

Cd Gv509 Gv at 1st Baptist Church Atlanta Usa

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of moral purity in the church and the need for a revolution of discipline and purity, highlighting the role of prayer in revival and evangelism.

Scripture: Acts 16:6

Topics: "Commitment To God", "Power Of Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of true commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible in our lives. He shares the story of Paul receiving a vision to go to Macedonia and how he immediately obeyed the call to preach the gospel there. The speaker also discusses the burden on his heart and his desire to share his confessions as a weak and struggling missionary. He highlights the power of prayer and the need for churches to prioritize prayer in order to experience revival and spread the gospel.

Transcript

I guess this is my third or fourth or fifth visit to First Baptist, and I'm always encouraged when I'm invited back because I have an ability of offending people and never being invited back. And, of course, if I offend anyone here, I hope you will write a letter to me. I have a new policy.

Anybody I offend, if they write me a letter, they get four free books. So I'd love to get some letters from you. But really, my heart is full, and living in England and living in Pakistan and Nepal and India, all these places my wife and I have lived these 27 years, makes it difficult for me to just easily adapt to the all-American way.

And I get deeply burdened and distressed by things I see, by the inroads of materialism, by many other things. For 25 years, I've gone across this nation giving a message that's always been very unpleasant on the subject of moral purity and impurity in the church. I've made that statement.

That impurity is an epidemic in the evangelical church, and that includes the charismatics and the fundamentalists and everybody else. I don't have time to speak on that tonight. I'd like to.

My most, perhaps, vulnerable message. But I have brought this book on our special book table. Some of you remember it from the last time we were here.

Written by Erwin Lutzer, the pastor of Moody Church, one of the largest Bible churches in Chicago, where I sat as a student under the feet of Alan Redpath. I believe this book should be now made required reading in our churches before it's too late. We've lost thousands of ministers this year through impurity and immorality.

What we see on television is a tip of the iceberg. Let's be honest, and let's deal with this as the Word of God deals with it in over 500 separate scriptures. Take this book, share it with your friends, and cry to God for a revolution of discipline and purity in the church of Jesus Christ.

Everyone who goes to the book table can also pick up free of charge this book, which I just brought up from our warehouse, our international literature warehouse in Waynesboro, Georgia. It's written by Stanley Volk, a close associate with Roy Hesschen, who was here with you the last time I was here. And it's a book about personal revival, how it is the privilege of every believer to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, with Jesus reigning and ruling by His grace in our hearts.

And all you have to do is go out that way instead of that way and pick it up free, it's worth 50 cents, and read it. And if that book doesn't challenge you and teach you something, this man who was touched in that great East African revival, you're right to me, we now have an Atlanta address. You can even deliver it by hand.

And I'll send you, with my apologies, 25 free books for encouraging you to read something that you felt was a waste of time. My own address in Bromley, Kent is on the back of the book. Now we have a lot of other books, but not the time to talk about them.

Books that have never been seen before. And as God has brought us to Atlanta, we're not quite here yet. We're just in the process of closing the New Jersey office, where we've been for 30 years.

And there's mixed emotion up there. I've just had the 30th anniversary with my friends in my home state. And I think many of you know, it's largely through the encouragement we have received from Dr. Stanley and from your church, Dr. Powell, and a few others, we're not known in Atlanta, that we have taken this step of faith.

And it is a big step. And already being here for a week, I'm telling my leaders here, it's going to be five times tougher than we thought. But we're not going back.

We're moving. We don't have any place. We don't have much money.

Though your church gave us a generous gift. Most other churches don't even know who we are. We're cast upon God.

But we believe if God brings us to Atlanta, and that seems to be happening, it is that we may be a blessing to the churches of this great city and this great state. God is doing something in this state. And I believe one of the ways we are going to be a blessing is through the literature that we have our fingertips on from all over the world.

In the church we were in, in our conference this past week, way up in the north of the city, they were stunned when they saw these books. They bought two or \$3,000 just like that. I was ministering here in a black church some months ago.

I thought they were going to go completely wild when they approached the book table. They were carrying out arms of books, books that are just known to us as basic Christian classics they had never seen. Like the writings of men like Roy Hesham, 40 languages, Christian classic.

He's preached here. That is far better than any of his preaching. Roy's a good friend of mine.

That's from his early days. That's dynamite. You can't even come on Operation Mobilization without reading Calvary Road.

