

The Challenge

by Gladys Aylward

Gladys Aylward's sermon challenges listeners to fully surrender themselves to God as a form of worship and service, promising His abundant blessings in return.

Scripture: Psalm 127:1, Malachi 3:10, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:6, James 1:22

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Faith And Trust"

Description

Gladys Aylward preaches about the importance of surrendering all to God, sharing her life journey of faith, sacrifice, and obedience. She emphasizes the need to give our complete selves to God, trusting in His provision and blessings. Through personal stories and challenges, she urges listeners to pray fervently, serve selflessly, and trust God's guidance even in difficult circumstances.

Transcript

I want to read one verse. Now, the verse itself is quite long. But I feel that this is a verse which God has given to me for you. It's a verse which challenges me every time I read it and makes me go back and wonder whether I have done all I should, have I given Him all He asked, and rededicate all over again from where I started. The verse is the tenth verse of the third chapter of the Old Testament Book of Malachi.

Now, you'll find that this won't, will not be a sermon. You've already been to your churches, I hope, and had your sermons. Shall we just listen as if God is speaking to us. Now, as I read this verse, I would like to remind you that my Bible is Chinese; and so, as it comes to you, it will come in a different wording because I'll just turn it 'round from Chinese back into English. Chinese is very beautiful, you know. There's much, much more of it. And so sometimes the verses are quite long, where in your English Bible they're quite short.

The tenth verse of the third of Malachi: Thee great over and above all one, Jehovah, who controlleth the host, leans, saying, if you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, that my family may be sustained, then you can prove me and see if I will not open wide windows in heaven, pouring out blessings so many you will never be able to use them all.

"Thee great over and above all one." This in Chinese is a very beautiful expression, which we use to speak of our God. You just can't use the word "God." A god to a Chinese is some idol sitting in a temple made of mud or wood or stone, or sticking on your kitchen wall on a piece of paper. Our God is over and above, not only all other gods, but over and above all, everything. He is thee greatest, thee most powerful,

thee most wonderful, thee great over and above all one. Here, when you preach or you talk about your God, too, you have to, according to Chinese custom, give as you would to anybody of any standing his status, his name, his honor. English is very bare, you know.

And so here we have thee great over and above all one, Jehovah. And what does He do? He controlleth the host. And I conclude that the hosts are those things, which man cannot control. Man has gone a great length since Zion, but he still has to get to the moon, and then he hasn't controlled it. The sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, the sea He controls. You cannot rule the wind. You can try all you know, but it still blows the way it should. The sea still comes at that split second of the tide every time it rolls in. He controls.

And yet this great over and above all one, Jehovah, who controlleth these hosts, leans. The lovely little Chinese word here, I only wish you understood it, [Chinese word], which means to lean out. And here He is, as it were, leaning out of heaven. And He is speaking, leaning, saying, if you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe. And you're going to find that this is something very definite, to be put in a very definite place for a very definite purpose. There are no perhapses with God, you know, no maybes, no later ons. Those words are not in God's vocabulary.

If you will bring into my storehouse. That is a definite place. And a storehouse is somewhere where you store something. You put, in those old days, those jars of pickles on the shelf for such time as Mother wanted to use them, and she reached them out at the appointed time. If you will bring, says God, into my storehouse your completed tithe. And you will find as I have found that your completed tithe, as mine, is this. This is Gladys Aylward, the completed tithe, myself. All I possess, all I have, my head, my heart, my feet, my hands, that that is me, my completed tithe. And when God asks us to do something, He doesn't ask for one hand or one foot or even one day. He asks for the complete you.

If you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, that my family may be sustained. And if you will look in the dictionary where I found this explanation, it says this means to uphold and to keep, as a nurse a dying patient, as a mother her baby. So it isn't money, is it? A dying patient has no need of your pound note. A tiny baby has no need of your half crown. A dying patient needs the upholding care of the nurse. The baby needs the comfort of the mother's arms.

If you would bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, that my family may be sustained, this you can prove. Do you see what I'll do? I will open windows in heaven, and I will pour out blessings. And there'll be so many blessings you'll never be able to use them all up. And the words here to describe this is an expression that in Chinese says [Chinese phrase], which literally means the incoming tide of the sea, the ever flowing of a fountain.

Now, it doesn't matter what you do down at the seaside. The tide always comes. The water comes. You can put pipes and draw it off. You can take buckets and bucket it out. You can build breakwaters. But the water is still coming, and there's still much. This is what God promises in blessing to you and me when we have put in a completed tithe.

And so, friend, you and I have got to come down to realize that why we have not got a blessing, either in our own life, in our family, in our community, or in our nation, is simply because we have not fulfilled the condition that God made. Now, you can say, well, that's all right Miss Aylward, but remember this is law. Yes, it is law. Jesus said I came not to do away with the law, but to finish it. And if you go back to the dictionary, you will find that to finish something is to add to it. The definition in the dictionary says, "To

finish a cake, you ice it. To finish a hat, you trim it. To finish a garment, you put on the buttons."

So if you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe that my family may be fed and sustained and upheld and kept, I will open the windows of heaven for you. It won't cost you anything. I'm doing the blessings. I'm opening the windows of heaven. And then you are going to say, well, I just don't know how to do that because I can't give up this, or I can't do that. God isn't asking you to fulfill a law. He is asking you to find the love of Jesus Christ and pass it on to someone else.

Tonight in this testimony I pray that you will realize that it is said for one purpose only: that it may help you in some way, it will comfort where you need it, it will challenge where you need it, it will urge where it is very needed. But most of all, we shall be willing to go away and give to God what we maybe have never given to Him before, our completed self. We have most of us given just one part of ourselves, one piece of ourselves, or just a little bit of our time. Friend, God does not want your bits and pieces. God is not hard up. The silver and the gold is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. He produces. He made them. He created them. He's not hard up.

And so if you think that God is waiting for you to put your sixpence in, dear friend, He isn't. If you would bring yourself, I will open the windows of heaven. And may God speak to us, pour out a blessing on us, so that we can go out and bless someone else.

