

Survivalship - Part 2

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the principles of survivalship in the Christian life, focusing on faith, praise, and personal growth amidst challenges.

Duration: 1:00:44

Scripture: Isaiah 59:19, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:8

Topics: "Survivalship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of studying Hebrews chapter 4 as a way of life for believers. He discusses the different approaches believers may take in their spiritual battles, either being on the offensive or defensive. The speaker encourages a balanced diet of reading and meditating on the word of God, including various books of the Bible. He also highlights the significance of maintaining a positive attitude, being constant in prayer and the word, serving God actively, prioritizing family and enjoying life, and realizing that God is easy to live with. The speaker concludes by emphasizing that without spiritual reality in one's life, all other outward displays of dedication and evangelistic zeal will not last in the long run.

Transcript

We look to you for this prayer meeting tonight. What you're going to do as we wait upon you in prayer. Lead us now in this study of your word.

In Jesus' name, amen. I want to just share some more principles of survivalship. The sixth principle I want to talk about is discussed to some degree in Hebrews chapter four.

Where it talks about laboring to enter into his rest. I think some people enter this rest of faith by crisis. I think others seem to grow into it.

Certainly it also must be linked with the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. I think it's very important to not only have an understanding of the Holy Spirit and who he is, but to know that you are filled with the Spirit. And tomorrow night I want to speak on Ephesians 5, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, it's a mistake to think that once you're filled with the Holy Spirit, all these other things will just be automatic. If this were the case, we would not need all of this other teaching on so many other basic biblical principles. I hope you'll study Hebrews chapter four.

I believe this is a way of life for the believer. Many days I find that I'm really in a sense on the attack. I'm in an aggressive attack against the enemy in various ways.

But there are other days when I feel that I am under attack, and I'm willing to pull in my guns in a sense, and just determined to survive, to get through that day in a position of praise and thanksgiving. Now even by the end of the day, or during part of the day, I may move into an offensive, and things are being accomplished, but my basic position is one of survivalship, and holding on to the existing territory. William Carey said, give me plotters, men who plot, they just keep going, going, going.

And I feel the rest of faith is very much linked in this. God wants to work into our spiritual life the ability to not panic in times of crisis. And I believe that God in his supernatural power can do this work of grace in our life, and again it is linked with this concept of the rest of faith.

A man of God is a man who can keep his head and keep his calm when everyone else is losing theirs. I do not think I have arrived in this area in my life, but it is one of my major goals, even in the home, with all that a home can mean or be with three teenagers and things going wrong and water coming through the roof and whatever else, to just play it cool. Yeah, of course you will be cool, but I mean, you know, emotionally to play it cool.

And I hope you have this as a goal in your life. And we need that this summer. Some of the things that people panic on, on the O.M. Summer Crusade, I mean, when you look back on it, you just, you know, you just wonder what in the world got into their heads.

How did you do when you missed the ferry the other day, some of you? Panic, because you missed the ferry. Well, I did, years ago, and it's amazing how something that is actually really not that important becomes huge, even to the destruction of our spiritual equilibrium at that particular moment. There are seemingly now endless ferries crossing the English Channel, dozens and dozens of them, hovercrafts, planes, jetfoils, people are even swimming across, and here you are panicking because you missed your one ferry.

I love to sing, Jesus, I am resting, resting. Now, if you're a calm person, you're calm in temperament, well, I mean, you have a great blessing. My temperament is a little more volcanic than the average.

And you would not believe some of the things my wife has had to suffer under the rain of this volcanic ash. You know, it's a wonderful thing, however, to be able to repent when you've blown it, you've sinned, and it is sin, to be able to repent and come back to that place of rest and know the Lord is in control, that is a beautiful, beautiful thing. And you will discover, and this is probably one of the great miracles of my life, and I'd better be careful saying anything, you will discover the volcano over the years through the word and the reality will explode less and less and less and less.

