

# Living Unpredictably

by Francis Chan

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*We need to surrender to God's will and focus on loving our neighbors as ourselves, just like the early church, to make a real change in our church.*

**Duration:** 45:55

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:31

**Topics:** "Compassionate Living", "Christian Love"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of compassion and love, focusing on the need to care for the poor and needy as a reflection of Christ's sacrificial love. It challenges listeners to consider the value of every life, especially those in desperate situations, and to take action to make a difference in the world by loving others as Christ loved us.

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## Transcript

You guys remember me? At the beginning of last service, someone tapped me on the shoulder and said, Hey, do you know when Todd's going to be back? Yeah, he did a great job. I've been listening every week on the podcast. You know, it's just so awesome to hear the Word of God being taught here, like week after week.

See, because I spent my summer traveling to all these different places and teaching in different places. And the sad thing about it was, all these places they heard me preach, they're like, Wow, I've never heard anything like that before. You know, we don't normally hear the Word of God just being taught, like straight out of the Bible, just word for word, here it is.

And we forget, we forget that this doesn't happen everywhere. And I'm listening to the podcast going, Man, it's the Word of God every week. You know, just laying it out, laying it out, laying it out.

And we're so used to it, but we forget. Man, there's just a world out there. And teaching the Bible is not real popular nowadays.

But what I really loved, though, was when you teach it, the people are actually hungry for it. They actually want it. This one worship leader, after my last session at this one conference, I loved his prayer.

He said, God, thank you so much for this weekend. He said, thank you for tearing down everything we believed about you and replacing it with truth. I thought, wow, what a great statement.

Thank you for tearing down everything we believed about you. Because everyone has these beliefs about God, and I think he should be this way, God should be this way. But then when you open up the Bible, it says, no, this is what he says about himself.

It's like, wow, that's the truth then. That's what he says about himself. I just had the greatest summer of my life.

It was so, so good and so fruitful. But if you guys remember, when I left, and it's been three months now, when I left, I really just wanted to, primarily, I wanted to know two things. God's will for my life and God's will for Cornerstone Church.

Remember, I was preaching through Colossians, so I'm not really preaching through. I made it through one sermon. And there in Colossians 1, when it talks about how Paul prayed for the Colossian church, that they would know God's will.

That they would understand God's will. The things that God desired. The things that God wanted.

And we talked about how everyone has a will for your life. Everyone wants things from you. They desire this, they desire that.

For example, right now, if my two-year-old had it her way, she would desire for me to be at the park with her right now. My six-year-old, she has a will for my life. She'd love for me to be at home playing Clue or whatever.

My ten-year-old would love for me to be taking her to the mall and buying her whatever she wants. Everyone's got a will, a desire. Different people are catching me in the lobby.

Hey, can you meet with me? Can you meet with this person? Can you meet with that person? This is what I'd like you to do with your time. Everyone has something they'd like you to do with your time. Your parents want you to be doing certain things.

Your kids want you to be doing certain things. Your friends want you. The church wants you to.

Then you want to. You know, there's things you want to do right now. And to somehow surrender all of that and say, okay, God, it doesn't matter.

All these other voices, what do you want? And we talked about that. And I had friends of mine come up to me after service and say, hey, you know what? I'm not going to lie to you. I don't want to know God's will.

I mean, that would scare me to know exactly where God would have me go this afternoon if he had total control and where I would live and what I would drive and eat. And if I knew God's will, he said, I think he would freak me out. So I'd rather not know.

And I think that's true for most of us. So that when we get to the end, we go, I didn't know you wanted me to do all that. I didn't know you wanted me to love them that much.

And, you know, it's kind of this naivety. It's kind of, you know, this blessing. And as I thought about it, I thought, wow, I feel some of those things.

And I didn't feel right being the pastor if that's the way I thought. Like I was scared of God's will. And so really, these three months have been a time for me to surrender to God and say, God, okay, anything, anything.

I want your will. I trust you. Okay, what do you desire? Anywhere on this earth, where do you want me to be? Where do you want me to live? What do you want me to give? How do you want me to live? I really want to do it.

I'll take my family wherever you lead me to. And same with the church. If you want me at Cornerstone, then what do you want of this church? We'll do just anything.

