

To Be an Antioch Church

by James Hudson Taylor IV

James Hudson Taylor IV emphasizes the importance of embodying the marks of Jesus through salvation, transformation, and service in the life of every believer.

Duration: 49:32

Scripture: Matthew 5:16, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:17, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Antioch"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of commitment and service to God. He shares a personal experience of speaking at a mission conference in Taiwan, where many young people committed themselves to world missions. The speaker also discusses a project he was involved in, where they loaned sheep to farmers in order to help them overcome poverty. The project caught the attention of the central government, and a Communist Party member acknowledged the service of the Christians involved. The overall message is that Jesus has saved us to serve Him, and that true poverty relief comes through teaching and empowering others rather than simply giving money.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, turn with me, would you, to the book of Galatians. The book of Galatians chapter 6. I want to look together with you at just one verse here. Verse 17 of Galatians chapter 6. Here Paul, writing to the church in Galatia, closes this letter with these words.

Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. I want to think together with you this evening on that title or that theme or that phrase.

The marks of Jesus. The marks of Jesus. Shall we bow our heads in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for this evening. Thank you for this time that we have, not only to worship you, but Lord, to turn our thoughts to your word. And Lord, as we think about these words that Paul has given to us, we would pray, Lord, that you would open our hearts.

And Lord, we would be able to, from these words, glean truth that we can apply into our lives. Lord, we pray that there would be eternal value to this service this evening. And that as each of us goes from this place, Father, our lives would be different.

And because our lives are different, the lives of those around us will also be different. Father, we commit these moments that follow into your hand. In Christ's name we pray.

Amen. Amen. The marks of Jesus.

I've been especially glad to conclude my trip or my time here in the UK with a stop here in Cambridge. If any of you have studied the history of Christian missions, you will know that Cambridge has played a very significant role in missions. People like Henry Martin, who was so used by God in India.

Within my own organization, the OMF, which formerly was called the China Inland Mission, in the middle or toward the end of the 19th century, a group of seven people called the Cambridge Seven went out from Cambridge and was tremendously used by God there in China. For me personally, there is another special significance for being here in Cambridge, actually my first visit, and it is because in my own spiritual pilgrimage, especially in serving the Lord, there was a Cambridge graduate who also went to China to be a missionary, who after his retirement in the United States had a tremendous impact on my life. David Adeny, and maybe some of you have heard of his name or have read something about him, graduated from Cambridge and went on to China to work in the middle province there in China, the province of Henan, for many years.

Just as the communists were coming to power in the late 40s and into the early 50s, God used Mr. and Mrs. Adeny, especially among the young people, the university students of China, preparing them for that period of time where they would have to go through tremendous hardship, tremendous struggles under the communist regime. After they had to leave China in the early 50s, the Adenys moved down to Hong Kong. They were also in Singapore for a period of time and were very instrumental, actually, in setting up IFES in Asia, both there in Hong Kong as well as in Taiwan and in Singapore.

As I mentioned, after their retirement, they went to the United States, and it was during that period of time that I had a chance to meet the Adenys and to, under their leadership, under their mentorship, and I'm not sure that word even existed back then, but under their helpful guidance, the Lord used them to bring me to a deeper understanding and a clear understanding of his will and his purposes in my life. We could spend a lot of time talking about these missionaries that have gone out from Cambridge, but this evening, instead, I'd like to turn our thoughts and our attention to an even more famous missionary, probably outside of Jesus Christ, the most famous missionary, the missionary Paul. And I want to think together with us this evening on these words that he closes out the book of Galatians, and particularly looking at these words and this phrase, the marks of Jesus from the standpoint of not only Paul as the missionary, but how does that mark of Jesus or those marks of Jesus impact us today as we think of missions? Maybe before actually looking at that phrase in depth, I can just pause very quickly to say that there is chiefly two explanations of what this marks of Jesus meant for Paul.

