

The Dream of the Kingdom

by Jackie Pullinger

Jackie Pullinger's sermon calls believers to actively share God's love and address the suffering in the world as part of living out the dream of the Kingdom of God.

Duration: 1:17:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 4:18-19, Luke 7:11-17, John 9:1-7, Acts 2:45, Hebrews 11:10

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that preaching the word of God is a task that God takes care of. He highlights that God provides all the ideas, leading, power, and the Word itself. The speaker shares a personal experience of a young man who was transformed by Jesus, despite being a member of a gang. The sermon also discusses the concept of praising God in the midst of problems and offering forgiveness when faced with adversity. The speaker concludes by expressing a sense of urgency to share the message of Jesus with others who have not yet experienced His love and salvation.

Transcript

I remember soon after knowing Jesus, I can remember going to a sort of Bible study prayer meeting with some friends of mine, and we were sitting around and we'd just done a sort of elementary study on how you know you have eternal life, and well the scripture told us that when we were in Jesus, we could know we had eternal life. Well, I always thought this was a bit presumptuous, but I saw that it was in scripture, and so I sort of claimed it, and then we began to pray, and I looked round at my friends, and they were all smiling, and they were all thanking God for eternal life, and I thought, oh my, they believe it. And no wonder they looked so happy, and I thought, why? You know, that's true for me too.

But the joy for me was not so long. I mean, I was happy for a very short while, to know that I had eternal life. But we finished our prayer meeting awfully quickly, and having thanked God for eternal life, they went on to make risottos, and you eat after the meeting, and I remember thinking to them, risottos? How can you eat risottos? I mean, we just thanked God for eternal life.

You see, the awful thing is that if you do know you have eternal life, then you know that some people don't. I thought, how can you eat risotto, when there are people out there dying? How can you eat risotto? You know you're going to heaven, but because you know you're going to heaven, in Jesus, you know there are some people who aren't. How can you eat risotto? You need to go out and fetch a few of them.

Well, I'm sorry to tell you that I haven't got very much better at Christian meetings from that time until today, and that's been over 20 years. I can't stand conferences. Really, by about halfway through the first day, I've had enough of a conference.

This is just the way that God made me. I've got to do a bit of practice for heaven, but I find them very hard to take, and the reason is that we hear many words, just like the Lord spoke to us, about the way He's going to heal us and make us whole, about the way that He loves us and gives us life. And I think, yeah, that's fine, and I enjoy praising God.

And then I hear, almost like screams, then I hear the screams of the people who are outside, who are not yet in the kingdom. And if I can escape during a conference, I do, and run down the road and find a tramp or two, and tell them about Jesus. You see, I hate keeping it to myself.

Well, we're still here. Otherwise Jesus could take us straight to heaven. He could do the job in a second, but He allows us in His mercy to stay here, so we can share the gift that He's given us with others.

As soon as I knew Him, I knew that. As soon as I knew Him, I knew there was no other purpose in life, no other purpose at all. There's nothing else in life worth living for, but to enjoy the love of God and share it.

And I don't believe it's possible to do one without the other. I don't believe it's possible to enjoy His love without sharing it. I doubt if we've even begun to understand His love if we don't share it.

And out there, well, you know because we came from it, there's a screaming world, which is in pain. And there are lonely people and there's suffering people. I remember one night, it was some years ago, somebody came to me with some bad news and I began to cry.

And it was awful because I didn't stop crying for about three days. And people kept offering me fried rice and flowers and handkerchiefs. And usually it was food, you know, this was in Hong Kong.

That's the way you comfort people when they look unhappy. So I was stuck in a prayer room for these three days and three nights. And so these food offerings kept appearing at the door.

And every now and again people said, can I pray for you? And I couldn't explain to them that actually I didn't need praying for at all. It was something different. Because for three days and nights I could see, and the awful thing was I knew every single one of them, a procession of people.

They were old men and they don't have anything to live on. And there's no unemployment pay in Hong Kong. So they don't have any living, they don't have any children either.

And if you don't have any children, you're poor. That's usually why you have children, is so that they can look after you when you're old. And they got criminal records.

They're probably addicts as well. Therefore it's very easy for them to be arrested. You know, you don't need to do anything wrong once you've been arrested.

You're just fair game. People can pick you up when they like. And they sit in a kind of cafe where they eat something called bean curd.

And these old men, you know, nobody ever once said to them that they were cared for. Nobody ever once was kind to them. And I saw many women.

There was a procession of these women. And many of them had sons who were drug addicts. Now there are many ex-addicts among us today.

And they will tell you that you suffer if you're an addict. But I'll tell you something, the mother of an addict suffers worse because she loves her son. Because she always hopes that he'll change.

