

Schaffhausen - Session 2 (Eng-German)

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon encourages believers to balance personal faith with a global perspective on missions and church leadership.

Duration: 43:18

Scripture: Proverbs 16:18, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:23, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 4:32, Ephesians 5:25, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "German"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker introduces the concept of 'big picture, small picture' to encourage listeners. The small picture refers to our personal lives, such as our homes, families, and daily struggles. The speaker shares personal anecdotes about their own small picture world, including experiences with marriage, parenting, and traveling. However, the speaker also emphasizes the importance of the big picture, which includes the global church and the challenges it faces. They mention the decline of local churches in England and Sweden and the need for encouragement and prayer. The sermon concludes with an invitation to a prayer meeting and a reminder of the power of gathering in Jesus' name.

Transcript

Okay, George. Thanks for having a second session with us. Yeah.

Let's just pray. Let's just search our own hearts. What has the Lord been trying to say to us today? Sometimes it's just good to stop and not hear anybody else speak.

But listen to the Lord. Are you open to some change the Lord may want to bring in your life, despite the difficulties that may take you through? So let's just have silent prayer for a few moments. Father, we thank you for the privilege of gathering in this way.

We think of Syria right now. This is the land of Syria and what they're suffering. We think of northern Nigeria, where no Christian is safe.

We think of Afghanistan and Iraq. Huge level of persecution, of especially those who love you. We think of Somalia, Lord, where these fanatics have said every Christian must die.

Lord, how do we in a place like Switzerland even begin to comprehend what it is to live in those places? But Lord, you've given us this freedom for a purpose. You've prospered some of us financially for a purpose. You've given many of us good health for a purpose.

May we not miss that purpose. May these few remaining hours we have together be a work of grace in our own hearts. We ask in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Well, it was a special blessing to meet some of you personally. Sometimes us older people are nervous about sharing our problems.

I do have memory problems. But they don't think I'm going to get Alzheimer's. That's a major, major problem here in Switzerland and all over Europe.

Surely it's one of the great mysteries of life. One of my friends has his mother in an Alzheimer's unit here. Thirteen thousand Euros a month.

That's what Alzheimer's can cost some people. But I just have a smaller memory problem. People are beginning to look the same.

Not people I've known for years, but people that I just meet. So if later on I meet you again, simply because I met you two hours ago, doesn't mean I will know exactly who you are. And I hope you will forgive me.

But I've always begged people to please, after I meet them, to send me an email, because that really helps me remember people. And my laptop is my companion. Seven hours a day on the laptop.

So I just stuck off there to send some urgent emails. But praise God for each one of these testimonies. We are going to have the prayer meeting this evening.

I think it will be very interesting. But I know it's hard to get people to come to prayer meetings. We're not only hoping you're going to come.

Maybe you'll phone someone, even from this church, and tell them to come. But our key verse for the prayer meeting tonight is where two or three are gathered in his name. He is in the midst.

So, who's ever here later tonight, hopefully you have some food, we're going to have a great time of prayer. Two items that I forgot to mention. One is this great book on leadership.

Through Special Projects Ministry, which I'll explain in a moment, we're putting this into dozens of languages around the world. Always in partnership with others. But if you know any Christian leader, what a wonderful gift.

This is a Christian classic. To give him a copy of this book. The greatest need, I believe, in every nation is a higher level of godly Christian leadership in the church.

One of the most famous pastors in the United States just had to stand in front of his 15,000 congregations and confess multiple adultery and addiction to pornography. How would you like to be in that church on Sunday morning? And this is happening because men move into ministry without being properly disciplined and trained in spiritual combat, especially in the personal areas. OM has been going for 50 years.

It's a lot of people, a lot of leaders. We have seldom ever had that kind of thing in the whole history of our work. Of course we've had a few tragedies similar to that with some of the young people.

But I believe it's wrong to just accept that this is now the way our society is and we can't really change it. And so many men and women of God have lived lives of moral purity, like the man who wrote this book. Can we not learn from these saints that have gone on to glory? Can we not learn from these saints that have gone on to glory? I think the brother who just left, isn't he with OMF? Someone's here with OMF.

This was the director of OMF for many years. He used to be called, when I was young, China Inland Mission. Now I know you all want one of these globes.

After you serve Jesus, for 50 years, you can get one of these globes. But meanwhile, you'll have to get just a map. This is all I had when I started out.

Of course the world we know is not flat. These are rather expensive. This is a very low price and there's a few left on the table.

Surely every mission mobilizer should have a map. I not only carry a map of the world, I'm a serious person in my commitment to Switzerland. I carry my map of Switzerland.

And I meet some Swiss people who have not even visited their own country. For example, last time I was in Switzerland, I went down to this place called Locarno. Is there anyone here that's not been there yet? Raise your hand.

