

Come Live Die

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of honesty and integrity, and the need to confess sin in order to experience true revival and growth in Christ.

Duration: 27:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:9, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Hebrews 5:12, 1 John 1:5, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Death To Self"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of hating sin and embracing goodness according to the teachings of the Bible. He highlights the moral confusion in society, citing examples of a murder being condemned while a person is killed for a pornographic film. The preacher emphasizes the urgency of spreading the gospel before it's too late. He also addresses the individual responsibility in following God's teachings, warning against pretension, neglect of discipline, and the danger of leading a double life. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about the impact of repentance and the need to be ready for the challenge of world mission.

Transcript

In a very unusual way, in 1968, I was asked to speak at the Urbana Student Convention in the United States. There were about 9,000 in that convention, and I spoke about the danger of a double life. I spoke about this dichotomy in which we decompartmentalize our life.

And in a strange way, I was called upon to give an invitation in connection with world missions. Some were a little upset because my invitation was firstly to repent and to get one's life right with God. 4,000 students stood up to turn in repentance and ask God to put their life together so that they would be ready for the challenge of world mission.

My book, Come Live, Die, actually grew out of the Urbana Convention because the InterVarsity magazine wanted to use my article on the dichotomy. And I finally allowed some of those different messages to go into print. I've had about 13,000 letters as a result of that book, personal letters.

So many people who have written have said the same thing. On Sunday, one thing. On Saturday night, something else.

With spiritual people, one way. With other people, people in the world, another way. And I've come to see that, of course, this is not something unusual.

Our burden is not to lay some super heavy guilt trip on you tonight. But let us not be brainwashed by the philosophy of this world that says all guilt is wrong. I read an article in a major American magazine this afternoon, just the one page, that tells about the latest step in the great sexual revolution that has come into our society.

First, there was the propagation of just general immorality and fornication. Nothing wrong with sex before marriage. We are told our ways are old-fashioned that just produce guilt.

And right behind that came the teaching that, of course, there's nothing wrong with a little unfaithfulness in the marriage, as long as, you know, we just sort of are mutually agreed about it. And then, of course, came the natural teaching that, of course, it's perfectly acceptable and normal for people to divorce when they're having a hard time in their marriage. And then there were the various liberation movements.

And, of course, women's liberation came in, which has enslaved at least some women more than ever before, because with it came the defense of lesbianism and the defense of homosexuality. And, of course, the free distribution of pornography and then child pornography. And this article that I read today is telling us of a new liberation movement, children's liberation, and it will become a major movement in the next decade.

It may take the 90s to really get it big, but it's on the way. Certain psychologists are saying there's absolutely no harm in children, even little toddlers of three, having sex in the family, with the father, with whoever cares to have sex with them. And that little children should be taught how to have sex at 5, at 6, at 10, any year of age.

We must recognize the tremendous sex life of all these toddlers. There is already an array of books that are coming out in this direction. And it's just unbelievable.

It is just unbelievable. I was absolutely almost ill after reading that one page today. And, you know, that kind of thing just gives me a hatred for sin.

I think it shows the devil up for what he really is. And the Bible teaches that we should hate that which is sinful and cleave to that which is good. And there is a place for legitimate guilt.

If someone murders someone, like the man who murdered John Lennon, still at least our society says, well, that's not right, really. And yet that same society, in producing a film, a pornographic film in Mexico, arranged for a person to actually be killed in the film to make it more realistic. Surely the world today is in a state of chaos that is almost hard to imagine.

No wonder God has raised up some emergency programs to get the gospel out to the ends of the earth before it's too late. But the real battle goes right down to where we are individually. Now we read these beautiful verses in chapter 1. I will read in English and you follow in your own language because we're short on time.

Read verse 5 through the end of the chapter. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you, God is light, in him there is no darkness at all. Six, if we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in darkness, we lie.

We claim to have fellowship, yet we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. Seven, but if we walk in the light, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another or with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from every sin. And verse 8, if we claim to be without sin, get this, we deceive ourselves.

This is a letter to believers. It's a letter to believers. Mercy, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Verse 9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. And yet 10, if we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar. And his word has no place in us.

And then verse 1 of chapter 2, my dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. Goal number one. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

Verse 2, he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. Oh, we could spend a long time on these few verses, but we want to go to prayer. And I've got a one o'clock ferry to catch from Zebra, which protects you from a long message.

