

1 Stir Me

by Helen Roseveare

God invites every single one of us to be missionaries, to serve Him and spread the Gospel, and it's a tremendous privilege that requires us to be stirred and committed to serving Him.

Duration: 41:45

Scripture: Exodus 35:4, Matthew 4:20, Matthew 22:37, Mark 10:21, Luke 14:33, Romans 12:1, James 4:8

Topics: "Evangelism", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker recounts a story about a man named James who transformed a group of unruly young people into a youth club by sharing the message of Jesus with them. The speaker admits to struggling with controlling the large group of kids and feeling overwhelmed. However, James persists in his mission to reach out to the older troublemakers in the community and organize a meeting for them. The speaker is initially unaware of this plan but eventually learns about it and realizes the importance of sharing the message of Jesus with everyone, regardless of their age or behavior.

Transcript

It's good to be here, and I hope the speaker doesn't fall asleep before she finishes, so I'll excuse you if you do, but I think I've been travelling since 5 o'clock on Saturday morning to get here, and they don't think of these things called jet lag at the moment. My watch says around about midnight, and that's what my body feels like, but still. It's good to come and share, and then somewhere along the line, either I read the letter wrong, or we got our lines crossed, because I was expecting to see 12, 13-year-olds in front of me, so I was terrified, and I looked up and saw you lot instead, and I thought, that's what I've got to do with you.

But various other lines have got crossed, I thought I was speaking six times over the other side, and I'm only speaking five times, so I thought the best thing to do is to give you the sixth talk that I'm not giving over there, and that'll make it all up for me. And my thought for the week over at the main meetings is, I was asked to go to a seminar recently at one of the southern cities in Britain, Bristol, and I was asked to speak on missionary image 1890 or 1980, and it gave quite a lot of scope to think about just what were they after, what did they mean, and where should we go from there, and so in thinking about this quite a lot recently, I've lined my thoughts up all right, if we want to think that the missionary work of today and going into the 1980s has changed from that of the 1890s, we need to look at why missions today at all, we knew why in the last century, where are missionaries needed today, what sort of missionaries are needed, which direction are we going to go in, and the one I had to leave out, there wasn't time for it, was, and

who?

Although that's fine here, it's just about right, it suits us, so I thought just to think on this subject, who does God call to be a missionary?

And I'm going to read a few verses from an Old Testament story, in chapter 35 of Exodus, when Moses came down from the mountain, where he'd received from God a vision of the tabernacle, in very great detail, its measurements, its length, height, breadth, what it was to be made of, what colour it was to be, all the furniture inside of it, etc, and he came down and he called together the children of Israel and tried to share with them his vision, and we have this in Exodus chapter 35, starting at verse 4, Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take you from among you an offering unto the Lord, whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord, gold, and silver, and brass, and blue,

and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and I guess by then that most of the congregation had switched off, it didn't concern them, those were things that only the rich possessed, and practically none of them were rich, so they merely switched off, thinking it wasn't of much interest, like I'm afraid happens in most church services, and frequently in any service I go to, which is called missionary, they don't sort of come when they hear it's a missionary service, they switch off before I start, but then he caught them out, because he goes on, the last phrase of verse 6, he suddenly said, and goat's hair, and you didn't even have to possess the goat, all you had to do was to go round the barbed wire, and the hedges, and the rows round about, and gather up the goat's hair that had been

left behind, and bring it in, and he suddenly nailed it down to the fact that there wasn't anybody there in the congregation, there weren't children who couldn't do that, they didn't even have to reach up to get it, it was their level, and his point being that every single person in the congregation had to get in on the job of gathering up what God wanted, and so he goes on through all the other things that he wanted brought in for the building of the tabernacle, verse 10, and every wise-hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord has commanded, again he goes through all that's going to be made, up into verse 20, and all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses, and they came, whatever version you may be reading it in, note the next

phrase, and they came, everyone whose heart stirred him up, everyone whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering, verse 22, and they came, men, women, and children, as many as were willing-hearted, and they brought the offering to the Lord, and the whole essence of this was that everybody had to be in on it, it didn't matter what age group, it didn't matter whether rich or poor, it didn't matter whether they were clever or dull, and I believe today very strongly in the time that you and I have the privilege of living, that the building of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the world needs every single one of us in it, I don't think God's got any special favourites, I don't believe that God wants to call out 10% of his Church to be missionaries, I don't see that

in Scripture anyway, the whole trend of Scripture is this sense of all, he throws it back at us because he says all who are willing-hearted, there's no compulsion on you, he throws it back at you and gives you the right to choose whether you will or won't accept, but in actual fact he invites every one of us into the privilege of being a missionary for him.