Just kind of surrender that and search out the scriptures. In regards to the church, you know, I mean, these are very important questions. I mean, do you care what God wants of you? Or do you just want to know a few things? Or do you want the whole deal? Like exactly, what would you want me to do? And when it came to the church, you know, I thought back.

It's maybe kind of weird, but as I was praying through the church, I thought about something I said. And I shared with you guys right before I left, some Jehovah's Witness came to my door. And I was thinking about that conversation.

This is what God brought to my mind. Okay, Jehovah's Witness knocks on my door. It was in his story.

You know, bad door to knock on. And he says, hey, have you heard of us? Have you heard of what we believe? And what do you think of us? And I said, I have heard of you. And honestly, I think what you're doing is awful.

I think it's absolutely terrible what you're doing. You are belittling my God. You're belittling who Jesus Christ is.

He's my Savior. This is the Son of God. The Bible says that he is all the deity, all the fullness of the deity in bodily form.

That it's about equality with God and everything that God is, Jesus is. And you are going around telling people that he's just another archangel. And he goes, no, no.

We're not saying just another archangel. There's only one archangel. Michael's the only archangel.

And I said, well, open your Bible. Turn to Daniel chapter 10, verse 13. And he opens it, and I go, read it for me.

And it says, Michael, one of the chief princes. I said, so you're saying Jesus is Michael, who is one of the chief princes, plural. So he's just like one of these angels.

And he goes, well, I never knew that. And I said, here's my point. I go, of course you didn't know that.

I go, because you weren't taught that. I said, here's the thing I'm most concerned about. I said, there is no way on earth you can look me in the eye right now and tell me that you opened the Bible for yourself, you studied it for yourself, prayed to God, God, help me understand the truth of this word, and then you closed that book and said, I figured it out.

Jesus is really Michael, one of the archangels. I go, there's no way. No one, no one does that.

You can't get that from the book. The reason why you believe what you believe is because someone fed it to you. And someone said, here, here's what you're supposed to believe, on and on and on.

And I am not telling you to listen to me. I'm not going to feed you anything right now. And I'm telling you not to listen to these people that you're walking around the streets with.

I'm telling you, open up the Bible for yourself and read it and you decide what does it say. And he left the house and he said, you know, I learned something today. I'm like, great.

And I'm going to pray for you. Now, that story came to my mind because when I was trying to figure out, God, what is your will for the church? I thought to myself, okay, let me be fair to that guy. I told him, man, just open up the Bible.

Whatever it says, you would never get that. You know, you were fed this. And I started to think, wait a second.

What about me? What if, what if I had never, think about this and apply this to yourself. What if you had never attended a church service in your life, anywhere? You'd never been to church, okay? Just imagine that right now. You have never been to church.

You've never experienced anything like this. And all you did was read the Bible. Okay, what if all you did was read the Bible and you get to book of Acts and you start reading what the early church was like in its purest form and what God desired for the church.

As you read that and you go, okay, that's a church, that's a church, that's a church. And you'd never been to church service. What would you have expected to see in here when you walked in? Would you really expect to see a bunch of people, you know, sitting in seats, facing forward, singing a few songs, hearing a message, turning around, going home? Is that what you would have gotten from this book? And so I started thinking, okay, so then why do we do what we do? Well, it's because of what we've been fed.

We grew up and we heard this is the way services are and I kind of do church this way because this is the way church is supposed to be done. And then I read the Bible. I go, wait a second.

Because when I studied the Bible, I would have expected something different if that's all I knew. What I would have expected, you know, based upon, you know, the book of Acts and the beginning of the church, I would have expected to see a bunch of people that totally loved each other. That's what I would have expected.

I would have expected this place just buzzing with interaction and people caring for one another's needs if I just read the Bible. You know, Acts chapter 2, verse 42, when it talks about the early church and how thousands were being added to the number, it says in verse 42, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. I'm not saying this is wrong because there is a sense in which we need to devote ourselves to teaching.

To the fellowship, they devoted themselves to interacting with one another. To the breaking of bread, you know, communion and taking the elements and remembering the body and blood of Christ, not just in church, but they were doing it from house to house. They would break bread and go, oh, yeah, yeah, we

gotta remember Jesus.

He's everything to us. They were so centered around this and they were devoted to prayer. And it says that everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common, selling their possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes, ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. You turn over to chapter 4, verse 32. It says, all the believers were one in heart and mind.