Many people believe that actually what Paul is referring to here is actually physical marks that he has upon his body. If we went back into the book of Acts, we will read of how Paul traveled to many different places and was used greatly by God, but as he traveled from place to place, he encountered tremendous opposition, and he was beaten, and he was thrown into prison, and on account of that, he had physical scars on his body. And so there are those that explain or seek to interpret this phrase, the marks of Jesus from the standpoint that these were physical marks, scars that Paul had upon his body.

And I believe that certainly that is the case. But at the same time, as we look at this phrase, and we look at it within the context of not only the book of Galatians, but also within the context of the missionary Paul, I

think we can come to also another interpretation paralleled with the interpretation that these were physical marks. And that is a spiritual understanding that Paul here is not merely talking about physical scars on his body, but there are spiritual significances behind that.

And as we look at these, I want us to bear in mind that when Paul says, I have the marks of Jesus on my body, he is not merely just giving his own personal testimony as if it is unrelated to us. In fact, I truly believe that this personal testimony of Paul actually is an example that he has set for us this evening. That when he says, I have on my body the marks of Jesus, he is not merely talking about himself, but rather he is setting himself up as an example for you and I. And I believe the question that I want us to ask this evening, each and every one of us is, do you, do I have the marks of Jesus upon me? It is an example and maybe we could actually even go one step further and say that it is actually the standard that Paul is placing before us.

That this marks of Jesus are not just for the few within the church that are zealous for missions or zealous for the work of God, but rather these marks of Jesus are things that each and every one of us should have upon our body. And so Paul has set his testimony. Paul has set an example.

Paul has actually set a standard for us this evening. Well, what do those marks mean? What were those marks that Paul was talking about? I think there are several, at least in my mind, that I want to draw our attention to this evening. It would seem first and foremost that when Paul is referring to the marks of Jesus on his body, he is actually referring to the marks of salvation that are found in the cross of Jesus Christ.

The marks of salvation. I believe this will become very clear to us, especially if we are familiar with the whole book of Galatians. If you look back through Paul's 13 letters, you will know that actually Galatians is the most unfriendly book that Paul wrote.

In the 13 books that he wrote, you recall that so often he begins with those words of praise and thanksgiving. Whether it's to the church in Rome, whether it's the church in Corinth, and we know that church was filled with all kinds of problems, and yet Paul began with praise and thanksgiving. In the book of Ephesians, in the book of Philippians, in the book of Colossians, Paul, over and over again, always begins his book by saying, every time I think of you, I can't cease to give praise to God.

But if we look at the first chapter of Galatians, we'll see that Paul is not praising the Galatians. In fact, he is very anxious about the situation there in Galatia. Well, just very briefly, what was the problem? What was the danger? What was the challenge that the church there faced? Simply, it was this, there were those who went into the church preaching a gospel, not a gospel of grace, but a gospel of works.

It was not the gospel that Paul preached to them. And in fact, in chapter 1, he says, if anyone teaches or preaches another gospel to you, let him be damned. And as these teachers went into the church, what they were teaching him, or what they were teaching the Christians in that church is, the cross of Jesus Christ, while having its role in our faith, and in our religion, actually is insufficient.

That, in essence, we have to fulfill Old Testament requirements. And particularly, you'll find the whole rite of circumcision, another mark, was being preached in the church, that we needed to have the mark of obedience to the Old Testament in order to be saved. And so, Paul, at the close of his letter, reminds the Christians that what is important is not physical marks upon our body, but rather it is God's salvation through Jesus Christ, that each and every one of us must have this mark of salvation upon us.

And of course, as we think of it from the standpoint of missions, this becomes a very critical thing for Paul. Because it was the salvation, it was the cross of Jesus Christ that became the very center of why Paul went forward. That was the thing that so propelled him as he went out, whether it was with Barnabas, whether it was Silas, whether it was with anybody else.