Of course, it's just a sermon in print based on the word of God. This summer, I'll be speaking at the Keswick Convention. Billy Graham was there for the 100th anniversary.

You probably will never get to Keswick, England, but you can get 100 years of Keswick quotations from the messages in that brilliant book unheard of in the United States. We actually had to bring these from England. Most powerful devotional book I've ever read.

Another book by an Englishman, Take My Life, the best book on discipleship ever put into print. Former leader of OMF, China Inland Mission. And then there's a book by Dynamic American on prayer.

Touch the world through prayer, just published. 250 some pages on how to pray, how to resist Satan, how to build up spiritual reality in your own life. A few weeks ago, I was speaking at the Missions Conference of People's Church.

You had Paul Smith here at your own Missions Conference. I was with Oswald J. Smith shortly before he died at 96 years of age. Many people believe he was the sort of grandfather of missions and the Faith Promise Program in North America, a very ordinary church there in Canada.

You know what they prayed in and believe God for last year? 1,500,000 for world missions. Incredible. So what you can give, that's not the big thing with God.

It's what can you believe him for? That's what the great Faith Promise Program, that revolutionized missionary giving in America, is all about. Again, not time to speak about it, but you can get the book, The Challenge of Missions, that altered my life as a young baby Christian many years ago. Lastly, I want to mention Operation World.

How many of you already have this book? Can you raise your hand? Many of you, at least in the front section. What is this, a missionary study class? But many missionary leaders believe this is the most significant missionary book of this decade. 500 pages, 500 pages of information and prayer material.

It does come from an interdenominational and European viewpoint. And because most denominations have their own prayer books, this is mainly dealing with smaller denominations and the national church. But it is still a brilliant book.

And we want you to get this, and to encourage you to get it, and to hit two birds with one stone, we're going to give you free of charge, if you get that book tonight, my unbelievably slow-selling book, No Turning Back. \$4.95. No wonder no one ever buys it. But there it is.

You can put it inside this book and have it, and I think we'll reduce it another dollar. And now some of you think I'm a salesman, so I'll put that away. In England, I offend people when I look like I'm trying to sell books.

You know, John Wesley was often criticized for pushing books from the pulpit. But praise God, he is using the printed page. And you ought to not just be reading books, but distributing them.

In fact, somebody bought one of my books in a jumble sale. That's sort of a glorified English garage sale. I wonder where my books were going.

She bought this book, even though it's written for believers, read it, was converted to Jesus Christ, and has already led several of her friends to Christ. So God can use even a feeble, poorly written book. Actually, I can't even write.

These are just tapes that somebody transcribed. I'd like you to now turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Acts. The book of Acts, chapter 16.

I always need water when I speak, because I have voice trouble, but I have never had to drink water out of a gold chalice. But I know that First Baptist does things right. Amazing peach juice.

Acts, Acts, chapter 16. Now when they had gone throughout Perga, I've never learned how to pronounce that, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit. Boy, this is a real interruption.

You ever get that kind of interruption into your life? It's a good one. Forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word at Asia. After they were come to Mycenae, they attempted to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit allowed them not.

Have you ever studied this in depth? This is bizarre. These people don't know where they're going. And then passing by Mycenae, came down to Troos.

That's where Luke joined them. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man from Macedonia beseeching him and saying, come over into Macedonia and help us.

And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go. Immediately we endeavored to go. To go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

There are many burdens that are on my heart this evening. It's one of the reasons I brought one of my cassette albums. Not if perchance anybody for some reason wants to hear any more of what's on my heart.

I have got these that you can get after the meeting on a very special basis. I wanted to really, after I heard about the message this morning and Dr. Stanley saying that I could give a great challenge, then surely knowing some would be disappointed, I really wanted to give this message the confessions of a weak, stumbling, bumbling, struggling missionary. That's me.

But I don't have enough time for that. Maybe I'll wait till November. But you know, it's so important to understand that we Christian leaders, we missionaries, we are earthen vessels.

We have clay feet. Great faith is not in the absence of doubt or struggle or even sin. Great faith is as we learn to persevere, as we develop spiritual, biblical speakability and perseverance in the work of God.

I have wanted to quit so many times. I lost track. I was saved from a non-Christian background.

I didn't know what I was getting into. I just went into this Billy Graham meeting in New Jersey. I was doing fine.

