

Unsearchable Things

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon explores the unsearchable nature of God and the vital role of faith and mercy in the Christian life and mission.

Duration: 54:41

Topics: "Mysteries"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of faith and taking steps of faith in one's life. He mentions various biblical figures who demonstrated great faith and achieved remarkable feats through their trust in God. The speaker also highlights the need to reach out to those who have not yet heard the gospel, emphasizing the vast number of people who still need to be reached. He concludes by acknowledging the overwhelming nature of the task but expresses gratitude for the global efforts being made to spread the message of Christ.

Transcript

I want to read two passages of scripture this evening, perhaps two passages that you've never had combined before in a Bible reading. Romans 11 and Hebrews 11. I remember at Bible college having Old Testament books linked with New Testament books, but I think my linking together of these two passages may at least seem a little bit far-fetched.

But let us read them including the first two verses of Romans 12, starting at verse 33. Speaks about the mercy of God in verse 32 and then says, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor, or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again.

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And then Hebrews chapter 11. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders received witness. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And then it talks about the faith of Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses. And we get to verse 32. We've spoken of people who have experienced great deliverance, great exploits of faith.

We read about a few more and then there's a sudden change. Try to catch it. What shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, Samson, and Japhthah, and David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens or the enemies.

Women received their dead, raised to life again, but others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tested and slain with a sword.

They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and in caves of the earth. In these all having received witness through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Let us pray, and let us include prayer, once again, for the brother I told you about, Omer, who is on loan to our relief work among Afghan refugees, John Tarswell. I spoke to Pakistan just a few hours ago. It's over a week now, and there's still no sign whatsoever of this brother or his whereabouts.

Keeping in mind both of those passages, let us pray. Our Father, we do thank you for these great passages of your word. In a sense, we could sit down and go home because they are already such a strong message to our hearts.

We do reach out in prayer to those who are suffering, to those who are being martyred for the cause of world evangelism or for their own fate, to people in prison in China, in Nepal, in other nations of the world, to people being harassed, persecuted. We pray for our friend John Tarswell. We know not whether he is alive or dead.

It is a mystery for us, but on the basis of these scriptures, we lift our hearts and give this whole situation to you, his dear wife and family back in Canada. And we ask that through this, whether it's life or death, that glory may come and that it may be used as the forward step for the planning of your church among the Afghan people, who are one of the most unreached people's groups in the entire world. Speak to us now

in this final meeting of this anniversary weekend, for we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. It was so encouraged to see some of you taking notes last night and at least writing down those six words. For those of you who weren't there, we emphasized as part of our anniversary celebration, thanksgiving, vision, action, discipline, love, and forgiveness.

And we believe that this ministry over these hundred years has incorporated those great biblical mega-principles into what has taken place here. We know it has not been all victory. I was really wrestling with what to share tonight.

I always have too many messages and too many burdens. I'm sure I can drive people around the bend by talking too much and sharing too many visions, especially about Operation Mobilization. I hope some of you will become serious about world missions.

In ministering up and down Britain now for almost 28 years, I would say there's certainly not more than 5% of British Christians who in any way could consider themselves serious. About world missions, I've not even met many pastors. A lot of my ministry is to Christian leaders, seminars.

We've had the privilege of ministering to tens of thousands of Christian leaders. Many of them have recommitted their lives in those meetings. I guess I've ministered in at least 200 Bible colleges and theological colleges this week again in the south of England, an hour or two with the students and then an hour with the staff.

But even only a small percentage of Christian leaders have a vision for world missions, as we would see it, for example, burning in the heart of the Apostle Paul. It's an uphill battle for anybody that commits himself to world evangelism, even though we have so clearly those words from the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then the Acts before he ascended, ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. How can it be that perhaps 30 to 40% of all the people on planet earth have still not had the gospel even for the first time? They know about Coca-Cola.

They know about some of these famous television programs. I was sitting in a cafe in Adana, Turkey, where I'd visit the graveside of one of our men who was martyred there, and they were watching Dallas on the cafe television. I remember in India when America first sent someone in outer space, put a man on the moon.

I think I was in India, may have been somewhere else, but I thought of the fact the whole world almost immediately knows that America put a man on the moon, but they don't know that God, the living God, the creator of the universe, put his son on the earth. It's really quite awesome. There's a lot I would like to say about world evangelism, about the ministry of O.M., but I don't feel that's God's direction for this anniversary of your own ministry.