The thing that so drove Paul was this vision of countless of people needing to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. And not only was that the case for Paul, it was the case for subsequent generations of missionaries. As Hudson Taylor went to China in 1854, the thing that so filled his mind was the thought that there were thousands upon thousands of Chinese racing toward a Christless eternity.

And that was a phrase that Hudson Taylor often used in his writing. Racing toward a Christless eternity. Recently, I was reading through a book that Hudson Taylor wrote in 1865.

And in that book, he talks about China's need and claim. China's spiritual need and the claims upon us. And in that book, he uses a simple equation to help communicate the urgency that he sensed of taking this mark of salvation to the Chinese.

Certainly, in his day, the Chinese are not as nearly as populous as they are today. Actually, in Hudson Taylor's day, there was about 300 million Chinese in China. Today, there are 1.3 billion Chinese in China.

And Hudson Taylor talked about what would happen if we imagined these 300 million Chinese racing toward a Christless eternity. And I converted his equation into today to help you and I understand what that might signify for us. If today there were some 40 Chinese that passed in front of us, do you know how long it would take for 1.3 billion Chinese to cross in front of us? 40 per second.

Well, I'll save you the math. It would take nearly 360 days of 40 per second crossing in front of us. And as Hudson Taylor would describe them, they are racing toward a Christless eternity.

And so Paul tells us that he has the mark of Jesus. And I believe it wasn't only the mark on his life, but he desired many, many other people to also have that mark of Jesus in their lives. And so first of all, it was a mark of Jesus.

The second thing that I am struck is that is not only a mark of salvation, but it is also a mark of transformation. It is a mark of salvation, but it is also a mark of transformation. Isn't it interesting that here these words are written by one who was formerly called Saul? Paul, writing these words, if you and I only would pause and to reflect upon who exactly Paul was, we would know that he was Saul.

And who was Saul? Saul was a person that was bent on persecuting the church of Jesus Christ. He was bent on destroying those who followed Jesus Christ. And here he writes, I have on my body the marks of Jesus.

It would seem to me we are brought face to face with the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that this gospel of Jesus Christ can turn a Saul into a Paul. And I tell you this evening that I believe that that is at the very center of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That our faith, our gospel is not just some ideology.

In fact, I don't really like to call it a religion. But rather it is something that can come into a person's life, and it can completely transform that person's life. It can change a Saul, a persecutor of Jesus Christ, into Paul, a proclaimer of Jesus Christ.

And over these last few years, we have had the privilege and the joy of seeing many, many Chinese come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, transformed in their lives. My thoughts go to one particular young man, actually we called him Paul as well. He was a young Yi man.

The Yi minority group in China is principally congregated in the southwest part of China, in the province of Sichuan, in the province of Yunnan, as well as in the province of Guizhou. There are about 7 million Yi people. Most of them are unreached by the gospel, and God gave us an opportunity to go into the southern part of Sichuan via some different kind of community health projects.

And while we were there, in one of the small towns, we came into contact with Paul, a young Yi man who came to the hospital because he was a drug addict, and his arm had become infected from using unsanitized needles to shoot drugs into his body. And as our colleagues sat down and talked with him and realized that he was a drug addict, they began to pray fervently for him. And each day as he came back to the hospital, originally the doctor said, there's no way we can save your arm, we need to amputate it.

But each day as he came back, they prayed for him and they changed the dressing, and slowly, in God's mercy and grace, his arm began to heal. He was, of course, very surprised by these people speaking Mandarin, not with a Sichuan accent. And he came to find out that they were actually from Taiwan, which surprised him because you'll know that the relationship across the strait sometimes is very stressful.

And they were very interested, he was very interested in knowing why they had come to China. Was it because they couldn't find a job in Taiwan? And the amazing thing is as they met together with Paul, day in and day out, not only did God bring healing to his arm, but God transformed Paul. And he took away the drug addiction, any kind of yearning and desire for drugs.

He transformed Paul's life. And Paul went home and in a matter of a day, his mother saw the difference in Paul's life. And she said to him, what has happened to you? And Paul says, I have become a Christian.

