

God Wants To Use You More

by George Verwer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in the Lord despite disappointments, unanswered prayers, and trials. The speaker shares personal experiences of persevering through challenges, maintaining faith, and focusing on Jesus amidst criticism and unmet expectations. Key passages from Habakkuk, James, 1 Peter, and Hebrews are highlighted to encourage the congregation to cast their cares on God, run the race with endurance, and find joy in the midst of difficulties.

Scripture: Habakkuk 3:17, James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:6, Hebrews 12:1, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Rejoicing in Trials", "Perseverance in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

To be back again many times. Ministered here right from the very opening of the church through the special relationship. Which one we honored his dear wife and others.

So thank you for the privilege. Both my wife and I are fanatic against any kind of retirement. I have the way people in measure in London measure.

I have three full-time jobs. But not the way God measures. My wife is not so well and she sends her greetings.

She still somehow manages to be full-time. In the tremendous database that we build up through our prayer ministry, which is always been the most important ministry of our lives starting when I was only 17. Right after my conversion.

I told God only one thing I wanted in life. I wanted to know how to pray. I'm still learning.

We kept a database of people that we pray for which is and then other organizations when I was the leader of OM that I had to be in contact with that's I stepped out of all that 15 years ago. So we have this new data protection regulation and we're having a lot of challenges with our database, but it's involving me

sending out literally thousands of personal letters that I signed hoping they will let us know whether they still want to continue on our database. I know some of you let's be honest.

You're on information overload. You get so many challenges in this amazing Church. I'm sure you don't know much about Operation Mobilization and there's not time to say much this morning, but I would ask you after the service to just be patient enough to visit our book table and pick up at least one little leaflet about Operation Mobilization.

Much harder. I came here because Britain is the real birthplace of OM though I my roots are in America. I was living in Spain and my vision was only Afghanistan communist countries closed countries, Turkey, Syria, Iraq that there's no interest in Western Europe.

The church is already here. Great missions were here. I didn't want to duplicate and so I was living in Spain, but through getting caught in my first Bible smuggling expedition into the Soviet Union by the KGB and accused of being a spy my life sort of changed and I went for a day of prayer and God gave me the vision to work with the church first not launch into the Soviet Union like I did sort of a long ranger and then Turkey and Afghanistan difficult unreached places but to work with the European Church and during that day of prayer God gave me the name Operation Mobilization.

There's a whole book about it. Just rereading it and I can't believe some of the things the amazing things that God did in answer to prayer. So I failed in my first effort.

I sent others some of whom knew Russian my Russian was just an infant stage and Operation Mobilization for 30 years became the largest smugglers of Christian literature in the whole of Eastern Europe hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people receive the Word of God because of these what they considered fanatic OM teams many ended up in prison many vehicles were confiscated was a huge operation. That's just one tiny part of what we've seen God do. Partly because of that failure.

Don't be afraid to fail failure can be the backdoor to success. Success can be the trap the trap door to misery. So beware of success.

Stay very humble before the Lord. So please pick up something about Operation Mobilization. This is where we celebrated our wedding anniversary right here.

We celebrated. I think maybe our 75th birthday. And so when my 80th birthday was coming people expected ver was going to rent Wembley.

It's going to be the biggest event yet and God just spoke to me in a quiet way. You're not having any big event. You know, we noticed in these big events of dear friends came from all over and often I'd get like two minutes with him at the door where I'm a very relational person.

I want to talk to people. I want to find out what's going on. And so the Lord put it on my heart to celebrate my birthday in 19 railway stations throughout Europe and be there the whole day 8-9 hour day people could just come have a coffee.

And as I agreed to do this with the Lord, I thought this is going to be a bit of a stretch. But God gave grace and now it's been extended actually Cambridge Oxford Reading are coming up also Denver and Portland as I discovered people come and it gives me a conversation had over 500 conversations in the stations. And of course that's led to all kinds of things.

I gave everybody presents. I asked people not to bring me any present. They could bring a gift for my Bible program in Africa.