I went to China exactly 36 years ago. I went as a girl in my 20s, and I really and truly believed that God told me to go. I was saved, not in my home, I'm terribly sorry to have to say, but after I'd left my home and gone out to work in London. And I was pulled into a church one night by a group of young people who were standing outside that church door, who had been saved during the previous week in some revival. And they were so happy they thought they'd got everything in Jesus Christ, that they were determined everybody else was going to find Him, too.

And I that night sat in that church and, for the first time in my life, realized that Jesus Christ, son of the living God, had died for Gladys Aylward. It shook me. It moved me. And it was going to alter my whole life. I went out not realizing, first of all, what had happened inside me, to rush home to the little place where I was living and throw myself on the bed. And I said, God, if you're real, oh, please prove yourself to me. And if you prove yourself to me tonight, I promise I will do anything you ask. I had no idea what He was going to ask. But all I can say is this: If I was to be put back tonight to that very moment, I would do the same all over again, in that it has been just wonderful. We have a very wonderful God and a very marvelous Savior.

That next year I floated around. And before I had joined a church, really knew how to read the Bible or understand very much of prayer in any what I'd call concrete way, He called me to China. Why He called me, I don't know. I only know He did. I was reading one day a periodical, and in it was an article on China that somebody had written because there had come into the news just a few weeks or days previous, the fact that the first airplane had flown over China. And the article pointed out that Western civilization was going in at a great rate to this great land, and yet there must be thousands, it may even go to millions, of people in China who had never heard the gospel.

Well, this shook me as much as the fact that Jesus was real. And I thought, why, how dreadful. Fancy having to go all through your life without Christ. Oh, but how dreadful to come and have to die and not know where you were going. Well, then, somebody ought to be just doing something. I had not been brought up in circles that talked about missionaries and mission fields and all this kind of thing. I didn't

know anything about that. And so I felt that somebody ought to be doing something. Weren't there churches? Weren't there Bibles? Couldn't they read them? When I discovered there weren't, well, then somebody ought to be going and telling them. And I now believed that this is my job, to see that at least one person went to China for Jesus Christ.

And so for that next year and two months, every time I went out, I called on somebody, either a relation or a friend or somebody I knew, and later on people who I didn't know but as names I saw in the paper, with this one idea, that I could persuade them that they were the very person who should be going to China for Christ. They were all very clever and educated, and they had good positions. They were doctors; they were nurses. Oh, they were wonderful. And to me they were just the very people who should be going. Well, I'm terribly sorry, not one of them even took me in earnest. They all thought I was a bit funny in my head and asked me such peculiar questions that I came out very disappointed.

And then, at the end of that time, I stood in a sitting room at home while my sister was sending off an aunt of mine who had been to visit. And I heard her say, "Aunt Nell, be very careful. If our Glad knocks at your door, don't open it because you might find yourself on the way to China before long." And I decided that even my sister thought that I was a little bit funny up here. And, well, perhaps I was. After all, it was a queer idea, wasn't it, running around, trying to push somebody off to a place you didn't know anything about, to do something you didn't know anything about, to a people who you also didn't know anything about? Yes, it was. Well, all right. But I just said, I know, I'll have one last try. And then I'll throw the whole thing up, and I'll go back and enjoy myself.

My last try was my own brother. I went home, I caught him in the kitchen, and I proceeded to tell him all that was in my mind. I promised to pay his fare. I promised to keep him if he'd go. All he'd got to do when he got there was to send me a letter with what he needed, and I would send it to him. I would work. I would earn money, and this is where it would go. And he laughed, and he laughed. And he thought it was the biggest joke he'd ever heard. And he said, "I don't know what you're worrying about them Chinese for. Do you know anything about them?" No. "Know where China is?" No. "Been reading any books about China?" No. "Well, that's a queer thing, isn't it? Well, what you worrying about them for?" Because they do not know Jesus Christ, and I feel they should. You wouldn't go? "What, me? Oh, no. I'm not interested."

And he made to run from the kitchen where we were standing. He had already gone out from the door when he turned back and, very boy-like, put his head 'round the door, and this is what he said: "If you really believe somebody ought to be going, why don't you go yourself?" Bang went the door, and away he'd gone.

I stood, I don't know how long. And there went on inside me that battle that goes on inside, as many of us know this: Shall I? Is it me? Isn't it me? All the fors, all the againsts, you know. It couldn't be me. Why, I'd never done anything really sensible. And I wasn't educated. I hadn't any money. And I wouldn't know how to begin. I couldn't - I didn't know anything about sermons. I don't know anything about church. Oh, no. Oh, no. And then, why don't you go yourself, if you really believe somebody ought to go?

And eventually I just made God two promises. The first, dear Lord Jesus, if you will open the way and show me how, I will go myself. The second, I will never again ask anyone to do something that I believe you are asking me, the person Gladys Aylward, to do.

The first promise I kept within the next year and a half by buying for myself a third-class ticket on the Trans-Siberian Railway, packing a suitcase, and going. The second promise I am still seeking, with his

help, to keep. And I praise God that, even although I didn't understand all it was going to mean and all it was going to cost, I still went.

I wonder tonight, if God owned you, would you go? Oh, not to China. This isn't a call to China. This is a call to give to God a completed tithe. Only just the two years ago I realized that to pay my own fare was something that was rather wonderful. I didn't think it was wonderful in those days. To me it was just the ordinary conclusion. I went to work, and I earned the money, and I could spend the money how I liked. And so I paid my fare to China.

We're come 'round to be lazy England. Young man, young woman, are you a leaner? Your Great Britain is full of leaners. You know, those people that lean on somebody. Well, you take care, because the leaning post is going to fall one day. If you want to do something, go ahead and ask your father for the money, hope he doesn't give it to you. Stand on your own two feet. You're a man, and you're a woman; and you are answerable to God, not to a man. Not even although that man be somebody you love, like your father, or somebody you love, like your mother. I never asked my parents. I told them I was going. It was my money, and it was my life. And I believed I was doing what God wanted me to do. And I praised Him. So although they did not understand all that it was going to mean, they accepted and let me go.