I had a nice girlfriend. I had money, three businesses, nice family. Went to a very good upstanding community church.

Was the president of the youth fellowship because I was teaching him how to rock and roll. Became the assistant to the pastor because he was as blind as I was. Good old New Jersey religion.

But I didn't know that I was lost. I joined the Boy Scouts because I couldn't get in the Girl Scouts. And I did my best to obey God in my country.

I was even elected as chaplain of the New Jersey state government when the students took over for one day. I never could figure out how that happened. But you know, New Jersey's a pretty wild place.

And then I was given the God and Country Award, the highest religious award in scouting in America. And I was on the road to hell. Because religion doesn't save.

Being a good American doesn't save. I thought salvation was by good works. And so when I would cheat at cards, especially at scout camp, and felt a little convicted about it, I would take part of the money and buy everybody a hot dog or a milkshake and feel sort of a Boy Scout Robin Hood type.

And then an elderly woman, I never could get on much with elderly people, but an elderly woman started meddling into my life. I don't know if any of you elderly folk are into that. Praying for people.

She put me on her hit list. And she started praying specifically for me, I think for over a period of two years. And that wasn't enough.

She had to send me a bomb through the post. Letter bomb. It's called the Gospel of John.

And I began to read this little Gospel of John. By that time, sorry to say I was hooked into a so-called mild brand of pornography, but it wasn't mild for me at 16. And I read this Gospel of John and God began to speak to me from His Word.

I've written a book about Christian literature. It's actually the only book I've written. We don't even have it on the table because it never sells.

Christian literature is just considered such a low priority today. It's unbelievable. But I thank God that that lady believed His Word, that this was God's Word.

She believed in prayer. She believed men and women were lost. She believed that Jesus, as it says in John's Gospel, was the way, the truth, and the only life.

And no man comes to the Father but by Him. And I hope you will pray for that great convention going on. Because if your great denomination ever turns away from the inspiration of Scripture, then it is lost.

It is lost in the fog. Because when it does that, you can be sure right behind it, they will be telling you there's no such place as hell. Right behind it, they will be telling you that Jesus is not the only way, the only truth, and the only life.

I went to an southern Presbyterian school, controlled by the northern Presbyterians. Ten years before I got there, this is ancient history, you can see how old I am, and it was in Tennessee. I thought it was biblical.

I thought it was evangelical. But before I got there, ecumenicalism, higher criticism had devastated people's faith. I studied with hundreds of ministers who denied biblical faith by the end of the freshman year.

My Bible teacher tried to destroy my own faith. Fortunately, I was a loud mouth, a bit of a rebel, asked a lot of hard questions, and he actually ended up encouraging me in my faith. It was in that school that I actually met Dale Roton.

We've been laboring together for some 28 years. I remember I was warned about Dale when I arrived there. He was from Biloxi.

I never met anybody from Mississippi, and I was warned that he was a fanatic and that he was baptizing people in the showers. And so I determined at any cost, I was going to find this character. And several years ago after that, he baptized me.

But contrary to the mythology, it was not in the showers, but in a little chapel in Wheaton, Illinois. As he transferred to Wheaton, and I transferred to Moody Bible Institute. Obviously, though I've jumped a few of the facts, you picked up the story.

That lady's prayers brought me to my knees. It happened in a Billy Graham meeting, a one-night stand in Madison Square Garden. Some men of God used some of their money to hire a bus.

Taken into that meeting, they prayed me onto that bus. I was skeptical about what all this was about. I even brought my binoculars.

So I heard he was a hypnotist. To watch and to see what was going on, I sat as far away as I could to watch this hypnotist. And he just gave in that lovely, sweet, mind-bending, heartbreaking, southern accent, the simple gospel.

And this loud-mouthed northerner fell on his face, went forward, and was born again of the Holy Spirit. Now, if you're a skeptic, if you're an agnostic, I can relate more to you than someone comes up to me after the meeting and says, so wonderful to meet you. Isn't Jesus wonderful? He's just so wonderful.

I find Jesus better every single day. And goes, you know, praise the Lord for people like that. I can't relate to them.

I don't understand them. They can autograph my Bible right here, sign here, hypocrite sign below. But if you're a doubter, if you're a struggler, if you have problems, if sometimes you feel like throwing tomatoes at the pastors in the churches you go to, I can relate to you.