And so almost everyone got a copy of this amazing new film. The story of CT stud one of the greatest cricket players in history. Just amazing.

By the way, pray for the OM cricket team from Pakistan who are on the way to Malaysia for a very unusual outreach. One of the fastest aspects of OM is global arts with people all kinds of art ability working with OM around the world and now global sports people using sports to make friends and I'm so excited about this method. You're going to use to share your faith because I've seen God use simple little methods.

The four spiritual laws back in younger days from Campus Crusade probably a hundred thousand or more came to Jesus through that even though some people criticized it. So I'm just continuing my celebration because God saved me in Madison Square Garden from a non-christian home a foul mouth hyper New York City kid who today probably would be in prison and he saved me in a meeting of Dr. Billy Graham and he sent me back to my high school where I saw many of my friends come to Christ and then he sent me to Mexico and it's discovered God answered prayer even though I was young and still stupid and making mistakes God answered prayer and most of you are who have been around a while know my story. There's not time to tell this morning is now available on film and this morning a lot of the books because of my birthday a lot of the books are a gift.

Please don't try to pay for the books on the gift table. My own personal PA who stepped in to help me this morning Mira. She's worked with me 30 years.

She's there and she'll point out what table are the gifts. We want everybody to take two or three books as a gift. Even if you don't read maybe you're not learned to read yet.

You can pass them on to someone else Christmas is coming. This is a chance to save some money on your Christmas budget. So then there's another table where there we do like to receive a donation even if it's 98 pence will not allow the one-pound shop to beat us.

So at our table you can get a book worth 15 pounds for 99 pence or even 50 pence. We just want literature to go out some of you be honest. You're neglecting reading.

You've got this smartphone and it's just got so much to read and I'm not against that but I'll tell you some of these great books every book out there. I personally handpicked because they books that have impacted and bless people and I receive letters and emails every single day of people blessed through books and through literature. So don't neglect that side of your life.

What are some of the other books for the normally we get a donation for my new book messiology used to be known as more drops. That's a word that I invented myself based on my George Verwer proverb. I think in this church you all know the George Verwer proverb right where two or three of the Lord's people are gathered together sooner or later.

There's a mess and messiology is the word God gave me to stay positive and to get a change in understanding how he works in messy situations and to become more forgiving and more big-hearted and one of the great scriptures. I wanted to look at it, but I'll just quote it is in Philippians where these co-workers of the Apostle Paul were complaining there are people out here. They're preaching.

They're preaching with bad motives. They're bad guys. They can't be trusted and they're preaching Paul.

What are we what should we do about it more or less? Paul said don't bother at least the gospel is being preached get on with what you're supposed to be doing. What a message that's messiology and you'll find lots of other wild stories in my book, which this morning is a gift my film of my life story is with it as well. That's the second most influential man in my life.

Oswald J. Smith. If you were younger you would know his name a huge People's Church in Canada and at the same time one of the greatest mission-sending churches and I really do want to thank you that you have been able to maintain that balance of reaching locally, which has got to be your priority. You're in a mission field here, but at the same time being concerned for the nations of the world.

You're the only church in the country. I've been preaching here 55 years. That's taken on on a regular basis of support of my wife and I I never asked for that because I was supported by sending churches from the States Acts chapter 13, but two or three of those churches as things are changing in the States.

They wrote us and said we're sorry. We can no longer support you. You didn't know that but around the same time the Holy Spirit put it on your heart to support my wife and I we try to live carefully as we can were considered fanatics.

My wife hardly ever spent anything since we got married except seemingly vitamins and a few other strange things that we're still discussing but we're quite stunned what it costs to live these days here in London our adopted City. We're not planning to return to the United States. I think many of you know both dream and I applied to be citizens and she was accepted.

I was of course turned down as they found my travel rather and confusing. So plus it's 50% cheaper to die here. So why would we run a return to the United States? Please pick up also from the table this fantastic book about women.

We need to know more about what women are suffering men are also suffering. This is a brilliant book way over a hundred thousand around the world in many languages. I believe it's probably on our free table Debbie Mirroff save our sisters.