I went across Europe, Poland, Russia, across to Japan and into the north of China. And here I joined an old lady, Jeannie Lawson. Jeannie Lawson was Scotch. She was 74, and she had spent most of her life in China. And now I had come along. I am perfectly sure that if we had met somewhere outside with the idea of joining up and working and living together, we would have parted the next minute. But God is a great God, you know, and He didn't allow that. He definitely intended we were to be together, and so we did not meet until we were right in the middle of China, and neither of us could run away.

Jeannie Lawson had been born in a tiny little fishing village in the north of Scotland. She'd never been to a big city. She had never been to England. I had been born and brought up in London and had never been more than a few miles from my own home. She was 74; I was 25. We knew nothing that the other one knew. We'd done nothing that the other one had done. We couldn't. Age and youth, north and south, how could we? And yet God had put us together. I did not learn to love Jeannie Lawson as I'd love lots of other people in my life. But I have what I call a little compartment in there of what I called a "proud love."

Seventy-four, the old going for Jesus Christ. I come home to find most 74ers with their feet on the sofa, grumbling about all the good old days that aren't here anymore, that if they thought very far they never were. All their operations, all their bad headaches, all the things that haven't been right. 74ers? I've met them. I know. If you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe. God gives strength, courage, and everything that's necessary. He says, I'll open the windows of heaven for them and pour out blessings on them.

And friend, I pray that you will get down before God as some of us have had to do and just have it out with Him. I pray again and again for some good old pioneers, still going, even though old, for Jesus Christ.

We opened, Jeannie Lawson and I, in this small city hidden in the Southern Shanxi Hills in North China, a mule inn. Now, this was not because we loved mules because we neither of us knew anything about mules anyway, or because we wanted to go into business or make money or get important. Oh, no. But because sitting on the side of that mountain one day, watching those men going over those mountain trails with their animal trains, Jeannie looked up, and she said, "You know, darling, wouldn't it be wonderful if those men got Jesus? They'd take Him and His love and salvation to places you and I would never be able

to go to. Let's go home and ask God what we do about it."

And home we went. And down on our knees we went on this mud floor, and for the first time I heard somebody pray. Oh, I'd been to prayer meeting. I'd been to church. But I had never heard anybody what I call "batter at the gates of heaven for the souls of men" in the way Jeannie now battered for the souls of the men of Yanchang Xian. I, I'm afraid, was a little concerned, and I knelt rather timidly behind her. But I was to praise God.

And although Jeannie never taught me how to eat Chinese food with chopsticks, or anything about Chinese customs, or even gave me any hints on how to learn the Chinese language, I learned how to pray and win the souls of men for my Lord. That's why she's got that little special compartment down there in my heart. And I pray to those of you who are getting old that somebody may keep you in their heart, not because you have been beautiful or done some wonderful thing, but because you have taught them how to pray.

Every night these men with their animal trains came into the inn. They listened to a story from Jeannie, who sat on a little stool in the middle of the courtyard while they finished their food or smoked their pipes. I don't know the story. One, I did not understand Chinese. Even if I had, I wasn't there. I was out in the yard, looking after the mules. Somebody had to do this job, and there was no other job I could do. So off we went. And again, there were times when I can honestly tell you I wished every mule was in the bottom of the sea. Nasty, pesty, smelly, obstinate things. And then, as I got irritated with the smell and the heat, my eyes would be drawn to that moon gate, and I would forget all about them and all the smell that they gave, and look at Jeannie calmly sitting there and the men, the owners of the mules, leaning forward, trying to catch every word of the story she was telling, the story of Jesus.

If you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe. Friend, when God asked Gladys Aylward to go to China, He didn't ask for one hand. He didn't even ask for two hands. He didn't even ask for one head. He asked for everything. And this, by this, He got everything. And all I can do is bring it.

Jeannie died when we had lived together in the inn for just one year. But the very men who had come into the inn were our first Christians. They weren't even men of that city where we lived. They'd come down from the mountain trails with their pack mules.

And then, when Jeannie died, I now believed that, because I was a young and single girl and alone, I should move. Girls didn't live alone anywhere in those days, and certainly not in the middle of China. China, anyway, has been a land of great convention. Women didn't go out alone, however old. They were always accompanied by some male servant, male member of the family. And if they hadn't got that, then they didn't go out.

And so the consequence was I couldn't go out. I found that I was bound to the courtyard simply because I had no chaperone and no one to accompany me. And I longed to know the women. I longed to go into the village. And I wanted to see outside. I was young. I was happy. I wanted to be free. And now I was bound into one small courtyard. And every night that courtyard was filled with animals and men.

Well, I didn't know quite what to do about this. I decided that I would have to move. Where? Well, I didn't know. I didn't know anybody else. And I supposed God would tell me where to go. And then two separate thoughts came into my mind. The first was that, did God put a person for one year in a particular place, pour blessings upon them, and then, because it was uncomfortable, and yet knowing that they were the

only real Christian there, expect them to move? I didn't think so. God was a god of love.

And the second thought was that I knew the only bit of language I had learned while I was in this place was only understood just there. So that, if I moved, I would have to start learning an entirely new Chinese, in that I wouldn't understand anybody outside, and they wouldn't understand me. I couldn't see it. No, I just couldn't. God doesn't do things like that. God is a god of common sense as well as love. And He knew I was the only Christian.

So I did something that I wouldn't advise you to do unless you feel very definitely led. I decided that every day, when I read my portion, if I came across in that particular portion the word "go," I'd get up and go. If I didn't find the word "go," then I just wouldn't leave. But I read day after day after day after day, but I didn't find the word "go." So I stayed. Rather puzzled, a little concerned, I wondered, why is God keeping me right here? I'm lonely. All day long, all I could do was study the Chinese in a very sort of odd way in that I'd no books and nobody to teach me and really no talk, and then at nighttime get mixed up with the muleteers and the men.

