

# Week of Meetings 1974-04 Savoring Things of God

by James R. Cochrane

---

*The Lord Jesus' decision to go to Calvary is a reflection of the character of God, who must reach out to help and bless humanity in its deep spiritual need.*

**Duration:** 1:03:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:20, Matthew 17:9-11, Mark 8:30, Mark 9:28, Mark 9:30, Luke 6:27

**Topics:** "Spiritual Desperation", "Divine Intervention"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that statistics alone cannot move us, but it is the Spirit of God that can truly inspire us to reach out and help those in need. The speaker refers to a young man in the presence of his father as a symbol of the human race and its desperate condition. The story focuses on a father whose son is possessed by a demon, and how the disciples of Jesus were unable to cure him. The speaker highlights the tragic state of the world we live in today, drawing parallels between the boy's situation and the spiritual misery of society. The sermon also mentions the upcoming opportunity to share recent developments and blessings in the Dominican Republic.

---

## Transcript

I've not consulted with Mr. Willie, but usually on our visits to Park of the Palms, at one of the services, we like to share with you just a little of what is happening in the Dominican Republic. And I would like to take that opportunity tomorrow night, at least at a sign, maybe 10 or 15 minutes, to share with you some recent developments, things for praise and thanksgiving, in that corner of God's vineyard. Now this evening, I would like you to turn once again to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 17, and we will read just a little farther on in this chapter.

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 17, and we will begin our reading in verse 9. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias has come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.

Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man kneeling

down to him and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and sore-vexed.

For oft times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.

And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him, and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief, for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as the grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him. And the third day he shall be raised again, and they were exceeding sorry. Again we commend the word of God to him, and we await his blessing as we meditate on it this evening.

Going back just for a moment to the previous chapter, you may have noticed this morning that as we read it, there is a prohibition from the Lord Jesus. One of those things that appears now and then in the Gospels that seem to us a little perplexing, just a little difficult to understand. Chapter 16 and verse 20, after Peter's great declaration of faith in the Lord Jesus, Jesus said in verse 20, Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Now, I just left Santo Domingo a few days ago, and I came directly to Parque de Palmas. And in the Dominican Republic, as in many parts of the world today, there is a great multitude of people who are wholeheartedly dedicated to evangelism, to making known to the peoples of the world who the Lord Jesus really is. That is somewhat of a shock and somewhat perplexing to come across verses like this one.

We've read three of them altogether this morning and this evening, three prohibitions in which the Lord Jesus says very emphatically in this verse that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. Now, the reason for that is not really very difficult to find. We mentioned this morning the political inclinations of the people at that time, how they were looking with popular notions about the Messiah, what he would be like and what he would do.

And most of their thoughts were concentrated in a visible political kingdom of God. Now, the Lord Jesus, having heard from Peter such a clear declaration of faith in the Messiah, in who the Lord Jesus really is, said to Peter and his companions, Now, you're not to tell any man that Jesus is the Christ. That is, he did not want people following him with political notions, people who would be looking for a visible political expression of the kingdom of God at that time.

That's the prohibition that is linked to this verse we have just read. Perhaps many of you received Decision magazine, and I'm not sure just which month it was, but in the last few issues there was an article by Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge of England, who spoke recently at the World Congress of Evangelism in Switzerland. Some of us have followed with great interest the spiritual developments in Muggeridge in recent years, beginning with his book, Jesus Rediscovered, and other books and articles.

Some of us have seen them on television. In this article that appeared in Decision magazine, which was the summary of the address he gave at the World Congress on Evangelization, he gives us what we might call his testimony. He goes back to his youth, almost to his childhood.

He was brought up in a home in England very much dedicated to the labor political party, to the point where they almost equated the labor party with Christianity. If only the labor party could get into power, then we would see the Christian ideal set forth in a society. And he and his parents and other members of the family dedicated them wholeheartedly to this purpose of bringing one of the major political parties in England into a place of power.

And of course, the day came when they were elected to power, and they have been many times over the years. But Muggeridge shares with us in this article how disillusionment set in. There was a time in his life where the name of Jesus and the labor party were almost one and the same thing, that the Christian faith and that great political party blended together into one thing.

