

Reality & Paul 2

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's word and the need for Christians to be involved in world evangelism, following the example of the apostle Paul.

Duration: 51:35

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 11:23, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:8-9, Philippians 4:13, 1 Thessalonians 2:9

Topics: "Reality"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the challenges and perils faced by Christians in their journey of faith. He emphasizes the importance of staying committed to Christ despite the difficulties and temptations that may arise. The speaker also highlights the need for Christians to be aware of the inconsistencies and shortcomings of fellow believers, as well as the importance of following the teachings and lifestyle of the apostle Paul. Additionally, he discusses the training program in India that helps young people discern their calling and determine if they are suited for missionary work.

Transcript

Lord, help us this morning as we continue in this study together. Help us to feed on your word and help us, oh, by your grace and power to be obedient to it. Oh, Lord, we pray.

Please deliver us from any subtle form of spiritual schizophrenia, any subtle dichotomy in which we departmentalize our lives and cause us, oh God, to be willing to change, to be willing to turn around in certain areas of our living, that we may be more and more like your Son, Jesus Christ. In his name we pray. Amen.

Well, I believe one of the brethren yesterday afternoon bumped into Eric Hutchings in the street. Of course, if you bump into him too hard, you'll know it. But now it seems that I'm going to be speaking this afternoon on a radio broadcast, or at least making a recording down in Eastbourne to go out over Radio Monte Carlo.

It's amazing the way God confirms his will. I find it difficult at times to know just what I'm supposed to do in any one day. I have so many things, hundreds of letters, phone calls I should be making, friends, dozens and dozens of prayer partners of our work living within 15 miles of here.

You know, what do you do in any one day? There's so many wonderful people right here to talk to, and my children. I have three of those. I don't know how that play happened.

Do you find that a problem? What to do, especially when you're in a situation like this? We met a very dear prayer partner, a girl who was on OM way back in 1962 at the meeting. She drove from Eastbourne to the meeting. She asked us to come over for lunch today.

She lives in Eastbourne, and I didn't know whether to go or not to go. But then our brother comes to me with this other recording, and where is that? Eastbourne. So that seemed to confirm that we should go and spend a little time with this close friend, who is actually an Austrian girl, and then make this recording.

I'd appreciate your prayers for that. I'd like you now to turn in your Bible to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

You know, these descriptions that Paul gives of himself are very powerful, and I hope you will not let them slide by without giving real thought. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and I just want to say this. I am a natural skeptic.

Some of you find believing perhaps somewhat easy. I've found people like that. Never doubt the faith.

Sean is a rock, at least intellectually. I have not found believing easy. Studying under communist professors in the University of Mexico, studying under all unbelievers in the first college I went to, two or three of whom specialized in destroying people's faith in the Bible, and they were men who knew the Bible.

Do not think there are unbelievers who do not know the Bible. Some of the shrewdest unbelievers in the world know this book. They don't know the God of the book, and so they can't know the reality of the book, but they know the book in terms of the words.

I have not found it too easy to believe, and I just want to say that the reason perhaps I'm here more than any other thing over these years is that I believe the Bible is the word of God, and I believe that is the rock foundation of our faith. You say, no, Christ is the rock foundation. Well, that's true, of course, but what Christ do we know other than the Christ of the Bible? Take away the Bible and try to maintain Christ.

You have neo-orthodoxy. You have all kinds of existential religious ideas, and you might as well flip over and say Krishna. What's the difference? And that's what you have thousands of young people doing.

If you follow the Hare Krishna movement, the growth of the Hare Krishna movement is beyond almost credibility. Recently, I was in an airport. These young people come in groups of 12 selling their magazines in the airports and chanting Hare Krishna choruses.

The Jesus Christ that we know is the Jesus Christ of the word of God. You see, Mahatma Gandhi said, it doesn't matter whether Jesus Christ existed in history. It doesn't matter whether Krishna existed in history.

It's the existential experience that you and I can have now. We say, no, it is important. If Jesus Christ did not exist in time, space, and history, then I am not going to fall down and worship him, even though I may get a nice feeling in doing it.

There is such a thing as truth. As Dr. Schaefer says, there is truth, truth. We're not just talking about existential experiences.

We're not just talking about a religious trip. We are talking about historic truth. I think that's very important.