And then the door opened. I discovered that, because I had been born outside in a land that was Christian, I was the only woman with unbound feet. All our women had tiny little feet, just the size of my middle finger. When the little girl is from two to four years old, and she could properly balance on those baby feet and walk those baby steps, her feet were bound down. By the time she was from 11 to 14, her feet were finished. They were. They were crippled for life.

Now, down in the capital of China, Chiang Kai-shek had become Christian. And seeking to put on reforms all over the land he was now head of, he made a law. The binding of women's feet was now to cease. So that although I know other reforms went on, I don't know any more than that this one law was going to mean more to my sisters and to me than you in Great Britain will ever really realize. You do not know how much we owe to this man and his courage and his stand for the faith that is in Jesus Christ. And when you criticize, would you be very careful? If you bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, you find yourself in love with people you don't - you might not like, but whom you know are your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

This meant that every head man of a district had got now to find somebody whom he could organize and pay and send 'round that district to stamp this custom of foot binding out. And the Mandarin of Yanchang Xian had decided that this was me. But I had decided that it wasn't. And so the day he came with the intention of getting me to accept this job, we stood on each side of the courtyard, getting no nearer to each other, and refusing almost to listen to each other. I wished him anywhere. Into my heart was the thought that I had gone to China for Jesus Christ. And I didn't want to be mixed up with governments and feet and politics and all these sorts of things. I wasn't interested. I was interested in souls for the Lord of glory.

But, you know, I couldn't get rid of this man. He just stayed on and on and on. And I didn't know what to do. And then I sent up a silent prayer to the Lord to send him out. And something most amazing happened. It seemed as if away in the distance somewhere was a little voice. It sounded just like my brother. It wasn't. He was still here in England, and I was in the middle of China. But the very words that he had slung across the kitchen at me all those years before, "If you really believe somebody ought to be going, why don't you go yourself?" But feet are nothing to do with me. "Do you really believe they should bind their feet?" Well, no. "Then why don't you do something about it?"

And I suddenly went and accepted the job. Something I had never dreamed of, thought of, wouldn't have thought of in a million years. I became an employee of the Chinese national government, the Official of Feet. I didn't get the job because I spoke good Chinese, which I didn't. Or because I knew how to climb mountains, which again I didn't. Or that I knew anything about the people of those mountains, which of course I didn't. Simply because of the size of my feet. You see, friend, that's right, you have to put just all of yourself in. God at that moment didn't need my hands, but He needed my feet. And He got them.

I cannot tell you that the job was wonderful, that the pay was glorious. It wasn't. You've never seen our women's feet, or else you'd know. I only know that I was happy because I believed I was doing what God wanted me to do. And every village, every hamlet was mine. I was an official, and I could just walk in. I could knock on your door and just go in. My congregation were there. I had, when I went out on long journeys, four men; on shorter journeys, two men - labor from the local militia of our own city. They were just little fellows that were so proud to be following that woman who knew everything. Oh, if only they knew how much I didn't know.

But we would arrive in a village, and I would stand on the middle of the threshing ground which is also in the middle of every village, fetch them all out. Everybody out. And I would wait and watch all the doors opening and the people streaming from the inside. To men in the fields, fetch them in. Bring those children and sit them at the bench. And gradually we would get organized. They had to be all there. Doesn't take long to explain about feet, growing and smoking opium, does it?

And so we'd start off. Shall we learn to sing? Sing? Government officials singing? Oh, yes, we sing. But anyway, you do the same as I am doing. And they learned to sing. And they listened to stories from this, the book. And they learned that God had created men and women as little babies, and their feet were the same because He expected them to remain. I learned very early that every two feet had a heart and a soul and lots of relations. As through the inn came the first Christians, so now through my job came the first Christian. Whoever would have dreamed that God was going to use what was then a heathen government to open the mountains of South Shanxi to the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ. There were no missionaries. There never have been. There was just me. I wasn't a missionary. I'm an official of the government.

And then there came into my life something which I hadn't reckoned on, thought of, or knew anything about. Because although I was happy, earning my own living, holding my own - and God was blessing in the most amazing way. Whole villages had come out for Jesus Christ. I had bonfire after bonfire of their idols and their ancestral gods and literally sang in my heart as they knelt to take Jesus as their Savior. But I was so lonely. I ached with loneliness.

I lived one week's journey from the next white men. They were the only people who knew anything about England. They were the only people who knew anything about the fact that I had a mother and a father, and I still loved them. The mountain people, they didn't know. I was just the official, you know. I was just that one sent by the living God to tell them about Calvary. That I had a home and a mother and a father never even entered their heads. And I longed, I longed to sing choruses. I longed to talk and be very happy. And I didn't know how. I was so lonely.

And then I came to problems, not only in my own heart and my own life, because we don't stay at being little boys, who grow into men. We don't stay at being girls, we grow into women. And I had grown up. And I - but because I was sort of facing problems also in the work. This should have been a man. I couldn't go

out alone without at least two men who were my bodyguard, or the four men who were my bodyguard. I would never have been allowed more than those few steps from my front door. I couldn't talk to men on my own. I'd got to go and grab some old woman or something to stand by. And you couldn't always find anybody who was willing or had time.

So I puzzled. Well, I came to the final conclusion about the solution to all the problems in the work, in my heart, and in my life, and in the need of the city. The whole thing would be solved if I had a husband. And it wouldn't be. I didn't know how to settle this. And so I took the matter to God. And I prayed, Lord Jesus, you saved me, called me, used amazing ways to pull me out and put me down here. Somewhere over this great wide earth there is a young man. I don't know him. I don't want to know him. I only know that, if you have chosen him, he is the very person who will fit into this work and into me. Would you pull him out? Would you do for him what you did for me? And here we will meet. We'll have the first Christian home, by loving you and loving each other, and we'll have the first white babies these people will ever see.