But when they came into power, and as the years went by, he found the same weaknesses, many of the same defects in that party he had witnessed in others, until finally he came quite disillusioned both with the labor party and with Christianity. And he turned to that great nation, Russia, captivated with the Communist revolution. And as he took interest in it, the day came when he was sent as a reporter to Moscow, where he lived for a number of years.

There were no Christian implications in that revolution, but to Muggeridge, it represented that great effort on the part of men to achieve the ideal society. And as he lived there and began to study and look behind the scenes, he became equally disillusioned. And finally, in his old age, for he is now an old man, he became aware of the reality of Jesus Christ, of something that cannot be linked to any political party or any nation anywhere in the world, that the Lord Jesus is very dogmatic.

For he said so long ago, standing before Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but my kingdom is not of this world. Now, right back here in Matthew chapter 16, and in the verse we've noticed tonight, the Lord Jesus very clearly makes this thought known.

He does not want those men and women whose ideal is linked to time and earth to follow him with their aspirations. It's tragic that in our own world today, some of us are very much aware of some of the great historic Protestant churches that have financed some of the revolutionary movements in certain areas of the world. Before you criticize them, let me add tonight that I deeply sympathize with them.

That if you've ever lived in people who live under oppression and who are longing for freedom, then you're somewhat slow in making quick decisions. But having said that, any man or any woman or any movement that lays claim to the name of Christ and seeks to link it to some earthly movement is mistaken. The Lord Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world.

And having spoken to Peter and the disciples, having brought them aside to test them to find if their interest in him was just the popular interest of those who were looking for a quick political solution to their needs at that time, and having found out that, no, there was something deeper, that God had touched Peter's heart, that Peter had the conviction that he was the Messiah sent from God, he leads them on. He begins to open his heart and to share with them the great purpose of God. But he says, Now don't go and tell people that Jesus is the Christ unless they have that same conviction.

Otherwise, sooner or later, there will be disillusionment. Today in our world, even in my little country, the Dominican Republic, I remember just a few years ago, just prior to the assassination of the dictator, that all of us who were evangelicals never spoke about politics. Why? Because we had an absolute dictator.

It was worth your life to say a word about politics. But the day after he was assassinated, you'd be surprised how many church people stood up in pulpits and on street corners and sounded off on political matters. Then came the thought of shame, that in the hour of need and of darkness in the Dominican Republic, no one said a word.

But when the threat was removed, then so many people began to expound their political views. Let me add just a further thought tonight. Having said these things before you, in no way do I suggest that the Christian lives totally apart from the involvement of the world in which he lives.

The very opposite is true. It doesn't matter your social situation, what your vocation might be, what your political inclinations might be, wherever you live and whatever you do, God expects that we will be salt and light in the world where we are. Thus, whether you live in Russia or the United States of America or in the Dominican Republic or Cuba, if you know God and you love the Lord Jesus in that particular environment where you live, you will do your very best to influence in all ways for good and for the glory of God.

But you can never take the name of the Lord Jesus and totally identify it with any movement in this world. For again, I repeat his words, my kingdom is not of this world. From the Mount of Transfiguration in chapter 17, where we concluded our meditation this morning, the Lord Jesus takes that decisive step and He begins to walk down the mount.

Coming down that mount, there was only one place He could go, and that was eventually to Calvary, outside of Jerusalem, where He would lay down His life for us. Let me raise the question this evening. Why did the Lord Jesus do it? We mentioned this morning that in that state of glorified manhood and in view of the glory that was His by right of His deity, the Lord Jesus could have stepped from that mount right back into that eternal glory that belonged to His Father.

Peter tells us in his letter that the Lord Jesus received from the Father glory and honor on this great occasion of the Transfiguration. It's one of the great moments in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. It is the Father that takes the initiative, and He honors and glorifies the Son.

In the Son, He finds His full pleasure. The Lord Jesus could have moved back into those eternal circles of love and of glory, but He turned and He took that step, and He walked down that mountain on His way to Calvary. And the question we've raised tonight is why? Now, there was no compulsion from outside of the Lord Jesus.

He was not forced down the mountain. There was no obligation placed on Him that made Him go to Calvary. Going back again to chapter 16 and down in verse 21, the Lord Jesus, when He began to teach the disciples about His death, He said how that He must go unto Jerusalem, suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day.