And that's why, as we approach the word of God, it is not just to have some kind of nice feeling or nice experience or be able to chant 1 Corinthians 13, but it's in an objective way. This is truth. This is the word of God.

We must obey. And many times our feelings may be going in the opposite direction, seemingly, of the commands of the word of God. But we must obey.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God. And I've had to ask myself, what purpose, for what purpose are these very heavy passages that describe the life of the Apostle Paul? Passages that are enough almost to scare us away from the Christian faith, especially when we think of his challenge to be followers of him. All right, let's look at this passage.

Let's start at verse 23, 2 Corinthians chapter 11. Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. And obviously Paul now is giving this description for a definite purpose.

He is not just boasting, but he is, in a sense, boasting with a very great purpose. His purpose is the unity of the believers. In order to keep the unity of the believers, in order for them to continue in the truth, he felt he had to expose his life in this way and share with them on this level.

And we have it in God's word for our own edification. I am more in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck.

A night and a day I've been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils, that is, dangers of waters, in dangers of robbers, in dangers by my own countrymen, in dangers by the Gentiles, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers in the sea, in dangers among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness. The paradox of pain. In watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Now we could spend all morning right here. Believe me, there's so much in that description of this man. We see the mentality of the Apostle Paul.

We see all that he had to go through for the sake of the Church of Christ. And we're reminded of those words in Philippians, where Paul says that we must be ready to endure all things for the sake of the elect. I wonder how many of us can say from the depths of our heart, I'm willing to endure anything, absolutely anything, pain, mockings, scourgings, for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of those who need to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want us to keep that passage in mind, and I want us to just go over to Romans for a moment, to take a look at something that will help us understand why Paul was willing to go through so much. Romans chapter 15. Romans chapter 15.

Verse 19. Through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Eurysium, forgive the pronunciation, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea,

so have I strived to preach the gospel not where Christ was made, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.

Now it begins to make sense. Suffering without a vision can become unbearable. Why am I suffering? What is the purpose? Why am I going the extra mile? Why am I sacrificially giving? Why am I spending this night in prayer? Why am I walking these 25 miles through the mountains of Nepal? But Paul's suffering, Paul's life of hardness and hardship, Paul's commitment had purpose.

His burden was to preach the gospel to every creature. And his was even one step further in that he said he wanted to preach the gospel where Christ was not named. And I feel this is part of the challenge this week.

I feel obligated before the living God to give out this plea to become involved in preaching the gospel in the world today, 2,000 years after Christ, where he's not yet been named. We can't all go to such places. Such places are few, comparatively speaking, in comparison to the day in which Paul lived.

But there are places today where Christ has never been named. We can take out this map of Asia or this map of the world, as I've requested you to do, and we can point to countries like Afghanistan. Afghanistan has 13, maybe 15 million people.

It has less than 15 known believers. Our team just finished yesterday this very careful campaign in Afghanistan that we couldn't even put into a prayer letter. Just getting the word of God out very, very carefully.

Here is a land where Christ has not been named in most places. And if we are going to follow the lifestyle and the impetus and the burden of Apostle Paul, we must at least, we must at least become concerned about these places. And yet so often, we are not interested.

We don't have time. I've met many missionaries out on the field who hardly ever receive a letter from their home church. Hardly ever receive a letter from another Christian.

I have seen more casualties on the mission field than I dare tell you. You would think I was the biggest pessimist that ever came to your Bible camp. If I told you the things that I've seen and I've known to take place on the mission field, people wiped out in a way beyond words.

Immorality is just one of the ways. So on the mission field, I want to tell you the fiery darts of impurity have no geographical boundaries. Missionaries are human beings.

And when we see these casualties on the mission field and we see the tremendous setbacks of the work in Afghanistan as it's been in the last couple of years, as you know, they even took the one church in the whole nation a few years ago and they bulldozed it right to the ground. That was 100,000 pounds sterling worth of church bulldozed to the ground. 70% of the missionaries thrown out of the country.

All the rest are confined to Kabul and all being spied on. There are setbacks. I believe in the sovereignty of God as much as probably anyone.

If it wasn't for God's sovereignty, I don't know how I'd even get out of bed in the morning. I'd go into a depression just thinking about what may come. God is sovereign.