I really believed, because God answers prayer, that one day I would see coming on a mule train or on a camel train a young man. He wouldn't probably have ever heard of me, but that wouldn't matter. We'd meet, and wouldn't it be wonderful? Oh, the joy of having somebody to climb the mountains with, somebody to discuss things with, somebody to sing with and to pray with. But he didn't come.

Do you think he should have come? Maybe you've never thought. And tonight I further challenge: Do you believe that it was God's will to leave one woman all alone, right in the middle of what to you appears to be nowhere? Do you? Did you do anything about it? Are you doing anything about it now? Because there are people in the same position right today. Are you bothered? Then you should be. And I challenge you men and women to seek God's Holy Spirit and ask Him to teach you how to pray.

They are going to fail, as I nearly did, unless you do. I waited, and I waited, and then decided that perhaps I was wrong. Maybe God didn't want me to have a husband. Well, if He didn't want me to, then that was that. But He wouldn't leave me alone. He was a God of love, and He knew that I longed for fellowship and companionship. I'd pray for a fellow worker. And so for the next year I did. And I waited, and I prayed in the same way for that fine girl, who of course, as you know, never came. I wonder if she should have come.

Young men, young women, in the name of Jesus Christ I challenge you every one. What are you doing for Jesus Christ? What are you doing for Jesus Christ? Not what are you doing for your career or yourself or even your mother and father, but for Jesus Christ. If you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, says God, then you can prove me, and you'll see what I will do. But you haven't got your completed tithe in, so you haven't got any blessing. I do believe somebody should have come to that part of the world because, you see, it was I who watched the people who I couldn't get 'round to die without Jesus Christ.

Into that next year, when I realized that probably no one was coming, I'm afraid I just went lower and lower and lower. And tonight, friend, may I remind you that, if you have a missionary, or if you know that native worker - or if you don't, then find one - you should be praying every day. They are in the forefront of the battle, and they need upholding and caring. If you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, for what purpose? That my family may be upheld and kept. They're not asking for your money. They're asking for your upholding care and your love.

And so one day there walked up the city of Yanchang a grim, hard-hearted woman. This is Gladys Aylward. Yes. She's not preaching about a God of love because there isn't one. Love? You talk to me about love? Hmm. That's the God who picks you up and pulls you out and puts you down in the middle of

China and proceeds to forget all about you. He doesn't care whether you're so lonely that you ache or what happens to you or anything. He only, well, that's all it is to it; and, well, here we are. Lord, if you want a grumbly, crotchety old maid, well, here she is. I'll serve you. But you wait and see what you get.

My heart was filled with my own self-pity, my own self-righteousness, my own pride, my own ideas, myself. Friend, are you there? Are you there? I meet them every day in the London Tube, on the buses, in the trains, the miserablest lot you could ever meet. They don't care about anybody but me and mine and us and ours. Got the worst headache in the world, haven't you. Well, I'm telling you, you haven't. God does not demand. God does not push. God does not pull. He says "if you will bring." And when that tithe goes in, it is in God's hands. And He will do with you as He so desires in such a wonderful and loving way that you will find you are usable wherever He puts you.

I walked up the city street, and sitting on the side of the road was an ordinary mountain woman. Leaning against her knee was a very dirty, miserable-looking little child. I discovered she was there to sell it. I bought it. I didn't buy the child, as you now know, because I love children, because I didn't. Or because I pitied it, because I didn't. Or because I wanted it, because I didn't. I wanted my own baby. And my heart at that moment was filled with my own self-pity and my own ideas.

I bought it because I truly believed that Jesus Christ asked me to. As I stood on that busy city street, it was as if somebody brushed past me. And a voice somewhere behind me was saying, "Buy it. Buy it for me." I haven't any money. "Oh, yes, you have." And I suddenly remembered that in my pocket there lay a few Chinese coppers. Do you mean to say that you want me to buy this with my own money? "Yes. Because you see, Gladys, you can only buy a body, but I can save its soul." Do you know how I earned this money? Because this is my wages, you know. See that mountain? I climbed up that mountain, almost on my hands and knees, because it is too steep for an animal to climb up. When I got to the top of that mountain, I called those village people together, and I shouted myself hoarse. That's my job. And I came down here to receive my wages.

"Yes," said the voice, "I know. I know exactly how you feel. You see, Gladys, one day I, too, climbed a mountain. And I, too, perspired all over climbing. When I got to the top of the mountain, I didn't shout. In fact, I never even opened my mouth. I allowed those men to do exactly what they liked with me. And they nailed me to a cross. Do you know what for? Because, Gladys, I hadn't any money. In fact, I hadn't anything else to give. So I gave myself, my warm life's blood. I was 33."

And I awoke. I was 33. Friend, have you ever been to Calvary? Oh, not a place. Can you close your eyes and know that God through the power of His Holy Spirit will give you a vision of what Calvary cost the son of the living God? Blood and sweat and tears. Murder. A most horrible death. And it was for you. I did. I'm never going to Jerusalem or Bethlehem. I don't need to. I know it all. All I know is He brought me. And I just realized that all I could do was to hand myself body, soul, and spirit over to Him.

I bought the child. It was the first act of what was going to be the complete submission of myself to Him. I never dreamed that I was buying my first daughter, a little girl who was going to come into my life and mean so much. From her there came, one by one, the others, all in different ways, all under different circumstances, all so different in their temperaments and characteristics. But they came. And I praised God for them. He kept us. He fed us. He clothed us. We all lived in a higgledy-piggledy mess in the inn. But we were very happy. And by the time the war came, I had 40 children.

And so one day, looking down on this sort of all scrambling mess below, I said, O Lord, I don't think I can bear any more. I believe 40 are a good round number for one woman, and please don't send any more. But you know, God doesn't always answer your prayer as you expect. That was the year the war began. And then, being pushed in front of the ever-advancing Japanese enemy, came hundreds and thousands of lonely, pathetic refugees. And when they had passed through our little place, there were always a few children left behind.

