

Is the Glory Departing

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the critical balance between spiritual preparation and evangelism, warning against complacency and the loss of God's presence in ministry.

Duration: 34:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:39, Romans 12:2, James 4:8, Revelation 3:1, Revelation 3:15-16

Topics: "Glory Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the struggle that many people face in trying to live a holy and righteous life while also feeling the pressure to reach the world for Christ. They emphasize the importance of spiritual preparation, prayer, and deep knowledge of the Word of God. The speaker highlights the need for love and humility in the Church, drawing parallels to the repeated command in the New Testament to love our neighbor as ourselves. They caution against becoming complacent or self-satisfied, using the example of the Church of Laodicea in the book of Revelation. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of being filled with the Spirit of the Lord.

Transcript

I think as we come on O.M. and as we hear these various messages, we face a terrific struggle in our lives. I think many of you are facing this struggle, as I am facing it constantly. We hear these messages on holiness, we hear messages on living according to the Sermon on the Mount, we hear messages on prayer, messages on the life, as there's such a great emphasis in this work, on living the life, again and again and again, this is emphasized.

And yet along with this emphasis is this tremendous challenge to reach the world in our generation. And we have these challenge posters and we have maps of the world and prayer meetings and weekly reports, and there's this tremendous thrust and drive to reach the world for Christ. And you can get caught with these two things in your mind, and you wonder, well, what is it? As we hear messages on spiritual preparation, as we hear messages on giving ourselves to prayer, as we're exhorted to spend days in prayer, nights in prayer, as we're exhorted to get a deep knowledge of the Word, we're encouraged to get a knowledge of apologetics, to be able to defend the faith or present the faith.

And so many things come upon us, so many challenges. We ask ourselves, well, what is it? Where is it? What is it that we really want? And so we're at times pulled. On one side, evangelism.

We've got to get the trucks prepared. We've got to get the literature ready. We've got to get the book table up.

We've got to get the shots or the jabs. We've got to get the visas. We've got to get moving.

We've got to get moving. And so over here, there's this push, isn't there? You feel when you come in, O.M., that you're a little bit pushed, and that we don't seem to stop anywhere. We keep going.

And then over here, we're told to wait upon the Lord. We're told to get close to Jesus, to learn about the Lord and know God. And there's actually far more messages given in this line, but our daily activities at times seem to immediately pull us over here.

And so I've had people ask me, well, George, which is it? Which is it? Which is more important? And I've constantly tried to emphasize to brothers and sisters that it's both. That as we go deeper and deeper into God, into a knowledge of God, so we will move out faster for the Lord. And that the Holy Ghost will bring a holy God.

And I'm convinced that it is both. And yet, perhaps someone won't be satisfied with that. Perhaps someone feels, well, which is the most important? And I'm convinced that if you're forced to choose, you, of course, must choose this side.

You must choose the side of developing a God-centered, Christ-centered, Spirit-filled life. And if O.M., over the years and as time goes on, is pressed more and more to choose, and at times we are pressed to choose, we will constantly, you be sure, put the weight over here. It's got to be here.

And it's always been this way. Though I want to see the whole world rich, even in our generation, though I have a burden for China, though I have a burden for Russia, though I have a burden for all these lands, I realize that the emphasis must be over here. And for every one message you ever hear me preach on evangelism, you'll hear seven on the life that God wants us to have, to evangelize.

And I'm convinced that the greatest mistake we can ever make is to sacrifice evangelism for spiritual quality. God is looking for quality. God is looking for men who will live, according to the Sermon on the Mount.

God is looking for men that will live the life of a disciple. And I can say with all my heart, and God knows my heart, if we're not going to have this quality, if we're not going to have this reality, then I don't want to move. I don't want to move.

If we're not going to have this quality in the literature department, I don't want any literature. If we're not going to have this kind of quality in the administration, I don't want any administration. If we're not going to have this kind of quality in our maintenance department, I don't want any maintenance department.

And I'm convinced that we've got to make sure that day by day and week by week, we drive the stakes in well. A.W. Tozer made a statement that I copied in my Bible. I think it's a brilliant statement.

I want to read it. He said, The popular notion that the first obligation of the church is to spread the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth is false. Her first obligation is to be spiritually worthy to spread it.

I'll repeat it. Her first obligation is to be spiritually worthy to spread it. To spread an effigy, degenerate brand of Christianity to pagan lands is not to fulfill the commandment of Christ.