But I want to tell you from a skeptic, doubting viewpoint. My grandfather, by the way, was an atheist from the Netherlands. My other grandfather was a drunkard from Glasgow and blew that family in two.

But I can testify to you as a struggler, as a doubting Thomas, as someone who has wrestled intellectual problems all of my Christian life, that Jesus Christ has been a living personal reality to me every single day for 32 years. There's a lot of things I don't understand in life. I remember Billy Graham saying he didn't understand everything.

He didn't understand, we've all heard this, we've been around a while, how the brown cow ate green grass and gave white milk. But we drink it. In England we don't drink much, we just put it in our tea.

And if you come and visit me in London, I'll give you the first probably decent cup of hot tea you could ever have. My first day in Atlanta on this trip, I almost suffered from culture shock. I went into a little cafe, somewhere not so far from here, early in the morning, and all I wanted was a cup of hot tea.

I don't need much food. I mean, look at that. I mean, where can I carry it? And I went into this little cafe, it was mainly all beautiful black people, and I cannot even tell you how my heart has been knit since my conversion with people of all races.

That would take me another hour. But anyway, I moved, walked in there, and I said, can I have a cup of hot tea? She looked at me, what? I don't, I can't say it how she said it, but she said something like that. And she went on to say, would you like some iced tea without the ice? They had no hot tea in this cafe.

I thought, I can't work in Atlanta. Anyway, I settled on a hot chocolate. Pray for us in England, we need your prayers.

God is working in England. God used Billy Graham and Luis Palau in a mighty way. God is using one of your great Southern Baptist preachers, R.T. Kendall, to shake thousands.

Most people in this country don't understand all that God is doing in Britain. We have a church that's growing. We'll have 7, 8,000 at the Keswick Convention.

I just spoke at a conference. It went over three weeks. We had 30,000 people enrolled.

We have 450 British young people signed up for Operation Mobilization this summer. It's true, we don't have churches of this size. We only have 9% in the nation or 10 who even go to church.

But God is doing something. So I was born again in the Spirit of God through the prayers of that elderly lady. I went back to that high school.

I found out later she had been praying for that school for 15 years. Isn't that amazing? Persevering in prayer for this ungodly high school where often a third of the students were drunk on the weekend right near New York City. And she persevered even though every year it seemed to get worse.

And then God began to move. And prayer, persevering prayer, is often like that. Don't be discouraged in your prayer life.

Don't give up praying for your city. Don't give up praying for our nation, praying for relatives, praying over tough, difficult situations. The Bible says we shall reap if we faint not.

I was, as a student leader, able to give my testimony and a few came to Christ. Then we started a distribution campaign and a thousand students promised to read the Gospel of John. And the Holy Spirit began to move as we gathered in prayer times.

And God's method for revival and spreading the Gospel throughout the world is prayer. A church that is not praying is a church that is straying. You can be sure of that.

We started even some extended nights of prayer, what are called today prayer concerts. And praise God for this prayer concert movement that's spreading across the world. We hope to organize a major prayer conference here in Atlanta if someone else doesn't.

We just had one in the Netherlands as a great gathering of young people. It started about 10 o'clock New Year's Eve and went till about 2 in the morning. The Holy Spirit was leading the meeting.

I was just a little part of it. And you know when we finished that night of prayer, there were 10,000 European young people there. They all ran off at 2 in the morning.

You buy copies of Operation World. I've never seen a book exhibition like it. At 2 or 3 in the morning.

And if you're down on young people, and you think this young generation is sold after drugs and booze, and they're not really committed and dedicated like we were in the old days, and the music is just awful. I think it's great by the way. I would challenge you because I believe it's the younger people who are generally ahead.

Generally there are exceptions. Ahead of the older people when it comes to reality, when it comes to honesty, when it comes to commitment, and when it comes to world evangelism. We have far more people interested in going than we do people willing to be prayer partners.

In our churches we can't even get people to sign up for a prayer letter. We put a big paper out, sign here to be a prayer partner. People walk by it as if it was some kind of, you know, paper that would harm them.

And you know I just wish, and I'll be doing that in November or the end of October, could share with you some of the methods that Satan is trying to use to stop people from going to the field. God worked in that high school, and I guess in that period of a year and a half, 200 professed faith in Jesus Christ. One who stood up in the meeting I spoke at when 125 came into the cafeteria for counseling.

