

An Honest Walk

by George Verwer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual warfare, worship, and perseverance in the Christian life, and encourages listeners to build a firm intellectual foundation, commit to their faith, and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 27:42

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 6:10, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Honesty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding how seemingly opposite aspects of life fit together in the context of the Christian faith. He discusses how missions work in different countries can be connected to the biblical principle of the local church. The speaker also addresses the need for both hard work and rest in the Lord, highlighting the balance in the Christian life. He shares his own struggles and fears, emphasizing the importance of being real and transparent in our faith. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's guidance and a desire for true spirituality and discipleship.

Transcript

In the honesty of your presence, we ask that you would open your words to us, calm our hearts, give us receptive minds, bless the ministry in the other tents even more than you bless us here, but just give us enough here that we may know we've been with Jesus. We thank you for the many miles that have been traveled. We pray for our brother Randy Birch, as his wife has had this miscarriage this morning.

Minister to him, Lord, and to his dear wife. There are many on our hearts that we yearn to be involved with through prayer. We thank you for the power of prayer.

We thank you, God, for what you did here last year for people that are out declaring the gospel because they met with you here last year, and we thank you for what you're going to do this year. We give you all the praise and all the glory in Jesus' name. Amen.

Of spiritual balance. I've written a book also on this subject called A Revolution of Love and Balance, and that will help you, those of you who managed to get to more than this one session. Some of you, I'm sure, after this session will want to find or go somewhere else when you see my name on the program.

But I just praise God for this opportunity to share. I want you to turn now with me to the book of Ephesians. Book of Ephesians, just tucked into that New Testament right before Philipians.

This is God's Word. I love those psalms of praise. This beautiful couple from, I believe, New Zealand or Australia.

I think New Zealand, if my memory holds, maybe Australia, were in London, and I remember going to one of their meetings. And I've been listening to their tapes so many times through that I think the tape is about ready to give up. And it's wonderful to be able to praise the Lord as we've been doing.

I believe the highest calling of the Christian is worship. I've been reading this new book on worship called *Destined for the Throne*. My heart has just been stirred beyond expression that this is God's purpose for creating us.

Worship, evangelism. I say that because I have a great burden for evangelism as well because through evangelism we get more worshipers. And this is a glorious thing how this fits together.

And in these sessions we're going to specialize in showing how things that look like they're going in opposite directions fit together. Teams launching out through Turkey, Afghanistan, and India fit together with the biblical principle of the local church and the importance and the significance of the local church. The crisis and the need for holy spirit crisis in our life fits together with God's process, the word, discipline, the cloth, the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Work and the need to work hard for Jesus Christ and become disciplined fits in with relaxation, refueling, resting in the Lord. Oh, I tell you, God alone through his word can put it all together. Let us look at this passage in Ephesians chapter 6 starting in verse 10.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, the wiles of the devil. Do you mark your Bible? When I was a young babe in Christ at 17 years of age, someone taught me to mark my Bible and Bible study was never the same after that.

Learn to mark your Bible. There's dozens of different methods you can use and you want to mark that verse. And related verses like that one in Corinthians, be not ignorant of Satan's devices.

Do you know that Satan has a plan even to counterattack these meetings? I've had people come to me and share that it was after main gospel meetings they fell into sin. One evangelist who visited a small town in the southern part of the United States used to leave several girls pregnant after every campaign. Do you think the devil's a jerk? Do you think there is no devil? Do you think it's all just a matter of lifting our hearts and saying hallelujah? I will tell you Satan has a strategy.

I never emphasize Satan very much. I emphasize Jesus. And I believe as Mary McChain said, one look at yourself and ten looks at Jesus.

So I don't know how many looks at the devil, perhaps none at all. But the word of God teaches that there is a real devil. We have seen in the past decade literally hundreds of thousands of Americans jump on the Jesus bandwagon and fall off at the first bump.

And today, and I believe it's one of the reasons God has brought us together here, is to understand the nature of the spiritual warfare. To understand that there are principalities, there are powers, there are evil forces, there are demons. Again, I don't want to overemphasize this, and I was encouraged that while everyone was writing a book on demons, Billy Graham came and wrote one on angels.

And I'm sure there are angels assigned to this tent. If not, I want to leave. You say, well, why does God need angels? I don't think God needs anything.

God is God. But because he doesn't need anything, he can choose what he wants to do. And God has chosen to use angels to protect his people.

We have two ships. Since I was here last year, telling you about the little ship we have, little 3,000 ton ship, where 120 people live and demonstrate the life of Jesus around the world. And I've seen a few more thousands come to Jesus.