It's worth taking a little time to meditate on the word must. He must go to Jerusalem. But no one forced the Lord Jesus.

No one pushed Him down that road. If there was compulsion, it came from within Him, from His very nature, from what He was like. When you come over to the book of Hebrews in chapter 2, you'll find a similar phrase where the author of this particular letter in chapter 2 in verse 10 writes as follows, this time concerning God.

And he writes, For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. Now, it became Him. It was consistent with the nature of God that in order to bring many sons to glory, the pioneer of their salvation should be made perfect through suffering.

Now, there is no Old Testament Scripture quoted to back up this thought. It comes as a direct revelation from God through the Spirit of God. The reason why the Lord Jesus went to Calvary, the reason how He did that salvation, is linked to the nature and the character of God.

He could not stand back. When our human race was in such deep spiritual need, the very character of God must reach out to help and to bless. And in this reaching out, it's not done by prophecy.

It's not done from a distance. But the Lord Jesus is sent right into the world. And as the pioneer of our salvation, He is perfected through suffering.

The word perfection, in this particular sense, means to complete a process. And the Lord Jesus was fully qualified to become the captain of our salvation because of His full identification with us, coming right down into our world, participating in our sufferings, and eventually going to the cross where He died. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus and His death were not accidental.

God takes the initiative. It's a reflection of what God is like. He must go to Jerusalem.

It became Him, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. Now, the practical implications of this particular thought touch every one of us here tonight. For as the Lord Jesus turned and walked back down that mountain, He walked down in the company of John and Peter and of James.

They walked down with Him in fellowship, back down into the valley. The Lord Jesus alone would do that great work of salvation, but those three men and their fellow disciples, and then all of us who know and love the Lord Jesus, are caught up in the great mission of reaching out today with the good news of salvation to those that surround us. I'd like to take you just for a moment to Luke's Gospel, chapter 6. And as we read these verses from the Sermon on the Mount, may the Lord speak to each one of our hearts this evening.

Luke's Gospel, chapter 6, and verse 27, But I say unto you which hear, I'm reading Luke's Gospel, chapter 6, verse 27, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. Then down to verse 35, But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great, and ye shall be called the children of the highest.

For he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Now, in no way does the Lord Jesus teach that we become children of the highest through what we do.

The very opposite is the force of this teaching. That because of what we are, through repentance and confidence in the Lord Jesus, there must be an expression in our lives that we are the children of the highest. And our God is a merciful God.

He reaches out to touch those in need. You remember the prodigal son in the far-off province? When he turns and makes his way home, when he is still a long way off, the father sees him, he stands, and then he

runs down the road to meet him, reaching out to welcome back the prodigal son. You remember the story of the Good Samaritan, the priest, and the Levite, the religious, ecclesiastical people of that day? They walked right by the man in his tremendous need, almost dead.

And then along comes a Samaritan, and there were no dealings between the Samaritans and the Jews. They were actually enemies. They thought of each other as dogs.

And along comes a Samaritan who sees the Jew almost dead in the road, and he stops. And he gets off his animals, and he picks him up, and he binds up his wounds, and he takes him to a safe place, and he pays for his expenses, and he promises to come back again to see how he is. Now, the story is told with this implication that not all those that say, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of God.

Not all of those that have a religious appearance will enter into the kingdom of God. Here is a Samaritan outside the recognized fold, but a man who has been touched by God. And in his life, he shows forth the mercy of God, for he takes time to deal with one who, in the language of this particular verse, is unthankful, a recognized enemy.

But he cares for him, and he loves him. And in that way, he expresses that he is the Son of the Highest. The Lord Jesus says with emphasis, "...be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is mercy." Mercy which reaches out in love, in strong, steadfast love, to help those that are in need.

The great lesson, then, of the Lord Jesus, as He returns from that peak of glory, to walk back down into our world, to go to that cross in order to suffer and die for us, has the practical implications that if we belong to Him, if we are children of the Highest, we must be merciful as our Father in Heaven is merciful. And know what it is to reach out and to touch and to help even those that are our enemies, even those that are unthankful, even those that are evil. For in the love of God that flows out through Calvary through the whole world, there is no discrimination.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Now, coming down that mountainside and into the valley, it would appear from Mark's gospel, and we won't look tonight at that particular chapter, but chapter 9, where you have the parallel portion to this one we have read, that people are startled when they see the Lord Jesus. It would appear to some of us that perhaps like Moses, when the Lord Jesus came down from the mountain, there still could be seen on His person an expression of that glory when He was honored and glorified by the Father.