I may be able to sneak a few things in, but I want to share with you six other mega words. Words are so important to me. The word, for example, the word integrity.

Just saying that word means so much to me. I could speak for probably 24 hours non-stop if God would grant me the voice on the subject of integrity. The word is so powerful.

It covers everything we can think of in ethics, in theology, in church life, in home life, integrity. It's a great word. Study it.

Look it up in the dictionary. And I want to share six words that I believe we should keep in mind as we go into the next 10 years, the next 30 years, the next 100 years. We don't know what lies ahead.

There's a lot of talk about the year 2000. It's great. A lot of it is just hep or hype.

God can use it. Americans, we're especially into that. We say all kinds of things we don't really believe will actually ever happen.

It's just to make you feel good and get people excited and revved up. The amazing thing, some of the things they say actually come to pass. And that's always embarrassing to the English, who are known throughout the world for being basically very small-minded people.

Did you know that? Yes, Americans are always criticized over here because they're big mouths and they're bad television and they're in trouble and they're now 45 years in prison. The main thing we talk about now is Jimmy Baker. And it's true.

Americans are big mouths and they're big thinkers and a lot of it never happens. And oh, I hope some of that television never comes here. But what would you prefer to have a reputation? As being big thinkers and trying too much and speaking too much or as being small-minded? Small-minded Englishmen.

I'm debating whether to become a British citizen. I now can become all I have to do is fill out the forms. I felt I couldn't do this when my mother was alive.

I mentioned it once to her and I thought she was going to hit me. True flag-carrying American. Also, my wife's stepfather was very anti-British and totally against Jesus Christ and the gospel.

We prayed for him for over 30 years. I even took up golf in order to get to know him better. It's the only thing we had in common.

I used to get these people on the golf cart with them. Americans like to ride around their golf courses. There's such traffic jams, they have to do that.

And I used to get people on the golf cart with them that had powerful testimonies. And this year, that man surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. Don't ever give up praying for the person you love.

No matter how hard. He persecuted my wife. He persecuted his wife.

He spoke against Christ, against the church, all kinds of things. About January 1st in a big Bible preaching Southern Baptist Church in Orlando, Florida, he was baptized and became a follower of Jesus Christ. He's now sending me tapes from his church.

My father-in-law. Amazing. Don't give up.

Keep on praying. We know, of course, there are many, many English people, British people with a big vision. Last weekend, I was in Northern Ireland.

There are certainly some people there with a big vision. I was with the most unusual man. Monday night prayer meeting, 800 were out to pray.

That's a real church. They might almost be able to claim a New Testament church. They're going to throw up a 3,000-seat auditorium.

What God was doing there is quite amazing. Six more words. Do you think you can handle six more words? Are you going to take your notebooks out or your church bulletins? You don't have church bulletins here, do you, Ken? Well, whatever.

I gave some notes to Tom on the train the other day. He wrote them on his hand. The first word that I want to give to you for this next 100 years, probably the Lord will return before then.

We might not even get out of the auditorium tonight. The first word is the word mercy. Mercy.

Isn't that one of your favorite words? God's mercy. That's why I'm still here. People say, how are you still going so many years? I often meet people who met me 25 years ago, and they say, well, I didn't expect you to keep going.

25 years ago, when I first came to Britain, I looked like a natural burnout case. People wrote to me, slow down, be careful. So many exhortations.

You're going to have a nervous breakdown. I never have had a nervous breakdown. I discovered through study, a little bit of psychology, I'm not the type.

I'm more the kind of person that gives other people nervous breakdowns. You have somebody clapping. God's mercy is the reason I'm still running the race.

God's mercy is the reason that OM has gone from strength to strength in the midst of much failure and now has 1,800 full-time workers, many of them career missionaries across the world. In fact, our personnel department recently gave me the statistics that 600 of the present OMerS are long-term, many of them lifetime people. Mercy is the key to what God wants to do in the months and years to come.

We can never take credit for what's being done. How sad it is when man gets in the way of what God wants to do. I don't like some of these meetings where we praise people and we give out awards.