But I somehow feel this is one of the most essential truths we can teach you. There is a victorious life. The dichotomy, the hypocrisy, the spiritual schizophrenia can be destroyed in the life of the believer.

That doesn't mean perfection. It means reality. There is a sense in which, of course, we all have our inconsistency.

But you see, when we confess that inconsistency, when we're open about that inconsistency, that breaks the dichotomy. That breaks the darkness and brings it out into the light. Now, confession to men is not necessary to receive forgiveness from God.

Let us make it very clear. We are saved by grace. Justification is by faith alone.

This movement stands very strongly for this doctrine. It is not faith plus works. It is not faith plus discipleship or even faith plus confession or walking in the light or anything else, including discipleship.

We are saved by the atoning blood, by the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross for our sin. But if we are saved, there will be good works. That is the proof, the divine proof, that a divine work has taken place in the person's life.

But walking in the light with another brother or sister, though not part of being saved, not necessary for salvation, is essential if we are going to grow and be strong in Christ. And especially so if we have been deeply wounded through sin and transgression against the living God. James says, confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

I think of the great revival that took place in East Africa or the revival that took place ten years ago in Canada. God works in different ways in different revivals. And in some places the word revival has lost its meaning.

In the southern part of the United States, some churches have used this word in place of the word evangelistic crusade. They are not the same. Revival is a deep work of the Holy Spirit that begins among

believers.

And there is the aspect of this kind of revival that is very linked with the sovereignty of God. So when you see one of these little advertisements in the newspaper there, revival will begin at our church on October 2nd at 7.30 at night. Our revival preacher is Howdy Doody or who else is in town.

This is a very poor misuse of this term. It almost caused me to run away from using the term at all. But revival is possible.

There are revivals taking place right now. And the history of the church is absolutely linked with the history of revival. In East Africa, that great revival that Roy Hesschen was involved in, there was a powerful emphasis on the confession of sin.

And in his biography he shared how sometimes this got a little extreme. The Africans are beautiful. When they were touched in revival, they became very open, very free.

Can you imagine the leading bishop standing up and confessing the sin of fornication with several of the women in his diocese? Of course. When this spread to jolly England 40 years ago, it caused no small stir, I can assure you. And this revival movement ended up being blamed for things, as usual, that never even happened.

Though some things did happen. When I was speaking at the Canadian Revival Convention, I met dozens of people who had their lives, as Peter Conlon's, radically turned around as they experienced true revival from God. And with almost all of them, it involved walking in the light, meeting with another person, sharing the real struggles and failures and sins, and then praying for that cleansing blood to do a deep work.

Look again at verse 7. I received the most ugly letter I've ever received from someone a few years ago who sat right here in these meetings. He had a serious homosexual problem. And I only found out later, he took it all rather lightly.

Well, that's the way he was. And, well, maybe for a while he would at least try to control it a little bit. But, I mean, he wasn't going to get real uptight about this whole thing.

And I don't think he certainly planned to walk in the light about it. Let us make it very clear that the sin of homosexuality is clearly condemned in the word of God. We're not talking about temptation.

And you must understand that perfectly normal people can be tempted to commit homosexual acts, and in our society they often do just to try the other side of the fence for some kind of a sexual kick. It is not a sin to have a homosexual temptation. I don't believe it is a sin to have a homosexual tendency.

We live in a wounded society. Many people have deep emotional problems that have been mixed with sinful past. And yet I have known of many such people who have come into the power of the resurrected Christ.

And though even ten years later, twenty years later, they still have that temptation, they have learned how to, in the light, deal with that temptation. But I don't believe such people will generally know real victory. And it's true of people with other difficulties and other sinful habits that somehow have got a hold of their life.

By the fear of people knowing about them, they are, in a sense, forced into a life that is in darkness. Verse 6, if we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie. We lie and do not the truth.

There is victory in Jesus. I have watched Peter Kahneman for fifteen years. It took him two or three years, after that experience of beginning to walk in the light, to come into spiritual stability and maturity.

And, of course, as he shared, there were still temptations and struggles to this present hour. In the Christian life, you never arrive at that place where you no longer are vulnerable, where you no longer can be tempted or even fall. And after that experience that he had, that was not the end, that was the beginning, or at least a new beginning.

But I saw, through the Word, through sharing, through discipline, him and hundreds of others like him over these twenty-five years grow in grace and in strength in the Lord. One of the main secrets of our relationship together as leaders in this work is that we walk in the light with one another. We have nothing to hide in our lives.