God is overruling. God is great. But as to the battlefield down here, which you and I are involved in the daily battles, there are setbacks.

And when we see some of these setbacks, and we see some of these difficulties, and we see lands 2,000 years after Christ gave the commission to go into all the world where there is so little witness, and then we go back home and we take a survey of the midweek prayer meeting, we understand better. We understand better. We have dropped the chains of intercession many times and the enemy has moved in.

We cannot study the life of Paul. We cannot talk about reality in the life of Paul without talking about world evangelism. This was the passion of his life.

To know Christ was the most important, and to make him known. And we see here not only that, but this desire to make him known where he had not previously been known. I think of some of the areas of India that we have been in.

For example, Rajasthan. 25 million people in Rajasthan. 25 million! You have more churches preaching the gospel within 15 miles of where I'm standing right now than you would have in the entire state of Rajasthan among 25 million precious souls.

And most of those churches in Rajasthan would have less than 20 people. And many of those people wouldn't be from Rajasthan. They'd be from other states.

As far as Rajasthanis of Hindu or Muslim background who know the Lord Jesus, there are just so few. One of our team members was talking to a man about Jesus, and he said, look, I think you've got the wrong village. He doesn't live here.

Try the next village. He didn't know who Jesus was. Who's Jesus? Try the next village.

And this is our burden. And we are looking. We are looking for people that want to take on this vision of the Apostle Paul, that want to take on this vision of the Lord Jesus, who said, you should be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts, the uttermost parts, the Rajasthanans, the Afghanistans, the Mongolias, the outer regions of Nepal.

And I believe this is something practical. This is something practical. Why, if someone asked me, I could tell them just like that, five or ten things they could do without leaving the British Isles.

That would make an impact in these countries. I believe, I spend about half of my life here in Britain, the other half all over the place. But I believe that when I'm here in Britain, I am making just as much a contribution to world evangelization as when I go out there, at least in my particular job.

There's prayer. There's mobilizing others. There's informing others.

You know, we write our prayer partners and say, could you help share the vision to a friend? Write in today for free pamphlets to give to some friends and share the vision of Turkey, the vision of the Muslim world. You know, you think you'd be just swamped out with inquiries. Don't kid yourself.

For most people, the six-penny postage stamp is enough to stop them. Plus who, you know, who goes around giving away missionary literature? Someone will think I'm, you know, pushing. Isn't it funny how all the religious cults, they're not afraid to push.

Boy, they believe, they believe in what they talk about. And yet so oftentimes as Christians, we're the tiptoe, tiptoe types. And we're afraid that we may offend someone.

You know, God can overrule. If you offend someone, God can overrule. I also don't want to offend people.

But if I didn't believe that God could overrule, if, you know, if I dropped the ball, as we say, offend someone or do something wrong, that God couldn't overrule. I think I'd get nervous. Nervous condition, just thinking about that.

The apostle Paul is a man whose eyes were set on the regions beyond. What about you? What do these countries mean to you? Is it all just something hazy? You know, many of the young people have accepted Christ through the Jesus movement. You know where they are? Many of them are back on drugs and back on the sex kick.

Worse than they were before they accepted, quote, quote, Christ. Many of the people who got on the Arthur Blissett bandwagon and praised God for him, he had a real message, a sincere brother. Many of the young people go to our music festivals and many of the young people run around through Trafalgar Square with their fingers standing in the air, saying they believe one way for Jesus.

Where are they? The fact is most of these young people, a very high percentage of them, eventually run out of steam. Because so often times young people are being given half the message. They are being told, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are told there's a great joy living for Christ. They are told, praise the Lord. But they are not told there is a world to reach.

They are not told that there is a suffering that they must be willing to enter into. This is a vital part of the Christian life and there has never been a man of God in history not one who has not suffered something for Jesus Christ. The Bible says all those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer.

And so after one or two years, the froth and bubble, the easy believers and the superficiality of the present day evangelical world, it blows away. Now praise God, he's on his rescue program and some of these Jesus people are some of the finest Christians today and they're going on. Some of them have gotten into the Word and some of them have got into discipleship training programs and I don't despise any move of the Spirit of God and I don't believe it's fair comparing Phinney on the basis of what you and I know about Phinney with say some modern preacher today.