He said in the authorised version it's everyone whose hearts stirred him up.

I deliberately read it from the authorised because I wanted that particular little phrase, which doesn't come in the other versions, but I like that one, everyone whose hearts stirred him up. I just trust that God is stirring your heart up. Now while you're still at school and later on in all that lies ahead, to realise that you and I have an enormous privilege, you know it is fantastic really, if you stop just a moment to think that the almighty creator God actually invites you and me to share with him in his task, it is unbelievable.

He gives us this fantastic privilege, we're going to touch more in other meetings during this week and ask the question, can we really call it a privilege when, I don't know if you remember, just about a year ago or June, June of last year, some of you may have seen it on your TV screens, what was known as the tragedy in Rhodesia when 13 missionaries and their children, including a tiny baby, were brutally slaughtered. Of course it wasn't a tragedy at all, it was a terrible misnomer, it was a fantastic triumph, 13 people went out to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. And the effect on that secondary school has been absolutely unbelievable.

Some of us know something about secondary schools in Africa, and to be a secondary school boy or girl in Africa, they certainly weren't there to get religion. They certainly weren't there because they wanted to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. They were there, the vast majority of them, to get education.

The one great big capital word throughout Central Africa is education. They'll sell their souls to get education. They'll do anything they can to get education.

And there they were, and the only school in their area happened to be the Christian missionary school. So that's where they landed up and they took the pill with the jam. They learned the Bible verses they had to because they couldn't go on with class if they didn't.

And then one night, locked into their dormitories, and the next morning they came out and found 13 unbelievably mutilated, slaughtered, murdered bodies of the whole of the school faculty and their families. Stunned, horrified, not a clue what to do or which way to turn. They were only kids.

And then within the week, hearing that other missionaries were coming out to take their place, to keep school going. And then hearing over their own radios, the guerrilla soldiers saying, any other missionary that comes to take over this school will be equally murdered. And yet within the week, the missionaries were there.

Those kids will never be the same. And those are, some of them, tomorrow's leaders in Rhodesia. God knew what he was doing.

God doesn't make mistakes. But this is what we're inviting you to. When we ask you young folk to think seriously as to whether God isn't calling you to serve him somewhere overseas, we're not offering you any cushy job.

There isn't any country in the world where the same thing couldn't happen overnight. Everywhere today, this is what we're faced with. And I'm telling you that that's privilege.

It's a tremendous privilege that God invites you to face up to that sort of situation and say, yes, for him, it's worth it. He's worth it. He's worthy of it all.

I remember when I was first converted, I was older than you are, I was a university student, and I knew just about as little as it's possible to know in this generation about the Lord Jesus Christ or anything to do

with salvation. And suddenly coming into the unbelievable knowledge that Jesus Christ, God's Son, had died to save me. And when you've never heard this before, when you know nothing of it, you've grown up with it, many of you, in some ways, you've kind of got used to it.

But it's a fantastic and shattering thing when it suddenly comes into you that it's true, that God actually knew me, and even knowing me, still loved me. I knew full well at that stage there weren't anybody else who both knew me and loved me. They loved me, they didn't know me.

But it was just unbelievable that this was true. God loved me. And the same night, within three hours of being converted and coming to put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, within three hours that night when I went up to bed, I tried to thank God.

I didn't know how to pray, I'd never learned anything about prayer, I certainly didn't know anything about thee and thowing. I was trying to thank God for this unbelievable thing that had hit me. I was just so full of joy, I didn't know what to do with it.

And I said to God that first night, God if you could possibly find your will to do it, would you give me the privilege of letting me be a missionary. I never had any other missionary call, or later on when I was in mission training school and they all had their lovely testimonies and they all had their right verses of scripture and the place where they were called and how it all happened. I used to ask God, I'd say well couldn't you at least give me a verse of scripture, it would sound better.