Actually, he said, I have become a believer in Jesus. And his mother said, who is Jesus? His mother had never heard of Jesus before. And Paul began to share the gospel with his mother who had never heard of Jesus.

And by the end of it, she said, even though I don't know who Jesus is, if Jesus can change you, I want to believe in him too. And I share that illustration merely to emphasize the point, brothers and sisters, that the gospel we believe in is a transforming gospel of Jesus Christ. And it changed us all into a Paul.

And there are thousands, there are literally millions of people who also need to experience that transforming power of Jesus Christ. Just like you and I, just like Paul, they too need the mark of transformation in their lives. And so it is a mark of transformation.

It is a mark of salvation. It is a mark of transformation. It is also a mark of service.

It's interesting the word that Paul uses here for marks. Actually, we have an English word that comes from the original language. The original language is stigma.

And we get the English word stigma, which actually has two different meanings to it in the English language. First of all, it is a condition of the eye. It is a disease of the eye.

If you have stigma, you have to go to see a doctor, and you have to get eyeglasses to correct that stigma. If I'm not mistaken, the word stigma actually has a second meaning, and that is having a bad reputation. And so somebody could have a stigma, and this could be a bad reputation.

People could think ill of that person. But it's interesting that actually the original word stigma or stigmatos didn't have either of those meanings. If we went back to study that word, we would find it actually is a very interesting word because it is a word that describes something that took place in the Roman Empire.

It was when somebody went out into the marketplace and bought somebody else, bought another human being, bought a slave. And as they brought back that slave to their house, they would do something. They would put a brand, a hot iron, or they put a brand into the fire.

And once that hot iron turned red, they would take it out of the fire, and they would brand that individual. And there would be a mark upon that person's arm. There would be a mark perhaps upon that person's back.

And they would have on their bodies a stigma. And this is the word that actually Paul uses here when he says that I have on my body the marks of Jesus. What he is saying is that not only am I saved, not only am I transformed, but I am saved.

I am transformed so that I can serve. I don't know about the church here in the UK, but I know the church in America has a great deal of problem with that concept. Because within the church in America, there are many people who see salvation as merely a ticket to heaven.

And they failed actually to realize that in God's economy, in God's plan of salvation, we are not only saved, but we are saved to serve. That God has called us out of our sins into His Son's marvelous light, but it doesn't stop there, but rather we are now called to serve Him, not to desire our own will, not to live by our own desires, but rather that His will would be done in our lives. And this is one of the greatest challenges that the American church faces is how to communicate this truth.

Perhaps it is something that we here in the UK also struggle with. I do not know. But whether it is in the UK, whether it is in the United States, wherever it might be, it would seem to me that what Paul is reminding us today is Jesus has not only saved us, but He has saved us so that we might serve Him, that you and I need the mark of service upon us.

Just a minute ago, I mentioned the fact that we were working in the southern part of Sichuan, and we got involved in a very interesting project. It was a sheep farming project. It was a sheep loaning project that we set up with the government in order to be able to help with poverty relief.

Originally, the government had come to us and said, would it be okay if you guys raised some money outside of China and came and gave money to the poor people? Well, anyone who has done community development knows that to solve poverty, you do not solve it by giving people money. You've got to find other ways. You've got to give them not only the fishing pole, you've got to teach them how to fish.

It's much better to teach them how to fish than to actually have to give them fish every day. And so we said, we're not interested in giving these people money, but rather we want to help them. We want to work together with them, and we came up with this idea of not just giving them sheep, well, not to give them sheep, but to loan them sheep.

And the project was a two-year project in which we would give each farmer, and there were 50 farmers, we would give each farmer 20 ewes and one ram. And at the end of the second year, they would have to return to us 20 ewes. We didn't want the 20 ewes that we loaned to them two years before.