I'm so grateful to God, my volcano doesn't explode much anymore, but there sure is a lot of rumbling. Some of you are more placid in temperament, you know about that. Outwardly, you've got it all together.

You don't look upset, you look very calm, but down in the inner sanctuary, the stomach is paying a heavy toll. Ulcers at 25. And any one of some 50 or 60 degree diseases that you can get, simply through never learning to express your emotions, just operation repression.

And that leads me to the next basic principle, and I might re-emphasize, I think I gave principle 5 last night, or did I miss it? The reality of praise and thanksgiving. Well, let's put that down as the next one. But the

reality of praising the Lord and thanking the Lord in every situation.

1 Thessalonians 5.16 In everything give thanks, this is the will of God. This is very important. And to be able to pull back from a situation of stress, to pull back and just thank the Lord.

It produces such spiritual strength and balance at that time. And to have, instead of reactions in the flesh, and it's so easy for our reactions to be in the flesh, have the ability to react in praise. It's an amazing thing, our reactions.

Sometimes I just bump my elbow, some little thing hurt my toe, and my immediate reaction is negative. And the word that just comes out, just like that, it isn't always a scripture verse. And if it doesn't come out, I think it.

We evangelicals are very good at swear thinking. Repressed swearing. I'm horrified at some of the things that come into my mind.

I found the other day, a dear brother in Christ, inside I was calling him a son of a, I mean this is not good after 25 years in Christ. I'm so glad I've learned to repent. And those words never got to my lips.

Sometimes the first two words got to my lips, and I had to quickly change the last two. I mention this because I find a lot of people have problems in this area. And I find a lot of people get very discouraged by their little slips, the little carnal things they do.

And then I find people who don't have these problems, who get overwhelmed when someone else on their team has not got quite total control over his reactions. There is no excuse for this, and I'm not excusing it. And I hate all sin, probably as much as most of you.

But I also believe I must face the reality of my own temperament, my own background. And what life really is. And now by God's grace, most of the time when this skinny little vessel is jarred, it's praise the Lord or something else that comes out.

Or the blessing of just not saying anything, but in your heart, in your heart. Because it's not always appropriate to say some of these things. In your heart, you're just thanking the Lord, and he's going to work it out.

It's heavy, it's a problem, it's a crisis, but in your heart you're saying, thank you Lord, you're going to work it out, you're going to work it out. Then of course there's the area of open praise, in your quiet time, praising the Lord with a psalm, singing unto the Lord, going into the woods for a half day of praise. Wonderful for the soul and for spiritual life.

God's going to test your praise factor in OM this month. My older son tested my praise factor last month. Ran out of petrol four or five times in four days.

That is a record. There are many, of course, explanations. Don't run out of petrol in the OM vehicles.

Among other things, it scrapes all the stuff from the bottom of the petrol tank up into the carburetor and into other places. It's a very simple thing, relatively simple, to keep petrol in the petrol tank, and not try to run the vehicle on fumes and prayer. We know some have tried prayer.

Let's move on to the next principle of survival. Accepting God's growth pattern in your life. Philippians 1.6 Speaks about that which the Lord has begun in you, he will continue to do.

Speaks about that which the Lord has begun in you, he will continue to do. There is a book by Layne Adams, Why is it taking so long? I strongly recommend this book, especially on this topic. There are, of course, many other books.

But I recommend this one. We need understanding for the summer as well. Many different levels of maturity on the teams.

Beware of judging other people's spirituality. Different people are growing at different speeds, different rates, depending a lot on their background, circumstances, and other factors. Different people are growing at different speeds, different rates, depending a lot on their background, circumstances, and other factors.

Be patient with your own growth rate. And a problem that you have is that you want so much, so fast from the Lord. And there needs to be a more restful growth experience, rather than a striving experience.

This is where I feel it is important to be willing to share failures. One of the reasons I share some failures, it's not easy, is because I want you to learn how to be honest and share areas of failure. It produces reality and honesty.