No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power, the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them, for from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

So what would I expect if all I knew was the Bible and I go, wow, I'm gonna go visit a church. What would I expect when I walk in? I'd expect people to actually care about, I mean, so care about one another. It's like, hey, what's mine is yours.

You know, I actually got this property, you know, out in Idaho. Yeah, I could sell that and give it to you because it seems like you're in need. And there would be this interaction of, man, I don't care about my stuff.

If you can use it for the kingdom better than I can, then let's do it because all we care about is this gospel. All we care about is the fact that I found God, so my stuff, who cares about it? It doesn't matter. I'd expect to walk in a room where there were no needs.

That there were no needy people and to walk in and go, wow, I wonder what that looks like. To walk in and no one be needy because everyone's taking care of each other's needs. See, that's not cornerstone.

There's needy people in here, why? Because they're lined up to meet with me and I can't meet with them all. You know, when it's the church's job to meet with one another and meet one another's needs and if we live that out, I thought, wow, that's what I would have pictured walking into a church. And we've done a lot of great things, but this whole idea of, you know, another thing I read, I read this thing called the Epistle to Diognetus.

It was just a letter from one of the early church fathers written about 140, 150 A.D. And it was written as this letter to prove that Christianity was real. Now, when we try to convince someone of our faith that Christianity is real, we tell them about prophecies, we lay out archaeology, we lay out the history, we explain the authenticity of Scripture, we throw out a bunch of facts, we may give them a book like the case for Christ or evidence of the man's verdict or something along those lines. Let me prove to you this is true.

What this letter, this letter didn't have any of the prophecy in it. When he was trying to prove that Jesus Christ rose from the grave, the whole letter was about, of course he did, look at the church. How can you explain the church? Look at this group of people, look at the way they give to each other, look at the way

they interact with one another.

How could this miraculous gathering be taking place if Jesus Christ didn't rise from the grave? The proof that Jesus rose from the grave was the interaction of the church. Now could you do that today? You're trying to convince your friend to believe in Jesus. Well, of course.

Look at the church. Could you point to any church as proof that Jesus was the Son of God? I mean, let's face it. The church is usually used as proof that He didn't come.

The church is used for the other side. How could what you're saying be true? I know my neighbor who goes to your church. I know the hypocrisy of his or her life.

The church can't be true. I've been with those people. I know the way they are Sunday.

I know the way they are the rest of the week. The church is used against Christianity. And our only hope is, well, maybe if we can find a speaker or a musician or someone that can help lead them to the Lord.

It's like, no, the church was supposed to be the evidence. And so as I looked at that and the fellowship and the love we're supposed to have in here, I came to this conclusion, okay, we've existed as a church for 12 and a half years now. Let me preface it by this.

Jesus says, I can summarize this all for you pretty easily. I can summarize this whole book, all the law, the prophets with two commands, right? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. You get that down, you got it.

Okay, you don't have to worry about sinning because you can't love your neighbor and sin against him at the same time. You can't love God and sin at the same time. So as long as you love God and love your neighbor, you're great.

Love God with all your heart, soul and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself. So here's the deal.

As I pray about this, I believe that over the last 12 and a half years, I believe Cornerstone Church has done a good job at teaching people to love God with all their heart, soul and mind. We said in our mission statement that we want to present to this community an accurate, we want to give every individual in our community an accurate picture of God. I believe we've done that.

You know, when we teach the word of God, here's what he says about himself, here's what the Bible says, not what I'd like him to be, here's what he says about himself. Here's an accurate picture of God and this is to help develop those who believe into fully devoted followers of Jesus, teaching people to be completely devoted to him. I believe we've taught people to love God and I know some of you, you're in love with God.

You're in love with Jesus. Some of you wake up at four o'clock in the morning, you know, and you start praying to him and reading from his words, singing to him. Some of you, you know, you've given up so much, you're just in love with him.

But it's that second half, love your neighbor as yourself, where I go, that's not too good. I believe if there's a clear, obvious area we've just failed in, it's love your neighbor as yourself. And before you write a note and go, no, that's not true, I love someone.

You know, just hear me, okay? Love your neighbor as yourself. Honestly, there's times when I look at that, I go, I don't even know where to start. Think about that verse, the second greatest commandment, love your neighbor as yourself.

