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by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, hard work, and dedication to the ministry of Operation Mobilization, and encourages people to join in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Personal Testimony", "Kingdom Service"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal testimony of how he came to faith in Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the importance of not just hearing the Word of God, but also putting it into action. The speaker encourages believers to actively serve God and His kingdom, whether through prayer, missions work, or even small acts of service. He highlights the transformative power of Christ in people's lives and urges listeners to join in the business of changing and saving people for God's glory.

Transcript

We thank you for what you're doing all over the world. And we thank you that you have called us to be world Christians. And whether we live in Germany or we're witnessing in India, we are concerned for the whole world and what's happening to the people of the world.

Father, we don't believe we're here tonight by accident. We believe it's by divine arrangement. We believe you have something very special to say to us.

You've already spoken. And we ask you to continue to speak to our hearts. We pray in the name of Jesus.

Amen. It's a great joy to be back here in Bremen again and to share in this meeting. I'm sure there are many others that could share and in some ways I'd rather sit down and listen to them.

I love to hear people's testimonies. I've just come back from visiting the other OM ship out in the West Indies. And I had the joy during that week of having a personal time of fellowship with about 70 of the staff and crew there on the ship.

And you could write an exciting book about what God has done in the lives of those young people. I remember being at the Keswick Convention two summers ago. Pastor Rogers remembers that convention.

And a young man stood up in the meeting when we called people to give their life to world missions. He had been just hitchhiking and wandering around the world. He was from Australia.

And how he ever ended up in the Keswick Convention is quite amazing. He had only come to Jesus Christ a few weeks before. And yet there in that great tent where thousands of people were gathered, when the call was given to commit one's life to Christ and to world evangelism, he stood up.

I remember him coming to the OM prayer meeting and asking me what the chances were of getting in OM when he was a few weeks old in Christ. I said, officially, they're not very good. I said, unofficially, kick the door and see what happens.

Two months later, he was at the September conference. And now he's out and he's been on the ship for over a year. And just as he was about to leave, just to see the radical change in his life, to see him out in the streets leading people to Christ, is very, very challenging to me.

You know, that's the business that Jesus Christ is in. Now, Germany, you're very good business people. Everywhere I go in the world, there are the German products.

Even the Eskimos are driving Mercedes. And I don't know what your business is. But the business of Jesus Christ is people.

Changing people. Saving people. And then using them for his kingdom and for his glory.

Now, I have many things I want to share with you tonight. And I look at that clock. Somebody must have hit that clock.

And I'm reminded of my favorite German story that I tell everywhere in the world. I was preaching in the south of Germany. And the young people were really listening.

But there was one older man sitting way in the back. And he began to fidget around a bit. And then he took his wristwatch.

I had been preaching about an hour and a half. Of course, the interpreter was taking half the time. Anyway, the man held up the wristwatch.

And I was preaching about world missions and discipleship. Forsaking all to follow Christ. And I saw that wristwatch.

I said, praise the Lord, folks. Here's a man donating his watch for missionary work. So, I don't know what method you're going to use to try to stop me tonight.

We are praising God on this ship so much now that you can feel the vibrations in the funnel. We are praising God on this ship so much that you can feel the vibrations in the funnel. Because God has given us a new generator.

And maybe that doesn't mean anything to you. But without that new generator, this 70-year-old ship is older than me. It's even older than him.

I won't ask about the captain. I think it's older than the captain. Without that new generator, it wouldn't be able to go much more.

And the story of how that was put into the ship is an amazing story. And it's been running all day. Beautiful sound.

We had all the German board members with the British board members for the first time together and also the first time together around the generator. And it's interesting to watch the difference between the British reaction to the new generator and the German reaction. Actually, I couldn't notice the difference.

I was too excited. I want to thank each one of you who has been praying for this ministry. Bremen has become really the home port of this ship.

Germany doesn't have a lot of ports. I was looking on the map for ports. And of course, it's unusual to some people in different parts of the world to discover that this ship is owned by a German company.