There is a difference, that unlike the case of Moses in the book of Exodus, the people were afraid. They were afraid to draw near to Moses. The very opposite is true in this particular story.

When they saw the Lord Jesus, though they were startled, they ran towards the multitude of people, the scribes and the disciples. And in their midst there was a Father whose Son was possessed of a demon. And as they come from that great glory of the mountaintop down into the valley, you find the great reason why we must savor or understand the things that be of God.

The reason why the Lord Jesus must go to Calvary. The reason why those that belong to Him must learn to deny themselves and take up the cross and follow Him. It's all summed up in a tragic, vivid, object lesson of a desperate Father who has a Son possessed of evil spirits, who brought Him to the disciples.

And surely one of the most tragic lines in the whole Bible is found in that verse where the Father said, I brought Him to thy disciples, and they could not cure Him. As you think of the boy tonight, I've jotted down from the three Synoptic Gospels a summary of what they say about this boy. And I would like to read it to you.

Matthew calls him a lunatic. Mark says he had a dumb spirit, a foul spirit. Luke says a spirit taketh him.

And as to the symptoms, Matthew says he was sore vexed, oft times falleth into the fire and oft into the water. He careth him. He foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away.

Luke adds this thought, he suddenly crieth out, and it careth him, that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. When you put the three descriptions together, you have one of the most tragic pictures in the New Testament. And in Mark's Gospel, it's not mentioned in Matthew, but the Lord Jesus asked the Father, when did this begin to happen? And a further dimension of tragedy is added, for the Father says, since he was a child, a young, innocent child, under the awful influence of demon possession, growing up with parents who were helpless, with a society that was helpless.

Nothing they could do, and in desperation, they finally bring him to the Lord. I think it is absolutely unnecessary tonight, to try and draw from contemporary illustrations, how vividly this boy describes the world in which we live today. You know, statistics don't really move us.

I remember reading many long years ago, that when one of the missionaries from China was coming to the United States to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, he was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States.

He was told that he was going to be a missionary in the United States. He was told that he was going to be a the Lord Jesus that brings into our lives that compulsion to reach out. For as He dwells in us in the power of the Spirit of God, it is not that we reach out, but that He reaches out through us.

Reading separately a biography of Mary Schleser, the great lady missionary in the pioneer years of missionary work in China, said something almost identical to what Hudson Taylor said, statistics don't really move us. It must be the Spirit of God that will move us to reach out and touch those that are in need. This young man, in the presence of his father, undoubtedly has great symbolical significance.

For from the glory, the Lord Jesus walks down and his first encounter is with this child, representative of our whole human race and its desperate plight. And that's why the Lord Jesus was going to Calvary. And that's why He emphasized that we must understand the things that be of God.

Bishop Hall, many years ago, wrote these words about this young land, and I quote them to you tonight. Out of hell there could not be greater misery. Now, we who are Christians, we know something of the spiritual misery of the world we live in today.

If we don't know very much about the material and social misery of our world, then we should listen to some of the leaders of our world, even the non-Christian leaders, who sometimes are more aware of the tragedies of our human situation than those of us who are Christians. But we have the great opportunity, unique to the Christian, of being merciful as our Father in Heaven is merciful in seeking to bless and to help spiritually and materially those that surround us. Again, in Matthew 18, chapter 17, we have reference to the lament of the Lord Jesus as He looked at this father and at this boy, and as He looked at the disciples and the scribes, it's interesting to notice that as they could not cure this boy, you find the scribes and the disciples in a dialogue, no doubt talking about what could be done and why they had not been able to cure him.

When you remember, and you need not turn to this, that in Mark 6, the Lord Jesus sent out the disciples two by two and gave them power over unclean spirits. Then in verse 13 of that chapter, And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. But here in this particular case, they find themselves helpless.

The Lord Jesus, as He hears the story, He turns, and this is His lament. As He thinks, and I suggest to you tonight, He's not speaking of the scribes, and He's not speaking of the people that were there, and He's certainly not speaking of the father who perhaps had more faith than anyone else in that company. But He speaks, I think, of the disciples.