This is one of the books. I've just finished reading perhaps my book of the year Paul Hathaway's Chang Dong province what they suffered for Christ in that one province is just beyond imagination more than all the nations almost that I can think of together in recent years. They suffered more especially in terms of martyrdom in that one province and yet that's one of the greatest Church growth provinces in all China and in the world incredibly messy Christians turning against each other Japan coming in and the communists coming in the boxer Rebellion incredible and I just thank God because that book led me to make 2018 and I'm running out of months the year of China emphasis.

So this is an unusual book table and we really hope you'll go and get at least some of the free books or donation books. Let's remember it's the Lord Jesus who said go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. So Lord Jesus who before he ascended into heaven said ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem Judea Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth.

It's the Lord Jesus who said as the father sent me so send I you it's the Lord Jesus who said go into all the nations and make disciples. So Lord Jesus who said the harvest is plenty as the workers are few pray the Lord of the harvest that he'll send forth workers in the harvest brothers and sisters global missions

reaching the entire world with the gospel of Jesus is not optional. It's not just for a few churches that somehow seem to be able to do extra things beyond the normal is the normal for people who are disciples of Jesus to be concerned about what's going on in Syria right now and to do something about it.

One of our largest fastest growing programs is our work among Syrian refugees incredible open doors. Also Iraq refugees over in Jordan where there's a lot of freedom where we've been working for half a century in my ministry of special projects, which I'm still the director of it's a small part of a lamb, but it's more than enough to keep me busy. This has been our greatest year and it's hard for me to express this but I've always been involved in seeing the funds released to keep the work going.

It's always been a big part of my life and ministry firstly through prayer and through and then through just communicating the truth and presenting the need just as we're taught in the New Testament. And God has been very wonderful in supplying and it's a mystery because some of my prayers were never answered. One of them was a bit wild that I prayed for a million million dollars pounds either one sort of above the normal income.

Well, it did happen years ago once and I celebrate that but I had turned that relationship over to someone else and so that one that million was spread throughout my entire OM world. I did get some of it for projects which I celebrate but this year the Lord somehow in his mysterious way answered that prayer and I had a gift of a million cents straight into our British bank account from Canada. Now I have to explain Canadian million is 20% lower than the American million, but I dare not complain.

I dare not complain and it was such a blessing to be able to move forward and many projects all over the world. I have what's called the Gideon 100. I have a list of them.

These are 100 shakers and movers around the world that I know could use at least 10,000 pound right now. So if you get a million and you divide it up between a hundred and then I have many other projects that we're funding and of course every field within OM also needs money. Believe me when you're in a large movement of the Spirit of God, it goes quickly.

So I kept praying and God in his mercy touched that same man's heart and he's giving a second million as a matching fund. So everything I see come in which puts me from normal motivation to hyper motivation everything I see come in till the end of the year will be doubled and we're seeing some amazing things including in Scotland a particular trust where I've never had a major breakthrough and they let me go there and speak to their board and I presented a challenge for a hundred thousand pounds. I've hardly told this story publicly.

I just get loose here in a church that supports me because I want you to know what I'm doing and when I left the room, I thought they're not going to do it. Very fussy these Christian trusts. They have lots of groups to give to.

Everybody's banging on their door. And so they say well you can go out of the room now and when he came back they said you've got your hundred thousand pounds. God is faithful.

Now if you think that's going to happen to you tomorrow, you might be reminded that I'm 80. It's taken a long time, but I believe there's a message in this for those of you who are getting older or maybe you consider yourself old that some of the greatest blessings can come in this senior years. It's not a time to sit back.

It's not a time to think well, God can't use me anymore. I'm as excited today as I was when I arrived in Europe on the Queen Elizabeth in 1960 and headed for Franco Spain because it's not me. It's the Holy Spirit's indwelling and anointing and the reality of Jesus that flows through and accomplishes his great purposes.

And I know for sure we're not here together by accident. God wants to use you. I know he already is using you, but I believe one of the strongest words on my heart from the Lord this morning.