And if he doesn't, it's hard because that hope dies. Or else it starts again. And then it's disappointed and she doesn't know whether to harden her heart.

There are many of those mothers who've been beaten by their sons. They've had all their belongings pawned or stolen. And those mothers cry for their sons.

And they hope somewhere that he will change. Nobody knows that they weep. Because you're not supposed to do it in public.

And for many of them it's a woman's lot anyway. So they cry in the nighttime. Some of them for weeks and weeks and months and months and years and years.

The suffering you wouldn't know. And nobody, not one person, ever went to them and put an arm around them and told them that there was an answer. Nobody ever once went and tattled them.

And as I saw this procession of old men, women, children, who'd been shut out from home, whose parents didn't want them if they had got new parents. I saw on the other side the church. And the church was where I was sitting, of course, because I was sitting in a prayer room.

And people came to me with fried rice. And people came to me with handkerchiefs. And people came to me and asked to pray with me.

And I used to go to meetings where as Christians we were ministered to. And yet we still had problems. We sort of needed going on ministering to.

And I thought, you know, week after week after week after week people would pray for me. People would come to us. We've got everything.

I mean, I didn't have any problems. People came to me because they thought I'd got problems. I haven't got any problems.

I've got Jesus. I mean, it's partly true and partly not true, but you know what I mean. I really don't have any problems.

I've got Jesus. I've got all his promises that it's going to be all right. And yet there are people outside who've never had anyone pray for them once.

Not once. And that was where I wept for three days and three nights. Well, you couldn't keep it up forever.

You'd die. That killed Jesus, you know, that pain. Only much worse because he felt the pain of the whole world.

He knew every time someone felt lonely. He knew every time someone felt neglected or somebody had been beaten or misunderstood, left out, despised, unnoticed. He knew.

He knew every time we felt that what we had done was so bad that nobody, let alone God, would ever accept us. He knew that. That's what killed him.

That's just one side of the story. That's the death side. And the reason that we could sing as we do, the reason that we can praise God, the reason that we worship him, is because he's changed our lives.

And he's changed that pain into health, into life. He's turned our darkness into light. And these are not just clichés, they're literal.

He's changed our lives. And that's why this group of us have come here to New Zealand. It's because we want to share that with you.

And more than that, we want to share with you how to share it with other people. Because that's what the love of God is given to us for. It's what the life of Jesus is given to us for.

It's to touch others. Now you probably knew that. You probably knew that when you first came to Jesus.

I guess most of us do, right at the beginning. So what I'm going to ask you is to ask yourself, what was your dream? What was your dream when you first came to Jesus? What was the hope you had? Now, you've probably all got one. It might be a bit varied by now.

Because church sometimes does things to our dreams. But what was your dream? What did you think God really ought to be like? What did you think he really ought to do? What did you want him to do for you? What did you want to do for him? I bet you've got one somewhere. Most people do.

Tell you what my dream was? My dream was about a country. My dream was about a place where everything came right. My dream was a place where sick people got home.

My dream was a place where lonely people were welcomed. My dream was a place where those with no families could come into a family. Where widows were not despised, but were looked after.

Where the bent remained straight. Bent in every way, made straight in every way. My dream was a place where blind people saw and deaf people heard.

Well, of course it was the dream of the kingdom of God. I didn't know how to make it come about. You don't think dreams.

You don't know how to make them come about. But you're supposed to have them. Now you're supposed to have this dream, and God's probably put it in your heart.

It might not be exactly the same way that he put the dream into my heart. I bet you've got it though, somewhere. How do you make it happen? I want to read you Psalm 126.

When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. And then it was said among the nations, the Lord has done great things for them.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. You see, our dream has come true. My dream has come true.

I always knew how it was supposed to be. I always knew what God wanted us to do. I always knew what he meant the world to be like.

I always knew, I just didn't see it happen. But I knew what it was meant to be like. Now if you've got a dream, you're supposed to go for it.

You're supposed to go for the dream. God will teach you how it's to be worked out. That's his business.

He'll also equip you. But you've got to keep that dream. You've got to know how it's supposed to be, otherwise you can't even begin.

When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. And Zion is where we're going. You probably know all this sort of Biblical language, don't you? Zion is where we're going.

The city of God. The holy mountains. That's where we're going.

That's where it says in Revelation, there's a place where there isn't going to be any more crying. That's where it says all the tears will be wiped away. There's no more death and no more pain.

That's where we're going. But we're supposed to bring it about now. That's the mystery of the kingdom of God.

And as Jesus announced it, he said it's here. And then again, he said it's coming. And of course we know finally that's the picture in Revelation.