And in verse 17, Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to Me. Now if the words seem hard, and if we react against them, the word faceless. Remember that farther down the chapter, when the disciples come into the presence of the Lord Jesus alone, and they say, Lord, why couldn't we cast him out? The Lord Jesus answered very clearly, because of your unbelief.

One version has, because of your little faith. And the word perverse simply means twisted. That was what was wrong with Peter.

He had savored, he had understood the things that be of men, but not the things that be of God. His outlook was twisted. The Lord Jesus says, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to Me.

And Jesus rebuked the devil, and He departed out of him, and the child was cured from that very hour. The joy can only be imagined tonight in the heart of that father, as his son is restored to him sound and

mind, freed from demonic influences, to go back home as a normal, healthy, natural son. It's something you can imagine in your own heart tonight.

But the disciples are perplexed. This word faithless, or because of your unbelief. Let me share with you that the Lord Jesus had sent them out previously two by two.

He gave them power to cast out demons. We have noticed that in the record of Mark 6, that they cast out many devils. Now here they come to this particular case, and they could not do it.

They're astonished. They anticipated they could cast the demon out. But in the presence of this particular case, they could not do it.

So they come to the Lord Jesus, and they say, Why? And the Lord Jesus answers, verse 20, because of your unbelief. And then down in verse 21, and as I read it to you tonight, I am aware that this verse does not appear in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts of the Scriptures. But it reads as follows, Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

The verse does appear in Mark's gospel, but in the best manuscripts, the word fasting is omitted. The whole issue seems to be an issue of faith, of confidence in God. It's not that the disciples were in a right and proper spiritual attitude, but they had come to a particular case that was different from all other cases.

Rather, it would seem to be that they had begun to take for granted their participation in the service of God. That things were being done automatically, without that day-by-day dependence upon God. Let me share an illustration with you from the writings of Rosalind Rinker, with a Dominican colleague.

We have just finished translating to the Spanish language her latest book called *Within the Circle*, a very interesting book, an autobiography of her spiritual development, which covers many years as a missionary in China. In that book, she does tell the story of a little Christian Chinese woman who lived in the neighborhood of that great city, Shanghai. This, of course, many long years ago.

One day this little woman found it necessary to go into the city of Shanghai, into one of the great department stores to make a purchase. She was known as a woman who day-by-day, moment-by-moment, lived with that confidence, that faith in God, looking for the direction of the Lord in each step of her life. And when she came to the department store and went through one of the main entrances, she moved to one side and she paused for a moment.

And she asked the Lord for direction, because there were two ways she could go to her destination, which was on the second story. She could take one of the elevators, or she could walk up the stairs. And she asked the Lord for guidance.

And the conviction was she was to walk up the stairs. So she walked to the staircase and opened the door and began to walk the narrow stairs and halfway up. She came across a fellow Chinese woman seated on the steps, weeping her heart out.

And she sat down beside her and put her arm around her shoulder and waited for a few moments. And then she began to talk with her. And as often happened in Chinese families, it happened in all families, but they have their unique and special way.

There had been a family argument, a family fight. And as often happened, it had gone on for days and days and weeks and weeks. There was no physical violence.

It was a verbal struggle. The opposing members of the family giving speeches, yelling and talking against each other. The neighbors would come in and sit for hours listening to it.

The man or the woman that would win would be the person who could most eloquently outtalk the other and give the greatest insults. And this poor Chinese woman had borne it for days and days. And she was desperate.

And she left her children and her home. And the only place of quietness she could find was in that staircase, in that great place. And as the Chinese Christian woman sat with her, she said, Would you like me to take you back home? And the two of them walked out of the store and back home.

And the Christian woman washed the children. They hadn't been washed for days. She dressed them.

She made a meal for the whole family. And while she was doing it all, she was talking about God and about His Son and about His love. And the neighbors would come for days to listen to the fight.

They now came to listen for the new song about God and His love. Rosslyn Rinker, who tells the story, makes a most honest observation. For she says, If I had gone into that store that day, I would have gone directly to the elevator and straight up to the second store to make my purchase.