I've tried to be more balanced, but I find it a struggle. Seems to me that all the awards should be given to God, but I guess he understands. He has a sense of humor when we pat one another on the back on occasion, and we have television programs in the States, and we bring our Christian leaders on to the program in Christian television, some of which makes me sick, and we say, this is your life.

This is your life, and we're telling all these wonderful things about this character. The fact is that most of us who ever accomplish anything, it's because of a team of people, and the team often, we don't even know who they are, and often in our culture, our more chauvinistic society, the women are left out. The men get these great awards, and the women have done all the work, and it helped this guy stay propped up even when he was falling on his nose.

Half the people there couldn't even tell you what her name is. The mercy of God, that excites me, and that passage we read, that neglected passage at the end of Romans chapter 11 is what we need more of today. My favorite author is perhaps A.W. Tozer, competes only with Dr. Lloyd Jones and a few other characters I've met, mentioned to you over the years when I've come here.

Tozer, J.I. Packer, Dr. Lloyd Jones, Andrew Murray, F.B. Myers, Alan Redpath, many other men that I can think of, emphasize the need to know God. There's always a danger, especially in a movement like ours, and I'm sure in a church like yours, that we get caught up in church activities, church activities. We're

running from one activity to the other, and we gauge the church on how full the church calendar is, and how many activities we go to, and how many meetings we go to.

And we don't want to swing the pendulum, because God uses meetings. We don't want people who are sitting around doing nothing, but we need to make sure that we're getting time with God, that we're getting to know God. We're understanding his attributes through a lot of time in his Word.

A week ago when I was with this man of God who started this church in Ulster, in Belfast, I couldn't believe the parallels. The age of that church, which started with 10 praying men, was the same age as Operation Mobilization. Part of the vision that God gave him for that work was in a mountain outside of Belfast.

I remember when I first came to Britain, and God took me to Belfast. I went, as I often did, into the mountains for a day of prayer. And I was in that mountain outside of Belfast for a day of prayer, trying to figure out what God was trying to do in our small ministry.

And in my life, it started to rain, and I went into that cave in that mountain, and God met me there. I looked some time ago at a memo I wrote, urging OM to take great steps of faith. But it came from that experience in the mountains outside of Belfast.

There was a strange experience when I went to that church on Monday night. This man and I had never met. I wasn't even sure he wanted me there.

Often, pastors don't want me in their churches. I get in there through the missionaries committee from some little person who wants George Furver in the church. And the pastor, reluctantly frightened to death, lets me in.

You ever heard Tony Sargent's testimony about OM? Tony Sargent's five times more convinced about OM than I am. Tony had heard about me and was determined that I would not get in Worthing Tabernacle, one of the biggest churches in the South Coast. But one little prayer partner, one little OM prayer partner kept Adam.

She was a real talker. And in God's sovereignty, in God's mercy, when my wife had major surgery, she had to go to Worthing, to one of these convalescent homes to recover. And the head of the convalescent home also went to that church.

Dear Tony Sargent, according to his own story, didn't really have much more ground. And he opened the door for me to share, I guess, at a prayer meeting. And we became two close, intimate partners in God's work.

I know of no church in Britain that has done more for OM than that one church. Tony himself has ministered over 15 or 20 times in India, on the ships and OM fields. In fact, last time he went to visit the ship in Amsterdam, he took 20 men out of his church to go scrape paint and work on the ship.

And as I met that man in Ulster just about a week ago, with such totally different ministries, quite different also in theology and background, I wondered what he thought about my being there. There was immediate warmth, great Irish love and hospitality, and he's given me a carte de blanche to come and minister at any time to his congregation of many thousands of people. Why do I share that? Because I believe God's mercy is greater than our particular doctrinal emphasis.

I've never had anyone attack my rather conservative doctrinal position. In fact, I just spoke again eight messages at my own Bible college, one of the most conservative in America. But I believe that God's mercy, God's providence, God's sovereignty, God's greatness is bigger than all the things that we are fighting about in our churches here in this world.

And I plea with you as you go forward together, and we have people here tonight from different churches and fellowships, that you will make your goal God himself. Not your particular little emphasis, not your particular little denomination, but God himself. Surely we know there is only one God.

There is only one faith. There is only one Bible. There is only one baptism.