But you know, he didn't. I just had this burning urge that if Jesus Christ, God's son, had died to save me from my sins, there was nothing else I could do for him but go out and serve him, anywhere he sent me. About six months after I was converted, I'd gone to a big missionary, well a big Christian convention in the north of England, Keswick, and on the Friday at the big missionary rally, amongst over a hundred other young folk, I stood up in the last hymn to publicly state that I would go anywhere the Lord sent me.

And we were singing a hymn, the first verse of which goes, Stir me, O stir me, Lord, I care not how, but stir my heart in passion for the world. Stir me to give, to go, but most to pray. Stir till the blood-red banner be unfurled, Or lands that still in heathen darkness lie, Or deserts where no cross is lifted high.

And that hymn got into me that day, it's remained with me ever since, this prayer that God would stir me, never mind my next-door neighbour, never mind the others in the meeting, God will you stir me, will you make this thing absolutely, totally real to me. I meant it, I meant business with God. I remember, I guess now about eight or nine years ago, out in Africa, during the rebellion in Central Africa in the 1960s, everything we had was destroyed.

The hospitals, the schools, the churches, there was just total destruction of the whole north-eastern province of our vast country of Zaire. And when we went back after the rebellion, to this total destruction, we had to start all over again. And we grouped up forces and a team of us medics got together to build a new central hospital to serve the north-east.

And amongst the group, Dr. Becker, our leader, divided us into sets, and he said to me, OK, that's your five acres up there, or eight acres, you take those eight acres up there and build a training college where we'll train national medical workers. And he ignored me and he turned to the next one and he said, you take those eight acres there and you do this, and you take those eight acres and you do that. And there wasn't any good any one of us hoping someone else would help us, because there wasn't anybody else

left.

And we each had our section. I tell you, you feel a bit of a mug when you happen to be a single woman stuck in the middle of the African jungles and you're just given eight acres of mountainside, it was all elephant grass and brambles and briars, and told go ahead and build a training college. And we went ahead and built a training college.

And four years, it was coming up to May, four years later, and we were just about ready to dedicate the first large building. We'd done mud and thatch. We were living in mud and thatch.

We were already teaching. College was in session. But meanwhile, we were replacing with brick as fast as we could go.

And the main block of classrooms, auditorium, and library, and office buildings, etc., was almost finished, and it was to be dedicated at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. Very posh name for a little humble group of missionaries and church elders. And all of a sudden I was told that the board meeting had had to be moved forward by three weeks.

Well, it wouldn't matter much here, but my word, they tell you that in the middle of Africa. What happens next? We've got one week to go. We've got nothing.

None of the painting had been done. There were no chairs, let alone have them varnished. There was nothing ready.

The place was still in chaos, and we had only one week to go. So, we started school for that week at 6 a.m. instead of 6.30. We cut out the breakfast break. We cut lunch down by half an hour.

I confiscated the football, and at half past two in the afternoon, the whole student body had to get to work, and everybody had their jobs to do. And we got any local carpenter. We rounded up everybody who knew anything about carpentry to get chairs made, and as soon as four chairs, ten, I think we did in blocks of ten.

As soon as ten chairs arrived, a student was given them to get them sandpapered and varnished. We just hoped the varnish would dry before the Board of Directors sat on them. And everything went into top gear.

A couple of students said they knew a bit about painting, so they were given a large pot of white paint and a couple of brushes and sent off to paint the woodwork in each classroom. Others were doing other jobs. Some were clearing up brick rubble.

One nice thing about living on the equator, on the Wednesday of that week, we planted canna lilies around the school, and on Saturday, opening day, they were all in flower. You couldn't do that here. There came the moment when I went to see how the painters were getting on.

I moved into classroom one, and they weren't there. I was a bit surprised. I moved into classroom two, and they weren't there.

By then I was suspicious, and the woodwork looked just as I had left it. I gingerly touched the woodwork around the door, and there was a sort of brown, sticky goo. I moved into classroom three, and there were my two prized painters, in and out of the paint pot and up and down the woodwork.

They were singing, they were chatting, as happy as could be. They were paying no attention to what they were doing. And the woodwork wasn't changing colour either.