Where do we even start as a church when honestly, you know, a lot of you in this room, you don't even wanna talk to the person next to you, much less love them as much as you love yourself. And so I haven't even made this a goal, you know, because it's just, it almost seems impossible in our day and age or something. And some of it are, they're my own issues too.

I mean, when I go to church, honestly, I like being alone. I like hanging out with myself. You know, just go to church.

I mean, when I visit a church, I wanna be anonymous, you know. I mean, my personality is more the one where I'd love to sit in the back and just kinda have my own little spot. No one talk to me.

Okay, I'll shake your hand during greeting time, but okay, that's it. You know, don't talk to me and definitely don't hug me. Just give me a little time to myself and talk to God, meditate on his word.

Oh, praise God and go home, you know. And so then you read this, is love your neighbor as yourself. And the early church was all about interaction.

I mean, it wasn't so much of this, one guy talk, everyone listen. There was certainly some of that and they devoted themselves to the apostle teaching, but sometimes that's all church is to us. And that needs to change.

I mean, I try to think even for me personally, have I ever really made that my goal? I've made love my goal. I've prayed to God and said, God, help me to love. Like I can look around and go, you know, I love some of you in here.

You know, Rob Hagen, I could honestly say, I love Rob Hagen. I do. But love him as myself? Do I love him as much as I love myself? Do I care about his kids as much as I care about my kids? Do I care about his well-being and his marriage as much as I care about my marriage? His house as much as my house? See, the early church, they did.

They loved their neighbor as themselves. That's why it's like, well, you could use this stuff more than I could use this stuff. I mean, that's what I see.

That's what I read. It's like, well, yeah, yeah, yeah. What's mine is yours.

Nothing's mine. It's all us. We're just all together on this mission and we love each other as ourselves.

That's huge. And I just believe that that needs to be our goal. It needs to be something we as a church, as we're saying over and over and over and over and over and over and over, why move on from this? What other lesson do we need to teach until we've figured out love your neighbor as yourself? And we've made that a real goal in here.

But that means changes, changes in the way that we do things. And I know that just me saying that makes some of you cringe because you want everything to stay the same. The same guy up there speaking every week, same worship leaders, same size church.

Don't let it get too big. Don't move. Don't do this.

I mean, you moved to Simi Valley because you don't like change. Right? Let me just get into Simi where I know everyone in the town. Some of you guys grew up here.

You went to high school here. You're still here. You're not leaving here because you know everything's the same.

And some of you, you know, it's really good if you can get in one of those gated communities. Then you know who's going to go in and out those gates and not just some random different person is going to get into your neighborhood. You know, no poor people, no bad people.

It's safe. It's going to be the same. We like the same.

I want my same seat. Some of you guys sit in the same seat every weekend because you like that, you know. And you want everything to be the same.

You want the same kids, you know. I just want these two. I just want them to go to the same school, have the same friends, and on and on.

I want to keep the same job. And I want everyone to keep working the same job. You know, and I want that same income.

And when I retire, I hope I can keep the same standard of living, you know. Don't you sometimes wish your kids would stay the same age? Like, oh, if I could just lock them in that age and just everything stays the same. And what do you do when you get older? I don't get a bunch of plastic surgeries.

I don't look the same as I did when I was 30. I don't want my face changing or any other part of my body changing. I want to get everything the same, same, same, same, same.

And so when someone brings about change, you go, oh, this thing could just completely, you know, turn around. We're going to come back from the men's retreat and give some leadership to the men. And this thing's going to just turn upside down.

You go, oh, don't change it. Don't change this. And yet I go, you know, when God saved you, did He save you so that you could be the same? What was the point in saving you? He wanted you to change.

You've got to change. Change is biblical. The first command, change, repent, and be baptized.

Change. Change. Every day should change.

Every sermon of mine should change. This doesn't sound like 10 o'clock. Hopefully I'm godlier than I was at 10.

You know, that's why God saved me. I want to keep maturing, keep changing. And hopefully I'm not the same person I was last year.

See, it drives me crazy when the day looks so much like yesterday. Wow, this feels kind of the same. Same office, same screen, same people, same job.

And then the next day is going to look just like today. Doesn't that drive you crazy? Because God didn't make you for monotony. He didn't save you so that everything would remain the same, but that He would make all things new.

And I remember, you know, a great association at this one time, I speak over at Azusa Pacific quite often, you know, at the university for their chapels. I do a lot of Christian colleges. But at Azusa, there's this one gal who helps with worship.

