

# Unstoppable

by Jim Cymbala

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving the spirit of Jesus, which makes us unstoppable and enables us to endure hardship like a good soldier.*

**Duration:** 25:37

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 25:3, Matthew 24:13, Acts 14:21-22, Romans 3:23, 1 Corinthians 9:27, Galatians 6:14, 2 Timothy 2:3

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being prepared for spiritual battles by understanding how the enemy works. He compares this to studying film before a sports game to anticipate the opponent's moves. The speaker encourages believers to live boldly and fearlessly, knowing that they will live eternally with Jesus. He also highlights the need for ministers to work hard and not treat the ministry as a retirement plan. The speaker concludes by challenging the congregation to refrain from complaining for a week and to never back down in their faith.

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## Transcript

As I've been saying, vital truth is like a vital organ. Heart, brain, lungs, can't live without it. Can live without a hand, can live without a toe.

You can have a hip replacement. Lose your hip, lose whatever. It's important to know the qualifications of a deacon, but you can grow in Christ without knowing that.

But you should know it by your daily Bible reading. You learn, but then there are vital truths. You cannot grow in God.

You're not gonna make it. You're not gonna be a blessing unless you understand these vital truths. I wanna read to you from 2 Corinthians 11, where Paul is defending himself against these false apostles who have come in after he was in the city, the Greek city of Corinth, which is in the southern part of Greece.

And he was there for 18 months, a year and a half. When he left, already then there were con artists and false teachers and fake apostles and people taking advantage of Christians who didn't know better. That's always been.

And that's another vital message. Maybe next Sunday I can talk about that. When ministers of the gospel are really masquerading as gospel ministers, but they're really messengers of Satan.

How do you know that? How can you decipher that? That's a vital truth. I gotta get that to you. Otherwise you could be hoodwinked.

Anyway, they went in after Paul was there. He left to do further ministry and they destroyed the work that he had done. They started saying, Paul, he's nothing.

He's chump change compared to what we have to offer you and all of that. And they robbed him of money. That's always a sign of a false prophet.

They're always talking about money and getting it from you. That's always the case. Paul now has to write back in the second letter, we call second Corinthians.

He's writing back to defend himself because he's saying, look, I might not be eloquent. He wasn't an eloquent speaker. I might not be an eloquent, but I had knowledge.

And he's reviewing with them. When I was with you, didn't you see the way I acted? And now these crazy people come and you buy into this. Very hurtful when you see people you poured your life into get hoodwinked by scoundrels.

And that's exactly what was happening. And as you'll find out maybe in another message, he didn't spare his language. So now let's look as part of his defense.

He defends himself like no minister in America would do. Are they Hebrews? So am I. They were Jews and probably bragging on what tribe they were from. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I'm out of my mind to talk like this.

I am more. I have worked much harder. Ministers are supposed to work hard.

All ministers who don't want to work hard should be washed out of the ministry. It's not a retirement plan. You're supposed to work hard.

How many say amen? Whatever we're supposed to do, we're gonna work hard. I've been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the 40 lashes minus one, i.e. 39.

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was pelted with stones. Three times I was shipwrecked.

I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move. I've been in danger from rivers, in dangers from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, and in danger from false believers.

I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep. That's not easy. I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food.

I've been cold and naked. Beside everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. When you're a true servant of God, a true minister, you're not interested in your bank account, you're interested in the people, how they're doing.

Are they strong in the Lord? Are they still serving Jesus? If not, what's the sense? All the work goes down the drain. He said, on top of that, I live with this pressure of how are all the believers doing where I've been? Then, who is weak and I don't feel weak? Who is led into sin and I don't inwardly burn? Now, this chapter, let me cut to the chase here. This chapter, this section of it is very odd because nobody would defend themselves like this nowadays and be talking about all this suffering.

But it raises this question, how did God permit Paul to go through so much suffering? If you believe some of the stuff that's called the gospel, God's main desire is that you and I live an easy life and have a two-car garage and live the American dream and have the latest cell phone before anybody else gets it. That's the way we're selling Christianity. And that brings in the whole marketing problem because America is based on materialism and selling and success.

That's invaded the church. People are trying to build up numbers, not many times quality Christians. So what they do is they get a message that people will wanna hear rather than the message people need to hear.

They present a Christianity that's not found in the Bible. They pick and choose some verses, mostly from the Old Testament that have nothing to do with us today. Remember, no promise in the Old Testament nor any command in the Old Testament has any application to our lives unless it is found repeated and illustrated in the New Testament.

Otherwise, we should be stoning people that dishonor their mother and father because that's what God said to do. And those 40 lashes minus one that he got was in response to obedience by the Jewish leaders of Deuteronomy 25. Has nothing to do with us.

We don't beat anybody. How did God permit him to go through that? I mean, if I love Vanessa, would I let her go through that? If you love someone, don't you just always make sure it's nice for them? This is the mystery of the gospel. This is what's called suffering for the cross.