I was only 18. It was my own father who became perhaps my best prayer partner. Then my mother came.

Then my sister came. God answers prayer. One woman stood upon the Word of God.

One woman refused to be intimidated. One woman believed that world missions was an absolute priority for every believer. It's not just for those who are going to go.

It's not just for the church missions committee. Every believer is to believe the Bible. Too many of God's people today are going to the Bible cafeteria style, pick and choose.

Now here in the South you've got some of the most incredible cafeterias I've ever seen. I went into a place, I think it was called Puffs or Duffs or Muffs or something like that, and I saw some of the biggest people in the entire world going in there. They paid a fixed rate, and they just went around.

I saw this sign. We don't have any of these I've ever seen in Europe. All you can eat.

Button's Paradise. Paid down and just go through once, twice, three times. Man, I just couldn't believe it.

And I tell you, it's highly intimidating to a guy like me. All you can eat, big deal. I just had the salad and was full and wanted to go home.

Not quite. So easy, so easy to pay lip service to the things of God. So easy to hear a powerful message like this morning on obedience, and yet still nothing happens in our lives.

We know that is true. Pastors are having nervous breakdowns because they know that's true. Now I know some of you listening to me, and I don't want to get so excited.

I keep praying, Jesus, these are good Southern culture people, bombastic North American, New York. I just want to be quiet and calm, but it's difficult. And I thank God for a book I read years ago on accepting myself.

That was a big hurdle in my life. Just the mirror was enough to make me ill. Look at the nose.

Look at that nose. You think you got a problem. Look at that.

I was giving out tracts once in Thailand, where we were living in Bangkok. Sunday morning, committed missionary, fighting on for God, giving out his word. And in Thailand, they have a name for people they don't like.

They call them, because their noses are really, you know, streamlined. Ours are sort of, you know, Mount Everest. And they have this name for us, if they don't like us foreigners.

They call us Long Nose Yankees. That's a good term for down here, but Long Nose Foreigners. I was giving out those tracts, and a man walked right up to me, and it wasn't to accept Christ.

He reached out, and he stroked my nose. I tell you, if I'd ever had a missionary call, I would have lost it right then. But I am sharing with you from the sincerity of my heart, and perhaps the reason the Lord mixes a little humor into my message, I never planned that, is because I am unfortunately mega serious.

I believe that men are lost. I believe world missions is total war. I believe every Christian is to put his hands on the plow and not turn back.

I believe that when Jesus Christ said, except you forsake all that you have, you cannot be my disciple, he meant what he said. Now, isn't it interesting, those of us who are inerrancy punchers, me, we believe in inerrancy. And if you don't believe in inerrancy, sometimes you get a little excited.

But what about when we get to the verses that are a little bit unpleasant? Then we drop back to the cafeteria pick and choose Bible study method. Brothers and sisters, if we are to evangelize the world, all of us who love Jesus, no matter how weak, no matter how much of a baby Christian we are, all of us need to grow stronger in Jesus. Often when we have a strong message, we then have an invitation for recommitment.

I do that. I'm not against that. But I've discovered the hard way that if that crisis of recommitment, if that crisis is not followed by God's process, it will become an abscess.

Last time I was here, I preached on the God of consuming fire. I gave an altar call. Many came forward.

Many recommitted their lives. I'm not against that. But we need to understand the process is more difficult than the crisis.

The crisis often is one step to be filled with the Spirit, to make a greater commitment. I believe in that. You remember what D.L. Moody said? I probably mentioned it last time.

It's my favorite quote. He often spoke about the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Billy Graham emphasizes this.

In talking about the Spirit-filled life, Billy Graham said, I don't care how you get it, just get it. The crisis often is one step to be filled with the Spirit, to make a greater commitment. I believe in that.

You remember what D.L. Moody said? I probably mentioned it last time. It's my favorite quote. He often spoke about the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Billy Graham emphasizes this. In talking about the Spirit-filled life, Billy Graham said, I don't care how you get it, just get it. That's a good one for a movement like Operation Mobilization.

We're in some of these tough controversies. We move in a sort of conservative middle road. Isn't there a danger for some of us, you know, who graduate from places like Moody Bible Institute and are known for being a little conservative in our theology? Isn't there a danger that we can overreact to some people? We feel they're into extremism in the things of the Spirit, and we overreact and end up in the deep freeze of dead orthodoxy.