It makes you more approachable. And a failure to do so will definitely stunt or hinder your spiritual growth in certain ways. Acknowledging failure doesn't mean dwelling on your failure.

I hardly ever dwell on my failure. That's just too much. And we bounce back into action.

Even in the area of marriage, I don't think ever, maybe once when I just fell asleep too quick, did I ever go to bed at night without knowing I was absolutely right with my wife and with my God. I don't want to sleep unless I'm in that position. The wonderful thing to be able to just have a life, that's an open book, can be read.

I was listening to a song by one of the contemporary gospel singers. Something about making a film, warts and all, even my broken tooth. In other words, letting people see my life, even the things that are not very pleasant like a wart or a broken tooth.

I don't know about you, but I'm very appreciative of contemporary Christian music, most of them. And I think often the words are very, very powerful. If the beat gets too loud, of course you can't hear what they're saying, but I praise God for the communication through Christian music.

And then the next principle, based on a quotation from A.W. Tozer, realizing God is easy to live with. Can you imagine Tozer saying that after all of his other statements? And realizing that it's easy to live with God. You might say, well, why am I emphasizing these things? Because, you see, if you have outward dedication, if you have evangelistic zeal, if you have even the ability to pray on all night, if you've got a great vision for the whole world, and you don't have this aspect of spiritual reality in your life, you will not last.

I've been watching it for 25 years. You will not last in the long run for Christ. It is not a compromise with discipleship and commitment and world vision, but it is part of the whole message of the New Testament.

You can get people doing evangelism mainly out of a guilt trip. Is that what God wants? People evangelizing mainly propelled along by neurotic guilt jerks? And there are many other ways that even Christian service can become a gigantic workaholic ego trip. And that's why we've got to get the right view of God.

He's a God of mercy. He's a God of love. You are now in the family.

Even though you fall flat on your face, He still loves you. He does not reject you. You may get out of fellowship.

That's your fault. But His arms are around you even when you're out of fellowship. And He's wanting to draw you to Himself.

False views of God are the major thing that extremist groups pray on and make use of to lead people astray. We even get people coming on OM because basically of emotional problems and desire to sort of punish themselves. They find the worst, most difficult thing going.

They don't want it. But somehow, this must be God's will. He's always dealt with me this way.

I go. And we sometimes can't connect spirituality and beauty. And we, of course, it's our own human imagination.

I just love that quotation. God is easy to live with. The rest of the quote, it goes on to say, God knows all about us and He loves us still.

And before God, we're all loved. And the leaders around OM, including myself, we're not some kind of special people. We have a work that we have to do.

And we're to be esteemed for our work's sake. But we haven't got a bigger page in God's book in heaven than you do. We all have a big page.

But you've got to decide what you're going to put on your page. I'm going to decide what I'm going to put on my page. And it's so important to understand it.

It cuts right through those fibers of inferiority and inferiority complex that are so destructive to people. So many people that I counsel who have heavy problems, have almost every case a very low image of themselves, a very negative image of themselves, and sometimes even sort of hate themselves in a wrong way. So many think that their life is mainly failures.

This can come from parents. The parents, no matter how good you did it, it wasn't good enough. Often times they were very mean, very much unaware of what they were doing.

I'm sure I've made some mistakes like this. And we hold the carrot out. And some Christians become evangelical carrot chasers, always trying to please God, to get the prize, and they never find it.

They never get there. If your concept of God is that he's holding out a carrot in front of you, trying to get you to go along, you need to go back to Sunday school, class one. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

I have to apologize to the interpreters. I thought they sang that song all over the world. The next point.

Very quickly now, we want to go to prayer. The freedom of a disciplined and ordered life. If you can find a copy, read Shelley Taylor's book, *The Disciplined Life*.

Shelley Taylor. Shelley Taylor's book is another good one. And then that great book, it's in a number of languages, Martin Lloyd Jones' book, *Spiritual Depression*.