You've all been there. I knew this was an exceptional audience. I won't ask any more questions.

Let's just pray. Father, we pray for Switzerland. Lord, there's way more potential in our Swiss churches.

And we pray there'll be a revolution of love and missions spreading through the churches. We know it's already happening. We think of this very church we're in right now and all these missionaries listed on the bulletin board over here on my right.

Including one of our former Lemmers, Benjamin Eagley, who served in those early days in O.M. Iran. Benjamin Eagley. Serving in Iran in the early days of O.M. So Lord, we pray for a greater move of sending forth workers, especially to these nations along the Silk Road.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Another key way to stay encouraged is what I call big picture, small picture.

And so I want to give you this concept. And I want you to share it with others. When we have a conference like this, we give things that we hope, as it says in 2 Timothy 2, that you will pass on to others.

We want you to be able to remember some of this. Perhaps in my first session I just shared too much. You won't be able to remember it.

I pray the Holy Spirit will bring back to you things you need to remember for your situation. So this session is going to be shorter and I hope you can remember. Big picture, small picture.

What is the small picture world? Your home. Your children. Your parents.

Your dog. Everywhere I go, I meet dogs. I love dogs.

Other people's dogs. And the home I was in last night, a lovely collie. They warned me, they said he's very shy.

We were friends within a few moments. He wanted to join me, he wanted to come with me today. And we didn't have a train ticket.

Our small picture world is important. OM in its early days had a super spirituality streak that was quite destructive. We didn't grasp the importance of the small picture world.

What we eat and where we live. In our health. And the enemy tried to use that.

And some people were hurt in those early days of OM. I learned from that. All my life I have felt bad about people who were hurt because of our extremism.

And so marriage certainly helped us out. I probably should have never got married maybe. Because when you get married, the small picture world is very important.

Suddenly you have a woman who's like sleeping next to you every night. So if you're the kind of person when you sleep, you like to move your arms, you dance in your sleep, you know, you're going to have a problem. My wife once got wounded in the night by her husband.

So our small picture world becomes especially important once we got married. My wife and I were very different. I never had an unhappy day as a kid.

And I had tons of pride. Self-confidence. Whatever you want done.

Before I was saved, I'll do it. I won the student election, became the president of my school. They had a sign everywhere throughout the whole school, let George do it.

My wife had a very difficult childhood. Her father was killed in the war. I just walked the beach where her father landed 70 years ago.

Her stepfather was an evil man. He had lost his eye in the war. He was angry.

He was a racist. And he threw her eventually out of the home. And we met just by a miracle of God.

I finally decided to stop all the kissing business. I decided this was not the way to evangelize the world. Especially, I won this one girl to Jesus and then I kissed her for the next hour.

It's not the best combination of discipling people. So I went on what we call in English cold turkey, like fasting. No more girls, no more kissing, nothing.

Just Jesus, evangelism, prayer. And that's when I went to Mexico. That's when I became saturated with the word of God.

That's when I gained the victory also over this pornography thing. And that time in Mexico changed my life. I felt I could not continue in my liberal arts university studies with what God was doing in my life.

And so I left the university and transferred to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. By the way, Swiss people go to Moody occasionally. And maybe you know some Swiss young people.

Everybody at Moody is a full scholarship and they love Swiss people. And Moody has more people serving Jesus internationally than almost any college in the world. So I arrived at Moody Bible Institute, I'll never forget it.

I was still quite young in my Christian faith. Suddenly all the girls in front of me are born again, Jesus girls. Really good looking ones with big Bibles.

You try to kiss one of them, you'll get a King James to the head. So I was infatuated with seven girls in the first ten days. Just crying out for mercy.

But I just stuck to what I told the Lord. Just evangelism, study, prayer. And then I went to rent an evangelistic film.

This was called going the extra mile. I didn't need to do that. I wanted to do more evangelism than the school expected.

I actually got in trouble for that. I went to rent this Moody science films. They're Christian apologetic films, very famous in the 50s and 60s.

I stepped out of the elevator. Because it's a high building in Chicago. I turned to the right.

I'll never forget this. I saw the most attractive girl on the planet. I broke my fast and moved in on the target.

I said something, I was so excited, I said something completely stupid. For me it was love at first sight. For her it was fright at first sight.

She's a little quiet country girl, like a lot of these Swiss girls. Little quiet. Her grandparents, by the way, are Swiss.

Little quiet girl. Never met anyone like me. New York City, loud mouth, aggressive.

So nothing happened. She heard people talking about me. She wanted to marry a man of God.

So she got a little interested. I got her on that first date. You know what I said on that date? This is the truth.

I said, probably nothing gonna happen between you and me. This is like reverse psychology. But if something did happen, you need to know I'm gonna be a missionary.