I don't believe we should emphasize unity in the sense of compromising our basic doctrines, and it's frightening to see the increase of various kinds of amalgamations and coming together of church leaders. And soon they will also want us to unite with Buddhists and Muslims. I can assure you there are church leaders that want us eventually to come into a union of all world religions.

The exclusiveness of our message about Jesus as Savior and Lord is very, very upsetting. In our evangelism among Muslims, including in the Manchester area, our opposition has not come from Muslims. Our opposition has come from churchmen who do not believe that Muslims are lost, who do not believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

He is one of the ways, and who certainly do not believe that there really is such a doctrine as hell. Even some leading evangelicals seem at times to have a rather wishy-washy position concerning hell and the lostness of people. It is a great mystery.

None of us want to believe in hell. I'm ready to throw it off tonight. Just show me from the scriptures.

I've been itching to throw it off for years. But the more I go back to the Bible, the more books I read, the more I somehow feel that I am not God's counselor. His Son Jesus Christ spoke about this place, warned us of this place, and though I as a human being find it difficult to grasp, I want to stand on God's word.

The second word I want to leave is the word faithfulness. This ministry has continued over the years, your ministry here, because of the faithfulness of God. I believe also because of the faithfulness of God's people.

If I had more time, I would perhaps also speak about the need for us to be merciful. I just feel it's so important for us to be merciful. As we think about people who have hurt us, as we think about people who have failed us, as we think about people who we don't agree with, let us, as the Beatitudes say, be merciful.

I'm thrilled at some of the new books on the subject of forgiveness. I mentioned one here this weekend. Sorry about that.

I don't have it on the table. These books by David Siemens do emphasize forgiveness, and I'd be happy to send that book if you want to write to me. Faithfulness.

God's faithfulness and our need to be faithful. The fruit of the Spirit, according to Galatians, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness. Faithfulness.

A lot of times, the work that God gives us in the local church, and the key to all that God is doing is the local fellowship. It's the local church. Sometimes people think OM has been able to do what we've done because we've got this particular principle or that particular principle.

It's not one thing or two things that causes a spiritual movement to go forward. Any more than it's one or two things that's caused this work to keep going on a hundred years. Usually, it's many things.

Paul emphasized the need to have the whole council of God. And our commitment to the local church and our partnership with over a thousand churches all over the world has been perhaps the main factor that's kept this thing from being the fly-by-night organization some people once felt it was. God's faithfulness needs to be matched with our faithfulness.

If you're responsible for serving the cups of tea, do it heartily as unto the Lord. If you have to park the cars, do it heartily as unto the Lord. If you're in charge of the music or the sound system or cleaning the pulpit or the pews or whatever, do it as unto the Lord.

I was excited about a church I discovered in Colorado some time ago. There's a new book about it called The Church Unleashed. Rather upsetting book, a little extreme, like a lot of books.

You don't have to accept everything you read in a book. You do have to accept everything you can read in this book. I still don't understand everything I read in this book, so that gives another challenge.

Faithfulness. In that particular church, you're not allowed to belong to the church unless you have a specific ministry. No sleepers, no passengers, no spectators.

Christianity in Britain really, let's be honest. Let's be honest. It's a spectator sport, isn't it, largely? It's a spectator sport.

It's a little unlike rugby. A few guys out in the field scrumping around, desperately in need of a rest, surrounded by thousands who desperately need some exercise. Oh, to see God's people get a vision of responding to God's mercy and God's faithfulness with some faithfulness on their part.

Remembering people. We pray for our missionaries. We lay hands on them.

We send them across the ocean. Six months later, they're not supposed to come back every six months. They're supposed to stay out there.

Amy Carmichael went out. She never came back. May God give us a few more.

But if you stay out beyond six months, you can be sure every month past the six months, more people will be forgetting you. When you do come back, if they know your name, you'll consider revival has probably swept in. Many missionaries told me they never get a letter.

They never get a letter. And sometimes when churches go into crisis, the first thing that gets dropped is the support of the missionaries. And if you don't think one of Satan's strategies is to get churches into crisis so that the program of world missions can be slowed down, obviously you haven't read much about the enemy's tactics.

My own White's church is in total chaos right now. Total chaos. Hundreds of people hurt.

From 200 to 300 in attendance to 35. And they've written us. My wife's a founder member.