We wanted 20 ewes that were born in those two years. And it was a wonderful experience because what God opened our eyes to see was that through this project, we could mobilize Christian sheep farmers. And we looked high and low in the Chinese church for Christian sheep farmers.

And let me tell you, there are no sheep farmers in the Chinese church, even in New Zealand. But thankfully, we were able to find New Zealand sheep farmers. And we were able to find Christian veterinarians.

We were able to find Christian agriculturalists to partner together in this project. And we would take these Christian professionals into China to work together with us, work together with the Bureau of Animal Husbandry, who oversaw this project, to work together with the farmers. And by God's grace, we were able to see these 50 farmers brought out of poverty.

And the amazing thing of what happened at the handover ceremony, and there was this actual handover ceremony where these 50 farmers brought in 20 ewes apiece, 1,000 ewes. And they brought them in this gate, and we had 50 farmers waiting to take these 20 apiece off for two more years. And in that ceremony, that handover ceremony, as there were probably close to 300 people watching on, suddenly a Communist Party member actually sent down from Beijing to observe this project, because it had caught the attention of the central government, believe it or not.

He stood up in the middle of that ceremony, and this is what he said to the people there. He said, You're probably wondering why these people have come. And we were standing behind him, and pointing to us, he said this to those people that day.

He said, These people have come to serve us in the spirit of Jesus. Now, I'm not going to unpack what he meant by that, what a Communist Party member might have meant by saying, We have come to serve in the spirit of Jesus. Actually, I don't know what he meant.

It sounded good, though. Coming from him especially, I mean, if it came from Jamie, yeah, you have to say that. After all, you're a Christian.

What else are you going to say? But coming from a Communist Party member, it was something very different. And my point is this, just as Paul had that mark of service, as we go, we go with that mark of service, not only to serve Jesus Christ and God, but also to be of a service to those around us, and to, through that service, point them to the one who has saved us. It was a mark of service.

And of course, the question that we have today to answer to is, do we have that mark of service on our bodies today? Is that mark on your body? Is that mark on my body? Is there a sense that we desire to serve within the local church context? Is there a desire on our behalf to serve within our communities? Not only serving Jesus Christ, but through serving Him, serving those around us. Is there a sense of desiring to be of service to Jesus Christ in world missions? Do we have the mark of service upon Him? Go back to Paul's letters. How often does he describe himself as a doulos of Jesus Christ, a servant of Jesus Christ? It was a mark of service.

Fourthly, not only was it a mark of salvation, a mark of transformation, a mark of service, it was also a mark of commitment. It was a mark of commitment. It's interesting how Paul sets up this whole phrase from finally let no one cause me trouble for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

Evidently, there were those within the community that were causing other people trouble. And actually, that word trouble appears several times, four times, if I'm not mistaken, in this letter. There were people that were causing trouble, that were agitating, that were causing others to doubt whether they were, in fact, truly Jesus followers.

Not only for them to doubt, but also for them not to be willing to put up with the cost of what it meant to follow Jesus Christ. And Paul here speaks of a commitment. He says I am willing to have that mark upon my body.

I am willing to commit myself no matter what the cost might be to follow Jesus Christ. And I know personally that speaks very much into my own life. For it's very easy for us to follow Jesus Christ when the going is easy.

But when the going gets tough, it's quite another story, isn't it? And I believe in the 21st century, we as Christians, as Christ followers, will face increasing opposition to our faith. And there will be a need for increasing commitment to be obedient to Jesus Christ. Perhaps some of you have heard the testimony of a young Yale graduate, and I'm not sure it's safe to say Yale in this place, maybe it is.

His name was William Borden. And even in his last year of university in Yale in Connecticut in the United States, God's hand was upon William Borden and gave him a vision actually to go to the far northwest of China to share the gospel with the Muslims there. Originally his friends tried to dissuade him.

They thought he was throwing away a career in law which seemed by all indications to be a career of tremendous success. His parents also initially were filled with reservations and in fact they tried to talk him out of it. But William Borden was convinced that God was calling him to China.