That's right. Eric Fife in his book, *Man's Peace, God's Glory*, says this, Today we have perhaps a higher standard of academic preparation for the mission field than ever before. By the way, he's probably the top leader in InterVarsity.

We have a higher standard of academic preparation for the mission field than ever before. But it is unfortunately true that there are very few candidates whose prayer and conversation are such as to have a heartwarming quality. And I'm convinced that unless you're desperate for holiness in your life, practical, real, outworking holiness, I'm convinced you're wasting your time thinking about the mission field.

This inward preparation that was spoke to us on Tuesday night is as important as our brother said, yea, twice as important. I might have some differences with some people as to how to get this inward preparation. But I'm convinced with all my heart, this is it.

What Brother Greg has brought to us tonight, what sometimes comes across the pulpit in O.M., this constant emphasis on the life, humility, brokenness, love, all these things. You might think this is repetitious. It's no more repetitious than it is in the word of God.

Nine times in the New Testament we're told to love our neighbor as ourself. God knew how dense we were. Christ knew how donkey spirited we were.

And again and again and again, love thy neighbor as thyself. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Love thy neighbor as thyself.

What's the last thing we do in the Church of Jesus Christ? That's right, love thy neighbor as thyself. And we spread our books, we send out our missionaries, and it's summed up in the words of Jesus Christ, He crossed land and sea and make a man two times the child of hell as he was in the beginning. Because you're spreading a degenerate, effigy form of Christianity.

It can't be. It can't be. And if I were in your shoes and I didn't see some of this reality working out of my life, if I didn't see something in the sermon of the mount coming out of my life, something of this reality flowing out of my life, I'd go to my country leader and I'd say, look, I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy to even ask you what country I should go to.

I'm a complete failure. This isn't real in my life. I'm not saying that to get you to come to us so we can place you.

That has nothing to do with it, because you'll probably end up going anyway where you want to go. But I'm trying to drive home to your hearts that this is what God is concerned about. This inward preparation, this reality, this humility, brokenness, love, gentleness, that constantly we speak about, you must have.

Now, there's a great problem with many of us. And it's summed up in the book of Revelation. And if you turn to the book of Revelation, you'll see in the words of Christ what I mean.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 3, we have some of the most powerful passages of Scripture you can ever read. The book of Revelation, chapter 3 and verse 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write these things, that he that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.

I know thy works. Look, God knows your heart. You can fool me, you can fool your leader, you can fool your pastor, you can even fool your wife, but God knows your works.

And all of us who come on our way, we get a name. And of course here, all those who follow Jesus Christ had a name. And the very fact they had a name, Christian, the very fact that they had a reputation of being Christians, and in this case a reputation of being a live group of Christians, which was the case of this particular church, doesn't mean very much.

Because God knows the heart, God knows the real works. And this has been the case of many O.M.s. Maybe I shouldn't use the word many, it's a very dangerous word, in the case of some. They've had a name that they were alive.

Operation Mobilization. That is why I bring the word. That's a prayer.

I've heard about this. So you get the name. Name that you're alive.

The very fact that you tell some people, and there are many people who look upon this word very favorably, far more than we imagine, too many do. And you tell them you were on Operation Mobilization for a summer, they expect reality. Many people.

They expect you know something about prayer. They expect you know something about witnessing. They expect you know something about the basic truths of the Christian faith.

If they've read True Discipleship, if they've read any of my literature, if they've heard any of my tapes, naturally you've been O.M. a year. You've been with O.M. a summer. You've got a name that you're alive.

Then they live with you and discover you're dead. This will be the curse of any movement. This is the curse of many a movement that has begun with great light.

And the people had a name. I belong to so-and-so church. Ooh, that's a live church.

I've heard about that group. My, they're really moving for God. The person, by the very fact that he's a part of that particular movement, has a name that he's alive, but he could be very dead.

And that could be true of you. You could be on O.M. You could be at this conference. You could go to India for a year.

You could go to India three years. And you come back from India with a name. People would book meetings for you.

People would listen to you. You could show your slides. You could give your testimony, a name that you're alive, but in your heart you'd know still, dead.

Because this life, this love, this brokenness, this weakness, that's talked about, that we read, that's been described in your books. In verse 15, it says, I know thy works, and here God is speaking to the lay of the signature, but thou art neither cold nor hot, and I would that thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

One of the most unexplained scripture verses in the Bible. And it's relatively easy, in O.M., to get into a state of lukewarmness. Overdoses of messages, overdoses of discipleship, overdoses of a lot of things,

can either produce a burning man who's hungry for God, or a lukewarm Christian.

