you, man, I'm crazy about you and this thing I have with God, it's been so good for me.

I don't have the words, I don't know, just God is so good to me, really is good to me and I just love you so much and it kills me that you don't know him. These are stupid words but do you see my, see, when you talk like that, people go, okay, I don't agree with you but I can tell you for real. I can tell something keeps you up at night like you genuinely love me.

I disagree with everything you're saying. But man, what is it about you? And yeah, no, you don't have the words to say it. You don't have the answers to everything and the Bible says we are to grow in our knowledge but don't lose that love because it's all about the love.

I mean, here's what it comes down to. If we love God with all of our hearts and if we loved our neighbors as much as ourselves, would I ever need to give a sermon on evangelism? No, right? Because if you love someone as much as yourself and you think, okay, if that were me and I don't have Jesus in my life, if that were me and I have not been forgiven by God, if that were me, what would you want someone to do for you? You're about to face God and no one's told you about forgiveness or you've never understood or you've never seen it, you've never experienced. No one just laid it out for you.

Wouldn't you want someone to tell you? Of course. And so when you start loving someone as much as you love yourself, you just go, okay, if that were me, I'd want someone to say something. You just, it just comes out.

We wouldn't have to talk about it. That's why I love, you know, that's what I was thinking about this morning. You know, Jesus just says, well, these two verses really do sum everything up.

If you love everyone, if you love people as much as you love yourself, then you're not gonna lie to them, you're not gonna commit adultery with them, you're not gonna, obviously not murder them, you're gonna share with them. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. See, the thing I love about Paul, when you read about him in Philippians, man, it was just the real thing, right? That's what I've noticed as I've been studying through Philippians.

It's like Paul was just the real thing. Like in his heart, he really didn't care about anything else. He really was in that zone and it was, it came from his heart.

It wasn't a speech that he learned. It wasn't a track that he memorized. It's just, it was just everything about him.

He just really loved Jesus and that's all he cared about was, I gotta get this good news to people because I'm genuinely concerned about people. And like the Bible says that it's out of the, the mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart. See, it's out of that overflow.

Whatever's in here is gonna come out your mouth. See, and Jesus was like talking to these Pharisees and go, man, you're all worried about this, this, this, don't eat this, don't say this, whatever. He goes, it's about what's in here.

They were trying to eat foods that were only clean and doing all these religious things. He goes, it's not about what goes into your body. It's about what's coming out.

See, because what's coming out is a reflection of your heart and in church, we teach people to watch their words. Hey, don't say this in church. Don't say that in church.

Hell no, do not say that. Not in church. When we should be saying, no, watch your heart.

Why did you say that? How come that came out? What's springing out from there? I'm hearing these words, because you're being honest with me, but these words of honesty are revealing to me something's going on in your heart. And we miss the issue, and so we just try to say the right things when we're here, rather than the truth. And we learn these Christian slogans.

We make ourselves feel good because we've kept this religious thing going on. But what's going on in the heart? What's really in your mind? For Paul, it was real. It wasn't just saying the right things.

That's why in Philippians one, verse 15, remember Paul's in prison, and he says an interesting thing. He was talking about while he's in prison. Remember last week, we talked about how he was just happy that the gospel's being spread.

He goes, this is great, I'm in jail, but I get to preach to all the guards. And now the whole guard, all of them know. The whole Praetorian guard knows about my faith in Jesus Christ.

Not only that, but now people out there are being more bold, and they're talking about Jesus. This is a good thing. He goes, I'm rejoicing in this.

In verse 15, he goes, some preach Christ from envy and rivalry and others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I'm put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Paul's saying, you know what, as I'm in jail, people are preaching Christ more boldly. And he says, some are doing it because they have great hearts, but then he says something very significant.

He goes, other people, they're just preaching out of rivalry or envy. They're trying to hurt me. And it's kind of weird, but it's almost like, trying to come up with a modern-day example.

It'd almost be like if I were put in jail, and if another pastor thought, oh good, Francis is gone. You know what, now maybe I can get a bunch of people to my church. You know what I mean? It's almost like, and I'm not saying anyone would have that heart, but I'm saying that in Paul's day, there was this idea of when Paul went into jail.