He wants to use you more. And I'd ask you not just this morning, but maybe as you read some of these books or watch my film or read some of my own thoughts as my last book of Messiology is sort of a legacy book to seek the Lord. How can you use more of the Holy Spirit? Of course, to touch people's lives, to reach the world with the gospel.

As a church, you're already doing tremendous things. At the same time, God wants us to trust him to do greater things. Keep that in your heart and mind as we now sort of change subjects a bit and we look at some interesting passages of Scripture that have been a huge help to me in my 60-year, 62-year pilgrimage with the Lord Jesus.

Turn to the book of Habakkuk there in the Old Testament. I'm sure some of you who've been following the Lord for a long time, you know this passage and you've been helped through it. I battled all of my Christian life a little less in my first few years as a baby Christian.

But all my Christian life, I battled a lot of disappointment. You know, it's a blessing and it's easy to share about great answers to prayer. And I've done that and my books, books about OM have done that.

But I think there's the other side of the coin that people need to know about otherwise as a preacher, I'm dishonest in my overall communication. And in fact, my life has been full of disappointment, especially prayer for relatives. The Verwers were a hardball sort of atheist family from the Netherlands.

And yet from the moment I conversion, I prayed for cousins. I prayed for uncles and I only saw I think one uncle, a miracle, this one ex-Navy uncle, Verwer, Joe Verwer, come to Jesus. He's in heaven now and he supported our work financially.

But his brother Clarence and Ray and Albert and their kids, I've never seen them. In fact, I have cousins who are triplets. They're born three babies at the same time.

And the headlines in the local paper was during the war, the headlines were Verwer saved by triplets. It was my uncle. And I prayed for them.

And two of them are just unbelievably, unbelievably dysfunctional and lost and nothing to do with God or the church. I spent time with him and even from my earliest days in Mexico and then Spain and then Russia, my life has been full of disappointments. And of course that gets married to discouragement.

So I found myself battling discouragement on a almost a daily basis. And if you're a people person, if you're a relational person, then Christian leadership is even more difficult because you don't want to hurt anybody. You don't want to offend anyone.

That was even in my background before I was a Christian and in a Dutch home. I've only developed this terminology recently, but I believe we get injected with toxic perfectionism. They want things perfect and

it's interesting that I was just looking at it that a Japanese documentary last night by accident emphasizing how in Japan they want everything to be perfect.

No, I wonder if they ever put that side by side with the unbelievable suicide rate in Japan and every kind of other problem you can think of. It's a message I'm working on. If I write a new book, it's going to be called Toxic Perfectionism Global Epidemic.

But it's complicated because the Bible teaches that we should commit ourselves to holiness and excellency and that part of me that was committed to do things right for God. And then when I was born again for God's glory, the Lord used it, but toxicity is sort of creeps in if we don't take the antidote and the key of this new book will be the antidote. First Corinthians 13 radical love Galatians 2 20.

I'm crucified with Christ. Nevertheless. I live yet not I but Christ liveth within me and the very words of the Lord Jesus.

If any man come after me, let him deny self. That's the antidote. And many men get in trouble with their anger problem and their sex problem because they they got this toxic perfectionism combined.

Of course with struggle with lust and they're unwilling for the daily tough antidote denying self. Other verses that are part of that antidote Paul. I buffet my body.

How are you doing on that? We're not talking asceticism. We're just talking basic discipline and saying no to things, you know, a wrong even though at that time you're wanting to get involved. My heart breaks for increasing numbers of leaders who are being knocked out through adultery.

The Brits here in Britain were better at keeping it quiet. There are major things happen that have been kept quiet Americans. It seems to hit the front page and story after story and I really believe it's linked with toxic perfectionism combined with lack of forgiveness, but also the failure to take the antidote that Jesus gave to walk a life of reality and victory deny self take up the cross and follow me buffet my body and bring it into subjection less after preaching to others.