I believe the best English book in the past fifty years. Don't have the time to deal with this tonight. But I'm so convinced, that the more disciplined you are, without being extreme, the greater hope for survival.

There are times in the Christian life when we're carried along by the zest and the zeal, and we're just consumed in all that God is and all that he's doing. But there are other times, when only what we have learned about disciplined living will carry us through. Only that will carry us through.

That's why Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. And Shelley Taylor in his book, he brings together sanctification, at least from his viewpoint, with the disciplined life. And it's a very, very excellent, I feel, presentation.

And Shelley Taylor brings sanctification, as he understands it, together with the disciplined life. And I feel, I think it's a very good presentation. And with Shelley, it's a more Arminian way to the disciplined life.

If you want more of the Calvinistic direction, then read Martin Lloyd Jones. Pack both together, and then it will work. Disciplined Calvinists like Whitefield, not too many that I've met.

Maybe they're hiding in the hills of Scotland. Arminians in theology, they're everywhere, no problem. Disciplined Arminians like Finney and Wesley and many others, well, I don't see them sort of crowding around to sign up to go to Turkey as missionaries.

To many people today, it's all theology of the head, and sometimes not even in the head, it's theology of the mouth. And without a revolution of discipline in the church life, in our own lives, I don't believe we will ever see the world evangelized. Population explosion is a staggering thing that the average Christian hardly thinks about.

He's far more concerned about the number of roses that may not come up in his garden this year, than he is about the exploding population and the millions that are going out into eternity without a gospel of John. Discipline does not bring bondage or extremism, not what I'm talking about. It brings freedom, freedom and more time to do what you want to do, what the Lord's leading you to do.

Then the next principle, learning how to refuel and relax. How to enjoy life. There are the hard aspects of life.

There are things we don't like. There are times we have to battle through, gritting our teeth, trusting God. But there are other things that we just love to do.

We enjoy them. Some of them are not spiritual things, some are. For some it may be some kind of music.

For me often, it's not much, a game of tennis. A walk in the mountains. In fact, one of the secrets of my life is that there are dozens and dozens of things I love to do.

And even things within the work, like just sitting back, relaxing on good old British rail, dictating 50 letters between Manchester and London. This is hilarious. This ministers, especially to the secretaries.

For a couple of years I lived in Nepal, mainly training leaders from India in small numbers. One of the very serious, intensive leaders came to spend six days with the dynamic discipline, George Miller. He couldn't believe it.

And when he left, I said, what did you learn, brother? He said, you change all the work to play. You can't do that all the time. But if you want to survive, you got to do it part of the time.

And there's ways you can do it. And it's a secret of survival. Relaxing, refueling.

Sometimes a change of pace. I've learned how to dictate letters in some 15 different positions. And I've learned how to pray in many positions.

I don't like to just sit praying like a bump on a log. You can run when you're praying. You can walk when you're praying.

You can jump on chairs. You can lay on your back. Stand on your head.

It's very good for the health, they say. Some people say, my Bible study is very dry. I say, well, where have you been? I've been in Leviticus for 16 weeks.

You've been in Leviticus for 16 weeks? Yeah, I don't understand it. You know, when you sit down and have breakfast, you know, except on a limb, you don't just have cornflakes. You have a little milk.

A little sugar. A cup of tea. Maybe some free jam.

All this jam we're giving you here, we got free, by the way. In five years, we'll be having the same jam. How about, let's go at it.

Let's go at it. I'm just worried that the next time we have a midnight break at a night of prayer, instead of an apple, Klaus will come in with jam. When you eat, you have a little variety.

Feed on the Word of God. A little variety. A little Old Testament.

Time in the Psalms. Time in the Proverbs. A little in the Prophets.

A little in the Gospels. And in the Epistles. Or at least part of that diet.

And that will revolutionize your Bible study. Let me just give you these other principles and then close. Just write them down.

I hope others will touch on them. Learn real fellowship and sharing. Next.

Keep a positive attitude and lifestyle, Philippians 4, 8. That's very, very, very basic. A revolution of positive living and thinking. Constant, next, constant in the Word and prayer.