The Lord's given us another ship. In fact, this tent reminds me of the ship because it's about the same length. The ship's just a little bit longer than this tent.

Of course, it's a little bit deeper. The 7,000 ton ocean-going ship. And I'd appreciate your prayers because it's a new project.

It's almost the oldest passenger ship in the world. Built in Virginia in 1914. But it's God's ship.

And it's sailing from Le Havre, France today for one of the greatest spiritual invasions of the Iberian Peninsula that has ever taken place in the history of the Church. And without prayer, I tell you, it's crazy. In fact, as soon as I leave here, I go to Spain.

And we are believing that hundreds are going to come to Christ in Spain. And you know, I believe there are angels assigned to that ship. The other ships in Korea, angels are there as well.

They go very fast. There are probably some that even carry the communication back and forth. And though this may seem funny to some of us, because remember, even though we are believers, we still have the remnant of our carnal mind and our carnal attitude.

And so we can understand, if we're talking about a policeman who protects children, we all understand that. That's perfectly normal, perfectly logical. Everybody believes in policemen.

But God has his angels. Billy Graham has written one of the most dynamic books on that subject. It became a bestseller.

And that's something to keep in balance. But there are evil forces. Let's read on.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principality, against powers, against the rulers of darkness in this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. That's one of the reasons the first place I wanted to go to when I arrived here this morning was to the prayer tent. It wasn't too crowded at that time.

I think there were three people. But that is where the battle will be fought. Now praise God, there are many, many people praying for this great gathering who are not here.

Tonight I'm going to share my own testimony of how one elderly lady persevered and by her prayers dragged me from my nominal, unsaved background to salvation in Jesus Christ. One woman persevered for my high school 14 years prevailing, prevailing, passionate prayer. All her work was born as a result of that woman.

Two and a half thousand of us this summer. Reaching into about a hundred nations. Not all of them this summer.

One woman prayed. Spiritual warfare. We want to be in much prayer during these days.

Wherefore take unto you, verse 13, the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith with which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

The importance of the word of God. I wonder how many here... Let's be honest. One of my themes these days is going to be honesty.

And I'm going to share some of my own struggles. Some of my own failures. You know, sometimes we meet a Christian leader, especially if we hear he's supposed to be a missionary or missionary leader, however you call it, however you pronounce it.

Canada always seems to be somewhere between England and the States. And sometimes we meet Christian leaders, we hear about them, and we think, boy, they've got it all together. Boy, evangelizing the world, thousands of people coming to Christ.

And I tell you, you're looking at a very weak, feeble instrument who even comes here in fear and trembling and in a great sense of inadequacy. Later I'm going to share some of that struggle. You know, it's always wonderful to testify, oh, when I was a young Christian, I had tremendous problems.

I had the lust problem, I had the fear problem, I had this thing up and that thing up. When I was a young Christian, 23 years later, to testify about your lust problem, ooh, wait a minute, how did he get into the speaker's book? And I believe that one of the great ways that God works among his people is to get them to take off the mask. To get them to be real.

I can't say that I'm as real as I want to be. That's one of my greatest goals. Satan is very subtle.

Out of 10 or 11,000 people, I've written me, as a result of my book, so many have said the same thing. I go to church, I go to Jesus festivals, I read my Bible sometimes, but it's not real. Prayer is not real.

Witnessing is not real. And I believe in many ways the theme that God wants to burn into our hearts these days is reality. Reality.

Whatever it costs, reality. Real with one another. Real with God.

Real with our parents. Real with the ones we love. Real with the ones we don't love.

Oh, may God burn it in to our hearts. If you'll be honest, I'd like to ask you, how many have never yet read the Word of God through once? You're not yet finished. I know you started.

You haven't read the Bible through once. Raise your hand. About half.

I want to just give this challenge to you that the Lord, I believe, has asked me to give. It could be the only thing maybe you'll get from me. Would you promise Jesus to read your Bible through once this year? If you come at Jesus79, if he carries, you'll have read God's Word.

I think God is concerned about this. Some places people are always going on, this is the Word of God. And I believe it's worth going on about that.

One of the greatest attacks of the enemy in America today is to reduce confidence in the Word of God. Where will we be? Where is David Moses III after he reduced confidence in the Word of God and produced 100 no-letters? And the young people involved with this false cult, the cogs, so-called children of God, have moved further and further from the truth so that now the Moses letters are teaching the girls to go out in the streets and give their body and sex to the men to win them to the truth. That is happening all over Europe, all over Europe.

I am not exaggerating. God hates exaggeration. I've been in first-hand contact for a long time with that one false cult.