Even though it's an international project, the world doesn't recognize international projects. You have to register it somewhere. You have to have a company.

Now, we're registered in Malta. Because in many countries, if you register in their countries, the officers must be of that nationality. And our officers, deck and engine officers, are from many different countries.

So we have what's called a flag of convenience. We're registered because of convenience in the little country of Malta. And we need to pray for Malta.

But it's GBA. It also says the same thing in English. Good books for all is the operator, the owner of the ship.

I'm so excited about the possibilities that lie ahead as we move toward southern Europe and Africa and Asia. And I believe one of the reasons God has brought us together tonight is to give you a vision for what is going to happen in the next two years. Now, this ship sometimes causes problems.

One of the problems this ship brings to OM, to be very honest, because I learned in Germany people like, you know, they like to shoot straight. They like to know what is what. Don't play games.

I transliterated. And one of the problems of this ministry is people see this ship, and they see all these people, they see all these books, and they think, number one, OM has a lot of money. I mean, anybody that can buy a ship.

Now, before we had ships, people used to look at me. I was the leader of OM. They look at me.

They'd see how skinny I was. And so the word went out, OM is very poor. And wherever I went, people used to sit me down and say, we feel burdened to feed you.

Please, sit down. But now that we have these two big ships, people think, well, OM, you know, they got lots of money. They don't realize this ship is one of the oldest passenger ships in the world.

It is not money that has made this a reality. You see, it has been prayer, tears, and hard work. And if you went out to get a ship like this today, it would cost 25 times what we paid for it.

And, of course, when you buy an old ship, it means that every week, literally every week, you have a new problem. And without people praying, without engineers signing up to work, this ship is not going to go to Africa. So don't just think, oh, well, OM, they're going to Africa.

Bye-bye, we'll see you in a few years. Without a few miracles, we are not going anywhere. And we want you to pray just as you prayed seven years ago, when we had no doulos.

Or 20 years ago, when we announced that we believed God was leading us to get an ocean-going ship, we had no ship. We had nobody, even in the merchant navy and all of OM. Or like 20 years ago, when we started to trust God and to pray for a ship.

We had no ship, but we also had nobody who had any idea about sailing. Another mistake people make, they see a lot of young people and think, wow, there's so many people. But the fact is that in OM right now, we are one, at least 100 people short of what we need to do the job God has given us.

Every leader I talked to on Lagos, when I was there, just recently, said the same thing. We just send us some more people. You know, as if I go home and just sort of manufacture dynamic, dedicated disciples.

They need engineers. They need men who are willing to work on the deck. They need people who are willing to work on the deck.

They need people who are willing to work on the deck. Strong men. You don't have to be good looking.

You don't have to be a theological graduate. You need to be willing to get your hands dirty for Jesus. And of course, the ships is just a part of Operation Mobilization.

India is crying for people. France is looking for people. Some of our offices in Zaventem, in Mosbach, in England are looking for people.

Now you be quiet for a minute. This is a test. How many of you can understand when I speak English? Just don't look around.

Raise your hand if you understand what I am saying. Ah ha. Ah ha ha ha.

I sense in my heart God is leading a number of you to England. Come on, interpret now. Because you will be able to improve that English.

So you not only you can also read your English Bible. And English books. And I've got people all over Germany.

I've been doing this for 23 years. Studying English. It's one of my goals.

One of my 100 goals for Germany. And people ask me, why are you pushing learning English? It's not to go to England. Though it may start there.

It's not to go to America. It's to go to places like Pakistan and India. Because somehow in God's providence they speak English rather than German in those countries.

If they spoke German then I would be crusading for German. And one of the most exciting things that I have seen here in Germany is to see young people from Germany going to India. On a two year program.

And to see the way God has used them. And I want you to pray about that. And I believe the Lord will do the rest.

Now that's my introduction Now I want to mention a couple of books. You can feel free to leave at any time. They won't allow you off the ship but you can feel free to leave.

I wanted to mention this book. It's one of the most powerful books I have ever read. He was a missionary in Japan for many years.