Of course, very basic. Next. Active in his service with your eyes on him.

Next. Not neglecting the family, fun, and a good life. Learn how to spend money.

What in the world has happened to Operation Mobilization? You cannot survive without spending money. You are not the God's holy protector of the penny. And if there was any area where I hurt people and hurt my wife, it was because I was just unwilling at times to spend money.

It takes faith to save money and it takes faith to spend it for the right thing as the Lord leads. Spending money often saves time and your time is valuable. And it takes your whole life to find balance in that area.

And lastly, keeping the balance at any cost. Some of you have read my book, Revolution of Love and Balance. And I'm just so convinced that the Christian who really is the number one enemy of the devil is the balanced, committed disciple of Jesus Christ.

Well, these are some things that God has been burning into my life these two decades. They could be expressed, I'm sure, in much better terms. I give them to you.

I pray you will receive them. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you again for the balanced message of your word.

We thank you that this will not hinder our commitment but it will increase the effectiveness of our commitment. Lord, this is a need in my own life. To absorb more into my spiritual bloodstream these principles of survivalship so that by your grace I may give many more years to your service and not end up some kind of casualty statistic.

Lord, we praise you. We look forward by faith to this time of prayer in the name of Jesus. The first hour and ten minutes until eleven o'clock will be prayer in your language group.

Go to your language areas except all the English are here. Well, I'm sure you've already been welcomed over here two or three times but I'd like to add my welcome on top of the others. Someone made a complaint last month and they said, would the speakers please introduce themselves.

We don't know who they are. Good idea. This is our speaker, Hans-Peter, and I'm interpreting into English.

You probably didn't realize that. I'm George Brewer. This is Hans-Peter.

I've just come back from Norway. I wonder if there are any Norwegians here. One.

We had some, a number of them in July. One of the countries that OM doesn't work in very much. Oh, two others.

Any others? Okay. Well, I bring you greetings from Norway. The place I was at, it's been raining almost every single day.

Until this Jesus Festival started, they asked the Lord to give them clear weather. The moment the Jesus Festival started, it stopped raining and didn't rain at all for six days. We had over a thousand people at the open air meeting on Saturday so we're glad it wasn't raining.

I really believe, in many ways, Norway is very ripe for the message that God has put on our hearts. At the final meeting, there were over 200 who openly stood up and filled in a paper that they want to begin moving in total commitment and in world evangelism. And I'd really appreciate your prayers as they go back to their homes and as they determine to find God's will.

Let's just unite in prayer right now. We don't want to be long tonight. We know it's a little warm as well, but we don't want to be distracted from what the Lord has to say to us.

That's even more important. Let's pray. Father, we need your help for this final meeting of the day.

That we may be on target. We may speak what's on your mind. We just worship you, Lord.

Thank you for all that you've done to bring us to this point. And we just lift our hearts in thanksgiving. Lord, you know those who have special needs.

Pray that you administer to them. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We hope you're taking notes during all of these meetings. And we hope also that you're aware of the very special display of Christian literature. In other meetings we'll be mentioning some specific books.

But you will notice that some of the books are available at very, very special prices. Last month they had a whole section of books at half price. And there are books in many different languages.

So be sure to set some time in which you go and look at the books. I'd like to just mention five authors. Rather than show a lot of books because so many different languages, I'd like to mention five authors that I would strongly recommend you reading.

The first is A.W. Tozer and his books are in almost all of the languages represented here. And I know you'll find his materials some of the most challenging. Conscience-striking material you have ever read.

Then I'd like to mention the name and the writings of Dr. Alan Redpath. He will be one of our main speakers at the fall conference here, the autumn conference. A man who God has used in many of our lives.

And most of his books are his sermons that are put in written form. Many of them are in German. Thirdly, Michael Griffiths.

The present leader of the OMF. Next year, or a year after, he'll be the president of London Bible College, principal. His books are also in a number of languages.