And he began to prepare himself. And shortly thereafter, he left the shores of the United States and on his way to China, he traveled through the Suez Canal and he decided that he would spend some time there in Egypt to understand something about the Muslim culture, the Muslim religion. And then events took place that frankly we do not understand and cannot explain.

For even before he left Egypt, his life was cut short and he went to be with the Lord. And in his biography, it is told of the journey that his mother went to collect her son's belongings. And as she gathered up his belongings, she came across the diary of William Borden and she opened up this diary and there on the front page, William Borden listed out three no's, N-O, three no's, three commitments that he had before Jesus Christ.

What were those three no's? The first no was no reserve. William Borden was committed to follow Jesus Christ in world missions, taking the gospel to the Muslims of Xinjiang province. There was to be no reserve in his efforts, no reserve.

The second no was no retreat. Even though this might not be an easy road filled with difficulty, William Borden resolved in his heart and in his mind that there would be no retreat once he stepped onto this path. And then the third no, I think for me is the most profound and it is this, that there would be no regrets, no regrets.

And how often we look back and we're so regretful. No reserve, no retreat and no regrets. That mark of commitment that Paul speaks about.

And my friends, I believe that God is challenging his church, challenging you and me to step up, to be willing to commit ourselves, our lives afresh into Jesus Christ's hand. I had an amazing experience just about four months ago, speaking at a mission conference of some 2,000 people in Taiwan. Young people, students.

And as the service drew to a close, an invitation was given. And out of those 2,000 people who stood up, nearly 300 came forward, committing themselves to world missions. And I stood there and I was in utter amazement that God was laying on the lives and in the hearts of these people, 300 of them to commit themselves to world missions, no matter what.

A mark of Jesus, that mark of commitment. And then lastly, not only was it a mark of salvation, a mark of transformation, a mark of service, a mark of commitment, but it was also a mark of proclamation or a mark of witness. Do you notice that Paul says this mark is on his body? It was something that was visible.

Actually, it was something that was visible even without Paul saying anything. He did not have to open his mouth one bit and people could see. People could see.

There's a verse that I love. It's actually found in the first epistle of Peter, chapter 3. You don't need to turn to it. But if you get a chance when you go home, look at it.

Actually, it is directed to wives who have unbelieving husbands. And Peter is trying to help these wives come to a better understanding of how they are to be of a witness in the home. And there in chapter 3, Paul tells them that they are to, through their good deeds, win over their husbands without a word.

And actually, the phrase there that is used in the NIV is one, W-O-N, one without a word. And I love that phrase. And in a sense, what Paul is saying here, he has this mark of salvation on his body.

What he is saying is, I don't even have to say a word and people can see that I am a follower of Jesus Christ. Well, maybe you are asking, what does that have to do with mission today? And it is simply and it is profoundly related in this way. As we look at the 21st century, I am convinced, actually not just myself, but there are many people who are convinced that one of the strategic areas of mission in the 21st century is the mobilization of Christian professionals to world missions.

The mobilization of Christian professionals to world missions. Well, what does that mean? It simply means this, that as we look at the world today, there are more and more places where the traditional missionary cannot go. Those countries, those regions are closed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Actually, if we were to just look at Asia alone, do you know that in Asia alone, 80% of the population lives in places where missionaries cannot go? But if you and I were to look at those places and they include not only China, but they include places like Vietnam, they include places like Laos, they include places like Brunei, they include places even like Malaysia, Christians, missionaries are unable to go to those places. But if we look carefully at those places, we will find that while missionaries are unable to go, Christians are able to go and to live there, to work there, and to be a witness for Jesus Christ. And this is what brings us back to this mark of witness that Paul talks about, that as Christian professionals are mobilized for missions.

It's interesting. The English word profession, I was telling OMF colleagues when I came to the UK this time, it's actually much easier for me to come into your country than it is for me to go to my country. I actually get into China easier than I get into the United States.