And perhaps if you get only one book from this tremendous book display you should get this book. I can assure you far better than any books that I have written. My books are not that good.

Though I do have a lot of good quotations from other books. But here is a really good book. And I hope you will read that.

Let me put it right here. Just two other books. Phil McDonald's True Discipleship.

How many of you have read this book already? Raise your hand but don't push it through the roof. Yeah, raise your hand. Good, very encouraging.

I hope the rest of you will read. And one final book is called Eros, Defile. There are so many people who write letters to me.

They say this is the area of difficulty in their Christian life. Things related to sex. And I think this book is just so valuable for our present situation.

Now some people won't buy it because they are afraid if people see me with this book they will think I have sex problems. Well, you can always buy my book and tear the cover off it and stick it over the top of this book. Of course, other people who know you they will know that you have bought it simply so that you can counsel others who have these problems.

You know, it's a great area of hypocrisy really. We're afraid that somebody might think we've got a sex problem. 400 verses at least in the word of God on the subject of sex.

And they're in the German Bible. And I just believe we need to be more open about this subject. I hope you'll read that book and if it doesn't encourage you and challenge you to be more victorious in your walk with God you can write to me send the book back I'll give you double your money back.

We're not here trying to just get people to buy books. That is not our burden. We are here for spiritual revolution.

We are here because Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. And his Holy Spirit now dwells in our hearts and he has told us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. That's what God's word teaches and that's the burden on our hearts.

I want you to quickly turn now to some verses in the word of God. I want you to turn to chapter 12. How many of you have your Bibles? Let me see if any of you brought your Bibles.

Well, this was international night and I guess they didn't think they were going to study the Bible. Anyway, we're glad you came. Wherefore I think just read it in German.

Verse just one and two in Hebrews 12 Hebrews 12, 1 and 2 It's hard to believe, isn't it that 1984 has gone? I want to ask you a question about 1984 before you completely forget it. As you look back over this

past year what have you done for God? What have you done for Christ and his kingdom? To me that's a very simple question. It's a very basic question because the Bible is very strong in saying that we are not to be just hearers of the word.

We are to be doers. James chapter 1 Now, I know that many of you here tonight you are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. You know him personally.

You've experienced salvation in Christ. But there may be some that have never had a true experience of salvation in your own heart. And I pray that Brother Hansler's testimony has spoken to you and I'd like to share my own testimony very, very quickly.

Many of you have heard it here in Bremen and it's also in my book. But I was not from a Christian home. My grandfather was born just across the border in the northern part of the Netherlands.

He was an atheist. My other grandfather was from Glasgow. He was an alcoholic.

My father immigrated to the United States with his father. And in so many ways he was a tremendous father. And he was seeking, seeking for God.

He joined a church. He became an elder in the church but did not know what salvation was. It was a church where they did not preach the gospel as we find it here in the New Testament.

It was sort of a glorified social club. And they never really asked him about his personal relationship with Christ. And yet he became an elder.

And I, of course, went to that church and I was living a completely double life. I have one foot in the world and one foot in the church. I was completely wild in the nightclubs in New York on Saturday night and I sat in church Sunday morning like some kind of reincarnated angel.

And a dear elderly lady prayed for me. And humanly speaking that woman is the founder of Operation Mobilization. She not only prayed for me she prayed that I become a missionary.

Now that's a pretty wild prayer to pray for one of the real troublemakers around the school. But she had been praying for 15 years. 15 years she was praying for people to be saved and sent from that ungodly high school.

And then she sent me a Gospel of John through the post. God's Word. And I began to read this.

And slowly over a period of two years it melted some of the hardness and foolishness in my heart. Then Billy Graham came to New York City. I did not even know what an evangelist was.

And among my crowd of people anything like that we thought that's emotional extremism. But somebody invited me to that meeting. And I went mainly partly out of curiosity.

I even brought my binoculars that I used to use at the races. Because I heard he was a hypnotist. He gave a very simple message.