The time when the kingdom is consummated. Utterly fulfilled. Meantime, we're supposed to make it come.

When I first went to Hong Kong, it was just twenty years ago. I saw so much suffering. I didn't know where to begin.

Actually, you don't need to go to Hong Kong. You don't need to walk down a few of your streets at night to see the same thing. We're just a bit more crowded.

We've got, I can't remember the name of your lake here, but we've got about three times your population in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is just the size of one of your lakes. So we're a bit squashed.

There's not that much room for all of us. We have to live on top of one another. When I first went there, I saw many people sleeping in the streets.

Hundreds. Then they even used to sleep down the middle of the street. Down the divider.

On the highway. Because there was not room for them in the houses. There was just not room, that's all.

It's normal for most families to live in one room. And that's where you eat and sleep and wash and do your homework, TV and make love. Just one room, one family.

That's normal. But that's not so shocking. You get used to that.

What I found much harder was the moral poverty. And I was taken to a place known as the Wall City, fairly soon after arriving in Hong Kong. And when I was asked to go, I thought it was just going to be a sweet little historical village somewhere, you know, poor but quaint.

But it wasn't like that at all. For a start, there was no wall, even at the Wall City. And we appeared in this street, and the whole street is full of dentists' shops.

No, actually they're not real dentists. They're false dentists. They just know how to whip your teeth out and put in false ones or gold ones.

You know, they're not much good at repairing what you've got. Anyway, they didn't learn properly. They probably learned from daddy or uncle or someone, because that street is outside the law.

It's outside Hong Kong's law. Therefore, they don't have to have a license to practice. And that's one border of the Wall City.

It's a very peculiar place, because it's actually outside the law of Hong Kong. It got left out of the treaty. You probably know that up until 1997, Hong Kong has been lent to the British.

Britain and China made this arrangement a century ago. But they left out this little bit in the middle, known as the Wall City, which is very small. It's just about five football fields, that's all, and containing about 60,000 people.

So you can see that it's squashed. There are no cars down there, because the streets are just two or three feet wide in places. There's no water supply, because that's what people have stolen from outside.

Or electricity supply, they've stolen that too. So you just walk through the streets with sort of loops over your head. But anyway, it's better not to look up, because they pour things out of windows.

And you need to look at where you're walking, because the sewers are open. And that was the street that I found myself in when I was taken into the Wall City, and I've been praying, oh God, there's so much here to do. I don't understand it.

My heart isn't big enough to understand everybody's problems. I can't take it. I don't know where to begin.

Please will you show me what I'm supposed to do? And that's where he took me. Somebody showed me a drug addict as I was walking down the streets, and I thought, oh hell, what do drug addicts do? I thought they whipped your watch or something. But this one didn't do anything violent.

He had very, very short hair, and I know now that means he'd just come out of prison. And he was putting his fingers through the sewer. He was just looking to see if there was anything useful in it.

He didn't look frightening. He just looked lonely, and he looked unhappy, and he looked in pain. How could you be afraid of someone like that? How could I be afraid? You see, I had eternal life.

I knew God loved me. I knew he'd lay down his life for me. How could I be afraid of a man with pain like that, who was just lonely? He hadn't known anything else.

I walked past him down the street and saw some old ladies. Well, they looked like old ladies, and sometimes you can't tell, because the ones who are 20 and the ones who are 60 look about the same. And they're the prostitutes.

And we had one who was living with us just last year, and he was prostituting up until the age of 67. Because, you see, there's nothing to live on when you retire as a prostitute. Nobody will give you a

pension.

There's nowhere to go, so you've got to go on doing it. And if you can't do it yourself, you have to look after other people that do. So the old and very diseased ones, they will sit on an orange box in the street, and they will look after the young ones who are prisoners upstairs.

And I found that some of those are just 12 or 13 years old. And to begin with, they were prisoners. To begin with, they were watched.

After a little bit, you wouldn't need to watch them, because they don't have anywhere to run. They wouldn't be accepted at home. And there isn't such a thing in Hong Kong as a home for young prostitutes who want to stop.

I saw these things as I walked down the streets. And I saw gambling dens, which were flourishing in the middle of the night, and old men sitting outside them. They're addicts.

Because each street, I learned, was patrolled by a group of men called the Charras. That's sort of like a Chinese mafia. And you become a member by following a brother.

And he becomes your big brother, and you become his little brother. And you have a binding relationship. Actually, it's a spiritual relationship.

They sacrifice to gods. They use cocks, and they say poetry and invoke curses on themselves if they disclose the secrets of the Charras. And I learned that the Charras ruled the streets and controlled the prostitutes, and the gambling, the drug smuggling, the drug taking, the drug dens.