You remember last year I was asked to speak here in this side tent on the cults. Many people expressed to me that this was a message that helped them so much. I didn't give great lucid descriptions about all the false cults, but I spoke on how to mock a false cult, how to know a false cult, and how to know an extremist situation so that you can avoid it.

That tape has been reproduced and has gone all over the world because many, even Christians, are being deceived into these extremist groups and into false cults. They don't understand. And the Bible says that Satan comes often as an angel of light.

He comes with a religious garb. Many are deceived. So we have to put on the whole armor of God.

We have to use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Verse 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

The emphasis of prayer. It was when I was 17. I was converted through the prayers of this elderly lady, the reading of the Gospel of John.

I was wondering what is the true nature of spiritual life. What should I emphasize as I went off to college in the quiet of my room, through the Scriptures, through other literature at 17? I said, God, one thing I want. I want to learn how to pray.

I want to learn how to pray. I want to learn how to worship. I want to get a degree in prayer.

Ever found a seminary that gives a degree in prayer, in intercession, in worship? Imagine somebody get a Ph.D. in worship, praise, prayer, intercession, thanksgiving, and yet they are the basics of spiritual life. This is a challenge that I believe God wants to lay upon us in these days. We're going to be speaking a little bit about the crisis and the process.

In many ways, these days together here will be a crisis. Hours praising God, hours fellowshiping with God's people, meeting all kinds of Christians from all over the world. And we'll go away from here, many of us just on a new level of joy and praise and reality.

But then we go back into the deserts, back into the front lines of spiritual warfare. I go to Spain where we got thousands of towns and villages with not a single Christian witness. We've got provinces without a single church.

Imagine if I assign you, just you, to evangelize all of Canada. 27 million people. I meet you after the meeting.

I say, look, I've just done a survey. There's no other Christians in Canada. Just you.

Just you. I want you to evangelize Canada because I've got to go somewhere else. We distributed a little set of prayer cards.

I happen to have them in my pocket. I carry them wherever I go. 52 of the most needy nations in the world.

Some of these countries do not have a single believer that's alive. Mauritania is one of them. Imagine, send you to Mauritania.

You're the only believer evangelized Mauritania. There are other nations where there are 10 believers. Afghanistan, we've been laboring there for 15 years.

In that most impossible land, there are now maybe 50 believers in Afghanistan among 18 million. Turkey has maybe 50 believers. There are more believers in this tent than the entire land of Turkey among 38 million people.

You know, there are some people that do not want this message at this kind of gathering. You know why? They say it makes people upset. People want a blessing.

And we don't want to bring anything in that's unpleasant. We don't want to tell the people of God that others are lost and that we need to be doing something about it. And presently, the North American Manpower Force is 99.9... if you have a computer, is committed to North America and less than one-tenth of one percent is committed to the rest of the world.

And then people wonder why my wife and I haven't taken our first furlough after 18 years on the field. 99.9 percent of God's people remain here and continue to go for the blessings summer after summer and year after year. Don't misunderstand me.

I believe in blessing. And if God didn't pour a blessing into me, every day I'd blow away with the first wind from the smallest demon the devil's got. But blessing in prayers and worship will lead to commitment.

It will lead to dedication. The Holy Ghost brings a holy goal. And if you're not going somewhere for God, you know nothing of the Holy Spirit in your life.

You've been deceived into an ego trip that's greater even than the children of God because it's more subtle. We're so boastful in the United States especially. Canadians are a little more sane.

But those of us down in America are so boastful. We've got the biggest churches in all the world. We've got the biggest Sunday schools in all the world.

We've got more Sunday school buses than anybody in all the world. And we go around patting ourselves on the back until we break a bone. I want to tell you I'm ashamed.

I'm ashamed of the church in North America. There are many, many people who shuttle into the sanctuary on Sunday morning that have never once denied self, taken up the cost to follow Christ in true spiritual life. What is Ephesians 5 about? What is 2 Corinthians 6 about? What is 1 Corinthians 4 about? What is Hebrews 11 about? As I read through my New Testament, and I've been through it a few dozen times, the hard part of it has been through me like a knife cutting into areas of the self-life, exposing me.

We can pray through a set of cards like this in which we discover one out of every seven people in the world is a Muslim. Now maybe there are some here that have never had any great intellectual difficulty. As a foundation for our thinking in these days, I wanted to share with you briefly some of the intellectual reasons why I have walked with Jesus 23 years despite many temptations and many doubts.

You know, a lot of people are afraid of doubts. Have you ever gone to somebody with a question, you know, about the Old Testament or about this or that, and they say, it's the Word of God, brother. We shouldn't be asking these questions.