Cannot really expect we can promise to continue to support you regularly as our missionaries. Later on, through prayer and faith, they did continue to send a little support. So it's not a total loss yet.

And I'd appreciate prayer for my wife and for that church. The faithfulness of God should be matched by great faithfulness on our part. Think of the few who stayed with the railway mission when there were only a few coming together.

That was the time to quit. If they had quit at that moment, I probably would have been in the quit camp. If they had quit at that moment, this particular church with its great possibilities for witnessing for world missions and reality in Christ might not be here.

The third word I want to leave is linked with that. It's the word faith. In fact, I wrestled with just speaking about faith.

That's why I read that passage in Hebrews 11. Faith. Believing God.

Trusting God. Taking steps of faith. This is not a time to slow down because you've been in a crisis or are going through a difficult period in some ways.

This is a time for great faith. This is a time to get alone with God and ask if there's some steps of faith you should be taking. It's exciting to take steps of faith.

It's also scary. I used to lead Operation Mobilization. I thank God I don't have that responsibility anymore.

I'm one of the leaders, but I tend to think I'm just a follower following all these visionaries all over the world and generally gasping for breath. Our co-leaders around the world seem to be launching a new major project every month. We can't even keep up with it now that we're in 40 countries in a full-time, long-term way, ministering in another 60 countries through short-term visits of the ships and evangelists and others.

Humanly speaking, at times it seems almost out of control. So much is happening in Brazil that it seemingly for a while has gone out of control. Next month, at the end of this month, we're flying in our two Brazilian leaders to see if we can make peace at one of our main leadership meetings.

Yet it's exciting. It's exciting to see young people taking steps of faith. It's exciting to see them take risks.

If we're not willing to take risks, let's forget it. We're not going to evangelize the world. It's not easy for me to think of a close friend, perhaps murdered along that Pakistan-Afghan border.

In fact, I had a fight off my imagination a few hours ago when I visualized him being stabbed probably many times. Two other friends of mine that went to Afghanistan, mainly as a result of OM's ministry, were butchered and cut into pieces in their own home in Kabul some years ago. They're children.

They come into the room and see that terrible scene. I can't even handle such things. I try to block them out of my mind.

I was the slowest person, perhaps in OM International, to agree to go ahead with a second ship, which is now a reality but has not yet sailed. It's not easy to watch television as I did this week and see another major leading passenger vessel of a top country plow into a container ship outside of a German port.

Having put one ship on the rocks, do you think we cannot have a worse accident next time? No one died through this accident we had.

It all ended up favorable publicity for Operation Mobilization. The next accident may not come out so grand. In myself, I'm scared.

I just thought I'd especially throw that in since we have the chairman of the company who owns the ship sitting in the audience. I'm sure he will have another nightmare tonight, but we will not accept his resignation. There'll be no gain without pain.

We're not going to reach the unreached people listed on that map of the world unless we're willing to take risks. C.T. Studd, one of the founders of an unusual mission society that has reached millions and millions for God, known today as WECC, said, let's not be nibblers of the possible but grabbers of the impossible. I have to preach that message to myself because I'm at that age where you begin to get a little cynical, where you begin to have too many answers, where you begin to know too much.

Sometimes I feel I've read too much about ships. I don't want any more ships. Let's get into bicycles.

Let's get into hiking for Christ or trekkers for Jesus. But God has led us to take the risky road because those first two ships have given us the privilege of facing over 50 million souls with the Word of God. I could give you thousands of stories of what God has done through those two ocean-going ships which, when they go from port to port, are like catalyst explosives and bring many people to Jesus Christ.

I've just come from Canada and I was in Saskatchewan. They have as much space in Saskatchewan as Texas and only a million people. It's very crowded in England.

Did you ever notice that? You could throw many Englands in Saskatchewan. They only have a million people. But they got some great theological colleges and Bible colleges and Canada has a very amazing per capita missionary thrust.

People's Church in Toronto, a million five hundred thousand dollars for world missions. One church and the church is still growing. They're knocking the building down, putting up another one.

Quite amazing. But a man told me a story and it reminds me somewhat of our approach to world evangelism. No, not completely.

This man kept going fishing out in a big Saskatchewan lake and every time he came back he had a giant bag of fish. And the game warden, the man in charge of keeping the rules in these great sporting areas, lakes, he kept watching this man wondering how he was getting a full bag of huge fish every time he went out. So he asked if he could go along.