And it was as if that message were just for me. And he called people to get up out of their seats and to make an open confession of faith in Jesus Christ. And that's what I did that night.

I stood up. I went forward. I confessed my sin.

I repented of my sin. And trusted Christ to save me. More than that I trusted Him and asked Him to change me.

I didn't want to just be saved. I wanted to be changed because I knew my life wasn't right before God. He wants to change you.

He wants you to become a new creature in Jesus Christ. I wonder if some of you have had that experience in 1984. Well, it's too late for 84.

But it's not too late for 85. I want to ask you if you don't know Christ personally if you're not sure of your salvation that tonight you would make that decision see Brother Byrne see somebody and speak to them they can show you from the Word of God how you can know how you can know Christ as your personal Savior. So many other things I'd like to say along that line.

But going back to this passage I want to ask you this question. Are you in God's race? For me, each year is a new race in God's great marathon. It's another lap around God's great spiritual running track.

And the Word of God I think is very clear. That a Christian is like a person who's in a race. Some of you probably watched the Olympics.

Have you ever read about some of those runners who win in the Olympics? Germany's got some good runners. Have you ever watched any of them? Have you ever watched a marathon? Now they have a marathon in which anybody can join. They just had one in London.

And there were 20,000 in the marathon. 20,000 running through the streets of London. Some of those people were 60 years of age.

They were running 26 miles. Some of you have trouble getting even from your bed to the bathroom. 26 miles.

And the one who wins gets a very small prize. It isn't worth much, I can tell you. Now why did the Holy Spirit choose to use this terminology in His Holy Word? Paul speaks in a similar place, in a similar way, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 9. Paul said, I therefore so run.

He's running a race. He also says in that chapter that he buffets his body and brings it into subjection lest after preaching to others he becomes disqualified. Now those of you who know about Operation Mobilization, you know we have these two goals.

We want to see people converted to Christ. We want to see people going to heaven. And therefore we're trying to take the gospel with the ships and with our land teams to every person in the world.

That's our burden, working with all other mission societies. Will you join us in doing that? Through prayer? Through coming on a summer campaign? Through getting one month helping us down in Mosbach? Even little things can help as we build the kingdom. Do you know that in OM we save used postage stamps? Now OM is known for being very careful with the money.

We even save used postage stamps. And then we sell them to philatelic dealers, especially here in Germany. And last year that brought in 10,000 Deutschmarks for the kingdom of God and to print gospel literature for India and other parts of the world.

Used postage stamps that some of you are throwing away. Little things are important with God. In fact, His holy word says that even a glass of cold water given in His name shall have a reward.

I mean, if you give a glass of cold water in His name it will be a reward. If you get that for water, imagine what you're going to get for coffee and apple juice. Will you join with us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth? God has set before us a great open door.

Not only is the door open, in some countries like India the door has fallen right off the hinges. But we need workers and we need prayer warriors who will join with us in this task. But that second goal is just as important we want to see revival among God's people.

And that includes OM. And recently the ship Lagos when they had a crisis in Venezuela the Holy Spirit moved in a beautiful way on the ship. And there was a small revival among the crew and the staff.

And people were repenting. And people were getting right with one another because you know it's not easy to live together on a ship with 25 nationalities and people from many different churches and it takes continual revival in many hearts to keep this ministry going. And I know that in your church the same is true you need continual revival.

I want to ask you are you living in revival? You know we make a great mistake if we think revival is some special thing that only happens you know once every 10 years or once every you know in Wales they think once every 50 years maybe possibly revival. My bible in Ephesians says that I am alive in Jesus Christ. Christ is in me! Brothers and sisters I believe that is revival.

And I believe it's the privilege of every believer to live in revival. And I believe it's the privilege of every believer And by God's mercy and by God's grace every day since my conversion I have known that joy and that power that can only be explained by the indwelling Jesus. So are you in God's race? Are you living in revival? You say well what does that mean more carefully? It means first of all the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Galatians the fruit of the Spirit is love joy peace long suffering faithfulness That's not something weird that happens to a few super dedicated Christians. You know why many young people are not praying about going to the mission field? And I've talked about this all over Germany for 23 years. They have false ideas of what a missionary is.