They got opium dens. They got heroin dens. And the brothels.

And a very, very large amount of money was collected from these every day. Well, that was the scene I saw. But you know, it was a strange thing.

Because although I saw that, I saw something else. I saw a city of light. And I'd like to read you from Hebrews.

This is from Hebrews 11, verse 8. By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place, he would later receive as his inheritance, or they even went, even though he didn't know where he was going. By faith, he made his home in the promised land, like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents, and we are heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. That was what I saw. I didn't understand these scriptures.

God was giving me these scriptures, and God gave me that one. He was looking forward to a city which had foundations, and I thought, strange. I mean, this is a terrible city.

I was offered a very good job once I got to Hong Kong. It's a long story how I got there, but actually I didn't know that I was going to Hong Kong. I just got onto a ship, and I prayed that God would tell me where to get off.

And so that's how I got there. And once I was there, I was looking around to see what I was supposed to be doing, and God said, looking forward to a city. And I didn't understand those things.

I'd only been a Christian a very short time, just a few months, so I didn't understand these things. A city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. He was looking forward.

See, that's how Abraham could stand it. That's how he could stand years and years not getting to where he was supposed to be getting to. It was because he was looking forward.

Now that's what we're supposed to be doing with a dream. We're supposed to be looking forward to what's promised. Not disappointed because it hasn't happened, but believing in the promise, or the dream, or the hope, or what you knew when you first became a Christian, what you knew was supposed to be happening.

And you probably did know what was supposed to be happening. Actually, lots of non-Christians know what's supposed to happen. There are many non-Christians who know that Christians are supposed to be healing the sick, feeding the poor, putting the homeless into their homes.

Non-Christians know that. Ask them, what should a Christian be doing? They know that. It's a hope inside many men.

And that was the hope that I had. So I saw a different city. I didn't see, or I did, but in the spirit I saw a city of light.

And I thought this is the most wonderful place. I mean, wonderful place. Okay, it's filled with brothels.

Okay, there were at that time 34 opium dens. And opium dens are the most revolting things you can imagine. And they've got platforms, not dissimilar to the one I'm standing on, a little lower, except that there are men lying around on them and they're full of slime.

Because water, slime comes out of noses, eyes, mouth, everywhere you can think of, slime comes out. And they're full of sort of grey-green skeletons inside the opium dens. Old men, dead, dying.

There were 34 of those where they took opium, dreaming, trying to escape to a better world. And I saw that. I saw the better world.

I thought, you know, there couldn't be a better place in all the world for God to shine. This is wonderful. You see, once it catches fire, it has to catch fire.

They can't help telling the neighbours they live so close. You've got to go out and find yours. Ours lived just next door.

You see, once the light shines there, you can't stop it. I thought this is a setup. This is exactly what God has meant all along.

This is not a mistake. This is his plan. So I went for the dream.

But I didn't know quite how to do it, so I started with some very easy words. And I read the Cross and the Switchblade, and you probably have too, and you know that the pastor in that, who went to find all these gangsters in New York, he went up to one called Mickey Cruz, and he said, Jesus loves you, and Mickey

Cruz's heart cracked. So I thought, well, this is awfully easy.

You know, all I have to do is learn how to say Jesus loves you in Chinese, and their hearts will crack. So it goes here. It's very simple.

So I picked my victim, and I chose somebody who is called a weatherman, a watchman, who sits outside of a gambling den, and actually he's not much good as a watcher, because he's what we call fishing, you know, just taking drugs, you know, and hardly there anywhere. I went up, knowing about the Kingdom of God, and eternal life, and the blood of Jesus, and his love, and all of that, you know, and totally unable to put it through. So I just said, Jesus loves you, and he said, which means, what does that have to do with me? Well, this was very disappointing.

So I thought I'd try a bit harder. So I said, he really loves you, and he said, why don't you run along and go find someone else? So this was very disappointing again. So I picked a prostitute next, and then I thought, well, you know, I'll touch her, and you know, I'm going to try and show her that Jesus loves her.

You know, it's very difficult to sort of, if you don't know the language, to put all what you've learned from Habakkuk and things, you know, through. All about lambs, and things like that, you know. And I mean, I knew it, you know, I was rich before it, I just didn't know how to put it through.

So I put my arm around her, and said the same thing, Jesus loves you, and she was so frightened, she nearly fell backwards into the sewer. And she was a very sad lady, she couldn't read, and she had no radio, and all she did all day long was just squat over the sewer. And she ate her rice, squatting over the sewer, and when men came out of the Blue Film Theatre, the only way that she could persuade them to be with her was literally by pulling them in, because there was nothing else attractive about her.

