

# Lord, What Shall I Do?

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon encourages believers to seek God's guidance by asking, 'What shall I do?' in their Christian journey.*

**Duration:** 13:40

**Scripture:** Acts 9:1

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing one's personal testimony of how Christ has transformed their life. He references the apostle Paul, who consistently shared his conversion story whenever he had the opportunity. The speaker encourages the audience to not try to be like famous evangelists, but rather to simply share their own experiences with Christ. He also shares his own personal testimony of how God broke him down and continues to guide him in his daily life. The sermon concludes with a call to surrender to God's will and a prayer for guidance in fulfilling His purposes.

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## Transcript

So here's the one sentence that is the missing sentence in most people's Christianity, and it's just one sentence, and it tells everything. Whenever Paul got arrested or had a hearing, he would almost always tell his story about his conversion. And his actual conversion is told in the earlier chapters of the book of Acts, in chapter 9, and then he retells the story in a couple other places in the book, because that's, and it reminds us that that's a good way to talk to people.

Don't try to be Dr. Billy Graham, just tell him your testimony. Tell him what Christ did in your life. Tell him how you got converted.

Donna, tell him you were up on the top of the building, ready to jump off and commit suicide. She was outside on a ledge, ready to take her life, and the cops let me up to try to talk her off the ledge. You've heard me repeat this, but for those of you who don't know, and the cops couldn't talk her off the ledge, and they warned me not to try to be brave, because they said she'll grab you and pull you out with her.

I went up and talked to her, and the minute they were in the other facility, other building, and I said to her, what's your name? Donna. I said, Donna, you've got to come off. Don't come near me.

Don't come near me or I'll jump. She was out of the window, ready to go down, die. I said, I'm a minister.

I pastored the Brooklyn Tabernacle next door here, because she had gone to see her therapist. Obviously, the therapist did not do a good job, because that lady was ready to jump. And she said, oh, you're from that church? That's the only place where people love me.

That's the only place where people love me. That's what got me access to talk to her. Right? And now, she has a testimony.

You have a testimony. Hers is different. Okay? She was out there, and very disturbed in her mind, in trouble.

And now, she's sitting here in a Tuesday night prayer meeting. Here was Paul's story. Listen.

Here was Paul's story. This is, he speaks to the crowd. They're about to kill him in Jerusalem.

And he speaks to the crowd. Then Paul said, I'm a Jew. When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, or Hebrew, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said, I'm a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but was brought up in this city, Jerusalem, under Gamaliel. I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers, the Jewish tradition, and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today, the ones who are trying to kill him. I persecuted the followers of this way.

I was trying to kill Christians, and he did kill Christians, to the death, he says in another place. I was persecuted the followers of this way to their death, arresting both men and women, and throwing them into prison. This is his testimony.

I was persecuting the church. You're after me, and you want to kill me, but I'm telling you, I was as much as one of you, as you could imagine, I was persecuting the people who were called Christians, throwing them in prison, as also the high priest and the council can testify. In other words, this is not bogus.

You can check on it. I was out there. I was mean, hate-filled.

I even obtained letters from them in Jerusalem, the leaders, to their brothers in Damascus, the Jewish leaders in Damascus. That's Syria. And I went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

So I'm on my way to Damascus in Syria to get the believers in Jesus, the Jewish believers there, so I can haul them back to Jerusalem and hassle them, and maybe get them killed, and stripped away from their family. What a nasty guy. About noon, as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.

I fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Now Saul wasn't persecuting Jesus. He was persecuting the church. But Jesus so relates to the local church, like a pastor said, that when you persecute a Christian, you're persecuting Jesus.

Jesus can't be persecuted. He's in heaven. But he said to Saul, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? In other words, when you attack my people, when you persecute my people, I'm the head, they're the body.

We're the body of Christ. Jesus can't do anything on earth except through his body. If the body is weak, then the work of the Lord goes backwards, even though Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Because his body has to carry out the work. That's just the way he made it. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Who are you, Lord? He hears this voice.

He's knocked off his mount. This bright light, brighter than the noonday sun, shines at him, blinds him. Who are you, Lord? I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.

My companions, Paul said, saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. So they were knocked down. They saw the light, but only Paul, Saul of Tarsus could hear the voice.

Now, remember now, he's not an apostle. He hasn't written any of the New Testament. He hasn't been to any Bible school.

He's just a guy persecuting the church. And Jesus reveals himself in a tremendously dramatic way to him. And now listen, they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

And then Paul says this, what shall I do, Lord? All right, he gets it. This is Jesus. This is the Son of God.

He gets it. The one, the Christians he's persecuting are serving the true God. Because this God has just revealed himself and knocked him off his mount.

And he's blind. And the light is brighter than the noonday sun. He gets it now.

He's wrong. He gets it. Jesus is the Son of God.