That scares me more. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. D.L. Moody taught that, and he would emphasize the need to be refilled again and again and again.

Have you heard that story? That dear lady who said, Mr. Moody, why do you keep saying we need to be filled again and again? And Moody looked her in the eye, this overweight evangelist, who in a secular encyclopedia said depopulated hell by two million souls. He looked this little lady in the eye, and he said, Lady, because I leak. How many of you never heard that before? Raise your hand.

Never heard that before. Isn't it great to be an itinerant teacher? You can just blow through, and before people even get a hold of you, you're out of town. But I believe that illustrates one of the greatest needs in our lives today.

If we're going to be God's world Christians, filled with the Holy Spirit, what if I asked you to stand if you knew you were filled with the Holy Spirit? Why, if I said, all those who are born again, you know you're born again, you know you're saved, you're on the way to heaven, you'd be happy to stand or raise your hand, right? But if someone comes along and says, you know, are you sure do you know you're filled, you're controlled by the Holy Spirit? Of course, we feel real shy about that. That would be boasting, wouldn't it? I mean, that would be super spirituality. No, it's a normal Christian life.

Being filled with the Spirit doesn't destroy the human factor. And you can relax. Being filled with the Spirit doesn't mean you're going to become loud and choleric like me.

No, relax. God isn't going to destroy your temperament. He's going to control it.

He's going to work through it. My wife isn't like me. She looked at me some time ago, and she said, just looking at you makes me feel tired.

You know, you read some of these books on marriage. You know, we got so many books on marriage. How intimidating.

We read these books on marriage, and how as we get older, and we're reading the Word, and we're reading, going to all the seminars, and we become more and more in love, and everything is more and more wonderful, and all of our children grow up to be good little evangelicals. We're all so happy. It didn't work that way in my marriage.

The more we were married, the more we seemed to be incompatible. We couldn't even walk down the street together. Of course, I read Calvary Road.

I'd repent on the corner and give out tracts, wait for her to catch up. You can laugh, but I will you know, when I pack a suitcase, it's no big deal. Probably shared this with you last time.

I've only had 2,000 meetings since I was here last time, so I have it all perfectly memorized, but when I pack a suitcase, you only need about a half an hour notice. I just throw the things in and get one of my heavyweight helpers to jump on the lid, and we go for the plane. When my wife packs a suitcase, it starts two weeks in advance.

It is a highly calculative, volatile, I mean, it's serious, and you can laugh, but I'll tell you, through my kind of extremism and through the differences between us and living on the field, three major surgeries, hepatitis, my wife went into very, very deep depression, and I thank God for a dynamic woman who had the to come to me and tell me I had to change my ways or I would destroy my wife, and that would probably destroy my ministry, and I got on my knees asking the Lord to rivet this message back into my heart, and God began to change me. I wouldn't even buy flowers. Flowers? How can I buy flowers for my wife? All my money is committed to scriptures.

Finally, I became more balanced, and I went out, and I picked some dandelions, and I gave them to my wife. Then, after repenting some more, I got more balanced, and people were exhorting me, and I was trying to learn how to spend money. I literally believe we should have one box for a table, another box for a chair, sleep on the floor, all money to missions.

Can you imagine why Operation Mobilization got a little bit of a reputation for being extreme? Well, you can thank the Lord we've come into balance. Some years ago, I gave my wife a dollar and told her to be free and spend it however she wanted, no account, and then there was a glorious day when I brought her some flowers. They were selling them cheap at the railway station.

They were all sort of droopy like the average Christian you find in our midst these days. Well, there's so much I would love to share. I wanted to, in a sense, give a Macedonian call for some of the countries I've come from.

That's why I read that scripture. Places like Pakistan, where we have a hundred million souls, and we have less witness than you would have in 20 square miles of where we are right now, among a hundred million people. Unreached people's groups like the Kurds and the Baluch.

I wanted to give a Macedonian call for the land of Turkey, where among 40 million we could put all the believers in the first two rows of your church. I wanted to give a Macedonian call for Bangladesh, where we're church planting among Muslims. When I was there just a few months ago, my heart was just so broken, I thought I might not even be able to function again.

I don't know how you can see the things that I have seen, the suffering I have seen, the hunger, without somehow becoming a little extreme. Forgive me if I've said anything hurtful or extreme. I don't mean to.