I believe that O.M. is intertwined always with spiritual. I believe there are many of us who are basically indignant to the truths of the New Testament. I believe there are some of us who find it hard to be stirred in prayer.

We find it hard to be concerned for souls on the doorsteps. We find it hard to feel an ache in our heart for the needs, for the burdens, for the sins that surround us and that plague the world, and it's a symptom of spiritual lukewarmness. I believe there's people in O.M. who are merely fulfilling a job.

There are some who have nothing better to do instead of sticking around. Some people wonder why we ask people to fill out a questionnaire each year, as if this was some great thing. But I want to tell you I believe all of us each year need to be examined.

Are we just hanging around? Are we just existing? Are we just going on and on? Or are we really hungry for these principles? Are you really hungry for what I pour my heart out over night after night? Or are you just merely part of the organization? As I pour my heart out, as I pour my life, every inch that I can possibly can into this work, are you being linked or are you just part of the organization? As Jonathan comes, as Greg comes, as Dale comes, as others come, and they pour out their heart, and these men are real. I move with these men. I've watched them with my spiritual binoculars.

I've traveled in trucks with them. And I want to tell you the men that get into this pulpit for the most part, not all, but for the most part, are real men who are hungry for God. But as they speak, as they minister, as sometimes they get a little excited, and their voice is raised, and we think, oh, he's an American.

But are our hearts getting linked? And if our hearts aren't getting linked, then what are we doing here? What are we doing here? Are you just doing a job? Do you think you're really serving God? You're in a state of lukewarmness that is contaminating the work. You're in a state of lukewarmness that is hindering the work. You're in a state of lukewarmness that will hinder the entire work of the Spirit of God.

And the Bible says, Be hot or be cold, but don't be lukewarm. I want to tell you I believe the man who's against O.M., the man who thinks it's all rubbish, the man who thinks we're hindering spiritual work, as far as I'm concerned, is doing less harm to this work of God than a man in our ranks who's lukewarm, prowlless, fruitless, and barren in his life. That's what the Bible says.

Our hearts ache to be part of it in our own time. My heart aches to see tears. My heart aches to see brokenness.

My heart aches to see spiritual hunger. Though we know we haven't obtained, though we know the Sermon on the Mount is a hundred miles away, though we know that our lives are full of problems and that we've got a long way to go, at least there's hunger. At least there's agony of soul.

At least there's repentance. Oh, how little we know of repentance. A little we know of really coming to a brother and repenting, coming to the cross and really repenting.

One of the greatest things we need to repent of is leaders, leaders, leaders, you and me. You've been around seven years, careful as ever, allowing truth to somehow no longer make an impact on your mind. I want to tell you, I've listened to Billy Graham's tape some fifteen times, fifteen times.

I've listened to some of Alan Redpath's tapes over ten times. I've listened to other people's tapes and other messages, and because something is happening in my heart by the Spirit of God, every time I hear it, there's a repentance, there's brokenness, there's agony of heart, and I can hardly stand sometimes to stand or to sit and listen to some of these men. Some of us not stand.

Some of us can listen, we can hear the challenge again and again, we can play the tapes again and again, and we sit like stones. We've been corroded, we've been attacked by spiritual reward. It's death.

It'll kill this world, just that world. What one man and other man labor for years, what they weep over, what they toil over, what they tarry through the night over, what they fight for, what they suffer for can be destroyed in one day by one new ornament. It might be better for you to say, I know my wife.

I'm not ready. I'm not ready. I can't go through it.

Better to say that than to spread degenerate Christianity, to spread this gangrene and spiritual lukewarmness which is so prevalent in the 20th century. What did God say here in the book of Revelation? Look at verse 17. Listen to this.

Listen to this. This trumpet blast against 20th century evangelical sleepism. Look at it.

Because thou sayest, verse 17, I am rich and increased with drugs, and I need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. How far off is this day for all of us? How far is this day off? Look at our office. Not like it used to be.

Look at the equipment. Look at the view. 1965 view.

Just give it to us. Look at the trucks. Not like they used to be.

Brand new. Look at the shank quarters. Not the way it used to be.

Curtains on the windows. Nice warm rooms. Everything.