Needle marks in the back of her hands, of course, because if you spend your life prostituting, you will need to get rid of that pain. Or else, if you're an addict, you'll need to pay for your drugs, so they'll always go together. Anyway, she nearly fell into the sewer, she was so frightened, and I was very upset, you know, because I was trying to show that Jesus loved.

And so what she said to me was this, she said, dear, you don't understand. And I realised that she was not upset that I touched her, she was not embarrassed that I put my arm around her, she was embarrassed because she thought I made a mistake. She said, you touched the wrong one.

She said, see, I know you're a Christian, you're one of those nice, Jesus people, aren't you? She said, nobody told you what I do. Nobody told you who I am. You see, nice Christians don't touch people like me.

And she was embarrassed because she thought I touched the wrong one. I used to go around the street saying to them, do you believe in Jesus? And they'd say, I don't have time. They weren't being rude.

What they meant was, if you work seven days a week, and you work 12 hours a day, and you never get any holidays, you can't be a Christian. Well, that's obvious, isn't it? Because you can't go to church, and that's how you're a Christian. Others of them would say, I can't read.

Well, that's obvious you can't be a Christian if you can't read, because Christians carry around big books like that. So being a Christian out, unless you're fairly high class and you've been to school, others would say, I can't be a Christian because I haven't got shoes. Well, that's reasonable too, because most people dress up a bit to go to that place they go to on Sundays.

And I got many answers like this. But nobody knew anything about Jesus. They knew lots about Christians.

They knew Christians could read, and they dressed up a bit. And they were clean people, and they were good people. But nobody knew anything about Jesus.

I thought we got it wrong. You know, because when Jesus was in the world, he didn't invite people to church. He went where they were, and he touched them.

Now I'm going to say some very shocking things to you, because I don't know what you're going to learn if you enroll for your crusade classes. I don't know what you've learned if you've enrolled in personal evangelism. But Jesus didn't do it like any of the courses I've ever read.

He did it quite different. You know, he never went up to anybody and said, A, B, C, D, or 1, 2, 3, 4, or, you know, would you like to invite me into your heart, or do you understand the cross? I don't think anybody understood the cross when he touched them. Shocking.

Neither did he go up to anyone and say, I love you. Never. That was my mistake.

Why should anybody be impressed if you go up and say Jesus loves you? If they don't know who Jesus is, why should they be impressed? And if nobody ever loved them, what would it mean? Nothing. But this is what Jesus did. When there was a blind person, he gave him his sight.

When there was a deaf person, he gave him to hear. And when there was a widow, his son died. He didn't comfort her, but raised his son to life.

Now that's the gospel, and I wanted to see that. I wanted to do this in the streets. I didn't want to go around inviting people to a service I was embarrassed if they came to.

They didn't know when to stand up and sit down. They didn't understand the hymns. They couldn't read them anyway.

I wanted Jesus to walk around the streets. I wanted Jesus to touch people where he knew they're hurt. Usually I wasn't clever enough to know that, but I knew he did.

That was what I looked for. I hadn't heard of anybody much who believed, except there were two people back in England I'd heard of who prayed for the sick sometimes. Now this was a long time ago.

This was nearly 20 years ago. I hadn't heard of people much who believed that Jesus was still doing what he did. I mean, I heard lots of people going to Bible studies and things, but I wanted to meet people who'd go out and do what Jesus did.

I wanted to go out to pray for the sick in the streets. I wanted to go into a drug den. You know, you could see sometimes a hundred people in a drug den doing what's called chasing the dragon.

That's inhaling heroin over tin foil. And they were dying. And they were living off their girlfriends.

They were living off their mothers. And half of them would be dead or in prison within a year. I said, God, if you will use me to help just one of these, just one, it will be worth my whole life.

So I realized I didn't understand the words, Jesus loves you. But we're not supposed to love in words. We're supposed to love in deed and in truth.

And that's how St. Paul learned to preach the gospel. He said that he had done it through words. And he said he'd done it through actions.

So I tried to do it through actions. And that means simple things, like if you've got a bowl of rice, you share it with someone who hasn't got one. Now, the gospel is very simple.

And this is what all of us are supposed to be doing. I mean, I can't see anywhere in Scripture where it says we need to compromise or rationalize. If you've got a room, you share it with someone who hasn't got one, that's all.

I mean, it's very plain, really plain in Scripture that we give up our lives for our brothers. So I tried to share my rice, I tried to share my money, I tried to share my time. I opened up the room for these gangsters to come in at night time.