They think missionaries are super spiritual. They think spiritual missionaries are great theologians. Or people who have a yearning to suffer in the jungles eating bugs wearing a big hat and carrying an oversized bible.

And they feel that they could never be a missionary because they see their own weaknesses. I see my weaknesses. I'm still failing my savior.

I still have struggle with certain fears. And yet somehow God has been able to use me a little. And I know that if God can use someone like myself, he can use every one of you who knows Jesus.

God is looking for ordinary people. And many of these spiritual lessons we're not going to learn these lessons just sitting in church. Now this ship goes very, very slow.

Captain, how fast does this ship go? Ten knots. If you try that on a German motorway you will be arrested. Especially in a ship.

When we sail out of this port we are going to Africa. When do you think we're going to get there? Tomorrow? The next day? No. I was recently in a jumbo jet crossing the Atlantic.

And I went up to the cockpit to talk and try to witness to the captain. And he was a really friendly guy. He gave me his seat.

He gave me his seat in his jumbo jet. There I am, looking out the window. And it was on autopilot.

And I was talking to the co-pilot and to the flight engineer about the ship and all these things. It took Logos eight days to cross the Atlantic. It took this airplane eight hours.

Very different. So when this ship leaves Bremen go out to the sea and take a long time so I don't expect Captain Isaacson to get the ship there in one or two days. But I do have one definite belief about the captain.

If it's out to the sea he's going to at least point the ship in the right direction. And that's what God is asking of you young people especially. You're not going to become a great missionary overnight.

You're not going to get to India next week. You're not going to get all of your problems solved one, two, three. But at least you can make sure you are going in the right direction.

God's direction. In God's race. Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Serving Him. Letting that fruit of the Spirit come out of your life as you repent of anything the Holy Spirit convicts you of. That's why I do I do give invitations for people to recommit their lives to Jesus Christ.

We just had a conference with three hundred Dutch young people. Some of you know Brother Andrew. He and I were there together.

He believes in giving invitations. I don't give as many as he gives. One day we were speaking together and he said, George did you give an invitation this morning? I was speaking together with Corrie ten Boom.

I said no Andrew I'll let you do that. And he said I will because I've learned it's easier to cool down a fanatic than warm up a corpse. Now maybe the situation is different here in Bremen.

I don't know your churches so well. Maybe you've got different problems than England. Too much enthusiasm for Christ.

Too many people moving out witnessing and winning souls for Christ. Too much prayer going on. Everybody's gathering in prayer.

Can't even get a decent meal. Your mother's always praying and everything is going on. You know if that's the big problem you have praise Jesus you're in a great city.

You know one of my favorite authors is a man named A.W. Tozer. And in speaking about the churches in America because he was a great troubler and prophet of the American church he said to think that too much enthusiasm was the big problem in the church. Was like sending a squadron of policemen to the

nearby cemetery to guard against a demonstration by the residents at midnight.

I don't think that's the biggest problem. I want to ask you is the joy of God the strength of your life? Are the spiritual bells of God's love ringing in your heart tonight the beginning of this new year? Are you as committed to God's race as those Olympic runners are to their running around in circles? Do you have a purpose in your life? Do you love Jesus with all your heart and soul and mind and strength? If not perhaps tonight should be a moment of decision for you to re-commit your life to Jesus Christ. I don't think I believe reality first geography second.

My first burden isn't to get you to go to India or on the ship. My first burden is that you just know personal revival and reality in your spiritual life. When you take that first step then God can work out the geography.

Have you ever done that? Presented your life completely to God even if it means being a missionary or sailing on this ship to Africa or to join a team and help feed the starving Ethiopians who this very night are starving to death. Or are you going to choose like so many just to sit back and sort of drift through life without this reality of God burning in your heart. Let us pray together.

Can you just spend a moment in prayer and then I'll

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