Beds now. Oh, look. Look at O.M. has really changed.

My, it's good. They aren't so foolish like they used to be. They've grown up.

They've matured. They've come a long way, yes. They're increased with drugs.

No more of this waiting for months to pay the bills. All on time now. They've got a budget.

They're settled top men in the finance division. They really know what they're doing. Good administrators, yes, O.M. Increased in goods.

Nothing lacking. Yet what will God perhaps have to say to us at that point? He might have to say to us what he's had to say to many organizations that have got to that point. And it could happen to us.

What he said in the book of Revelation in the church of Laodicea. Thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Do you want that to come in this work? Do you want Ichabod to be written across on the front of all of our lorries? That word that was used in the Old Testament that meant the spirit of the Lord hath departed.

I remember when I was in Bible school the dean of men was so broken, so concerned he finally moved him out of the place. Then I remembered standing before that men's student body and I wanted to tell you if I ever saw Luke 1 as I saw it in Bible school it would almost kill me. Lines of guys sitting in the back of the chapel at devotional time sleeping, joking.

Oh, I tell you I saw such mockery among evangelicals. I've seen guys mock prayer. I've seen guys who claim to be born again make absolute folly of speakers because they were emphasizing something they didn't like other things.

Oh, my, I used to hate them. And it used to hurt the dean of men. I tell you his heart was aching.

And one day he preached to those young men and he said, I want to tell you there's going to be a new inscription on the front of our Bible school. It's going to say Ichabod. And I believe this inscription is slowly, slowly being written on many places on many organizations, on many Bible schools.

Ichabod, what does it mean? The spirit of the Lord hath departed. Do you want this written on the armchair? Do you want this written on the maintenance base? Do you want this written on our lorries? Do you want this written on our bookshelf? It will be, unless there's repentance, revival, brokenness, and a love for Christ that takes us barely to the feet of Jesus and refreshes us with a spirit of coming. Oh, my God.

Show us how serious this business is. Do you remember the story in the Old Testament when they carried the ark on a cart? Do you remember that? Do you remember that story? They put the ark of God on a new cart. Boy, this is the answer.

None of this old shoulder bearing. Wow, for years we've been carting this thing on our shoulders so much work, sweat, hardship, trouble. They had a new cart.

And there's a constant influence in any work of God and there's an influence in OM often to get a new cart and to do away with some of the old fanaticism, to do away with some of the extremisms. Now, let's cut the prayer meetings down a little bit and let's be careful of this and this and, you know, there's all kinds of ideas for a new cart. Do you remember what happened when they put the ark of God on a new cart? They lost the blessing.

They had a new cart and they could move faster but the blessing was not on them. The curse came upon them. And when they finally took the ark of God off the cart and put it back on the shoulders, then the blessing came down.

Let us never want to take the hardships, the burdens, all that God has given to us and put it on a new cart as attractive as it might look. But let us each bear our burdens as God has told. I remember a man from Mexico preaching to me or to us on this subject at Bible school.

And, oh, I tell you, I can remember his message as clear as if I was sitting here explaining how so often in God's Word we're tricked by the new cart. And as Bowne says in his book on prayer, man or the church looks for new methods and God looks for men. For men.

Holy men. Spirit-filled men. Men who live in revival.

I tell you, young people, this is possible. Don't let Satan deceive you that you have to go through these days of depression. You have to go through spiritual barrenness.

You have to go through these things. Don't let the devil deceive you. He has made provision for you and we'll be speaking about this much as the week's gone.

He has made provision for you to live in revival. He has made provision for you to be more than a conqueror in Jesus Christ. Don't let Satan deceive you.

This little book, Calvary Road, this little book, The Release of the Spirit, these are not mythological fairy tales. This is truth. This is the truth of the Bible expressed through God's anointed vessels.

And this kind of life is possible. This kind of holiness that Greg has spoken about, this practical holiness that will stun the unbeliever right where he stands, this is possible in the 21st century. And this is what... Let's stop the healing.

Let's scrap the ridiculous shit. Let's not go to India this year. Let's not budge if we're not going to get serious concerning these matters.

Be he hot or be he cold. What is the choice? Middle or low? Indifferent? Lukewarm? Waiting for some special? No. It's hot or cold.

May God give you the grace to enter into his healing. He wants it. And as Tozer has said to many of us through his literature, you have as much as you want.

You have as much as you want. And every year at these conferences I prayed, Oh God, do something new in me. Change me.