And man, it seemed like every time she was up there, she got more and more fired up. I remember after service one time, I just go, okay, what's your deal? You amazed me. Like, you really are so into it and more into it than last time.

And I'll never forget what she said to me. She goes, you know, she goes, it's because I pray and I say to God, God, I don't want a repeat of last week's chapel because you are not a duplicator. You are a creator.

She goes, my God is a creator. So every time I get on that stage, I say, God, create something new in me. Make me a new person.

Have me worship and experience you like never before. And I love that. I thought that's it.

That's why it's so frustrating when everything remains the same. It's like God destines us for change. And I believe as a church, it's time to go, you know what? Here's the Bible.

Here's us. We need to change. We need to.

I don't care if no one's done it before. I don't care if, you know, half the people are three-fourths and nine-tenths leave. It's like, well, if that's what the Bible says, then what are we doing? You know, if fellowship doesn't take place, then church isn't really taking place.

And I was trying to think, should the church ever, ever meet together without interaction and without us caring for one another? So there's so much I want to say, but there's no time. I'm going to, you know, hit the guys in the men's retreats for the next couple weekends and just say, you know, expect some changes. But as I was praying and I go, okay, that's God's will for the church, I really believe that based upon Scripture.

God, what about me? What do you want from me? And, you know, it's the same thing. I don't believe my goal has changed over the last five years or so. If you cut me open, I have one goal.

I really do. My goal is that one day I die, stand before God, and I hear Him say, well done. That's it.

Cut me wide open. Find out what is He all about. He is all about wanting to hear those two words out of the mouth of God so badly that He'll do anything for it.

It's about just, at the end of my life, I don't care if people like me, or if I'm popular. There's a lot of things I just won't care about. When I stand before God, what I'm going to care about is that He goes, well done.

You know, you had that short time there on the earth and you did what I wanted you to do. You didn't do what everyone else wanted you to do, or what you wanted to do. You did what I wanted to do.

Well done. That's where I was leading you. That's what I wanted.

That's all I care about. And so I was just coming before God and going, yeah, you know what? That is all I care about. So tell me, what do you want? Show me what you want.

And here's what I did. Last week, as everything's winding down and I've been away for three months, I'm going, okay, I've got to come to some decisions here. I've experienced so much.

I've got so many opportunities. And there's so much need out in the world. What do you want of me? And so I go to the beach, right? Because this is not where you're supposed to find yourself.

So I go to the beach and over to Zuma, you know, and I go to that little Starbucks across the street from Zuma, and I got a little coffee, a little grande, you know, and a little muffin, and I got my little towel, you know, and I head across the street. You know, it's early in the morning. No one's around.

Just sitting there watching the sunrise, you know, and I'm all cuddled up, you know, and I've got my coffee, I've got my muffin sitting on my towel. I look out in the ocean and just kind of go, God, who am I? You know, what is the purpose of my life? Right? Doesn't that just sound beautiful? And so I'm just doing that, and I'm not one to hear voices or anything like that, but you know how there's sometimes in your life you just really believe God's saying something to you. And it was just one of those moments.

As I'm sitting there, sitting in my coffee, drinking my, or eating my muffin, sitting on my towel, looking out in the ocean, I just felt like God was looking down and going, that's really cute, Francis. That's just cute. Look at you with your little blankie and your coffee and just going, gee, what is the purpose of my life? Cute.

He goes, meanwhile, there are millions of people who are suffering right now, wondering if they're even going to live through the day. Okay, so as you sit there on the nice little coast, nice little seashore, wondering what is the purpose in my life, there are millions of people just wondering, am I going to live through this day? There are mothers holding their babies going, man, I cannot find food anywhere. Is my baby going to live through the day? What do you think my will is for your life? What do you think the purpose would be? Francis, everything you know about me, Almighty God, everything you learn in the Scriptures about me, what do I care about? Man, what did the prophets say? Why were they so angry at the people? Why was I angry? Because they were complacent.

They didn't care about those who were suffering. The strongest language was reserved for those who were complacent, reserved for those who were suffering. Man, we think of, no, what about the sexual sins? You know, Sodom.

Why was Sodom destroyed? It's wickedness, right? What was his wickedness about? Homosexuality? Yeah, probably some of that. But what does Ezekiel say in Ezekiel 16.49? It says, This was the sin of your sister Sodom. She was arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned.