And I went and bent over their shoulder, and there in my lovely large pot of hard-gloss white paint was a solid mass of white substance, and no remaining oily diluent. They hadn't known that you had to stir. I gave them a lecture on stirring.

In fact, I got another pot of paint. When you think, I'd had to send over 1,000 miles, about 1,300 miles for that paint. It'd been ordered from Kinshasa.

It'd taken five months to come. We'd ordered 12 pots. By the time it reached us, five had been stolen.

And now we'd lost another. It's pretty desperate. We took another paint.

I demonstrated that stirring's hard work. You have to stir right down to the bottom. You've got to go on stirring until it's all one consistency.

You've got to go on stirring until there's nothing solid left. It changes colour. It doesn't go so far.

But now it does the job you need it to do. I left them. I trust mollified.

I suddenly thought later in the morning horrors. I forgot to tell them you have to keep on stirring. I rushed back, and sure enough, it had begun to separate out, and they hadn't noticed that it was no longer white.

It was now cream. So we stirred again. And so next day, at the morning Bible study, being a teacher at heart, I took the matter of stirring.

That God wants to stir us, just as a pot of paint. And He wants us stirred right through to the bottom. He wants every single bit of us stirred.

So that you can't divide your lives into two parts, solid and liquid, or spiritual and secular, or Sunday and weekdays. It doesn't work. God wants to stir us right through, so that we're just one consistency.

So that everything that comes out and shows, day in and day out, reflects the Lord Jesus Christ. So we're doing the job for which we're made. I remember at the end of prayers, one of the senior students prayed in French, which is our government language, and they're a bit hesitant.

Many of them, it's their fourth or fifth language. And he was stumbling a bit. And he got so far in his prayer, and he sort of said, Go on, God, I don't care what it costs.

And then there was a pause. And then he blurted out in Swahili, his own language, very rapidly, he says, I do care what it costs, God, I care a lot what it costs, but never mind, stir me, God. Now, that's pretty honest.

And the thing is, are you and I willing to say the same thing? Are you and I willing to say to God, stir me? If he stirs you, as a pot of paint, he'll know where to apply you when the moment comes. In the first verse of that hymn, there were three things it mentions. Stir me to give, to go, to pray.

And just very briefly looking at those three. Stir me to give. And I'm not thinking of cash.

I can tell you lots of thrilling stories of the wonderful way God has provided for my needs over 20 years in Africa. Unbelievable things. When the last drop of something disappeared, that very day God sent more.

When we ran out of soap, that very day a box of soap arrived. Unbelievable things which happened. If I told you one or two stories, you could shrug your shoulders and say, coincidence.

If I told you hundreds, you'd get to the picture and say, God, there's no other way out. And God provided because people gave. And people have given and given and given.

But you know, it isn't just that sort of giving. I think what the hymn writer meant here is that God looks to you and me that we would give ourselves. And you'll give yourself 100% to God.

You know, in Scripture, I don't see any place for 95%. God never talks in 95%. You start right at the very beginning, work your way through, you'll find one little word, one little three-letter word, and it comes in all the different versions, it doesn't matter which you're reading.

All. He said, you should love the Lord thy God with all, heart, mind, soul, strength, body, the lot. Jesus Christ, looking at his disciples, he said, if you want to be my disciples, you've got to renounce all.

Peter, when he was called to follow Jesus, he forsook all and followed the Lord. And that's what God's looking for. He's looking for young fellows, young girls, who are prepared to put all on the altar for Jesus, whatever the cost, and move out into his purposes.

You know, I think he means it very literally. Your time, your talents, your ambitions, everything that lies ahead, say, OK, God, stir me to give you all. I remember not very long ago now, I had one of those sort of days, can't go into detail, the clock always works faster than I do, and everything had gone wrong that could go wrong.

I'd been called at about half past one in the morning, I'd gone down to the hospital, and had to do surgery for a woman down who was ill. And things didn't go very well, I stayed with her for a time. By the time I eventually got back to my home, it was almost dawn, it wasn't worth going back to bed.

I'd had a cup of coffee, I had a quiet time, I got down to school. School with us starts at 6.30. I got there at 6.29, the students got there at 6.31. I thought they were late, they thought they weren't. I grumbled, they growled.