See, Paul preached this gospel that says, look, you die for him, you do everything for him. But then there's these other people that were preaching this prosperity type of gospel that was saying, no, you know what, if you follow Jesus, you'll be rich. You don't have to suffer and everything else.

And Jesus is going, no. And Paul's saying, no, look at Jesus' life. We gotta suffer for him.

This other stuff's nonsense. And so when Paul went into jail, you know, his opponents, you know, the prosperity guys were going, see, look at what happened to Paul. You follow him, you'll end up in jail and everything else.

And Paul's going, no, you don't get it. I'm fine in here. It's okay.

I'm gonna suffer just like Jesus. I wanna know the fellowship of his sufferings. This is really, he goes, these other people, they're preaching all this stuff, thinking that I'll be in jail and I'll be all shamed.

Like, oh no, you know, those guys are preaching. Oh no, their churches are getting bigger. He goes, I don't care.

I don't care what kind of motives they have. They could have the worst heart in the world. As long as they're preaching the gospel, I'm cool with it.

Because that's really all I care about, is the gospel. Paul's whole life, he goes, I just want people to know about Jesus. I don't care if they like me.

I don't care if they come to my church. I just want them in love with Jesus. I want them to hear that good news that they can be forgiven and have this relationship with God.

And if they can get that, then great. Great, then I don't care. I'll be in jail.

I'll do whatever. It doesn't matter if they're rich or whatever. I just want Jesus proclaimed.

And I was thinking about this because I thought, wow, Paul really had this one-track mind. It was just about Jesus. He didn't care what they thought about him.

And I thought, he's kind of like Don King. No one respects him, okay? He doesn't care. You know, he's just promoting these fights, right? Because as long as you watch the fight, as long as you pay for the money, you know, whatever.

As long as you pay, I'm just promoting this fight. You know, it's just not even about him. We laugh at him.

We ridicule him and everything else, but he gets people to watch his fights, right? He's a promoter. He's a promoter. And I thought, wow, that's really in a lot of ways the way Jesus wants us to look at ourselves is I don't care what you think about me.

I want you to hear the good news. And I want you to tell people about the good news. I want you to tell people how great Jesus is.

I don't care if Francis gets a following. It's about Jesus, and it's about how great he is and what he's done for us. And as long as he is lifted up, I don't even care if your motives are so that you become this Christian rockstar.

I really don't care. You know, it'd be nice if your heart were humble and you cared about, you know, things of God. But as long as Jesus is lifted up, Paul says, that's all that matters to me.

And I love how he says, and I'll rejoice. Verse 18, yes, and I will rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.

It's my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. And, you know, we're just gonna stop there.

We'll go further next week. But here's the thing. I want you to get this.

Paul says, I don't care if I live or die in this jail cell. I really don't care. He goes, I care about one thing, and that's that Christ is honored.

And if it means me dying and he's gonna be honored, great, so be it. Kind of like what I talked about, those Koreans that were in that cell in Afghanistan that just one at a time surrendered their lives and go, God, whatever. You want me to die? That's gonna bring you more glory? Kill me.

Have the tailband kill me. I don't care. You want me to live and go on and serve like Paul says? Well, maybe I'll just stay on the earth because that'll mean fruitful.

He goes, you know, whatever. Whatever, God, I just surrender because really that one verse, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Paul says, look, all I care about is Christ. So if I'm to be alive on this earth, great. I'll tell people about Christ.

And if I die, that's great because then I actually get to be and see Christ. Do you understand that Christ is all I care? See, when I read Paul, I go, you know what? He's the real thing. He really means that.

That's not, he's not saying these words because he memorized it at Iwana. You know, he's just going, no, you don't get it. I'm in jail, I don't care.

You read about his imprisonments, his beatings, his stonings and everything else. You go, wow, his life shows for him to live really is Christ and to die is gain. And I want you to, in fact, let's put that verse on the screen.

I want you to, I just want to camp out on this verse and just close with this. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. What I've been praying for for this morning is for honesty, for you guys to look at that verse and admit, don't say the Christian thing.

Just admit if you go, no, that's not me. For me, living is when my family and I are on vacation, and you know what, everyone's getting along and everyone's healthy and my job's going well so that we could take these types of vacations and then go home to a house that's pretty nice and have retirement all set up and know the rest.

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