Because the only thing you and I know about Phinney is what we read. And when you read, especially books about men 100 or 200 years ago, you don't always get the full picture. A great, great percentage of the converts of Charles Phinney backslid.

The school that he founded was wiped out within a couple of decades. But many did also go on. I believe with all my heart, God has gathered us together this week to take us a few steps further in spiritual warfare.

There is no reality outside of the warfare. Is World War II real to this new generation? The kiddies of 5 and 10 and 15 years of age, is World War II real? Is the Battle of Britain real? Are the trenches of World War I real to hardly anybody around in our day of this generation? No. We can read about it.

We can see the films. We can read history. It's not real.

But if you go to one of the many hospitals where there are men who are crippled in World War II and you talk to a man laying in a hospital bed who's been there for 20 or who knows how many years, missing one arm, one leg, maybe an eye, maybe an ear. He's just been laying there. You ask him if it was real.

Don't be stupid. And in a Christian life, reality only comes to the man, to the woman, to the boy, to the girl who gets into the battle. If you're just standing on the grandstands or along the side of the road as sort of the parade goes by, it will not be real.

But when you go out to the front lines and you get involved in people and you get involved in intercessory prayer and you get involved in the warfare for the word of God through the lips of the apostle, Paul says in Corinthians, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty unto God through the pulling down of strongholds. You will quickly discover reality. Reality.

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel not where Christ was named lest I should build up another man's foundation. Let us get involved in doing just that. Going back now to this passage in 2 Corinthians, let's go verse by verse and just see some of the challenge in some of the spiritual meat that we have here.

Paul considered himself, verse 23, a fool for Christ. There is a difference between being foolish, and I've been, I'm that way often, and being a fool for Christ. On the other hand, if you're so absolutely petrified of being foolish, you may in fact never be a fool for Christ.

There is some gamble. We talked yesterday of how every failure should be a springboard to success. I meet so many young people.

My whole life is involved with young people. We had 900 at our July conference. Next week, I'll be over there in the midst of our August conference.

There will be another 800 or 900. All in this huge place that God has miraculously given us for four summers in a row, almost free of charge, in the middle of Belgium. That's an incredible story.

But so many of these young people, now come on around. Many of them have never served the Lord in any sensible or systematic way to any great degree before they came. Because they were frozen within their environment basically by the conviction that they weren't old enough, or they were too weak, or the problem was too hard, or they would make too many mistakes, or if they made a mistake, look at the embarrassment.

The man who is afraid to make a mistake, the girl who is afraid to make a mistake, will never accomplish anything, neither for God nor anybody else. We've got to be willing to gamble. We've got to be willing to be a fool for Christ.

Young people have written to me, and they said my own experience was a second conversion. Why? Because they simply began to do and to live what they had believed for 10 years, or at least they said they believed. I think the greatest way that God has used OM, one of the greatest ways, is simply showing ordinary people that they can be mightily used with God.

They come back at the end of the summer, having won their first soul to Christ. They come back at the end of the summer having done door-to-door work and street evangelism for the first time in their life, even

in a foreign language. That can be rather interesting to say the least.

Of course, we find these young people at terrific sales with the Christian books. They go house to house. They only know a few phrases.

Dear madam, this is a wonderful book. The lady sort of looks quite amused by your French. Will you please buy this wonderful book? The lady says, I don't want your book because you don't know what she said.

So you go on to your next phrase. Please buy this wonderful book. Finally, she buys the book.

Every time she says no or leave, I don't want to look at you anymore. You don't understand a word she's saying. You just keep smiling.

And I tell you what a smile does in France. It's worth a lot of money. And not only have the sale of these books led to conversions to Christ, for your information, a number of New Testament churches have been planted in some of these countries as the end result.

Because on the year program, we follow up going back, visiting, visiting, Bible study groups, and then planting a church. But it starts with a petrified young person and a pile of books and 16 phrases in French or in Italian or Spanish going house to house. And it's a revolution.

It's amazing what happens to our faith when we begin to step out. When we begin to believe God for something definite. Young people cannot come in unless they trust God for some money.

They cannot raise the money. They cannot request it even from the local church. They have to trust God.