You know what really ticked me off about that city? They were so arrogant, and they were eating themselves to death, and they didn't care. They're just unconcerned. You know, when you read Amos, you know, chapter 6, verse 1, it says, Woe to you who are comfortable, and complacent, as you lay there on your couches, and you play music to one another, and you're eating, and on, and on, and on.

Woe to you. And, you know, you start reading in Isaiah, and do you know how much? I don't know if God, His heart is more angry toward anything else than those who don't care, who don't love other people, who close their eyes to the needy, who just shut their ears to their cry. And then I started thinking New Testament.

What about the New Testament? What are the scariest things? What are the scariest passages in the New Testament? See, my first one that came to my mind outside of Revelation, when He just destroys everything, is Matthew 25. Matthew 25, what a scary passage. When people say, Well, you know, hell is an eternal, I go, turn to Matthew 25.

Matthew 25, God looks at this whole group of people, but it's the sheep and goat judgment. And He says, Depart from Me into this eternal punishment. An eternal punishment.

And you go, Wow, God on judgment day is just going to look at a bunch of people and say, Go to eternal punishment. And then it says in Matthew 25 that people say, But why? And what is God's response? God's response is, You're going there because I was hungry and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, you didn't give me anything to drink.

I was naked, you didn't clothe me. And the people are like, Wait, what are you talking about? I never saw you hungry. And God says to them, Whatever you did not do for the least of these, you did not do for Me.

So go, depart from Me. That's scary. But think, think, what else? What other graphic? Because I thought, Okay, is there a more scary passage? And to me, I always go back to that one scene where that one guy's just burning up and saying, Would someone just dip their finger in some water and just give me one dab of water on my tongue because I am burning up down here.

But do you ever stop and consider what that story was about? Lazarus and the rich man. Do you realize that? That it was about this rich man with all this stuff and as he's eating everything else, there's this beggar, you know, at his door just hoping for some scraps. And so when life was over, it got flip-flopped.

And the one who had everything now suddenly was suffering. And the one who was suffering now suddenly was there at Abraham's bosom. And everything was good and he was in paradise.

And you look at these passages and it would almost, if that's all you read, you'd think God was saying that our salvation is based upon our care for the poor. Now those who know the Bible know that, you know what? No, our salvation is we're saved by grace through faith but yet he's able to use these examples because he's explaining that, look, a true Christian, a true believer is going to be marked by his compassion for the poor. In fact, we all know John 3.16, right? Do you know 1 John 3.16? 1 John 3.16, I think this really gives you the heart of it all.

In 1 John 3.16, it says this, this is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? If you see someone in need, you see a brother in need especially and you have no pity on him, you have stuff and they don't but you don't pity them, you don't do anything for them because how could the love of Christ be in you? How could you really, you can't really be a Christian because in verse 16, the verse before, he says we know love, how? He says through Christ, that Christ laid down His life for us and he says therefore, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

See, it's this whole idea of why are you here? You want to be a Christian. You want to follow Christ and he's saying, what was Christ's example of love? He laid down His life. You've got Christ, you've got God on His throne, think about this, in heaven, everyone's worshiping Him, life is great.

Angels screaming, holy, holy, holy, bowing down before this God. Equality with God and yet the Bible says He didn't consider that something to be held on to but instead of holding on to that, He lowered Himself, He emptied Himself, He humbled Himself, He left that, He laid down His position there to come down on earth to take the form of a man. Not just the form of a man, He lowered Himself even more and took the form of a servant, washed people's feet.

Not just a servant, but a servant that people would spit on and beat up. And not just a servant that people would spit on and beat up, but eventually they would nail Him to a cross. He left that, laid down His life and gave everything to where He's nailed on a cross and still praying for the people, God forgave them.

That's the example that we have to follow, a person laying down His life for us. Why? Why did He do that? Because He loved you. Because He saw that you and I, God in heaven saw that we were helpless.

I can't save myself. I've already ruined my life. I've already done things that are offensive to God.

That means at the end of my life, I'm going to be punished by Him. There's nothing I can do to change that. And then God says, but I can change that.

I'll come down, I'll take the punishment on the cross for you. He saw me as helpless and He came down, He made me rich. And He says, now if you are a Christian, you do the same thing for your brothers.