And they are all valuable, really edifying books. Fourthly, Dr. Francis Schaeffer. I'm sure all of you have read at least one of his books.

Even if you didn't understand it. But he does have books like the church at the end of the 20th century, which are easier to understand than, for example, the God who is there. And books like his book on love, The Mark of the Christian, of course are very basic.

It's probably his best book. And then lastly, I'd like to mention a woman writer to keep all this in balance. Eugenia Price.

Now, if you've read one of her books and you didn't like it, again, you might want to read one or two more, because she has two or three totally different types of books. But The Wider Place and her book Make Love Your Aim are two really excellent books, well worth reading. And also No Pat Answer, No Easy Answer, an excellent book on suffering.

Now, I'd like to add another 20 authors, but we don't have the time. I want to speak to you about the subject of survivalship. How to survive on OM.

I have a number of secrets that I've gathered up over the last 25 years. And I thought I would share some of them with you. Survivalship is one of my own terms.

I don't know if it's in the dictionary. Probably doesn't exist in some of the languages. It means persevering.

In Spanish, aguantando, going on, continuing. And I believe it's part of the life of victory. I believe there are many false views about the victorious life.

These false views are guaranteed, guaranteed they'll eventually discourage you. I'm sure in my early ministry I must have managed to discourage quite a few people along the way. Maybe giving them, I hope not, but probably at times giving them a distorted picture of what the victorious life really, really is.

Later on this week I'll be speaking about spiritual balance. And in a sense these principles I share with you tonight about survivalship are a balance on some of the strong principles you've already heard on tapes and other and books on discipleship and commitment. Let's look at Isaiah 59, 19 as a starting place.

Isaiah 59, verse 19. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

And shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun. If we study the life of the Apostle Paul, we read about a life of almost perpetual difficulty and problems. Probably some of you already, even since leaving your home, have faced some difficulties and some problems.

And many of his problems came from God's people. If you are still surprised by crazy things taking place among God's people, it's probably a mark that you are still very young in the things of God. Paul had to deal with problems in the Corinthian church where men were going to sleep and having sex with their own mother-in-law.

In fact, every church he planted had problems. And if you want to get a sort of view of what he was facing at times, just look at the book of Philippians. We all know Philippians 1.21, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

But how many of us know Philippians 2.21? Look at that one. Paul is speaking about all of his co-workers and the churches, all the people he was working with. He says, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ.

I can't think of a more depressing situation. The Apostle Paul even came to a point in his ministry where he despaired even for his own life. He even thought it might be better just to die.

He spoke once about coming to the people in much fear and trembling. And much weakness. He obviously had some kind of physical problem.

Though some say that the thorn in the flesh was something else, and we will not argue the point tonight. It is obvious from reading his life that at times Paul was just battling for survival. It was just day by day survival as he plotted on against impossible odds and every kind of problem a man could think of.

But he knew how to draw upon the resources of God. And that's what we've got to learn. How to draw upon the strength of the Lord.

For things that we don't like. For some of our own struggles and our own weaknesses. That we may be together if it's God's will 20 or 30 years from now.

And each one who's here will be carrying on for the Lord. It's a thrill to meet people that you haven't seen for a long time. Find out they're going on for God.

I flew from a little place called Molda to Copenhagen. Then I took the train. And the plane stopped at a little tiny place called Olsen.

I was singing of Tom Olsen. Some of you have met him. And someone got on the plane and I thought, Oh, that looks like someone I know.

I was singing of a brother named Helge. He was in the Arab world 7 or 8 years ago. Now I only know about 15 or 20 Norwegians.

As friends. And I thought, let me see, it just can't be. He wouldn't be getting on this plane at this time in this little dinky village.

And so I said, well, it's not him. And I looked at him, no, it's not him. Lo and behold, when the plane landed, we both had to get in the same line for our transit tickets.

And there it was. Helge. He was a fellow on the plane.

And that was it.

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