He heard those messages. He knew what they were preaching because he was persecuting them. He was learned in the book of the law.

He knew about the promises of the Messiah. But he said, Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah. That's bogus.

And now he realizes he's bogus. Jesus is the Messiah. And now he says the natural thing.

What shall I do? See, that's the missing sentence. A lot of us say, I believe and I must start going to church. But very few people say, what shall I do? Obviously, you got a plan for my life.

So what shall I do? And the Lord said to him, get up, the Lord said, and go into Damascus. That's where he was heading. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.

End of story. That's the missing part. Maybe they have it more in Ethiopia than they have it in America.

Because it seems like when these congregants get saved, they're saying, Lord, what shall we do? Where do you want me to go? What do you want me to say? Yeah, I have a job. I have a family. That you'll take care of.

I know. But what did you save me for? What's my assignment? And the Lord said to him, you want to know what to do? Go into Damascus. Because anyone who wants to know what to do, the Lord will tell you what to do.

If we surrender our will to the Lord and say, Lord, what shall I do? The Lord's going to reveal himself to us and say, what shall I do? Obviously, this man, Pastor Ray and Linda were, Lord, what shall I do? And they put Ethiopia on his heart. Not everyone, you know, Billy Graham got a different assignment. They're not

greater than Billy Graham.

Billy Graham's not greater than them. Nobody's great. Jesus is great.

All we're supposed to do is say, what shall I do? If he's Lord, the Lord gives orders to servants. How many want to be servants of Jesus Christ? So that's the question, Lord, what shall I do? And then the Lord answers him. This is not told in the conversion story.

Go into Damascus, and it will be told to you. You'll get further instructions. I'm not answering you now.

You just wait and listen, and I'll tell you what to do. And through the rest of his life, Paul was always not knowing what to do. That's why it's so silly when ministers get all these plans and formulas of what they're going to do for the next 10 years.

I mean, I guess God could give it to you, but it's certainly not a biblical pattern. Paul was always just like, Lord, what do I do? Oh, I want to go there, but the Lord is blocking that. I want to go over there.

Oh, the Spirit of Jesus blocks me. Lord, what should I do? Oh, and then a vision comes from Macedonia. Come on over and help us.

And that's how he ends up in Macedonia. And that's how we get all those letters to the Greek churches that he founded. And the Lord will always lead anyone who says, Lord, what shall I do? And maybe you're here tonight, and this is what's missing in your life.

Did you notice how charged this pastor is? Come on. Is the brother hyper or what? The brother is hyper for Ethiopia. Why? Because somewhere along the line, he said, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord said, here's what you do.

And whenever you do what the Lord tells you to do, you get this juice. You get this energy. Christians who are bored have somehow missed, Lord, what shall I do? You're never bored.

Can I just say this for the glory of God? My wife and I have a lot of faults, but somewhere in her life, she has said many times, Lord, what shall I do? I have a lot of faults in me, but I promise you before God, I said to God, what shall I do, God? What shall I do? The only reason I'm standing here is God, in his grace, took someone who wasn't even a strong Christian. He broke me down and brought me to that place. And I still need to do it every day.

Lord, what should I do? I asked him this morning, what should I say to the staff? What should I say when I meet Pastor Ray Noah? Lord, what should I do? Tell me when to be quiet. Tell me when to talk. What should I do? Where should I go? Those of you who know God has his hand on you, but you don't know what to do next, just get up out of your seat and come and stand at this altar.

And for the next 10, 15 minutes, I'll pray with you. Don't anyone else move? I'll dismiss you in another two minutes. But first, I want everyone who says, Pastor, even while that man was talking, I felt stirred.

Because here are people in Ethiopia, obeying the Lord and going out to start churches. And my Christianity is I'm in control. And the Lord better help me when I'm in trouble.

Lord, we say with the apostle, what shall I do? Give us grace to be able to say that to you tonight, Lord. Help us to surrender our lives, our strength, our money, our brains, our bodies, our futures, and say, what

shall I do for you? After all you've done for us, Jesus, the least we can do tonight is say, what shall I do? Go into Damascus and there you will be told all that you have been assigned to do. Speak in a dream tonight.

Speak with speak with a still small voice. Speak tomorrow. Speak through a verse in the Bible.

Speak, speak when and how you want, but God show us what you want us to do. As a church, the pastors, as a congregation, individually, as couples, we surrender ourselves to you. Yes, God move in Ethiopia, but move in New York City.

Move in our lives around the world, Lord. Send us wherever you want. Our father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Let's put our hands together and clap for the Lord Jesus.

Remember now, this is just the beginning. You go home in the morning, you wake him. If he wakes you up, you just, Lord, what will you have me to do? Come on.

Do I get an amen? Lord, what will you have me to do? Say it with me. Lord, what will you have me to do? God, get everyone home safely. Let your face shine upon us.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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