Jonathan McCrosty, Dale Roton, many of those men know my struggles, my failures. That doesn't mean that we have to go around parading intimate details of difficult experiences. And especially in public meetings, some things should not even be spoken of, according to Hebrews or Ephesians chapter five.

Of course, the Bible is very blunt about what it speaks of, but we are not always speaking with the same degree, I can assure you, of inspiration. And this leads me to want to just share with you these few thoughts that I shared up in Canada among these people, so many of them who had experienced revival. As you begin to move on this road of revival, getting your life right with the Lord, walking in the light, confessing sin, fellowshiping with others, and knowing the daily infilling from the Holy Spirit, the devil will do everything to get you lopsided, to get you off balance.

Extremes easily invade movements of revival as God works in our midst in these days. And as we experience newness of life and have great experiences with God, whether it's here in the meeting or out in the woods, the devil will counterattack. What are a few of the areas of difficulty we need to watch for in a discerning way? I mentioned already, number one, the danger of getting involved in too much confession, too many details.

In one movement, people almost competed with one another to confess more. And the more you could confess, the more you were considered as being touched by the Lord. Remember this, there's a wide range of people.

Some are more sensitive than others. We're from many backgrounds. God is not trying to force you into something that is going to go against, in a sense, your conscience and your very being.

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We're from many backgrounds. God is not trying to force you into something that is going to go against, in a sense, your conscience and your very being. The second area is super-spirituality.

The Lord touches your life. You experience the power of the Holy Spirit. You have some great manifestation, some great experience of the glory of the Lord.

And pretty soon a very subtle and ugly form of super-spirituality. And you judge people who don't have your vocabulary. So we develop a revival vocabulary and we use that revival vocabulary to block other people out from our little circle of revived friends.

And then we may organize a conference of those who have been touched in our revival. But if we do, we should not be surprised if the Holy Spirit decides not to come. You will probably hear this from me 15 times before you leave.

God works in different people in different ways. Many of you have a testimony completely different from Peter Kahneman. Some of you have been walking in a very lovely walk with Jesus from your childhood.

Jonathan McGrath, from childhood as a son of a missionary, his whole life was a walk with God. That doesn't mean he didn't need revival. Doesn't mean he didn't have to deal with sin and learn to repent, of course.

And then another difficulty is the danger of exaggerating our testimony so that it can compete with some of the more popular testimony. I know that Peter Kahneman's testimony is the truth. But don't take any of his testimony and put it into yours thinking that will make yours more dramatic.

Don't talk about the deep double life you were living at eight years of age. Don't give a suicide testimony simply because at one time before you were converted, the thought of suicide happened to flutter through your head. In India, of course, suicide testimonies become very popular.

Our brother Devakaram actually attempted suicide and was in a hospital dying. And through that, he came eventually to Christ. When some little brother hears his testimony, he likes to copy that.

It makes such an impact. How we need to walk carefully before God with our testimony. Because ours is a God of honesty and integrity.

And then, fourthly, there's the danger of spiritual naiveness. I find this often among God's people. They experience some blessing but fail to see some of the complication when they present this to other people who have different problems and different needs in their life.

This is linked with the fifth thing I've written here. Total answerism. The tendency to have a total, final, easy answer.

One of my favorite books is No Easy Answer, No Pat Answer by Eugenia Price. There are similar books. I have always had, for the last 20 years or 15 years, a little bit of reverent skepticism to those who promise through charts and graphs and books the total answer to all of life's bewildering problems.

I will tell you, OM and the teaching and the vision of OM is not the total answer. Dr. Schaeffer's teaching is not the total answer. Bill Gothard's teaching is not the total answer.

How much we've learned from those two men and from many others. Truth is very big. No one man, no one group has ever had all of it.

Let us walk humbly before God. Let us realize that life is a very complicated place for many, many people. That which is a blessing to one person brings another person seemingly into confusion and bondage.

Again and again I have seen that. That's why it's good I go away for four or five days. And other completely different men, different age, different organizations come and minister the word here.

And then there is the danger of spiritual impatience. God blesses us. We see great victory.

We fail sometimes to realize that actually may have built up over many years. And then we want our brother, our mother, our father to get immediately the same thing. We become spiritually impatient with others and then sometimes with ourselves.