And I remember being really happy one day when I walked out of the Wall City, it must have been about 2 o'clock at night, and I saw a couple of men having noodles at a stall, and one of them had very short hair, which means he's just come out of prison. And he was saying to the other, That is, Miss Poon, and her telephone number is 833-179, and he said to his friend, next time you're arrested, not if you're arrested, but next time you're arrested, he said, remember the phone number. Because, you know, everybody's supposed to be able to make one call from the police station.

So he said, remember the number, because it doesn't matter what time of day or night you call, she'll come. And he said, it doesn't matter whether you've done it or not, because, I mean, 50% of the time they haven't done what they're in for. He said, doesn't matter whether you've done it or not, she'll come.

But one important thing is, you've got to tell the truth, because you see, she's a Christian. That has taken about 2 or 3 years, I think, and I've rarely been as happy in my whole life as to hear that. You know why? You see, they wouldn't understand the words about Jesus, but they did understand something.

They understood that it didn't matter what time of the day or night you called, Jesus would come. And it doesn't matter if you've done it or not, he'll still come. But his name is truth.

And you don't fool with him, because he knows. Well, that was getting them through. They were beginning to understand something about Jesus, but I wanted to see their lives change.

Now, I hear that there are some of you here who've recently attended some of John Wimber's conferences and studies, and you might know something about him. I don't know whether he shared this when he was here, but God gave him a vision. God gave him a dream, you see, that the sick were going to get healed.

I don't know whether he told you, but every Sunday for a whole year, God told him to pray for the sick. And nobody got healed for a whole year. And he'd say, oh God, what am I supposed to speak about this week? And God said, tell them about praying for the sick and healing the sick.

So he preached this wonderful message. Nobody got healed for a whole year. And yet, look at the ministry that we have.

Because he went for it. Because he saw what God's promise was. And he looked forward to that city.

And because of what he looked forward to, many others have been able to enter into as well. Sick people in the streets. I only knew God was supposed to be doing it, and he told us to do it.

I only knew that he told us that we were supposed to be going out preaching the gospel, healing the sick and raising the dead, sharing our homes. I only knew that I saw that city. I saw a place where there were old prostitutes and orphans and widows and street people and addicts and criminals and people of all colors and races and backgrounds living together in homeless and in joy.

I knew that's what I saw, and I didn't know how to get there. And then I met a couple. And I looked at them. They were a Chinese couple. And it was in a little chapel. And actually, you're cheating.

I don't think you ought to be called a chapel anymore, because you're a bit big. This was a really little one, you know, six people inside. And I walked in and saw this Chinese couple, and they were all shiny.

And I thought, ah, they've got it, or whatever it is. And so I knew they believed. I knew that if there were six people, instead of immediately sending them to a doctor, they'd pray for them.

I knew that. I knew they believed. So I went up to them.

And they were very rude to me, very rude. They said, you haven't got the Holy Spirit. And I said, I have.

And they said, you haven't. And I said, yes, I have. And we argued for five minutes or so.

And all the time we were arguing, I knew I was right. Alone. Alone.

Of course I had the Holy Spirit. I couldn't have believed in Jesus if I didn't. So I knew I was right.

At the end of five minutes, I thought, why are we arguing? Why are we quarrelling? They say, I haven't got the Holy Spirit. And I say, I know I have. You see, I knew they had something.

My problem was just semantics. My problem was just words. I hadn't decided if you call it the power of the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the second blessing, the insulin, the anything else you like, you know.

So I finally, I said, oh God, I'm going to quit quibbling, because, you know, there seem to be a lot of relations that have trouble over this. But, you see, I can see they've got something. And I'll go, if you have anything at all, anything at all from the Holy Spirit that will help me to show Jesus in a real way, I'd like it.

And I'll decide what to call it later. So, that's what happened. And I went to pray for them, and they were all noisy, this couple.

I mean, terribly embarrassing. They said, grace in tongues. And, real shakers.

Anyway, I went to their house, and they laid their hands upon my head and said, why don't you start speaking? So, of course, I shut my mouth and said, millions of other, like myself, have said, if God's going to give me this gift, God's going to give it to me. So, completely impossible as long as you shut your mouth. So, anyway, I was sort of expecting him to take me over or something, which he would never do.

So I said, they're just getting hot. And, very sweaty, you know, it's a very humid country. And there was a sort of, you know, a glowing puddle on my feet, and they'd got two plates on the table.

And in Hong Kong, you know, if we have a celebration, we celebrate with oranges, which you cut into eight. And they'd also got a plate of wet flannels on the table, and this was for me to cry into when I'd received. And the oranges were for me to eat as a celebration when I'd received.

And all I could think of as they were doing all that business on my head, you know, help, we're not going to need another plate. And, you know, nothing was happening. I was rejoicing, you know, no spiritual clouds or anything.