The old fisherman said, sure. You want to go fish? Come along with me. He went out in the boat in the middle of the lake.

The old fisherman took a bag full of dynamite, took up a big stick of dynamite, lit it, threw it in the water. All the fish jumped out, put them in the bag. The game warden said, hey, you're not allowed to do that.

There are regulations against that. That's extreme. This is not possible.

The old fisherman looked at the game warden, took out a piece of dynamite, lit it, handed it to the game warden. He said, tell me, have you come to fish or have you come to talk? Well, if you were Canadians, you might laugh harder at that story. It always reminds me of how difficult it is for an American to tell a joke in Britain.

They bring the best comedians over. They stand on the stage for 25 minutes in London. They tell every joke they can think of.

Nobody laughs. Amazing. He's discouraged as he walks off the stage.

He falls, breaks his arm. Everybody cracks up laughing. The unique British sense of humor.

We saw how God could use it when we lost our ship and the support for the ship ministry greatly increased among God's people in the British Isles. Now people think I'm going to go around and try to sink something else in order to get us out of perpetual financial trouble. Faith.

There's no way we can reach the world. There's no way you're going to continue a hundred years or even one year without steps of faith. Yes, we need to count the cost.

God doesn't honor foolishness. And I'm still learning how to find a balance, but I want to take some steps of faith in my life in the next few months and in this final decade. And I'd appreciate your prayers for that.

The fourth word perhaps is even greater than all the other words. It would be a big debate. It's the word grace.

You ever read much about the East African revival that took place in the You ever had the privilege of meeting people like Festo Kavandre before he died? William Nakanda? Some of those men like Joe Church, Roy Hessian? They've been a great influence in my life. And last time I was here, I think we sold every copy of Calvary Road we had. I talked to Roy, not to Roy, but his wife on the phone the other day.

He's had a terrible stroke. He's not able to speak, but his books speak. And they emphasized the message of grace.

I just feel that's such a great need. As we go into a new decade, as we face a world filled with suffering and pain, as we discover that many of the people who come to Jesus Christ in the 20th century have wounded emotions. They've experienced incest, as I spoke about last night, or they've experienced other very traumatic, difficult experiences.

Many of the people signing up to be missionaries are people who have gone through serious emotional difficulties. And we have to spend many years often helping them emotionally and mentally to become strong in God and balanced psychologically and emotionally. William MacDonald, who wrote that powerful book, True Discipleship, once said, grace, and he spelled it out on the blackboard, G-R-A-C-E, God's riches at Christ's expense.

It's the grace of God that keeps us going. The grace of God. That's why it's so wrong to become judgmental.

The greatest sin in our movement in years gone by, at certain times, was the sin of judgmentalism. We were so committed to using all of our money for God. We were so desirous of getting more Bibles and more literature and more accomplished, that we easily judged people who had a different lifestyle or spent

money in different ways than we did.

It was an ugly thing. Many ugly things happened in our world. So, if you've had some ugly things happen in your fellowship, wherever, whenever, join the club.

The church is not some kind of fraternity for super saints. It's a clinic for sinners. We make mistakes.

We fail. We get into legalism. We get into bondage.

We get into hero worship. And when we do, our hearts get broken, because all God's heroes are sinners. We need to understand God's grace to weak people.

I've always been opposed, almost since my conversion, to the ability of the church to constantly treat divorced people as second-class citizens. In our movement, we took a big gamble, especially considering our conservative background. And we allowed divorced people and divorced remarried people into our movement.

And my 33 years of observation and research shows that these people have been mightily used of God. We were warned as a movement not to do this, because they said, that will lead to compromise in your own movement. Yet, we have been able to run a parallel track, emphasizing grace and forgiveness and restoration, and God's program to use Plan B, together with an emphasis on discipline, holiness, purity, integrity, and honesty.

We can have both. But it's hard. And that's why legalism, in all of its subtle tentacles, is one of the main things strangling not only old churches, but some of the new movements are into neo-legalism that can bypass what they saw in the churches they came out of.

The devil knows how to attack an old church. The devil knows how to attack a new church. You have to have at least one really unpleasant word.

Guess what the unpleasant word for tonight is. If anybody can guess it, you can have five free books. Who would like to guess tonight's unpleasant word? Raise your hand.