He goes, in fact, if you see someone in need and you have stuff and you don't pity them, then you don't have the love of Christ in you. You might still love people, everyone loves a little bit, but the love of Christ is a love that lays down for others. I want to show you a couple pictures and I just want to see what you think when you see these pictures.

What do you feel when you see that? That's someone's kid. Do you think that kid is as valuable as your kid? I mean, really. You hear that baby crying in our own room.

Is this baby as precious as that one? Go ahead and go to the next one. What do you think when you see that? Do you go, oh, but I had a rough week too. Oh, but I have financial needs.

We're just scraping by. It's amazing when you care for the poor how suddenly your problems go away, don't they? You go, I had a pretty good week. The next one.

This one's interesting. It's the last one I'll show you. This actually was an older photo.

This is a Pulitzer Prize winning photo of this little girl that's about to die and that vulture just waiting. The photographer who took that got so depressed afterwards that he killed himself. It's just, what do these do to you when you go, okay, here I am in America.

I got all this going on. You know everything about God and how He's a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows. His true religion is to care for the widows and orphans.

Don't you just go, okay, what am I doing here then? What is my life supposed to be about? If I were supposed to be a picture of Christ, and Christ, man, you talk about lowering. For me to sell everything and give to them, that doesn't even compare to what Christ did for us in humbling Himself. It's like, well, I'm supposed to be like Christ.

Every 3.6 seconds, someone dies because of hunger. Boom. Someone just died.

Three. Someone else just died. Two.

Three. Another person just died. Two.

Three. Little kid just died. Two.

Three. Infant just died. Two.

Three. Mom just died. Every three seconds.

Every 3.6 seconds. And every one of those people, every snap of the finger, that was a life that's just as valuable as mine. It's just as valuable.

And every soul is just as valuable as my soul. Man, there's this world out there that we need to think about. And sometimes we get in the church and it's all about us, and it's like, well, I didn't quite like this.

I didn't quite like that. It's like, you know what? You don't have needs. I mean, if we really looked out there, we'd realize, and if we really gave our lives to people who have nothing, man, this isn't a bummer thing I'm talking about.

It really makes your life so wonderful. You just realize the blessing you have. I'm going to have Jim and my wife come out, and she's going to sing a song, and I want you to listen to the words of this song.

And then we're going to flash up some pictures on the screens, some of the pictures that some of you guys took on our mission trips to different places. Now these kids aren't as intense as the other ones. Some of them aren't even starving, aren't even hungry.

But I just want you to be aware of the world out there. And the song is written from the perspective of a mother overseas just trying to help her family out. And it's just a plea for us to just think about them and not think about ourselves so much, but to love them as ourselves.

So listen to the words of this song and look at these pictures. You can know it It's been a while Since anybody asked I love to laugh Just like you do And my family also means the world to me So as you choose what to wear Remember I fight to stay warm As you decide where to leave It's my children who won't think of me Let me live in your mind Keep on loving me Let others play blind Show true religion Cause your words don't win me Your actions they heal I'm sure that you believe You have a life to understand God has blessed you so enjoy what he has given You've heard so little It's not enough Possessions never shield a life from pain As you consider your life Would you think about mine As you remember my tears Maybe yours disappear Think of me Let me live in your mind Keep on loving me Let others play blind Show true religion Cause your words don't win me Your actions they heal I'm sure that you believe As you choose what to wear I fight to stay warm As you decide where to leave It's my children who won't think of me Keep on loving me Let others play blind Show true religion Cause your words don't win me I'm sure that you believe A lot of times we would just end service here and go, think about them. You know, we leave convicted and sad.

And yet the Bible says in James that it really doesn't help anyone if you just say, gosh I wish they were fed, I wish they were worn. It's like, it's your actions that heal me like that song says. It's when we do something that lives actually change.

And I was thinking, you know, as I was praying about this, I go, Lord, why is it that sometimes we'll give to the poor and we'll just forget about them for a long time. And we'll get wrapped up in our own lives again and all I think about is me and my kids. Me and my family.

And I realize, well, a lot of it is because come home, close the door, and who's there? It's me and my family. Walk down the hallway, what do I have pictures of? Me and my family. When I go in the office, look on my desk, what do I have pictures of? Me and my family.

I thought, is it, maybe we're...

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