Some of you have read the story of George Miller. You know, by the end of his life, he had 25,000 answers to prayer. He was another one of these apostolic types to say the least.

25,000 answers to prayer at the end of his life. How are you doing? Maybe you prefer not to keep any records. 5,000 of those prayers were answered on the very day he prayed.

He's the man who prayed in millions and millions of pounds back in the days when a pound was a pound. Where we're going, a pound would be like a penny. George Miller's penny.

So that's the way you can figure out what he's praying in. But my heart gets challenged when I read about these men. And I don't want to be found just sitting on the side of the road watching men of faith walk by.

I want to be found in the line of march, don't you? I'm sure you do. A fool for Christ, following the steps of men like Paul. I am more in labors, more abundant, you know a dirty word in the 20th century vocabulary? Work.

Really, work. W-O-R-K. Just try it in your local church.

Now, you get a tremendous bill, packed out. You bring in one of the local gospel, big groups, it's over the auditorium. Get in Johnny Cash or Mickey Rooney or some other person and everybody will come.

But you announce on Sunday morning the main, you know, Sunday evening, whatever the biggest meeting in church, next Saturday, we are going to gather together and we're going to work and clean the church basement and we're going to clean the garden and we're going to paint, we're going to work.

Everybody's invited, no admission charge. You see how many come next Saturday morning? You'll be able to meet together in the church festery.

Work, hard work. And I believe with all my heart and I say this from the depth of my soul, I believe one of the greatest sins of our generation is laziness. I believe we are a generation of lazy Christians.

I believe we are like those described in more than 20 Proverbs. Like the man who turns on the hinge in the morning. The man who says, oh, we can't go out there, there's a lion.

It's not a lion, it's just Neil sitting out there. There's a lion in the world. We always have an excuse.

And if you've ever studied those verses in Proverbs, by the way, Proverbs is one of my favorite books. I was selling books door to door, I think that was when I was about 17. And I met a lady, she was an older Christian.

She sat me down, boom, she was a very big lady, sat me down and says, no, I'm going to tell you how to live for Christ. And she said, a proverb a day keeps the devil away. So I started reading one chapter of Proverbs and I found out it just fits a month.

But really, there's a lot of spiritual food in the Proverbs. The apostle Paul was a man who was willing to work. He was not a full-time Christian worker as we think of today.

During a large part of his life, he supported himself through working in the tech making business. And yet he was ministering continually. That's why it is said of him in Acts chapter 20, just quickly turn to Acts chapter 20 where it says verse 33, I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel.

Yet ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me. And I have shown you all things how that so laboring you ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than receive. That's something, isn't it? Look over to 1 Thessalonians and we get a greater picture of this incredible lifestyle.

And in some ways, you can see the purpose of this in God's plan because therefore Paul becomes a great challenge both to the full-time Christian worker and there is a place for such a person and the man who is working. Paul did both. So his challenge comes to both groups.

None of us can run away from this man. Look what he says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 9, For you remember, brethren, our labor and travail for laboring night and day. Think of that, laboring night and day because we would not be chargeable unto any of you.

We preached unto you the gospel of God. What a challenge these words should be to every one of us gathered here today in laborings often. Hard work.

If you want to grow in Jesus Christ, if you want to amount to anything more than an evangelical fish floating in and out of various religious meetings the rest of your life, you will determine to work for God. A. W. Torrey, great man, or R. A. Torrey, wrote a book called How to Work for Christ. Not to gain salvation, none of us are that ignorant here, but because we are saved and we know whatsoever we sow, we shall reap.

He that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly. And when we think of how much there is to do, we think of how many different people are needed. The devil tricks young people and they go, Oh, I've got a special

talent.

I can't preach. How can God use me? For every one great preacher in the work of God, you need a hundred men to stand behind you. You need a hundred men of all kinds, all different gifts, teachers, mechanics, secretaries, clerical workers, cooks.

What's the hardest job to fill in the log house? You think it's captain? You think it's the chief engineer? I got three chief engineers. I got five potential captains. I'll tell you the job I can't get on that ship.

I can't get people in the kitchen, in the garden, cooks. That is the toughest spot on the empty log house, the galley. And the devil has roared through there so many times, he's got a path on the floor because it's so unglamorous.

It's so mundane. If you give everybody good food, nobody says anything. People are people.