And we started the day on that footing. And through the day, everything that could go wrong went wrong. And by evening we had a staff meeting, and it was just one of those staff meetings.

I was school director. I got something I wanted to put through quickly. Whenever I wanted to put anything through quickly, the staff always seemed frightfully suspicious.

They wanted all the details. And I thought they were horribly pig-headed, and they thought I was dreadfully stubborn. And when I eventually got up home about 10 o'clock that night, not only was I dead tired, but I was very ashamed.

I just felt I'd failed the Lord pretty badly. I was out on the mission field, and I went to the back of my home, put a primer stove on, and put some milk on to have a drink. I went out the back to draw a bucket of water to have a wash, feeling pretty ashamed.

I felt that I'd let God down all through the day. As I came back in through the back door, I suddenly heard on the front door. I said, oh no, God, no thanks.

That day had been long enough. I turned the storm lantern right down low. I stood dead still.

I thought, oh, they'll think there's no one in the house. They'll go away. It didn't work.

After half a second, so I turned out the stove and put the milk off. I put down the bucket, and I walked to the front of the house. And I just timed to pray between the back door and the front door that the Lord would take over.

I wasn't in a fit state to see anybody. And outside, there was a senior student. He was obviously in distress.

I asked him in. We sat down, got us hot drinks. And then, little by little, he began to open up.

And somewhere in the early hours of the morning, I had the joy of leading that lad to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. Now, how nearly I'd missed. Of course, I'm telling you one of the stories when I didn't miss.

One dreads to think how often one did. How nearly I'd missed. I'd given God 21 hours of that day, and I thought the other three hours could be mine, and I could go to bed.

God wanted 24. You know, the amazing thing is, by the time that lad left me, somewhere around 2 o'clock in the morning, I wasn't even tired. I was so full of joy and happiness, it was just thrilling.

And that's what God does to you. He wants all. And He literally means it.

He doesn't mean it metaphorically speaking. He wants you to give Him all. And trust Him with it.

Stir me to give. The hymn writer went on, Stir me, O stir me, Lord, till all my heart is filled with strong compassion for these souls. Till thy compelling word drives me to pray.

Till thy constraining love reach to the poles, far north and south in burning deep desire. Till east and west are caught in love's great fire. Stir me to go.

And you may say, go where? I want just to say to you, anywhere for Jesus. You know, I don't honestly believe that God's particularly interested in geography. I'm not getting at your geography teachers.

But what I mean is that this word missionary has kind of got a tag attached to it these days of a geographical location. God wants you as a missionary wherever He sends you. He just simply wants you available to Him.

And He'll say where. You're not likely to know now where God wants you. Or maybe when some of us folk went out 30, 40, 50 years ago, life was pretty different.

We did know where we were going. Things didn't change much. But today with coups and counter-coups and all the upsets in different countries, one day you're thrown out, the next day you're invited in, it's very hard to know for tomorrow.

And the country God may really want you to serve in may today be a closed land. The country you think you want to serve in, today open, may be closed by the time you're ready. That is not important to God.

What matters is that you're available to Him for wherever He wants you. That you'll let Him stir you. Because if you'll let Him stir you, once you're stirred right through, He can do the rest.

He can apply you wherever He wants you. I think of a student in college where I was training, teaching. James.

I can't tell you the whole James story now. One day I may get it written. It's a good story.

But James turned up at our college in November, the first year that we opened. We'd started college two months previously. And unlike most of our Africans, he was a great strapping fellow.

Most of them were shorter than I am and I never felt short. But he was towering up here. And he was wearing a loincloth, barefooted.

He was speaking a language I didn't know. We had a very interesting conversation. He came in about nine o'clock at night onto the veranda and I didn't understand a word he said and he didn't understand a word I said.

And we chatted along. And in the end I got hold of someone to take him off for the evening and give him bed for the night. The next day the chaplain of the college came to me and said, I've admitted James to school.

I looked horrified. Nobody admitted anybody to school but me. I was the director.

I said, I beg your pardon. He said, never mind doctor, don't talk. He said, once you've heard his testimony you'll understand he's got to come into school.

I said, listen, he doesn't know any French. Never mind French, he said. But I said, he's never had any education.