I have a US passport, but it seems that some terrorist also has a name similar to James Hudson Taylor IV. And almost every time I go into the United States, I go through immigration, they haul me off to the side room to be interviewed by an immigration officer. And sometimes I've spent half an hour in that place, and then they say, you're free to go.

And I say, well, wait a minute. I spent half an hour. You need to tell me what the problem is.

There's no problem. You're free to go. Well, in those cases, you don't ask any more questions.

You quickly leave. I forgot where I was going. This is my 18th sermon.

Easy professionals. Thank you. It's easier for me to enter China.

When I came to the UK, on my immigration form, I had to write out what my profession was, what my profession was. And so I found that writing pastor is an easy thing to do, and they ask less questions. But the English word profession not only talks about our vocation, our jobs, but it also talks about our faith.

And we talk about the profession of our faith. And I don't believe that that is a coincidence. And in a sense, the merger of those two words, that through our profession, we are making a profession of faith, is a tremendous thing that is before us in the 21st century.

And as I look out over your faces this evening, I know that there are many young people here, and I think the challenge that I would give to you is this, to seek out God, to ask Him, what would you have me do in world missions? And for some, it might be traditional missionary roles. But for many, many others, it could be that God wants to use your profession in order that you might make a profession of Jesus Christ. Just about three years ago, I went to Manila for a mission conference.

It was a very interesting mission conference. It was for the millions of Filipinos who leave the Philippines to work overseas. They are called Overseas Contract Workers, OCWs.

It was Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday afternoon. And after I spoke Friday night, I was very, very discouraged. I just seemed to not be able to relate to this group of about 500 OCWs who were on their way to go overseas.

And as the organizer of the meeting drove me back to my hotel, I expressed to her my frustration and my apologies on not doing a good job that evening. And she says, don't worry about it. We'll pray for you.

And I said, but I want to know why did you invite me to be a speaker at this conference? And she said, well, I had a dream one night and I dreamt of Hudson Taylor. And I woke up the next day and I immediately called the OMF office in Manila and I said, I've dreamt of Hudson Taylor. We're organizing a mission conference.

We'd like to invite Hudson Taylor to come and speak at our conference. And whoever answered the phone, bless their soul, says, sorry, you're too late. Hudson Taylor died in 1905.

But, there's a third and there's a fourth. The fifth is too young, but take your pick. Do you want the third or the fourth? But I'll never forget at the end of that conference, a young lady, probably just about 23, came up to me and she shook my hand and she said, Pastor Jamie, the Lord has called me to Saudi Arabia.

And she says, you will never get a residential visa to Saudi Arabia. But I already have a visa in my passport. She said, for you to go to Saudi Arabia, you would have to ask churches to support you.

But my employer has already paid and in fact, has already sent me my plane ticket. But she says, what is even greater is the fact that you will never be able to go into their houses, but I am going to live in their house. And she said, would you pray for me that God would enable me to have a witness for Jesus Christ in their homes.

A mark of witness. A mark of witness. And so Paul here speaks of the marks of Jesus that he has upon his body.

A mark of salvation. A mark of transformation. A mark of commitment.

A mark of service. And a mark of witness. And we come back to the question this evening at the close of this service.

Simply asking this, do you and I have the marks of Jesus upon us? That mark of salvation, that mark of transformation, that mark of service, that mark of commitment, and that mark of witness. Finally, let no one trouble me, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. Thank you, Father, for this evening.

Thank you for the time that we have spent in your word. Thank you for this privilege that you've given me to share with my brothers and sisters. And Lord, as our service draws to a close, the prayer on my heart, Lord, would be that each and every one of us would have those marks of Jesus that Paul talks about here in Galatians chapter 6, verse 17.

And not only, Lord, that we would have them, but we would desire that many, many around us and those afar would also have the marks of Jesus upon them. So bless and guide each and every one of us, Lord, and enable us to strive not only to have, but to continually have these marks of Jesus upon us. For it's in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

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