I don't want to come back the same. Every year he's done it. Every year I've stood in trembling.

Can I live another year 365 days of revival? Can I live another year with the joy of the Lord every day, with fullness every day, with the shekinah glory every day? And it seems impossible and I just shrink. It can't be done. And that's what the devil always says.

It can't be done. You've got to slow down. You've got to get a new cart.

You've got to change your ministry. Oh, he's got so many little ideas. Another 365 days have passed.

And those 365 days have been 365 days of testimony that what Roy Hesham talks about in his book, that what Watchmen speaks about in his book, that what Ravenhill speaks about in his book can be reality in our lives. It doesn't mean we don't sin. I didn't say that.

I'm a sinner and I'm a felon. The only difference probably in me and in some of you is not what you think, that I'm some special spiritual being, that I'm this or I'm that, or I've had this experience or done that. No.

But probably the only difference between me and many of you is simply that I repent quicker, is that I love Jesus or something has happened to me in which I just can't stand to be away from him more than a few minutes. No, there are breaks of fellowship sometimes almost every day because of self, because I am a felon, because I am a poor husband, and I am a poor leader, and I am a poor, there's about everything you can name. In other words, breaks in the fellowship.

I go on to the cross and because he by his grace has taught me the cross, I immediately go back. Not a minute, not a minute, I immediately go back. If it's to my wife, I'm sorry, honey, it was in the flesh.

Please forgive me, Lord, I need you. Immediately this grace, immediately this restoration, immediately the flame gets hotter than it was before you. It's the sinner who has to come, as I have to come many times to the cross for the pride of my heart, for my irritability, for my impatience, for my lack of love.

I don't love Indians, really. I don't love the people all over the world, Afghans and Russians. I was there in Russia just a few weeks ago and as I walked by those Russians, hundreds of them in the airport in Moscow, I was stone cold.

What could I do at that moment? I'll tell you what I did. Immediately I repented and immediately I was warmed up. I wanted to just go around and kiss some Russians.

Repentance is the way of revival. Back to the cross. Daily.

Back to the cross. Hourly. Back to the feet of Jesus.

Some of you don't want to die. You get embarrassed. People will think you are all that you would hope to be.

People may not think you're as spiritual as you should be. You'll be misunderstood. The man who lives at the cross, he'll never be misunderstood.

But it's the only way. You can use other terminology. But basically, it always comes back to Jesus.

Back to the cross. I pray this coming year, all of us will come in to the heat of God's love through cowardly repentance and through realizing that Jesus Christ is the only one. I don't speak these words.

I can't prepare these messages. Amen. The Holy Spirit of God.

Oh, Jesus Christ, have mercy on this multitude of sinners. All the children of Israel, we want and want you. We've built our golden castles.

We've learned and we've learned. We've been indifferent. To your love, we've built new carts.

Father, Father, pour out your Spirit upon us. Bless, oh God, the place of brokenness. Oh, Lord, pour out the cowardly repentance of the foot of the cross.

Lord, that we might not have Ichabod above the lightning's place and our Lord's. We might not have Ichabod on the doormat tonight. We might not have Ichabod over the doors of our long period of misery.

Forgive us of our transgressions. Forgive us of our colds. Forgive us of our agonizations.

Forgive us of our amnesia. And move us and change us that we might be with your kind Lord. And we honor as we expect.

At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light and the burning of my heart rolled away, it was there by faith I received and now I am happy all the day. It was there by faith I received my sight and now I am happy all the day. Blessing necessarily comes through cowardice, through moaning.

We certainly have lost the sinner's bench in the 20th century. In some ways, after the meeting, we get involved in our false and bubble conversations. So we usually arise, go to our girlfriend, arise, go to something else, and the glory... I'm going to ask that this room be kept really quiet tonight for a while, back for the rest of the month.

If some of you want to come up here to the front, to get away from the others, and just move, move, and pray as you can. I've done it many times. I've been asked that, and I tell you, and that's just really powerful.

So, if God has spoken, and you feel that, just come up here and pray, have any type of show, nothing, nothing of that. You can go back and do the same again, that's okay. You can go out the way you want to go, however you do it.

I don't care, but I pray some of us will take some time to seek the Lord. And I'd like to invite those of you that can come up, and pray, first silently here in front to yourself, and then perhaps slowly express ourselves to God. Let's be very quiet as we meet.

Amen.

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