He said, never mind education, he said. He's in. James came into school.

And his testimony was such that it was unbelievable. A fantastic lad, really. But he didn't have any secondary education.

And they all had to have done 10th grade to come to our school. And he didn't have it. He'd just done up to 6th grade.

Got no 7, 8, 9, 10. He didn't have French. He didn't have enough money for his fees.

He didn't have clothing. He didn't have anything. Well, through interpretation I told James, you're going to have to work solid hard if you're ever going to make it.

You're going to have to do four years of secondary school education at the same time as you do four years of medical education. Because you're not allowed to sit the medical diploma unless you've got so many grades of 10th grade. And James worked hard.

He slogged it out. He did extremely well. He came out to his last year at college.

But he's still a long way to go. I'd sent him again at the beginning of his last year. I said, James, you're just going to have to everything else to go by the board.

There's going to be no ball game. There's going to be nothing. You're going to have to work round the clock.

It's the only hope you've got if you're going to make. With the grades you need in order to be able to take your medical exams. He came to the first Sunday in his last year at college.

Apparently there were some notices given out in church. I confess I didn't hear them. I was probably sitting at the back ticking off the register that all the students were where they should be.

Monday morning, James met me outside of school. He said, Doctor, what are we going to do about the Vandals? I said, I beg your pardon? He said, what are we going to do about the Vandals? I said, James, I haven't a clue what you're talking about. It's time for school.

We went into school. At the end of classes, there was James outside school with the same question. He said, you'd better explain yourself.

He said, it was given out in church yesterday. I said, what was given out in church yesterday? He said, the pastor told us all to pray about the Vandalism and what we could do about it. It was true, we'd got a gang of hooligans around who were smashing windows, smashing the desks and spoiling things.

I looked at James. I said, it's nothing to do with us, James. That's a church affair.

He looked at me. Junior student to senior missionary and said, aren't you a member of the local church? I swallowed hard, said yes and fled up to breakfast. Next Sunday, I did listen to the notices.

You can imagine my horror when it was given out in church. On Tuesday evening at seven o'clock in the new nursery school auditorium, there'll be a meeting for all Vandals under the age of 15. Not quite sure what effect it would have on your church, and what members of your church would own up to being Vandals if they didn't hear it given out.

After the service, I went up to James. I said, did you hear that given out? He said, yes, but you'd agreed. Tuesday evening, I went down to the school to open the door and put the lights on just in case a few kids turned up out of sheer curiosity.

When I got there, I couldn't reach the doors for the sea of youngsters. By the time I got the doors open, long before I got the lights on, they swarmed in. When it's a small school, we seat 120 in the hall.

180 kids poured in. They sat free to every two seats. And I'm telling you, they were the scruffiest, smelliest, dirtiest gang of kids I have ever met.

And they're all chewing mangoes. Some of you will understand what I mean. Others won't.

But you know, a mango, you spit out the sticky skins, and then you spit out the sticky stones, and then you wipe your sticky fingers down the nicely whitewashed walls. I looked at James. I said, what on earth are we going to do with them? He says, I'm going to tell them about Jesus.

And he did. And every week through that college year, James gave up Tuesday evening. And he turned that gang of hooligans into a youth club.

I remember them at Christmas, all standing up in front of the church, singing, and looking like little angels. And... On about the fourth or fifth week, there was a lot of noise outside during club. And James turned to me.

He said, would you look after the kids while I go out and see what's going on outside? I confess, as soon as James went outside, there was much noise inside as outside. I did not know how to control 180 kids. At the end of club, James came up to me.

He said, Doctor, what are we going to do about the senior vandals? I said, James, enough. He said, listen, Doctor. When I went outside, there was a whole gang of young men, 18, 24, 30 year olds.

And they're all saying, it isn't fair. You're telling the kids about Jesus. Why aren't you telling us? I said, James, stop it.

I said, you'll never pass your exams if you do anything more. You cannot give any more time up. I said, I can't.

My kind ear was absolutely crowded out. He looked at me. Are you telling me, Doctor, that you won't tell them about Jesus? You won't be surprised when I tell you next Sunday it was given out in church.