They expect good food. But if any meal comes up that's not good, you say, non-Christians in the Lord's world of the Lordship? Yes. If you don't know anything about the inconsistencies of Christians, obviously you must have just been born again last night.

What a challenge it is to follow the teaching and the lifestyle of the apostle Paul. Well, let's move on. We'll never get through this passage.

In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure. This is not the American flag, stripes, this is lashings across the back, and when I think of that, I don't know what to say, so maybe I better not say anything. In stripes, above measure, in prisons, more frequently, it's quite unique, isn't it? My heart gets so grieved at the general drift in some evangelical circles among some evangelical leaders.

They fly into town, and they stay in the number one hotel, and it's twenty pound a night. They fly out first class jet, they send a man ahead to get it all ready, to make sure they can get a booking in the first class hotel, and all the rest. Quite different with the apostle Paul.

When he arrived in town, he checked out the local prison, because that's where he usually spent the night, and it was rent free. And when he wrote one of his letters, I think it was a letter to the Philippians, he expressed at that time that he was abounding. He says, I know how to abase, and I know how to abound.

And that position, he said he was abounding. Where was he? He was in prison. He was in prison, but he considered that an abounding experience, because he knew stripes, he knew all these other things, that to just be able to relax for a couple of weeks in prison and write out a few more epistles, hallelujah! Not so today.

We can hardly sit still in a two-hour prayer meeting. I believe that these passages are not written just to fill pages in a Bible. I believe these things are practical instruction, practical examples.

And believe me, some of these things may be upon us in this country quicker or sooner than we think. In prisons more frequently, in deaths often, that is in danger of death. Can you imagine having a group of people come up to you or getting a message and say, look, we have decided we are not going to eat until you're dead.

That's encouraging, isn't it? Have you ever had that experience? We are not going to eat, there's about 15 of us, 20 of us. We all love food, but we are not going to eat until you're dead. It's a real encouragement.

I dare say you may decide to move into another country. And yet Paul lived under this pressure. People talk about pressure.

Men of God are made under pressure. Learn to live with pressure, don't keep running away from it. God makes men under pressure.

And he lived under this pressure. In danger as often as we are going to see in other verses. Verse 24, the Jews five times received I 40 stripes.

Not once. If I had that once, the rest of my life my one major goal would be not to have that experience again. Five times 40 stripes.

That didn't stop him. It goes on to say, thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned.

Thrice I suffered shipwreck. And night and day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, you know, if we are going to reach this world for Christ, it's going to mean a lot of travel.

You know, I arrived at the scene of that accident last December. Went out and saw that O.M. Volkswagen. Pushed into an accordion.

Went to the hospital to see two of my friends seemingly dying. They both lived. And then they asked me over to the morgue.

Actually, I never did go in to see the bodies where the four others were dead. It's not an easy experience. Four of your closest friends killed just like that.

In myself, I would never send another O.M. vehicle out anywhere. We have 150 on the road right now. Sometimes when the devil is getting at me, I sit in a state of fear waiting for the phone to ring.

Which O.M. is dead next? Paul Little, two weeks ago, one of the leading evangelicals who organized the World Congress on Evangelism, just killed traveling from Chicago to Toronto. Some of you know his book on how to give away your faith. The highway seems to be the big place in the 20th century where many of God's people are being taken.

But if I didn't believe that God could overrule us and work through this, and even be glorified through it, and I have a little article I'd be happy to give you about the four lives of those young people, you know, I just wouldn't be able to go on. And it's passages like this. It's a realization that in Christian missionary work as Paul was in, he had to say, in journeys often.

So we, if we're going to reach this huge world for Christ, with almost 4,000 million people, it's going to mean journeys. Believe me, a ship is a lot safer, and a lot more effective way, and a lot cheaper way, to get large numbers of people from one place to another. And we praise God for the ship.

And we believe he's going to provide, in his time, another ship. In journeys often, in perils of waters, I knew what it was to be at sea, in danger. And I'd ask you to pray for this ship.

You know, this ship has no insurance. We can't afford to insure this vessel. In our mind, it wouldn't be the right use of the Lord's money.

This is God's ship. You can't insure the people anyway, and they're the most valuable thing. When you talk about merchant navy or ship insurance, you don't talk about the people.