And then I would have gone home. Never for a moment thinking of that dependence that all of us should experience day by day, that need for confidence, for faith, for looking to God for His direction in our lives. I suggest tonight that probably the problem in the chapter that we are dealing with is that the disciples were now taking for granted, perhaps in their own minds, they were doing efficiently the service of God.

But there was not that dependence, that faith, that trust in God. And they were brought up short, for on this occasion they could not cast out that spirit. The lesson for all of us this evening is that in our service for God, to understand, to savor the things that be of God, involves self-denial, the willingness to sacrifice, if necessary, above all that close following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, coupled with that confidence, that trust, that looking to Him day by day for direction and blessing in our service.

And the reason, the urgent reason for this is the child who is possessed by demons. Mr. Willie has shared with us in these days a number of bestsellers in the evangelical world, and not a few of them have dealt with the satanic influence in our contemporary world. Paul uses a startling phrase two thousand years ago, talking of the evil one and calling him the God of this world.

Our world, then, in which we live, under the influence, subtle or open, of the evil one, is the place where we find ourselves. And in order to serve the Lord Jesus, we need that dependence on Him day by day. Now, you may have noticed, as they came down from the mount, that the Lord Jesus said to them, Now don't you tell anyone what you've seen, until after the resurrection.

I quickly pass over that prohibition tonight. It would simply seem to indicate that the Lord Jesus knew their limitation, how little they were grasping at that time, and that they would never fully understand the transfiguration until after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, which, of course, was true. For as we've quoted from the writings of Peter, he speaks about being a witness of the majestic glory of the Lord Jesus when He was honored and glorified by the Father.

But the third prohibition is found in Matthew 17. It's not mentioned, excuse me, in this chapter. It is mentioned in the parallel chapter in Mark 8. You need not turn to it tonight, but the Lord Jesus says to them that not to go on and speak about these things.

The reason seems to be that He wanted to be alone with the disciples in order to give them further teaching about the mission of the Messiah. And though you need not turn to it, I would like to read to you from this portion of the Scripture this evening. The Lord Jesus has already come down from the mountain.

He's already seen the Son. He's already cured Him. And now He's on His way with the disciples.

And we find in Mark 9 and down in verse 28 that the Lord Jesus, with the disciples, they ask Him, why could we not cast Him out? And He said unto them, this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer. Verse 30, And they departed hence and passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it. For He taught the disciples, and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him.

And after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day. Now this completes the circle. We've come back to where we started this morning.

In chapter 16 of Matthew's Gospel, He began from that time forth to tell them about what He must do. Now after all that has happened in those two chapters, He takes the disciples aside. He doesn't want any following, for He wants to teach His disciples.

And this time He adds a further thumb. And it is this, that there will be betrayal. That the Son of Man will be betrayed, is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him.

And after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day. Now in Matthew, Matthew writes, The disciples were exceeding sorrowful. In Mark's Gospel, Mark writes, But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask it.

Now that seems a very strange phrase. I'm not aware in the Gospels of anything that indicates that the Lord Jesus was of such a nature that the disciples were afraid of Him. The very opposite is true.

He was a person of compassion, of understanding, of patience. It makes you wonder in this verse, verse 32 of Mark 9, if the disciples were rather afraid of themselves, and afraid that their own notions about the Messiah might be destroyed if they were to ask any more questions. They are exceeding sorrowful.

They don't understand the saint. That doesn't mean that they couldn't understand Him. All of you know that there are things that come into our lives that we don't want to understand.

Because if we fully understand them, they are going to shatter some of our preconceived ideas. Now these men had their ideas about the kingdom of God, about the Messiah, about the political kingdom. They had their ideas.

The more the Lord Jesus talked about the Messiah, about His mission, and about what they would have to do, there was that feeling deep within them that their own notions were wrong. And this verse says, they were afraid to ask Him. And the conversation stopped.

We know as we go through the Gospels that they never fully understood until after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But then they gloriously grasped the whole meaning. And as I mentioned to you this morning,

they went out into the world and boldly they declared the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

They denied themselves. They suffered. You only have to read in connection with the Apostle Paul, one born out of Jew season, but a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, what he suffered in the cause of the gospel.