And probably you will be eaten alive by cannibals in New Guinea. To this day I can't believe that I said that. I still can't believe that I said that.

And when people from Papua New Guinea started to join OM, I had to be careful how I told this story. And my wife is still alive. Too bad she can't be here today.

So we then got to know each other. I mobilized my prayer partners. She wasn't really that interested, but I got my prayer partners to pray for her.

And she decided I was the man, a miracle. But we didn't know each other. She thought I was a Bible teacher.

I gave her that key verse. Not the whole chapter. Key verse from Ephesians 5. Submit to your husband as unto the Lord.

She was young. She was new. She accepted that.

And so when I asked her to marry me, she said yes. When I asked her to sell most of her possessions, she said yes and started to sell everything. When I told her there'd be no ring, there'd be no honeymoon, we're going to Mexico as soon as we're married, somehow she said yes.

She did everything that I said. We wouldn't spend any money for an apartment. We were just living on the floor in the bookstore.

We had a tremendous marriage. For several weeks. And she started to read the other verses.

She read the whole chapter. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. How are you doing on that? That's got to be one of the most idealistic, unrealistic challenges in the whole of the Bible, especially for people like me.

So we had problems in our marriage. Here we are, young missionaries, taking the world for Christ, and we got problems in our marriage in Mexico. But we had the basics.

Grace, forgiveness. We read together that little book, Calvary Road. We never have enough copies.

It's of course available in German, but we never have enough copies. For 20 years, if you wanted to come on OM, you had to read that book. It's about humbling ourselves.

It's about dealing with our pride. It's about brokenness and Jesus' grace when we fail and when we sin. And a revival came into our marriage.

Because of that message, which of course is from this book. That revival has lasted 54 years. And we just thank the Lord that this book is so practical.

Whether it's missions or marriage, this is what to build on. The Word of God. And we just thank the Lord for the way He can use all kinds of people.

So that's a little bit of my small picture world. I could talk all night. About my small picture world.

Living on a ship together with three children. Traveling overland in a Volkswagen in the winter to New Delhi. My daughter thought she was going to die in the mountains of Turkey, and so she quickly accepted Jesus as her Savior.

But we don't have time for that. Your small picture world is important. But we have people like me with global jackets and with big globes to talk about the big picture.

A lot of people are discouraged in their local churches, especially in England. A lot of local churches are getting smaller. They're smaller.

Just try Sweden. Anybody here from Sweden? Churches are getting smaller and smaller. The pastor of the biggest charismatic church in the whole nation, very famous man, Ulf Eichmann, planted churches all over Russia.

He just left it all and become a Roman Catholic. How would you like to be in that church? So a lot of people in their small picture world, it may be their church, or it may be their family, are having problems. Now number one, as we said in the last session, that is sort of normal.

But at the same time, when we have a big picture of what God is doing throughout the world, it can encourage us in our local tough situation. So all over the world, I talk about the big picture. Number one, this is the greatest period of history for the church, without question.

There are more biblical churches than ever before. More missionaries than ever before. More people being saved than ever before.

We don't talk about thousands being saved, hundreds of thousands being saved. We now talk about millions coming to Jesus every year across the world. Now people who, of course, are naturally pessimistic, the moment I speak this way, they raise their hand.

But you don't know all the problems they have in the church. Like Nigeria, people are picking on the Nigerians. Do we have any Nigerians here? In London, they're picking on the Nigerians.

There's so many of them. They're on the move for God. Some of their churches are a little extreme on prosperity.

The senior pastor has his private jet plane. He's flying around Nigeria, looking out the window at millions of people who live in complete, complete poverty with no education. So he can look out his private jet at the people as he flies by.

And the pastor of this community has his private jet and can look down at millions of people who live in absolute poverty. There are books written against this. I published one.

But the other side of the story, I wonder if you're going to remember. It's a long time ago, the last session. Messiology.

The church in Nigeria is very messy. There are many problems. There's some false teaching.

But God is still blessing in a phenomenal way. And millions are being saved and thousands are going out as missionaries. That's the big picture we need to remember and it encourages me.

Tonight in the prayer meeting, we're going to talk about some of the places that have been totally left out of this. If you're working in those places and it's going very hard, look at Libya right now. Look at Tunisia.

These places are more difficult than before the Arab Spring. If you're in one of those countries, you've got to stop at times and look at what God is doing globally. This is probably not a period of super church growth in Switzerland.

Or most Western European countries. But if that causes us to get discouraged, we make a big mistake. God, in a sense, has taken the message of Europe, the strong Christian message, and it's gone global, big time global, and we should rejoice.

A huge part of this work around the world is traced to European missionaries. Great missionaries that went from Switzerland, great missionaries from Sweden. Some of the movements they planted while their church is getting smaller in Sweden, the church they planted is now a million.