So the family grew and grew until there were over 80. Eighty of us during those years ran around the mountains. He protected us. He kept us. He fed us. And then we made a final getaway, came over the Yellow River where He worked miracles for us, to make a new life for ourselves in the province next door, Shensi. I watched the older ones go away to join the army, the navy, or the air force. I watched the girls go away to join Red Cross units and to be put into hospitals for wounded soldiers and for wounded refugees. And each time I broke my heart, I praised God for them and handed them over to Him. He had given to me to love and to bring up. And I prayed and longed that they should go out to be the testimony and the witness, which I longed to be in the place where they were going. I don't know what became of lots of them. War separates. War kills. War hurts. War breaks your heart. But we kept the smaller ones of us together as long as possible.

And then, as you know, when the first enemy retreated, so a second more wicked, more evil enemy swept in. And what we had not lost under the first enemy, we now lost under the second. The Japanese never took away our Bibles. The communists did. The Japanese did not do what the communists did. And we watched with aching, breaking hearts this evil, horrible thing take, bit by bit, everything we possessed.

Friend, tonight I don't know you. I don't know your thoughts. I don't know that you love the Lord Jesus or that you know Him as your Savior. But I challenge you, if you have any idea that communism has a good point, it came from hell. And if there's any good in the devil, then there's good in communism. Because that's its master. I hate it with every breath I breathe because it is my Lord's greatest enemy. It has killed. It has murdered. It has suppressed more love, more people, than any other thought or religion has ever done since the world began. And all that amazes me is that you can sit and listen and swallow the bait that they're throwing out on you.

Great Britain, I challenge you to give to God your completed tithe and get the blessings because, if you don't, you know what's going to land in? Something that you least expect. Now, don't say nobody's ever warned you. And don't go away and say it cannot come here. That's what we said. I sat in a lovely little village on the side of the mountain and said, oh, no, it couldn't come here. But I watched that village disappear, bit by bit, brick by brick, man, woman, and child. If you haven't got the blessing, watch, because you have not given to God what He asks.

We met, the family and I, for the last time in a field outside the city of Chengdu, the capital city. I had decided it was time to go. I brought danger on everybody who looked on me or even spoke to me because, although I held a Chinese passport and was Chinese in my thought, in my love, in my language, in my clothes and in everything but my face, I still had a foreign face. I came out. I would willingly have died for China, but God didn't ask death. He asked that I live. I came to England, and then I turned my face back. I knew that I could not go again to the place that had been my home in North China. It was closed. It was behind an iron curtain.

And so I asked the Lord where He would have me go. I set off, and I wandered around the East and into the Far East, had some of the most amazing experiences, going into South Africa, Ceylon, Malaya, and all around those fields, looking into every face. There might be my son. I might find my daughter. I might find a lonely Chinese. I did. In every place. I found them there, not my sons and daughters in every place, but Chinese who were lonely, who were refugees, who were longing for freedom. God gave us blessing.

But there was no witness in my heart to stay in any of these places until I arrived in Hong Kong. And here the whole place was absolutely chockablock full of refugees. They literally were there in their hundreds. Every place where you could put a body, there was one. Every shop doorway. All the pavements down the sides of the roads. Even down the middle of the road there were families living. And I who knew what it felt like to be a refugee, felt this is what God has sent me for. I will work among refugees.

And so I took a little room, and I sort of set my little house in it, as it were, and I prayed and expected that God would show me what to do. Well, He did, because He does. I didn't know in those early days how to begin. I wandered among, up and down the rows, sitting beside those heartbreaking families, nursing some of their dirty babies. I wasn't really doing anything. I didn't know how to do it.

And then a miracle happened. I met one day in the street one of my own boys. I thought he was dead. He thought I was dead. And now, right there in the middle of all these great crowds of people, we met. And we joined up. This has been a most wonderful partnership, my son Michael and I. I praise God for him, for all he has done, all he means to me, and all I know he means to God. We opened right there in Kowloon what is now the Hope Mission. It was just then an empty shop. There was nothing in it. And for the first couple of months everybody who came in just either leaned against the wall or stood up. But they crowded in.

God blessed us from the very moment that we stepped into the place. And I praise God for all He has done in that little place. We have the usual activities that go on. Every night there are these different groups, and they come for their prayer meeting or their Bible study or their band practice. They're terribly in earnest. Mostly they're young people who have come out, leaving all their families behind. They're lonely. But here they find fellowship. This is not only their spiritual home, but they will tell you it's their home. So that although they don't actually sleep there, they count it as their home.

We now have in Hong Kong four rooftop schools. If you have seen on television those great high resettlement buildings, and you know what happens, you rent a rooftop. And you put around it a fence, or what I call chicken wire, and you build a little lean-to in the middle, and you open your school. The children live in the building beneath. They just come up to the rooftop. Every resettlement building holds 1,000 families. We have four. The opportunity is wonderful. And if you see them, your heart just sings with the fact that they are not only learning to read and write and understand the things of the world, but they are learning of Jesus Christ.

We last year opened what we call a "poor school," which is for the children of beggars. These have no status, no name. They can't take jobs because they have no pass, and so they are beggars. Their children will be beggars unless something is done. Well, they're not going to be beggars if we can help it. And so, with others of like mind, these poor schools have been opened. We have one. It was wonderful to go out there just a little while ago and have their dirty little hands put on you, and a little dirty face looking up and saying, "Grandma, oh, Grandma. Are you my grandma?" Yes, dear, I am your grandma. "Oh, how wonderful to have a grandma." But isn't it wonderful to have a Father? "Oh, yes. But He is up above, you know?" And they in their simple way are proving the love of Jesus Christ.

I did not remain in Hong Kong. I, because I again believed that I should go one step further, went to the island of Formosa. Now, again, I didn't know why I was going. I only believed that that was what I should do. And when I got onto the island, I just didn't know, again, where to start. But I arrived when the island was going through a wonderful time of, shall I say, not actually spiritual revivals, but revivals of all kinds. All sorts of reforms were going on. They were unifying the language, land reform, schools were being built and opened, so that things that never could, and I do not now think ever will happen on the mainland of China, are really happening in Formosa.