Thursday evening, seven o'clock, in the new nursery school auditorium, there will be a meeting for all vandals over the age of 15. And he thinks, oh, very well, our kids will come, but you don't expect over 15s to turn up. Thursday evening, every seat in the hall was taken.

And they were a very sad crowd. They were all fellows with a chip on their shoulder. We discovered little by little as we got to know them that more than 50% of them were on hard-line drugs, practically all of them smoking and drinking heavily.

Their language was truthfully so obscene that I can only thank God I didn't know enough Swahili to understand them. And you wonder, why did they come? There was nothing to bribe them. There was nothing to bring them.

I looked at James. I said, what on earth are we going to do with this lot? He looked at me and he said, you are going to tell them about Jesus. And you know, James and I together took that crowd every single Thursday through that college year.

And before the college year was out, we had the joy and the privilege of leading more than 80 of those young men to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Why? Because a 19-year-old lad went where Jesus sent him. Went in his own school hall.

He didn't go any further than that. That's where God told him to serve. And that's where he was.

And he gave up two evenings a week. Even when I told him, of course he passed his exams. I mean, God never lets them down, does he? And he did very well.

He's now head of the anaesthetic department of our hospital. A very brilliant young medic. But he was a man who was willing, a boy, a fellow who was willing to give his life to Jesus and go where he was sent.

Finally, in the last few minutes, third verse of that hymn, Stir me, O stir me, Lord, till prayer is pain, till prayer is power, till prayer turns into praise. Stir me till heart and will and mind, yea, all is wholly thine, to use through all the days. Stir till I learn to pray exceedingly.

Stir till I learn to wait expectantly. That's the third one. We might be willing to pray.

Young folk, it's the hardest, and it's the thing we leave out, and of course, as always, the thing I haven't left enough time to touch on. It is far the most important, and I want to stress that it's far the most important for you. As I go around taking meetings, I take a lot of college meetings, youth meetings, high school meetings, etc.

And also church meetings and church prayer meetings. When I come along to the midweek church prayer meetings, I'm talking to Britain, of course, I've not been over here much, but in Britain, at the midweek church prayer meeting, I'm the only person there, probably, who isn't snowy white. And I want to know where are the young folk? Why don't they come to the prayer meeting? I talk to college groups, they say, why don't you go to the prayer meeting? Why aren't you there? Well, we don't know how to pray.

I say, no, you never will know if you don't go. It's when you go and start praying, it's when you learn to pray. Oh, well, they all use these and those.

I say, well, they wouldn't worry if you used you's and yours, as long as you use something. You and I have got to get in on this and we've got to mean business and we've got to believe that God means it when he says that his job is done by prayer. And if you don't learn it now and believe it now, you're not going to learn it later.

And I've got a great heart longing to see us younger folk really get burdened with the need for praying and that we will be the majority in prayer meetings, not the minority. And we'll learn, we'll learn what to pray for by being there and hearing. And God wants us praying, you know, for everything, all the everyday affairs, all the little things that happen.

You were just coming up to your exams, now you've just had them, but if you were just coming up to your exams, if I can use that as an example, I don't know about the rest of you, but there are those, just as it gets to exam time, they get a good deal of tummy troubles and it's the last minute dash before we go into the exam room. Now at that moment you're feeling like that. If you just stopped for a second and prayed for an African student, girl or boy, doing the same exam as you're doing, and just think, for that African student, same age as yourself, doing the same exam as yourself, has got no textbook whatsoever, has got no library whatsoever.

The only thing he has to study from is the notes he's made himself in his own exercise book, copied down from the blackboard, the old blackboard and chalk method. We've got no overhead projectors. We've no electricity.

And you stop and pray for them trying to take the same exams you're taking, and you suddenly find your own nerves are settled. You go in with a quiet heart and somebody out there has been blessed. This is real praying.

Everything you meet, every problem you've got, every difficulty you have, just pray for an African or an Indian or an Indonesian student doing the same thing in the same situation, and suddenly things begin to become real. That's the level God wants us on. You know prayer works.

During the rebellion, again at one of the other meetings I've been mentioning this, I was taken captive by rebel soldiers. I happened to be the first white in our area to be taken captive. I had no idea what was going to happen.