I would be a castaway. I've been able to live a basic life of moral purity with some failures. Of course with my eyes not justifying that but it's because as a teenager, I made a radical commitment to live a life of moral purity to not compromise with girls to be wise even in any kind of counseling Billy Graham was an example and that was a strong message in OM.

We'd have sessions in which in the 60s or 70s. We talked more openly about sex in OM than any movement perhaps in history. We were criticized for it, but we look back at 60 years and we've had very little major moral failure among our leaders and long-term is around the world.

We've had very few broken marriages and yet we were the first group to recruit divorce people into global missions. Yes, we can have radical discipleship and radical grace at the same time. It's not easy.

Randy Alcorn that brilliant author wrote that book grace and truth paradox. I touch on that subject in my own book. Well, that's preparation for this powerful passage that has helped me so much in the discouragement and the disappointment and the complexities of life.

Of course, we have three children and it gets more complex than we have five grandchildren. It gets even more down complex. Now we got four great-grandchildren and it's getting even more complex.

And so we go back to Habakkuk. Look at this verse 17 of the final or last chapter of Habakkuk, which is chapter 3. Though the fig tree does not bud, there are no grapes on the vines and though the olive crop fail and the fields produce no food. Pretty grim, right? There's no cattle in the stall.

There's no sheep in the pen. That's as difficult and as dark I think as you could get. I think Job had it worse actually.

What is the next verse? Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength.

He makes my feet like the feet of deer. He enables me. He enables me to tread on the heights.

For the directors of music on my stringed instruments, which we've had here this morning. How many of you have already been before you? This passage is strong. It's already ministered to you before.

Raise your hand. You've been ministered to by Habakkuk. Only a few.

So maybe I chose the right passage, but I just want to, with all my heart, urge you to take this concept that whatever's buffeting you, whatever's going wrong, and of course, that's not what you want. And from the moment I get up in the morning, I still try to do things right. It gets more complicated when you're older, but at the same time, no matter what, I'm going to rejoice in the Lord.

And by his grace, I've hardly had ever a day since my conversion when I haven't been rejoicing in God, and I'm certainly not going to start as an old buzzard living in London. I'm going to praise him no matter how many times my heart gets broken, no matter how many disappointments. My prayers for Afghanistan have not been answered.

My prayers for Iraq have not been answered. My prayers and fasting for some different situations in the world have not been answered. There have been some answers.

And I could tell you many stories of God working among Afghans, God working among Iraqis, God working in some of the most complicated situations, but it's not what I have been praying, but at least it's a taste of it. And I learned to live with that. Two other or three passages that have greatly helped me to keep my walk with the Lord and to understand this challenge of the book of Habakkuk, which is so important.

James chapter 1 verse 2. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds. Trials are normal. We don't want them.

We try to avoid them. That's also normal. No matter how though we are with the Holy Spirit, we're incredibly human.

I made a huge mistake and almost slipped into super spirituality and hurt quite a few people. I think in the process of the mystery of messiology is other people were blessed at the same time, which is a little hard to understand, isn't it? Because God's ways are not our ways. God helped me to rediscover my humanness or I do not think I'd be here speaking that balance between the so-called spiritual and basic things of humanity of our humanness.

And I just encourage you beware of the pitfalls of extremism and super spirituality. I've seen more even former OMers, 200,000 have served with OM, by the way, we may have learned something from them. I've only received a few thousands of letters.

I meet people everywhere. I go on trains and buses almost everywhere who have been on OM. I only found out at a memorial service, a Thanksgiving service yesterday.

Where was I? In Torquay. A woman who married a close friend of mine. And I never got to know her.

You might know Gerald Goldson, a great work in Ethiopia. Ethiopians were there from London. And I found out she escaped from Lithuania under communism and went to East Germany and became a fanatic communist youth leader.

Her name was Ellie. And after years, she became disillusioned with communism and she risked her life to escape East Germany and managed to get over the wall or under the wall or over to West Germany. And just in God's providence, she didn't know a word of English.

She ended up at one of the biggest OM conferences in the birth of OM when we really exploded here in the 60s. And she met this English guy who had some German background and they couldn't speak but he just fell cuckoo in love with her. And I only found out at her memorial service yesterday.