And I just, as it were, went down into the middle of it and had a most wonderful time. And while I was having this time of student retreats, revival meetings, conferences, conventions, which I had sort of come into because, when I had come out of Shanxi into Shensi and discovered that our mountain dialect would not be understood down there on the plains, I had learned Northern Mandarin. And oh, how grateful I am to God for letting me learn it while I was still, anyway, younger than I am now, and that it was all ready to go into in Formosa, where it is now the official language. And imagine, I arrived speaking the official language. To me it was just overwhelmingly wonderful.

And then, right in the midst of all this busyness, God, as it were, put a full stop. I went home one night to the little ruin that I was living in to discover that somebody had already been in it. They had not stolen anything, but they had left right there in the washbowl, which was on a little chair inside the room, a newborn baby. And I picked up the bowl with the baby in it, and I said, oh, no, Lord, there's some mistake here. Now, I do not want a newborn baby, and you know that I have nothing to feed it on, clothe it in, or any time to look after it. And also may I remind you that mothers are young. I am well over 50. But there was no answer from heaven at all, just as if God was deaf.

But as I was standing with the bowl with the baby in my hands, it was just as if I could see myself all those years ago, standing in the kitchen of my own home. Dear Lord Jesus, I promise I will never again ask anyone to do something that I believe you are asking me, the person Gladys Aylward, to do. So I took the baby. God worked more miracles for that baby in its first few days than He's worked for you and me in all our lives. So it lived. But before long there were other babies. People got the idea that I loved babies. And so every time I came home, well, I knew what was going to happen.

And now somebody told me that outside, in a very lovely place, from our city, Beitou on the side of the mountain, there was an old hotel. I took it, rented it, the Gladys Aylward Children's Home. It has been filled, up to last year, with children of all kinds, all sorts, and all conditions. Orphans of all sorts. Lonely, pathetic, lost, abandoned babies God blessed in a very wonderful and mighty way.

And then, four years ago, I came to a very important time in my life. I had my 60th birthday. Very important in China, you know. And of course there were great celebrations. And all the important people, you see, gave me honors and so forth. But at the end of that week my family arrived. Now, the family is rather large. And they filled everywhere. In fact, they swamped the hotel, and they were in everybody's house and so forth because, you see, the family have grown up and married, and then they have got children. And so there are - they go on and on, you see. And there they all were.

And on this night, after all the grandchildren had paid their honors and everything, are just the family, my sons and my daughters. And my eldest son gave a speech. He is an officer in our Chinese Air Force, and a very, very fine Christian in that force. "And now our honorable mother has got to the honorable age of 60. And so we the family have decided that it is time that she had a rest. She has spent all her life looking

after such as us, who were just little bundles of nothing that she picked up on the side of the road and has loved and cared for." And then of course you know the usual all sort of thing that would go on. "And so now we have decided, and we've got a little house, and we have even sent outside and bought a bed." We don't have beds in Formosa, as you know. "And so we are expecting that our mother will now take her rest and sleep every night and all night on the honorable bed."

Well, I thought this was a very wonderful idea. And I went and took up my residence in the little house. It was quite small, but it was very nice. And I slept very comfortably on the honorable bed. For one whole month. At the end of that month, one of those very boys had been doing accounts of the orphanage with me. On his way out, very late at night, to go back to the orphanage up the hill, his foot kicked against what he thought was a bundle of rubbish just outside my door. He picked it up. He was on his way up the street to put it into the bin, which is there for the purpose, when he thought he felt it move.

He was very annoyed that somebody would tie up a little dog or a cat and leave it on our doorstep. He brought it back. But when it was opened, it was neither cat or dog, but a baby. I believe the dirtiest baby we've ever had. The sickest baby I've ever had, anyway. It just breathed. I decided that to wash it would kill it. So I took it to the kitchen. I rubbed it all over with cooking oil, wrapped it in a towel, and took it to bed with me. Decided that in the night I would feel beside me a little cold lump. All I would have to do would be put it out onto the floor, and then it would have died. I'd have done my best anyway. But I slept all night. And in the morning it was still alive. It lived all that week. Lived into the next week. Into the third week. And now I woke up, well, wasn't it going to die? Why didn't it die? I didn't know. Because it didn't seem to move much. It didn't cry or anything. It just didn't die.

And so I just got hold of two boys from the orphanage, and I said, now, listen. You go straight down to the police because everybody but the people who should know, know about the baby. The neighbors had all been in. The family had all been in. Even some important people from the government had been in. But the police didn't know, and they ought to know. And so I said, well, go and report it to the police. And on your way back you'd better drop into the registry place and just register. You can think up a name on your way. It's going to die anyway, so why worry what name you give it?

Imagine my amazement when they came back with the paper with the name of the baby on it, to find they had christened it, or shall I say registered it, as Ai-Chi-Guang. Now, Ai-Chi-Guang literally means the first of a new Aylward family. Well, Ai-Chi-Guang was just a bundle in a bed for nearly one year. Didn't do anything. Just was there. Just breathing. Whether he knew anything, understood anything, we didn't know. There was no voice. There was no nothing of what we would call sense at all. And I nearly broke my heart.

And it came to Christmas, and our babies were so lovely, and we were going to have such a wonderful Christmas. And I stood looking at them, and they were all gurgling at the Christmas tree and the little silver paper things we'd saved to hang on, you know. And then I went home to my little house, to Chi-Guang, who maybe would never know a Christmas tree, would never know that Jesus had ever come or that He'd ever died.

And I just picked him up, and I said, O Lord, I do not believe that this is your will. Surely you can't just expect a little breath to go on in a body like this. Please will you answer my prayer. I will never ask you for anything again, if you don't want me to. But would you take him back to heaven? Or would you heal him? And God healed him.

Here tonight is Ai-Chi-Guang. Who's been naughty. Who's even taken his clothes off in the book. And to you who have had anything to do with him or seen him, you know very well that, when God heals, He really heals. Because here he is. There are no spots on him, let me tell you. We have been here just over four months, and he's learned enough English to carry on quite comfortably without me and get lots of things that I don't know anything about.