That's separate. But this is God's ship, and she's going to sail as long as God wants her to sail. When I think of his mercy toward us, four and a half years of sailing without hardly a single mishap, I can just praise his name.

In perils at sea. In perils of waters. You know, one of our biggest problems in India is thieves.

You can get them on the teams. In any society where there's economic depression, people join your team for false motivation, false brothers. They go on for months.

They have all the jargon. They have all the talk. You think this brother is so committed to Christ.

Pretty soon the typewriter's gone. Pretty soon the brother's wallet's gone. Pretty soon... What's going on? It's an inside job.

Can you imagine that confusion and the difficulty that brings to the team? Trying to find out who that is. And then there's thieves from outside. Continually, one family traveling to Nepal on a train.

They were conscious that they might get everything stolen. And so the husband, big strong fellow, slept on top of the wife's trunk. She had all of her possessions in one trunk.

And the thieves got that trunk right from underneath him in the night. Now, I don't know how they did it. Neither does he.

But it never came back. And as we go forward in God's work, there are so many things harassing us. There are so many things hitting.

This is why we need the prayers of God's people. Sometimes it just becomes overwhelming. It's four times as hard just to live in a place like India.

Just to survive. Just to keep going. Just to organize your food and to get some air to breathe.

As it is, for example, here in England. Of course, the devil uses other tactics here. Especially he hits the mind.

But he hits the mind out there as well. And we're finding that 50% of the people we send to India just cannot take it. That's why it's good.

It's a training program. If they go back after two years, they realize this is not their thing, there's no harm done. It's a good way to find out whether your calling is from God.

You know, put some feet on it and go try it. And many missionary societies are saying today, look, get some training with a group like OM or missionary internship, give one or two years, and then come back and put in your application. And we'll know what you're made of.

And something more of God's plan for your life. Endangered by robbers. Endangered by his own countrymen.

Endangered by the Gentiles. Endangered in the city. Endangered in the wilderness.

I like that because to me it speaks to the simple fact that you can't get away from the dangers. A lot of people keep organizing their life to make it easier and to overcome this problem. And in the affluent society, we see a problem and immediately think, what can I buy to overcome this problem? My car breaks down.

Oh, what a tragedy, my car is broken down. Here I am in the AA, five miles away. Taxis within five miles of wherever you are.

Trains, the greatest train network almost in the entire world. The country is so small, the people walk from... being made by the young people. And the fact of the matter is, you and I know that as we grow older, we don't necessarily grow more discerning.

As Hitler grew older, he didn't get more discerning, did he? And if our heart isn't right, and if we don't have a spirit-controlled relationship with God, our age and our becoming older doesn't mean anything, except it may be the greatest hindrance in our life. And we become less willing to learn, and less willing to confess our faults, and less willing to be corrected. If you want to see how spiritual you are, just take a thermometer of how you react to criticism.

Oh, praise God for criticism. Isn't that wonderful, criticism? You just love that, people criticizing you. Isn't that great? What about when your husband criticizes you? Boy, isn't that great.

What about when your wife criticizes you? You're driving. My wife's always criticizing my driving. You discover that it's very easy to be Holy Joe in the pulpit, but you can be a little bevel behind that steering wheel.

Somehow there's a special area of pride dedicated wholly to driving. And Satan's very clever in using it. Very clever.

There are so many areas in the spiritual life. This is why I praise God for this message of Alan Redback, who said, we must always maintain a childlike spirit. And that means we're willing to even learn from a little child, from the mouths of babes.

Sometimes come tremendous things. The Apostle Paul knew what it was to face the problem of false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, I don't like either one of those.

In watchings often, the word of God says, watch and pray. And when I think of this whole subject of the second coming of Christ, I believe it is one of the greatest areas of unreality in the church today. I've been asked to speak at prophecy conferences.

And sometimes I've gone and spoken. And I speak on this subject, what would you live like if you really believed all this? It's so easy to have a head belief of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and have a head belief of what heaven is, and the wonders of heaven, and say, oh, praise God. And it's another thing to get that into practice in your life, to live in the light of his second coming.