Anybody. Tonight's unpleasant word. I can see you're really a bunch of risk-takers.

Sacrifice. Years ago, someone told me, you're not allowed to use the word sacrifice anymore in the church. Some kind of a deeper life message.

We can't use the word sacrifice, because in the light of all the sacrifice that Christ gave for us, including his whole life, how can we talk about sacrifice? And so, as Christians, we decided not to talk about sacrifice. And we also decided not to sacrifice. Great logic.

Since Jesus did so much for us, he sacrificed so much for us, we can't possibly match that, so let's sit back and do nothing. Real in-depth theological thinking. Would you bring the word sacrifice back into your vocabulary? Not in a superfluous or superficial way, but understand that even in the business world, people make great sacrifices for their companies.

In the sports world, people make incredible sacrifices for their nation, or for their team, maybe for money. In the military, and this is Remembrance Sunday, it's all sacrifice, whatever the motivation. And as we pointed out this morning, that is not something we should forget on Remembrance Day.

And if we are to evangelize the world, if we are to keep this fellowship going when it's under fire, and in the battle, it's going to take sacrifice. The Apostle Paul said in Acts chapter 20, another passage I wanted to read tonight, that for the space of three years, night and day with tears, he warned people. Does that sound like the average evangelical? Again and again, those words from Acts 20 have brought me back to the cross, and have caused me to present my body afresh as a living sacrifice, as we read in Romans 12.1. As a lover of this country, I spent a lot of time studying British history, 80% of which I eventually was not able to remember.

I even tried to memorize all the kings. Talk about a difficult thing for someone with my kind of brain. But I especially remember the last war, and all the sacrifice that people made, especially those in the RAF, but in other places, in other parts as well.

I remember being at a home in Norfolk. I think it was a place called Bury St. Edmunds. Maybe it was Suffolk.

And a man said that during the war, they actually came and took his iron fence. I mean, really? Take away an iron fence of an Englishman? I've told this story over in America. It really breaks them up.

Sacrifice was absolutely part and parcel of life in that war. And as soldiers of Jesus Christ, attempting to take the gospel to every nation, every people's group, surely sacrifice must be a part of it. And as we approach the Christmas season, when so much money gets thrown around for every kind of cockeyed gift, including many things that no one ever uses, it seems to me it would be a good time to examine our hearts and see how much we're sacrificing that the gospel may go to the ends of the earth.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The greatest problem right now is not volunteers for missionary service. The greatest problem is to find the finance to get them out there and to keep them out there.

In our own work every year, some of our best people leave. Some of them to take up secular jobs, to support the people they've seen on the field. And when they've lived in financial difficulty for two or three years, some people can handle it, but other people say, and sometimes it's God's will, I'm going back and make money.

A few weeks ago, I was with a friend in the United States who was with our work in the early days in India. OM India was not his thing. He was a Minnesota businessman.

He developed an ulcer through being on OM, living in India, the hot food. He came into my office in Bombay when I lived there. I gave a message about commitment, and somehow God spoke to him about giving a lot of the money.

I don't even know how he had this money on the OM team. A lot of other things that he had with him for the cause of the gospel. We then made a big mistake.

We went into business together in Bangkok because there was such financial pressure, and we thought selling Vietnam war surplus would help finance the work of God. OM sometimes is only learned by our mistakes. We learned then to stay out of business for God.

I think to this day we still have some sleeping bags and stopwatches from the Vietnam troops that we were not able to sell. He was a good businessman in Minnesota, but he didn't know how to handle the Chinese businessmen of Bangkok, Thailand, and he went back to the United States with a great burden to support

sacrificially the work of God. He could be a millionaire today, drives an old car, lives in a small house.

His two sons love Jesus, and they're getting involved as well, and he has poured hundreds of thousands into world evangelism. Many, many different people, I'm sure many different groups. So few people seem to have that vision.

My businessman friend, it is tougher to be a businessman for Jesus Christ in this day and age than it is to serve God in operation mobilization. My counterparts in the business world, and I have many, have a tougher job than I do. Mine is an awesome privilege, extra time for prayer, extra time in the Word.