Because we think, well, if I've got that blessing, certainly I can do that now. The Lord has filled me with His Spirit. Certainly I can lead five souls to Christ in Ankara, Turkey if I go there as an evangelist this year to the Muslim world.

George Miley has a tremendous message. I hope he can give it at this conference on how God's people can be deceived. Yes, God's people can be deceived.

Spiritual impatience can be the road to deception, even in the area of our social relationship. We can want a particular person so much that somehow this works in our subconscious, produces a dream about that person, and we take the dream as a confirmation that that's God's person, God's partner for us. It's an area where we easily become impatient and we can get very much deceived.

And then the next area of difficulty is the neglect of family. Caught up with the Lord, caught up with a blessing, the blessing caught up in the revival, we neglect our own families. It's not God's way.

And then I have here stereotypism thinking everybody must go that way. Don't go around saying everybody needs to join Operation Mobilization. That's utterly ridiculous.

You know my advice to some of my close friends? Don't join Operation Mobilization. This movement is not everybody's spiritual training place. We are only one weak movement in the hands of the Lord.

Don't feel upset if a friend of yours tells another friend, don't go on OM, I don't think that's the right place for you. Don't go into the air screaming when that happens. And then the next danger I've written is emotionalism.

I have seen emotionalism destroy so many people. I guess I have become a little bit conservative. I used to be very, very emotional in my praying.

When the Lord was moving in those early prayer meetings, jump on top of the table praising God, run around the room, hallelujah, Jericho, marching around the room praising God. Many, many things I did. God used my wife.

She came to me once. She said, you know what the other people are doing when you're standing there on the table shouting? She said, they're not praying, they're all watching you. I felt that one.

And then what happened? Other new recruits, when they got the blessing, they jumped on the table. So easily we try to copy people who are spiritual or we think they're spiritual. Now, of course, in OM, things often go the opposite way.

We preach so much on this that people do everything possible to make sure that in no way they appear to be like George Verwood. And if I announce, let's go 6.30 jogging in the morning, you can be sure that 90%

will definitely not be there. So for the next five mornings you can go because I will not be there.

Paul said, be followers of me. It's a difficult teaching, that is. You see, in terms of love, basic spiritual quality, yes, we can follow people.

Not in terms of personality or practice or other outward things. And we are honest in acknowledging that the convictions that burn in our hearts, for some of you, it will take several years before they become your own convictions in the deeper sense. Search the Word of God in these days.

See if these things be so. Then next week there's a danger of spiritual window dressing, pretension. Long after the revival is gone, we're still singing the same choruses, going through the same motions.

Then there is that danger of the neglect of discipline. We think, oh, I've got the blessing now. The Lord will do the work for me now.

I won't have to exert myself so much. But that's a great mistake. Let me read this as we bring this to a close from Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones.

I defy you to read the life of any saint. You cannot read the life of any saint that has ever adorned the life of the church, that has ever been in the church, without seeing at once that the greatest characteristic in the life of that saint was discipline and order. Invariably, without question, it is the universal characteristic of all outstanding men and women of God.

Read Henry Martin, David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards, Wesley or Whitefield. It does not matter what branch of the church they belong to. They have all disciplined their lives and have insisted on the need for this.

It is obviously something thoroughly scriptural and absolutely essential. God can touch us in revival. We can walk in the light.

We can experience great cleansing. God can set us free by his power. But that must be followed up by daily crucified living, daily discipline.

And it will be a battle. And as Peter has brought out, there will still be struggles and difficulties and at times even sin and failure. Chapter 2, verse 1, Sin not, but if you sin, you have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ, the righteous.

Many great men of God have shared this. The closer they got in fellowship to the Lord, the more things were uncovered in their life that were not right. So the truly committed life is a life of continual committing ourselves to God.

I pray this will be the road that you will take. Our God and Father, we thank you for the power and the reality of your Holy Spirit. We thank you that we can experience daily personal revival in our lives.

Oh God, grip us with the reality of this. That we may never be the same again. That we would not be afraid to seek out the help we need to get our lives sorted out.

Keep us from these pitfalls, from these extremes. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us stand worshiping and singing number 16, Christ the Lord is risen today. Brother Frank Dietz and Fritz Schuller will be leading the prayer meeting. We want to go right into prayer.

But some may have to just quietly go out at some time and then come back. With all of our hearts, this is to sing all year round, not just Easter.

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