Do you really think we would spend all of our money the way we're spending it if we really, in the depth of our heart, believed in the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you really think you're going to get a three-minute warning just before the second coming, so that you can call your bank, and say, hey, a quick transfer, please. Bring it over to my house. Christ is coming in three minutes.

We will take nothing with us. Nothing with us. And yet, I think of the materialistic drive among Christians.

I think of the accumulated wealth among Christians. We have churches in America that have no less than seven millionaires sitting in the congregation on Sunday morning. And I think of the wastage, and I think of just so many things along this line, and I just want to weep.

I just want to weep. People don't believe in the second coming. They don't believe that Jesus meant what he said, meant what he said when he said, lay not a treasure upon earth.

I have found very few who are willing to take those principles seriously. Paul did. Peter did.

He looked at the man who wanted to, who wanted to hit him up for a bit of money, and he said, silver and gold have I now. For what I have, I give. Rise up and walk.

And if you've studied Acts chapter 2, and if you've studied Acts chapter 4, and if you know anything about the Apostle Paul, you know that they were serious about this matter. And watching is often in hunger and thirst. You see, we have this affluent society, evangelical teaching, that if you're dedicated to Christ, you'll never lack anything that you really need.

Well, it's all right to say that, but what do you mean by that? Who knows best what we need? God or us? And it seems to me that oftentimes what Christians need is to suffer need. And that apparently is what Paul needed, because God allowed him to go without food, God allowed him even in times when he couldn't get water. And I believe with all my heart that we must not allow ourselves to be deceived into this pseudo-type of Christianity in which we have the idea that God is sort of a glorified Santa Claus, and you know, whatever you need, like the missionary who felt he needed a yacht out in Bangladesh to tour the rivers and to relax more, and of course he managed to scrape together some money, it was from a big denomination that paid missionaries greater salaries than any of you get.

Well, probably most of you. And so he bought a yacht! And he was praising God, look at this wonderful provision! Oh Lord, it's so great! Within 20 miles of his house are Christians living without hardly enough food in their stomachs. What kind of a God is that? What kind of a schizophrenic, nightmarish type of God are we creating? When in one minute we boast of how God supplies all these crazy things we don't even need, but he doesn't supply basic food for our Christian family, that's suffering.

The fact of the matter is, when we want something, we can justify it. Religion has always been one of man's main methods for justifying that which he selfishly wanted. And you and I know that leaders in this world oftentimes, even like dear Richard Nixon, have tried to use religion to get votes, and to keep the people in order, and I don't think we want it anymore.

But we can, without knowing it, fall into the same trap. And we create an English God instead of a New Testament and Biblical God, or an American God. A cultural substitute for the real living God that we read about in his word.

Suffering is an intrinsic part of the Christian life. And the fact of the matter is, some of the greatest joy in the Christian life comes through suffering. Some of the greatest joy comes through suffering.

Some of the most beautiful people that I have met, and fellowshiped with, around the world, I'm going to be seeing some of them next month in the land of Poland, are people who have suffered for Jesus Christ. And many of us are spiritually blah, because we've never had that reality in our lives. Well, let's just quickly

look at these few remaining words.

And watching is often in hunger and thirst and fasting is often in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. This is the great concern.

We can't go out asking to be beaten or asking for rods or stripes or prison. That may come in its time, but every one of us can get under the suffering and under the burden of other Christians. There are so many needs, there are so many suffering people, hospitals that need to be visited, prisons that need to be visited.

There are so many old age pensioners who never leave their homes and no one visits them. And I've been door to door in this country and I know the situation. We don't have to cross necessarily the English Channel.

To get involved in this, let's make this our lifestyle. It won't be easy. We don't have all the answers here this morning, but I think we've seen the direction that we need to move.

Apostolic reality that involves a real commitment. He who puts his hand on the plow and turns back is not fit for the kingdom of God. Let's put our hand on the plow in this kind of living.

Examine the scriptures. You. Don't take my word for it.

And see if these things are not true. Let us pray. Lord our God, we thank you for this powerful segment of your word.

The example, the Apostle Paul. We're going to see the other side of his life tomorrow. The gentleness, the patience, the meekness, the balance.

Lord our God, we pray that we may have this sign as well. That we may have our eyes on the regions beyond as well as right here. And that we may be ready for this kind of total abandonment to your son Jesus.

In his name we pray. Amen.

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