All my co-workers born-again Christians, but the man who's out there in the business world today, especially a cutthroat, difficult world to live in, committed to resourcing the work of God, and if it wasn't for such men, Lausanne 2 Congress would not even have taken place. Most of the things happening in the Christian world, the big things that God has used in a mighty way, would not have taken place if it wasn't for men and women in the business world, the professional world, the farming world, wherever, who had a vision for sacrificing time, money, effort, that the gospel may go out to the ends of the earth. Someone said some time ago, the greatest hindrance to world evangelism is frozen assets.

So few are willing to take the risk of reducing their assets. The pressure of our day from a hundred insurance agencies banging on our doors is to build up as much as possible for that difficult day that lies ahead. Basically, when you look at the way a Christian lives, and you look at the way an unconverted man lives, you won't really find much difference, not when it comes to economy and money.

Tozer said that. Maybe he was wrong. You can tell him when you see him in heaven, but I believe personally it's true.

Nothing is more scandalous in Great Britain among God's people, in some ways, than the lack of sacrificial giving to the great cause of getting the Word of God out to the ends of the earth. I'm not talking about giving to OM. That's not my first burden.

I'm talking about giving to God. I was talking to a wealthy Irish businessman a week ago, and I said, you've got 20% unemployment here in Ireland. I said, do you have many Irish people that have any money? He laughed at me, because he's an accountant.

He knows a lot. He said, we have so many Christians with so much money in Ireland, you would never even imagine. Millions and millions and millions upon millions.

And he said, most of it is locked into banks, insurance companies, savings and loans. And he said, in fact, I've talked to some people, they have money, they sense they perhaps should give it, but with their way of thinking, they don't know who to give it to. They don't really trust people that much anymore.

That happens when you get older. And so they decide, 15% interest, better just to leave it in the bank. Praise God for every dynamic exception to that.

Praise God for a little group of Christians down in Surrey who decided to launch an auction program for auctioning antiques. Antiques and valuable possessions for the kingdom. And according to their last report, Wellington's missionary auctions have put over two million pounds or more into world evangelize.

How much of that is sacrifice? Only God knows. That's where the score is being taken. And I'm not interested in getting into judgmentalism, which leads into Phariseeism in this world, but I want to be committed to do whatever I can.

And that, I believe, at times calls for sacrifice. I would not even be here tonight if it wasn't for the sacrifice again and again of my own wife. First, giving her whole inheritance to the kingdom of God, which was a major sum of money when this work was being born.

And secondly, going again and again the extra mile with my philosophy of expenditure and lifestyle now for almost 30 years. And the final word, you probably guessed it, perseverance. I guess that's why I entitled my book, I don't know if I have a copy of that up here, No Turning Back.

I really wanted to call it The Human Factor because it's so much about struggle and failure and God's grace to weak people. But Graham Greene pinched my title, so we called it No Turning Back. And I leave you with that exhortation on this final message of this great anniversary.

Let's determine, whatever happens, whatever victory, whatever failure, whatever heartache, whether this church has to knock the walls down as it grows so big or has to meet into the church vestry because under enemy attack it becomes very small, whatever may happen, let us determine that we are going to persevere. We are going to persevere. I'm very hesitant to pat myself on the back even with my finger about what I've seen happen in my life because my greatest burden is not how I have started.

My greatest burden is how I finish because I've seen too many old, bitter, ugly men of God and I don't want to finish that way. When things were going well and their family was going on for God and the money was there and people loved them and they had a great ministry, they seemed to be rejoicing. But when things went wrong, the bottom fell through, some of their children backslid, disappointments came, doubts came in, unbelief came in, cynicism came in, and they died bitter old people backslidden and away from God.

How can it be? It happens more often than the church will report because most of us, if we're honest, are not that interested in our elderly people and these neglected people are tempted to feel forgotten and if they aren't very spiritually minded strong people, they will become bitter in those final years. I don't want that. So I don't look back over my 33 years of service.

I look forward to the next five or one or ten and I hope you will do the same. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Mercy, faithfulness, faith, grace, sacrifice, perseverance, not just in those two passages we've read, but written across the whole of the Bible.

Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for these mega words to our own hearts and to our own lives and we want to respond in faith and obedience to be your men and to be your women, to go where you want us to go and to do what you want us to do.

We look to you and we praise you and we worship you. Minister to our hearts in these moments of meditation. In Jesus name, amen.

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