I arrived in Pakistan, and we worked in Karachi for a while, and I took a train up to a city in the Sindh area. We arrived at three in the morning, so I couldn't go to sleep, and I walked out into the streets of that small, small city or large town, and everything was quiet. And as I walked down the street, there was unbelievable poverty and filth, especially everything dumped out into the streets.

And I was praying and battling with various things in my own heart. And as I walked along that street, there was a sweeper woman. Early in the morning, a sweeper woman.

Many of the Christians of Pakistan come from sweeper background, outcast people who came to Christ in a mass movement. Some of them know Jesus, some of them don't. But I'll tell you, as I saw this lady just sweeping the street, these people are considered untouchables.

Again, my heart was broken for that country, O.M.'s fastest growing new field among Muslims. Later on, with the pastor, who was a converted Muslim, talking to his wife, she explained how they were teaching some of the sweeper women in the church how they could give out Gospels to the heads of the family, because the heads of these homes could not touch these people. Couldn't touch these people.

And they showed them that they could put a Gospel, they have to wash their hands first, put a Gospel in a little shawl, and then they could hold out that shawl to the people of the house. And the lady of the house, if she was willing, could reach out and take that Gospel. I'll never forget that story.

The easiest thing for us in America is to be spoiled. We have so much. And you know, spiritually speaking, those of you from this church have so much.

So many churches I go to, the people tell me, the pastor is boring. The people come to me on the side and say, they actually say this to me, do you know any way we can get rid of our pastor? That's not very pleasant. There are many men in the ministry today who are not gifted in teaching and preaching the Word of God.

I believe some of them are misfits. I believe in some churches they should perhaps have plural leadership. I don't have a simple answer to some of the complexity, the mega-complexity of the American church congregation, and the lack of Bible teaching in many of our churches.

But I'll tell you something, to whom much is given, much will be required. Don't sit back and thank God for the great Bible messages you have. But go home after those messages and search your heart.

C.S. Lewis, that brilliant agnostic converted to Jesus Christ, said we have the tendency to think, but not to act. We have the tendency to feel, but not to act. And if we go on thinking and feeling without acting, someday we will be unable to act.

In one of my books that's brought me 15,000 letters, I call that spiritual schizophrenia, where we divide our life into two separate compartments. Sunday, go to church, religious compartment. And then the rest of our life, what we do with our time, our money, what we do on our vacation, what we do when no one sees us.

And I believe until there is biblical repentance, as Roy Hession talks about, as Stanley Voigt talks about, until we begin to deal with some of the hidden areas in our lives, whatever area it may be, that we will remain, many of us, even in the best churches, we will remain spiritual schizophrenia. In fact, the greater the light, the greater possibility that we're deceived. The book of James says that we should not be

hearers of the Word only, but doers.

Would you go home tonight and search your own heart? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? The Holy Ghost will bring a holy gall. And if you're not going somewhere for God, then whatever your background or whatever noise you're making, you don't know the Holy Ghost of the New Testament. It's not the amount of noise that counts, it's the amount of reality and fruit and power and gifts and love that's moving from our life on a seven-day week basis.

Are you really committed to the Lord Jesus Christ in a way that's in line with what we read in the Word of God? Can you say that the Bible is the final authority in your life, in every area, though as me, you're a learner and you find it hard and you may have to often repent? These are basic, simple questions that I close with, that only you can answer before God. But unless we get back to a more visionary, dynamic, biblical kind of Christian faith, then I believe we will invoke the judgment of God. This is serious business.

Don't think about the person sitting next to you. Don't think about how your wife needs to get sorted out, or how your children need to get sorted out. Ask God, Lord, expose me.

What are the uncrucified areas in my life? What uncrucified aspect of pride, even religious pride, is there in my life? Or lust, or envy, or jealousy, or fear, or timidity, or any of the other sins of a flesh so vividly outlined in the Word of God and in some of these books we brought along tonight. I know it will be a long road. When our ship leaves, as it did from Madras, India, recently to sail for Malaysia, of course it can't get to Malaysia overnight.

It takes days. It's a ship. It goes about 12 miles an hour.

But one thing we demand of our captain, and we've been in the shipping business for Jesus for 16 years and have reached about 50 million souls. I'd love to tell you about that. But one thing we demand of our captain, he can't get the ship from Madras to Malaysia overnight, but at least he can make sure as we sail from that port it's aimed in the right direction.