I was in a conference of a Pentecostal church in England, a leader's event. It was a privilege to share. And their leader from their church, their partnership church, in Ghana, he was the other speaker.

Amazing meeting. That English denomination started that work in Ghana. They're no longer growing very much in England.

They're growing a little bit. Two million people in that denomination in Ghana. That's one of dozens of denominations in Ghana.

Big picture people are always rejoicing. Even when they personally feel miserable, and I do sometimes, they rejoice anyway. And so the Lord wants us to be of course working away in our small picture.

Swiss people are generally quite good because they're disciplined and well organized, generally. But we need to keep that big picture. That's not part of the national ethos in Switzerland at this present moment.

Maybe your church is the exception. Missionary church, visionary church, putting millions of Swiss francs into global missions, sending the best of the church out to the ends of the earth. Please tell me about the church in an email as soon as possible.

But as we think globally, whatever our local situation is, we are going to be thanking God. We need to be thanking God more for what he's doing in the world today. Even the history of OM.

Our own movement, OM, our history. It's an amazing story. One woman prayed for me.

I wasn't a Christian. My grandfather was an atheist from the Netherlands. My other grandfather was Dutch.

No, my other grandfather was English, Irish and Scottish combined. That's basically toxic. He was an alcoholic.

My grandmother divorced him. No, I didn't have that spiritual legacy. I was very happy when this praying woman came into my life.

And you can warn the young people. When you meet young people, you warn them. You tell them, if you want to live your own selfish life, beware of praying women.

Don't let them get your name. This lady got my name. I'd broken into a house and the police had caught me.

I'd broken into a house. I wasn't stealing anything, but the police, they had other ideas. People were talking about me.

She put my name on her Holy Ghost hit list. She not only prayed that I would be saved. She prayed that I would become a missionary.

That God would send me out of the country. She probably didn't want me around anymore. And God heard her prayers.

He then sent me a Gospel of John through the post. I read that little Gospel. The same kind of pornography in a small way started in my life.

That prepared my heart for that Billy Graham meeting. When I was saved by the grace of God and this movement was started. That when we stopped counting 25 years ago had given the Gospel face to face to one billion people.

The small picture world there in New Jersey merging with the big picture through prayer of a billion people being given the Gospel of Jesus. Maybe this is the reason I've never had a discouraging day in my Christian life. Discouraging hours, yes.

Including stupidity. Sometimes sin. But a full discouraging day somehow I've not had that because of Jesus.

And because when we confess our sin He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all of our sin. I battle discouragement all the time. I don't speak about being discouraged any longer.

I speak about unprocessing discouragement. I don't know how that works in German. Unprocessing discouragement.

How can we look at some of these tough situations like Syria and not feel a degree of heartache and disappointment. Over 100,000 dead in Syria. That doesn't even give a picture of all the suffering of all the children.

It's an unbelievable demonic control situation. These things are so powerful. Some people actually lose their faith because they just can't handle where is God? Where is prayer in all of this? I went through huge intellectual struggles in this area.

Surely if you study the history of Europe you know that many Christians, maybe they were only nominal Christians the Lord knows Many of them after that first world war of 1918 they walked away from the church at that time. Especially in Belgium and France. But also in Britain.

Because it didn't fit in to their understanding of God. Both sides in that war claimed that God was on their side. That they were engaging in this war because of God leading them.

The churches that opposed all this, they never get spoken about. Many of God's people were opposed to that horrendous war. So the whole challenge of suffering like the Holocaust it's normal to have intellectual struggles about these things.

And we shouldn't persecute people in our churches because they express doubt. In the old churches you couldn't talk about doubt. You're doubting the Bible? You're doubting God? You wicked little boy! A Scottish theologian helped me a lot.

Great faith is not in the absence of doubt. It's as we keep growing and learning and looking for God in the midst. I close with those words from Romans 11.

Just read those last few verses. Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been His counselor? Can you read those last few verses like a doxology of Romans chapter 11 and we'll close this session. Let us pray.

Father we thank you for what you're doing around the globe. Later this evening we're going to be praying for some of the countries that seem to have been left out so far of this global church expansion. But at this moment we give you thanks for what you're doing across the globe.

The phenomenal church growth in China. The staggering church growth in certain parts of India. Lord, this church I just spoke at in Hyderabad with 70,000 members.

The phenomenal growth of the church in most parts of Africa. And South Central America and all of Latin America. So many other places.

So Lord, even though it's harder times here in Western Europe, we're going to celebrate what you're doing globally. And we're going to persevere locally in our situation. And we pray for more and more spiritual health among our leaders and in our churches.

We pray for a reduction of these ministerial casualties where men are wiped out in the battle. And we thank you that we can be involved as mission mobilizers armed with your word in some of these life-changing books. We can all be involved in a small way to change the course of history.

We ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. You be sure to visit the book table.

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