That's where they met at the OM conference. And they had 55 great years of marriage. Who can understand God's ways? And who can understand this falling in love thing? Which sometimes seems to work and other times seems to explode.

But one thing for sure, no one is going to walk with God without trials and tribulations. And the more we can saturate ourself. Before I was 20, I was saturated with the word of God.

Dale Rotem, my co-worker, memorized one-third, one-third of the New Testament. No wonder he's been my mentor and my model running ahead of me by many months all of these years, pioneering our work in Eastern Europe, pioneering the whole thrust into the Muslim world, and then becoming director for some years of the ship ministry. We met when we were both baby Christians, but God had a purpose in our meeting.

We have a relational God and he's wanting to give us relationships, long-term relationships. And of course, he wants to give us the right husband or wife or give us the grace to be single. And some of the greatest missionaries in history have been single people who have never married.

Let's remember, however, along the road, Habakkuk chapter 3 and James chapter 1, and just two other final passages to help drive this reality home. 1 Peter, 1 Peter chapter 1, I guess it's best to pick it up at verse 4, and into inheritance that can never perish, never spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last days.

In all of this, you greatly rejoice, right? But you got to read the whole verse. So now for a little while, you have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that proven the genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

In closing, let me just share a few other practical things. I've touched on them, maybe not clear enough, that have helped me to keep running the race through the discouragements, and through the disappointments, and through what seemingly are unanswered prayer. Philip Yancey's book, what is it called? When God is Silent.

No, that's Ronald Dunn's book on the similar subject, *When God is Silent*. I can't think of the title of Philip Yancey's book, but he wrote it on this very subject, dealing with this thorny difficulty of when we don't see answers to prayer, even persevering prayer. There's a lot more I could say on that, but I want to close by just throwing out some practical things that have just helped me stay on the straight and narrow.

I've given you already the key, rejoice no matter what. Another one is found in Hebrews 12, where we're told to run the race. You know that passage? We run the race, we lay aside every weight, keeping our eyes on Jesus.

So that's been another factor that has kept me, because in starting a movement from nothing, I was always criticized, there was always problems, there was always misunderstandings. I've written on all these subjects now, and yet somehow I kept my eyes on Jesus. And on the fact that God is sovereign and he works his purposes out in ways that we can never comprehend.

My final passage has helped me so much in recent years to handle things that I just don't understand. Can you imagine what I've seen just in this country, in the churches, in 55 years? How many prophetic words that have never happened? How many things people said about London 20, 30 years ago? Big meetings, tons of hype. I know most of it never happened.

Some of those people have actually chucked the Christian faith. Yes, they didn't have a theology of reality, of suffering, of what it is to live in a real world where bad things happen to good people, and bad things can happen even to good church people. Lots of good things as well.

And that's one of the other principles that's kept me going. Philippians, that passage that says we need to think of that which is of good report. And so I'm not, I don't give much time to these disappointments.

I don't give that much time to these discouragements. How can meditating and thinking about it ever be helpful? And that's where 1 Peter 5, 7 has rescued me almost on a daily basis, casting every care upon him. He cares for you.

Do any of you have a lot of cares this morning? You send me my list. If I can't double your list, I'll send you a hundred pound. Of course, we have cares.

I'm praying for almost every nation in the world. I have personnel in 110 different countries. I receive sad, heartbreaking news every single day, but I'm cast upon God, cast every care upon him.

He cares for you. He loves for you. Of course, sometimes you don't feel it.

It's normal to go through all kinds of feelings. Often I feel like a blob. Often I feel God must be a thousand miles away and he certainly doesn't know who this loudmouth from New York City, George Burwer is, nor does he care.

But somehow, I buffet my body. I submit to him. I cast my care upon him.

I take up a cross, even though my legs are shaking, and I follow him. And if a guy like me with so many struggles, especially eyes for attractive girls, can run the race till 80 years of age, none of you have an excuse. So go for it in the name of the Lord.

Amen.

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