Nobody else had yet been taken. It was a very cruel and very wicked night. I was cruelly beaten up, the body never flung on the ground and cruelly kicked.

I lost my back teeth that night through the boot of a rebel soldier. It was a bitter night, a cruel night. I was desperately alone.

I wasn't praying. I tell you I wasn't praying. I was numb with fear.

I was paralyzed with horror. Somehow in the back of my mind I was hanging on to the name of Jesus. If I got to praying any prayer I believe I would have always prayed My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? Weeks later I was rescued from the rebellion.

Months later I was taking a meeting up in the north of England. And quite a young person came up to me after the meeting and said, I don't want to worry you doctor, I want to ask you one question. Do you remember the night of October 28, 29? I said, I certainly do.

Were you in special need that night? I certainly was. Well she said, I'd gone to bed early that night with a headache. I woke at half past eleven.

Half past eleven where she was would have been half past one in the morning where I was. She said, your name is in my heart. So I got out of bed, I got down on my knees and prayed for you.

I went to get back into bed she said and I didn't have peace. She was a young married woman. So I woke up my husband, he got out of bed, he joined me and together we prayed for you.

Again together we went to get back into bed and we didn't have peace. So we stayed on our knees and we prayed for you. And we prayed through until half past one in the morning that would be half past three where I was.

She said, we felt the burden lift. And God met me. Right where I was.

And God spoke to me with tremendous clarity. Right in the middle of all the suffering. He says, these aren't your sufferings, they're not beating you, these are my sufferings.

All I ask of you is the loan of your body. And suddenly there was God tremendous, mighty, real. And he suddenly filled me with a terrific sense of the privilege of being allowed to share with him what he wanted.

I'm not saying those two people hadn't prayed for me. God wouldn't have done that. But I am saying that's how he works.

And he needs people who will pray. I was taken captive that night. I was flung in a truck and driven away.

The news eventually filtered down to the village where I lived. And the African pastor beat the drum at four o'clock in the morning. He called the whole church, men, women, children, the lot.

He called the whole crowd out to the church. They went into the church building at four o'clock in the morning and they got down to praying for me. They prayed that God would deliver me.

And they held on and they held on and they held on that God would deliver me. During the course of the day God changed their prayer that if it was God's will that I should die and be killed, God would give me the grace to go through with what lay ahead. During the morning they heard a truck drive through the village.

One of the men went down to the roadside. They saw me bound up with other whites on the truck. They heard the rebel soldiers shouting out that we were being taken to Issyro to be shot.

He went back into the church. They continued praying. Two o'clock in the afternoon we were stood before the firing squad.

The order was given for the soldiers to raise their guns. The order was given for the soldiers to take sights. And then, we never know why, God has his own ways.

Something happened. They were told to lower their guns. We were bundled back in the trucks.

We were taken home. I reached my village five o'clock in the evening My people were still in church. They'd been praying for thirteen hours young folk and many of them were younger than you are.

Thirteen hours they'd been in church they didn't stop they didn't bother to feel hungry they didn't bother to feel tired. They held on in prayer until prayer turned into power and I was brought home. That's what means prayer.

And God wants you and me in on this. God wants you and me to believe that we have a part to play as much as the old is. That everybody has got to be in on the building of the church of Jesus Christ in these days.

May God stir you as me to give all we've got to go wherever he wants us to pray on every single occasion. The Lord Jesus Christ will continue to build his church on earth. Shall we pray? Stir me O stir me Lord thy heart was stirred by love's intensest fire till thou didst give thine only Son my best beloved one into the dreadful cross that I might live.

Stir me to give myself so back to thee that thou canst give thyself again through me. Father God stir each young heart here before you now that they will come willing hearted hearts stirred up to bring to you the offering of their lives that you may do with and through them thy perfect will reaching out to the millions as yet unreached in this sad world of ours that we too may be part of the great task force called by privilege to serve with our Lord Jesus Christ in the building of his church here on earth. For Christ's sake Amen.

You've been listening to one of a four part series of Helen Roseveare sermons entitled Stir Me. Stir me Stir me to give Stir me to go Stir me to pray and you can find the rest of these sermons at www.PathToPrayer.com Again that's www.PathToPrayer.com P-A-T-H the numeral two P-R-A-Y-E-R

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