And, finally, I just wanted to get out. I said, Oh, God. And, of course, as soon as I opened my mouth, he was able to give me a new language.

And it was very nice, and it was quite interesting. But, you know, I didn't sit on a cloud or anything, and didn't want to land in glory. And I wasn't thrilled with love or anything that I had read other people got.

My sole emotion was embarrassment. And I thought, Oh, let's just get home. So I got to the door as quickly as possible.

And they said, Oh, by the way, you can't expect the other gifts of the Spirit to follow. You know, there are nine. I said, Yes, I know about this.

You know, I've done my homework. And I knew that there were gifts of interpretation and prophecy and words of knowledge and wisdom and discernment and faith and healing and miracles and interpretation. So I said, Thank you very much.

When I got to the door, I went home to wait for the other gifts. And I wasn't that sure how you knew when you got them, you know. But I was dying for healing.

I thought that would be great, you know. It would be wonderful to walk into a drug den where there are a hundred people dying, you know, and the name of the Lord, and the name of the Lord still was standing up. So I was looking forward to that.

But I didn't know if I got it or not, you know, because I didn't know how you knew when you got these gifts. So it was all very disappointing. And I had tried praying in tongues, you know, but it didn't do much for me.

So that sort of petered out. And it was a whole year later that I met an American couple. And this American couple, very rude.

And nearly the first thing they said to me was, Jackie, do you pray in tongues? And I thought, Oh, well, English people would not give it. So I said, No, actually, I don't. And they said, Why not? And I said, Well, yeah, I'm not really sure if I've got the same as everyone else.

You know, it doesn't actually do anything for me. I didn't walk around on a cloud or sit on a mountain or anything, you know. I just felt embarrassed.

It didn't make me feel closer to God or anything. And so I don't use it. And they said, You're very rude.

You're supposed to be a good evangelical and you say you believe the scriptures. Well, the scriptures say if you pray in a non-native language, you're going to be edified. It doesn't say you're going to feel edified.

Whatever nation is sick, the gift of the Spirit is a gift of emotion. Now you get with it, girl. You use what God's given you.

So they made me. So every day for half an hour, I prayed in tongues. And it really wasn't very easy.

And it was quite hard work. And I still didn't sit on a mountain, you know, or walked around on a cloud. I wasn't enveloped in joy.

It was quite hard work. But I just said, God, you see there are millions of people out there and I've got my own idea which ones I'd like to come to you. I've got my own idea how I should work for you.

But will you now, while I pray in tongues, will you now help me to pray for the ones that you want to touch? Will you now help me to pray for the ones that you've got ready? And I would mind if I never know. And that was about the first time I'd ever prayed a real prayer, an unselfish one, you see. Praying in tongues, I was to love later.

I loved God to do what He wanted. Up until then, I'd been pretty condescending. You know, God, I'm going to talk to this one and this one and this one and this one, and you bless me.

You know, my idea is you bless me. As I prayed in the spirit, I said, God, I really don't know who you want to touch or how. I don't know how they're ready.

But you do. And if you could just use me, that's why I wouldn't mind if I ever know. Just let me be a shadow.

And about six weeks into beginning to pray, I found that when I talked to gangsters in the streets about Jesus, they fell down and they got converted and they wept and they got healed, you know. I thought, oh great, my Chinese is getting awfully good. And I wasn't that surprised, you know.

I thought that was supposed to be happening anyway. And then I realized that it was because I'd been praying in the spirit. And you can't be proud when it happens.

Because you know that it isn't you. I mean, I was saying just the same thing as I said before. I wasn't saying anything new.

I didn't even feel full of extra love or full of extra power. Not a feeling at all. You walk by faith just the same when you walk in the spirit.

You don't have any more or less feelings than before really. It's just in a sort of mysterious way you get to be in the right place at the right time. That's God's business.

So what you tried saying to all those people before, you're now saying to the right people. And all you have to say is fish and chips and they fall down. I mean really.

I know that sounds a bit naughty, but you know, when people are ready to listen to Jesus, you really hardly have to say anything. You can put out your hand and they'll start weeping. Because the Spirit of God is prepared.

And then you know it's not you. Then you know it wasn't you that convinced them about Jesus. Then you know it was the Word of the Spirit.

And we're all supposed to be involved in that. And it's great. And that's what God is loving you to do through you, through us all.

It's really a much easier way of doing it. Because He does all the work. He has all the ideas.

He does all the leading. He gives all the power. He gives the Word.

He gets their hearts ready. There's nothing much to do with you. You just get your head on it.

And then you know all the praise and glory goes to Him. And I began to see this happen time after time after time. And one particular occasion there was a young man who'd come to Jesus.