Just trust the Lord. And we wonder why quite a few thinking people end up throwing the whole thing overboard. I have a fear that there may be some of us here today that our Christian faith is just a late adolescence ego trip.

It's something nice to do now, but God's not just concerned about now, next year, five years from now, ten years from now, that we may be going on from victory to victory, resisting temptation, worshiping the Lord the rest of our life. That's our burden. I'm sure that's your burden.

1 Corinthians 15, 58, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. And one of the most important things we want to emphasize in these days is perseverance, going on for God through trials, through difficulties, through all kinds of things that sometimes come. And I believe our faith must be built on a firm intellectual foundation.

I began to doubt the faith, especially when I met a lot of Christians. I was converted from a non-Christian background. I'll tell about that tonight.

I didn't know many Christians. The few I met my first year at a secular college, they were on fire for Christ. Their lives rang with reality, prayer, love.

That's how they'll know that we're Christians, not because we carry huge Bibles or not because we got a Jesus Saves pinned on our forehead or hanging on our toes. Because we love one another, even though we're all different. We love one another.

We even love those that switch us off. I'm sure, even as I speak, I must switch some people off. I've learned to accept myself.

I've learned to know that when I speak, some get switched on, some get switched off. We're all different. One of my greatest problems as a Christian was I switched myself on.

One look in the mirror and I thought, oh dear. And I had this tremendous hassle accepting myself. And I'm going to speak tomorrow, Lord willing, on accepting yourself.

That is a very, very ABC foundation truth, to know God and to persevere. Accept yourself. You say, what's the biblical basis for that? We're going to look at that.

Because it's there and it's very clear. So I had many doubts when I started to meet God's people. Especially I went to Bible school.

I'm not against Bible schools. I believe God uses Bible schools. But when I went to Bible school and found there were so many people who said so much and did so little, I thought, this can't be true.

When I was at this liberal college, it was very consistent. They believed nothing. They did nothing.

Beautiful consistency. I had no intellectual troubles with that. They denied the Virgin Book.

They denied the Bible. They believed nothing and they did nothing. Then I went to a nice, good Bible college.

And there they believed everything and did nothing. And I found somewhat of an inconsistency with my friends. And I thought, how can Christianity be true? Where are Book of Acts Christians? There are now 200 books about the Apostle Paul.

There are hundreds of men across America expounding the life of the Apostle Paul, writing more books about the Apostle Paul. And as a young Christian, admittedly I was a little bit of a rebel. And God had to do all right in my life because my tongue went faster than my brain and all the rest.

And I had a question as a young Christian after going through these books and sitting to lectures on the Apostle Paul and the Epistles of Paul. I had one little question. Where are the Pauls? Where are the men who live with this kind of passion and reality and fervency and balance? Because we see Paul, not only a dynamic person, over the wall and basket, in jail in the middle of the night, praising and worshiping Jesus.

You know, it's one thing to be here, beautiful atmosphere. I spent most of my life living in crummy, smelly, stinking cities. Bangkok, Bombay, Brussels, London.

About 20 others. I hate cities. Whenever I pray, I look for the nearest woods.

Climb the nearest tree. I love to get out where things are green. And there are not too many people.

I get overexposed to God's people and I begin to shrivel. I don't know if any of you have that unspiritual problem. But oh, what a blessing to be out in the woods and to praise God.

I don't have to pinch myself anymore. Marriage is a reality. I believe the Christian life is the balanced life, the intellectual, the emotional, the discipline, the blessings, the joy, the struggles, the suffering, the victories.

And God, I believe in these days, wants to put some of this paradox, apparent contradictions, questions in our mind. God wants to put it together. That when we go from here, it will be as disciples.

It will be following in the steps of men like Paul who had the basket experience and the prison experience, but who also was as a nursing mother among his babes. And who penned 1 Corinthians 13. Perfect balance.

True spirituality. Going on for God. May that be our desire in these days together.

Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the balance of Your Word.

We thank You for the way You can put these things together. We thank You for the many intellectual reasons why we know Your Word is true. Why we know that Jesus Christ died and rose again.

And Lord, if there's someone here even this morning that has never surrendered to Your will, that has never really been born again of Your Spirit, may they come to You in humility and repentance this morning. We thank You, our God, for the reality of walking with You, for the power of Your Holy Spirit. We thank You for all the different beautiful people You have brought here from all over the world.

And as we learn to relate with each other, and love one another, and serve one another, and lay down our lives for one another, may we in turn go away from here to persevere. Another month, another year, a lifetime. A lifetime for our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen. God bless you.

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