But going back to Peter, let me read to you from 1 Peter chapter 4. There is almost a note of humor in this verse if you remember Matthew chapter 16 and chapter 17. But now in 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 13, this same man who has grasped what it means to savor, to understand the things that be of God. He writes as follows, But rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's suffering.

There is no rebuke now. There is no trying to turn aside the Lord Jesus or turn aside the disciples. Rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

It took Peter a long time to learn that lesson, but now in his old age, as he looks back, remembering the transfiguration, the resurrection, the reception of the Lord Jesus in glory up into heaven, he is absolutely convinced that to understand the things of God means now self-denial. Dedication to the cause of the Lord Jesus and close fellowship with him. And if it means suffering, Peter says, rejoice that you can suffer.

Participate in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, for the day is coming when we will see his glory and we will rejoice with great joy. Many of you in your own world today may be able to think of something that in our own world symbolizes the boy that Peter, James, and John and the other disciples found at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration. I would like, in closing, just to leave with you one very recent incident in my own life.

Just of half an hour, it brought back into focus once again all of the tragedy and the sorrow of our world. I left for Park of the Palms early Wednesday morning. Late Tuesday afternoon, I left my office in downtown Santo Domingo for the last time.

I walked down the flight of stairs to the main street with my daughter, Grace Lynn, who is my secretary. And as we walked out onto the street, right underneath our office is a barber shop. And there is a man there who has cut my hair now for many years.

And as I walked by, I found him seated outside of the barber shop on a little step right on the sidewalk. And as soon as I saw him, I knew that something was wrong. He's a rather tall man, well built.

I knew he'd been sick recently. And as I looked at him, you could almost see, as we sometimes say on his face, the look of death. I had an appointment in half an hour, which to me, in view of my leaving the Dominican Republic, was very important.

But there was no way I could pass that man. And though I was dressed as I'm dressed tonight, I sat down beside him on the sidewalk, the two of us. And I put my arm around him.

His name is Emilio. And he looked at me, and in a voice that was faint because of his sickness, he said to me in Spanish, La muerte me está persiguiendo. Death is right behind me.

I knew it just wasn't a physical problem. I knew that in his life there were great spiritual problems. There was a broken home.

There were children he could no longer control. There was another woman that had come into his life. And now there was sickness that compounded the whole problem.

And as I sat with him for over half an hour and talked with him and looked at him, I'm sure you've had experiences like that. I felt that I was looking right into the face of the whole human race, frustrated, perplexed, broken, and without any orientation or sense of hope. We talked for a long time.

I wonder, and it's not left my mind for almost a moment since I've counted me with you, I've wondered whether he is now in eternity or still alive in Santo Domingo. But when I stood up finally, having helped him both spiritually and materially, and I mention it only in recognition of the grace of God, I remembered again this particular portion, that the challenge before all of us is that we must favor the things that be of God and not the things that be of men. You may sit there tonight knowing Malcolm Muggeridge addressed the Congress on Evangelization in Switzerland just a few weeks ago.

He said, Now, my life is almost over. Maybe some of you feel that way tonight, but in our audience tonight there are prayer warriors who pray for the young people of our Christian community, who remember every day the missionaries who spread around the world, who pray regularly for Christian congregations. May God burden your heart tonight that we will pray together for ourselves and our colleagues that we will not be an offense in the way of the Lord Jesus, but rather through His grace that we will savor the things that be of God.

In summary, deny yourself. Now, that's Gethsemane, where the Lord Jesus said, Not my will, but thine be done. And to take up the cross, well, for the Lord Jesus it meant thousands.

For each one of us tonight, only God knows in what way in our service for God we can express sacrifice that will be for His glory. And then follow me, that close, intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus, that day-by-day dependence upon God that He will lead us and use us in the furtherance of His kingdom. Take with me now our hymn books and let's sing as we close tonight another hymn that I've discovered this evening in your hymn book.

Hymn number 590. It reads as follows, the title, We Face the Task Unfinished. And the last verse reads, O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired, Savior whose love constrained them to toil with seal untired.

From cowardice defend us, from lethargy awake, forth on thine errand send us to labor for thy sake. Hymn number 590. We shall remain seated and I suggest that we sing the first and the last two verses of this hymn.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9993.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-r-cochrane/week-of-meetings-1974-04-savoring-things-of-god/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**