And he was a triad. He was a member of a gang called the Fourteen K. And he had several younger brothers. And he was quite powerful.

But he gave these up when he came to Jesus. And one day he telephoned me early in the morning to tell me that our room had been broken into. Now our room was very small.

It was just big enough for a ping pong table. And when I went down there about five in the morning, I found that they had painted sewage on the walls. And they had smashed the windows.

And I thought, oh well, that's the end of God. I don't know how many of you come from or came from England. But what I said to God was, I can go back to Camden.

And really they have broken up the sewage. I mean I haven't been to a dinner party for four years. Four years.

And giving up my life to people. I mean I thought what a martyr. No dinner parties for four years.

And they paint sewage on my walls. Well, I don't have to stay here forever. I don't have to play ping pong with this lot.

If they don't love ping pong, they don't even have ping pong. I'm much worse at playing. Because you see, it was the people that spent all the time to smash the windows.

It wasn't the enemies. It was the friends. And they didn't understand it.

You won't. But it happens. It usually happens that way.

And don't try and understand. But as I was sweeping up this mess, two things God was saying to me. One is, when you've got problems, you're supposed to praise God.

Which is not very sensible. And the other thing is, when somebody hits you on one cheek, you're supposed to offer the other. Which is not very sensible either.

Anyway, you're supposed to do both of these things. So instead of closing the room, I thought I'll open it the next day. And I spent the day sweeping up all this sewage mess.

Using God. Because you're supposed to. And I had tears pouring down my cheeks.

And the next night, this stranger appeared. I'd never seen him before. And he was just outside the door.

And the suite was very small. He left there and he said, you've got any problems? I said, pain, no. I'm fine.

Actually, I was not very frightened. I wasn't frightened of him. I was just frightened of being rejected.

That's what most of us are frightened of. I was frightened that the people that I'd come for didn't want me. And he said, you've got any problems? You just let me know.

I said, God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

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God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

You want to go to the kingdom of God? You want to go to Zion? You want your dreams to come true? You want to realize the promise He gave you? You want to see come about what you thought should come about? Well the way He offers you is through the cross. There is no resurrection without the cross. It was because of the cross that He poured out His Holy Spirit upon all mankind.

There is no other reason we should deserve His blessing or anointing. It was because of Jesus. And you may have as a Christian exactly what you want.

You can choose. You can choose for your Christian life to be exactly how you like. You can know God and you can come to services.

You can worship Him. You can read your Bible. And you won't feel much pain.

And you won't feel much shame. Or you can pray like Paul. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His suffering.

Becoming like Him in His death. You can choose that, but it's not a choice. And if you choose that, your heart will break.

And you'll never be the same again. You cannot close up your heart to the people who are outside who are suffering it. You will not be able just to enjoy God for yourself, but to love the people who don't know Him, know Him too, and you'll feel their pain.

You'll feel with them. You'll begin to understand a little bit, just a little bit, of what Christ felt for His people. And that's a privilege.

It's a privilege. It's not a hardship. It's a joy.

We hear of the Christians coming out of China who've been imprisoned, who counted it a privilege that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ, or with Christ, to share in His suffering. But it goes the other way, you see. If you're willing to share that, and it will break your heart, you'll share His glory, because that's how it goes.

Rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ. So you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. We are heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ if indeed we share in His suffering in order that we may share in His glory.

And that's the invitation I make to you today. He promised this morning the outpouring of His Spirit upon your life. His love to make you whole, to meet your needs.

And then more. To share with those who don't know. And then more.

To share with yet more. And wanting for healing. And wanting to set the captives free.

And wanting to bring good news. To raise the dead. Yes, you can do all this.

I know you've been challenged to do all this. And you will enter into it through suffering. Your choice.

Just like it was Jesus to do the will of His Father. And He chose to come down. Instead of staying in a comfortable heaven, He was obedient to the will of His Father.

And remember in the coming weeks, as more and more people share with you the challenge of the kingdom of God, remember the cost of that kingdom. It was the cost of Jesus. It was His death.

Will you die too? Or pray? Lord, in your mercy, pour your spirit upon us. Lord, in your mercy, we really don't want to play church. We want to know your heart.

And we invite you in your mercy to break our hearts, just as yours are. Lord, as we embrace the news about your kingdom, as we long to see your kingdom come about, as we want to go for it, we ask that you

do what's necessary in our hearts, that we be broken. You can do it your way.

And I would like to pray for those of you who are willing to pay that price. And you may feel a bit frightened. That's all right.

All right. We'd like this with you. We want God to use you in the coming of His kingdom, like it is now.

And I don't stand too quickly, because I'm asking if you'll embrace the suffering that is with it. But it's all right. It's a joy.

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