Some of you are new. Some may not even be born again, and tonight could be your night. Some of you are just growing, just learning about the deeper truths of God.

I don't expect you to become some kind of dynamic apostle, missionary overnight, but I beg of you as you go home tonight, make sure you're going in the right direction in your prayer life, in your relationships with people of all races and backgrounds and all churches, in your marriage, in your witnessing, in your missionary giving and stewardship. Sure, it will take a lifetime. And I just know this, that if God can keep a character like me going every day for 32 years, and a marriage like mine going for 27 years, then everybody here is without excuse.

Really. Don't be intimidated by your failures. They're the backdoor to success.

Stand up on God's promises. Ask him to refill you afresh with the Holy Spirit. Believe that self will be crucified every day, and that you will be the man and the woman of God that he has meant you to be.

Amen. Let us pray. Let us have a moment of silent prayer.

Let's just search our hearts. Let's pray our own prayers of repentance, of brokenness. Isn't it beautiful to be honest with God? He knows all about us and loves us still.

He's not trying to put us in a straightjacket of false guilt. He's trying to set us free through repentance and brokenness and steps of faith. Let him set you free.

Don't let something maybe I've said that was a little off balance, or my accent, or my background, or my temperament, don't let that hinder what the voice of God is trying to say by his Spirit to your own heart. And just pray your own prayer right now before I pray. Lord Jesus, you know each one of us.

We know your need. You know our needs. You know all about us, and you love us still.

And we want to surrender in a new way to you. We want to respond to this Macedonian call from Pakistan, from Turkey, from Bangladesh, from the hundreds of millions who have never had the gospel, the thousands of unreached people's groups across the world. And yet we know that for many of us, we need to clean up our own act first.

We need to put our own house in order to some degree first. We need to make sure that our own spiritual ship is going in the right direction. So Lord, we thank you.

Cleanse us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit that we may by your grace never, ever be the same. We thank you in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Just one final plea in this crucial time in our history, which is now so linked with your own church here.

We really need your prayers. I wanted to talk a little more about the work, about the move to Atlanta. I touched on it.

But the Holy Spirit would not, if I discern right, allow me to do that. Our burden is to minister. It's to give what God has given us these couple of decades.

If you would like more information, if you would like to become a prayer partner, meet us back at the table. There's all kinds of literature there. We put a little earnest deposit money on some property.

We are crying out to God for wisdom. We cannot allow money being channeled out to our existing work in 35 nations, 1,600 full-time workers, a third of them very, very highly under-supported. We cannot allow normal OM giving to go there.

We have got to see specific breakthroughs without any heavy fundraising come in in answer to prayer. We haven't seen breakthroughs as we had hoped, so we've rented a temporary accommodation as we were moving and being pushed out of our houses in New Jersey. We have no property in the United States because we put all our money into supporting nationals, into buying literature.

400 million pieces of literature OM has distributed. 400 million. And so 30 years after we started, we basically have nothing but a computer system and some typewriters and some really committed people.

We are really cast upon God, and these have been a hard seven days for us here in Atlanta. This is a mega busy city. It may be as busy as New York.

I don't know. And I tell you, we're scared. Have we made a mistake in moving? We don't believe we have, but there's a danger that people think that there's some big money behind all this.

Any group that has two ships, there must be some big money. Most of the gifts to our work are \$50 and \$100. Many of us have sold everything we had, even to extremes.

Don't think as we come to Atlanta, someone else is going to do it. We have very few prayer partners in Atlanta. If this church doesn't back us, not just the pastor, he's incredibly busy.

I haven't even met the man yet. It's got to be the ordinary people. The ordinary people who say, yes, we believe in world missions.

Yes, we've invited OM to Atlanta. Let's do something. It's the widow's might that shakes the devil's foundations.

And so if you could sign up as a prayer partner, if you could read some of our literature, listen to some of our tapes, give us a fair hearing. And then if you say, I believe I should be praying, giving what I have to others, no problem with us whatsoever. In fact, 95% of all the fruit of our ministry is in other organizations.

That's one of our greatest visions. Thank you very much. I'll be also there by the book table to speak to anyone.

There's some of you praying about wanting to get involved in world missions. Please see our dear brother. There are others who just want to pray a prayer of recommitment to Jesus.

We'd be happy to pray for you. God bless you and thank you for your patience.

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