We come back to the beginning. If you will bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, that my family may be sustained, then you can prove me. And do you see what I'll do, I'll open windows of heaven for you. I'll pour out blessings. And friend, He has. We have in this new family 26. And then to climax the whole thing, just two years ago God sent to me my fellow worker. And my heart was filled with a tremendous joy. And I thought of all the lonely years in Shanxi, when I had longed and pleaded, first for the husband and then for the fellow worker, and they had neither of them come. And I felt, this is worth waiting for. Here was somebody who was going to fit in in a most wonderful way.

And I praise God for keeping me waiting and then sending to me dear Kathleen, who although she had never nursed a baby, knew nothing about orphanages, and didn't know anything about the mission field, but who certainly loves the Lord and has fitted in, in a way which to me has been literally amazing. I have left her there with those babies. And my heart is absolutely at peace about them, and her, and all that is connected with the work that doesn't belong to me, but to God.

And so tonight, friend, as we have thought of all these various things that I in a very simple way have tried to fit together, to not just prove how wonderful God is, but to prove what you can get for yourself if only you would give Him your completed tithe. I wonder why people don't. Tonight would you let God speak to you? Would you allow Him to come right up close and in your ear challenge your heart? Because I truly believe that there are many of us here whom God wants to teach how to pray. I also believe that there are many who should be doing at least something for Him. Maybe there are those who should be going. And there are certainly those who should be giving. What you give, I don't know. Nothing to do with me. But it just isn't money. It's yourself.

If you would bring into my storehouse your completed tithe, that my family may be sustained and kept, then, says the great over and above all one, Jehovah who controlleth the host, I will open the windows of heaven for you, and you'll get so many blessings, you can't use them up because I will just keep on pouring them out. Oh, aren't we miserable.

Tonight, as we bow our heads in a word of prayer, shall we ask God what He is going to ask of us? Would you be willing? Mothers, if God asked you for your son or your daughter, would you be willing? Young men, young women, if God asks you to go, would you go? Or have you some reserve of your particular place when He calls?

You have to go where He puts you. That jar of pickles in your pantry is put where Mother's hand wants it to be put. And in the same way you in God's storehouse are in the hand of God, to be put down in the place that He knows, and only He knows, you are going to be useful in. God did not send me to Africa. He knew I wouldn't be any good in Africa. He didn't send me into the slums of London. He knew I wouldn't be any good. He sent me into the middle of China because He knew I'd fit in there. And I believe that in this way He does so with each one of us.

If we are not in the way of His blessings, then would you like to go home and see why, and how you can get back and get those blessings? Friend, you live in the miserablest place on earth, Great Britain. You're

the biggest lot of grumblers there is. And you've got nothing to grumble about, may God challenge you. Do you realize how many hungry people there are in India tonight? Have you ever been hungry? Do you realize how many people still live in refugee camps? Have you ever lived in a refugee camp? Do you know how many people live under the iron hand of communism? Have you ever lived under the iron hand of communism? Have you ever lived through an earthquake, like Turkey is right now? Do you know anything about a typhoon? Do you know anything about an enemy soldier standing in front of you when you're a woman? Do you? Of course you don't.

You think you know anything? No. You don't know sorrow. You don't know suffering. May God break your hearts, and through those breaking hearts pour His love. Friend, tonight there is one way to get into Russia. Shall I tell it to you? Prayer. God sent Holy Spirit prayer. There is one way to save a child in China tonight. On your knees with believing Holy Spirit prayer. May God teach it to you.

There is going to come a day, friend, when you stand before God's judgment throne, and He's going to say, what have you got? Must I go in empty handed, thus to meet my Savior so? Have you got anything? He doesn't want your hat, or your pie, or your car, or your land. He wants you and the souls which you should be catching for Him.

If you're afraid, can you hear the sob in God's voice, leaning out of that wonderful glorious heaven? Oh, if only they would give to me something to use that my family that is dying without me might know of my love. God has given to you your privilege of living in freedom, of being able to read this book when and where and how you like, of praying anywhere, how and when you like. He hasn't given this privilege to millions. No man in Russia tonight or China tonight can pray where and how he likes. He lives under the hand of the devil.

As we pray, would you let God deal with you as He's had to deal with me? Friend, I have not done what I wanted to. I have not eaten what I wanted or worn what I would have chosen. I have not lived in a house that I would have ever looked at twice. I longed, as I've told you, for a husband and baby and security and love, and He didn't give it. He left me alone for 17 years with one book, a Chinese Bible. That's how I know it and no other. I don't know anything about your latest novels, pictures, theaters. I live in a rather out-of-dated world. And I suppose you say, well, it's awful miserable.

Friend, I've been one of the happiest women that have ever stepped this earth. I've had a great family of someone else's children, who I've loved with a great love because Jesus Christ loved me, and who I'm now receiving love back from. I've a wonderful family. And they are now going into the places that I will never go to. They are doing things that I can never do. It's a fact, for God promised the heavens opening and the blessings tumbling out.

Shall we pray? Dear Father, accept what we are now going to give to thee. Something that is precious. Something that we've kept, but we are now going to hand over: our pride, our jealousy, our self-centeredness, our prayerlessness. Our silly little empty nothing. All the things we've got ourselves tied up in.

O Lord, give us freedom, freedom in thee, that you might be able to pick us up and put us down and use us when and where and how you like, that someone might know how much you love them. We pray right now, not only for ourselves, but for those whom we should be upholding and keeping, those lonely missionaries, sick, fragile, tired of the heat or the cold, surrounded by hedonism, superstition, cruelty, and sin.

O God, we're very near to you. We ask thee that you work to teach us how to pray for the men in Russia, the children in China, people behind iron curtains, behind walls. O God, give us visions. Make us to dream dreams, that we may know something of Calvary, what it cost, and a lost soul. That we may learn, not only how to pray, but how to do, how to be, how to go, and how to give.

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