Not gonna be found in the Old Testament. Promise in the Old Testament is a bunch of land and a tree to sit under and a house and long life. That is not the promises of the new covenant.

Has nothing to do with that. We have eternal life. We're gonna live forever.

We're not gonna have gold. We're gonna walk on streets of gold. Now we see that not only, as we look at scripture, did God permit that, Jesus and others warned that these things would happen if you're gonna be a real believer.

You're gonna have to beget the spirit of Jesus in you and make you unstoppable because it's not easy being a Christian. Never was a true Christian, never will be. For example, look at this verse found in the book of John.

Jesus said, I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace, shalom. In this world, you will have trouble. What will you have in this world? Trouble.

What will you have in this world? Trouble. Trouble. Jesus said that.

You could say, well, I don't receive that. You can receive anything you want. In this world, you will have trouble.

But take heart, I have overcome the world. I have overcome the world. But then look here, another place in the New Testament, Paul at the end of his life says, in fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

You wanna really be a real Christian, okay? You're gonna face, maybe not like them, maybe not like Paul for sure, but we're all gonna face persecution. Why? Because Satan is the god of this world. That doesn't mean he's the god of the clouds and the dirt.

He's the god of the systems of this world, the media, the education, the culture, the philosophy. I don't care what country you go to. He's the god of this world.

So we live in a hostile environment, different than their hostile environment, but a hostile environment nevertheless. And if you stand for Jesus and really live for him, they are not gonna applaud you. And this is why many hold back, compromise.

This is why preachers take a dive when they're questioned on TV, is Jesus the only way? Is he the only name that you get say, well, no, he's not the only, he's my only way. You might have another way. Well, that's nonsense.

Jesus said, nobody can come but to the Father, but by me. But to say that, obviously you're gonna stir up a hornet's nest of trouble. And that's why Paul is saying, and he endured all of that, because he stood for Jesus Christ.

To stand for Jesus Christ in this environment as a pastor, even as a church. Compromises are being made all the time while I'm speaking. Messages are being preached probably right now that are strictly nonsense.

Why are they being preached? To get away from the stumbling block of the cross, of Jesus, that we're sinners, we need to repent. Don't tell me I'm a sinner. I gotta tell you you're a sinner because that's the message.

But I'm a sinner too, so join the club. But we can repent, we can put our faith in Jesus. People don't wanna hear that.

It doesn't matter what people wanna hear, it's what God told us to say. It's how God wants us to live. Can we just say a summary, amen to all of that? But there's more, Paul says in another place when he's on one of his missionary journeys.

They preach the gospel in that city and want a large number of disciples. Then they return to Lystra, Iconium, by the way, that's one of the places he was stoned, and Antioch, strengthening disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. Quote, we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God, they said.

We must go through many what? Hardships. Okay, so right now in the last 50, 60 years in America, we've been inundated by positive confession, positive thinking, earth-centered, materialism-centered, pseudo, make-believe, fake gospel, so that it's instilled inside of people that if I serve God and I put my trust in him, things are gonna get real good for me. I'll have a bigger car than you because God is on the throne.

Look at my BMW, come on now. The only trouble is people who curse God have 10 BMWs. So how do you now rationalize all of that? God has nothing to do with BMWs.

Just be thankful you have a car to get from point A to point B. How many say amen? Amen. And God gives you more mazel tov, but it's not germane to the question here. Now we realize not only was Paul permitted to go through those things, but in many ways for all of us, the Bible promises us that if you follow Jesus, really follow Jesus, it ain't gonna be a walk in the park.

Pastor Simba, don't say that. How are you gonna make converts? Listen, we're supposed to be captive to the word of God. We can't go past what Jesus said.

If Jesus said it's the way it is, it is the way it is. The Bible says he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. Endure what? Endure some hardship.

Paul says to Timothy, a young minister, endure hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Soldiers have to endure hardship. They have to march when they don't feel like it.

They have to stay awake at their post when they don't feel like it. Endure hardship. America, our culture, has become so soft, so self-indulgent, especially the more recent generations, so self-centered, so involved with shutting the world out and the needs of this world, and just what do I want when I want it? That's all I'm interested in.

I have no morality, no anything. I am my own morality. That has invaded the church so that we become very soft.

Certainly, when you read that, we're troubled when the service is slow on our computer. This dude was getting thrown in prison. It's really, in a way, I'm speaking now by myself, it's shameful what we complain about.

Negative, complaining, bitter Christians who have taken on the role of victim. It's shameful when you read this word of God. Shameful, it's shameful what we talk about, what we complain about.

This is the same guy, I'm gonna go through just three things that he went through. This is the same guy that says at the end of 1 Thessalonians, rejoice always in prisons more than anyone. Five times I received 40 lashes minus one.

Rejoice always, pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances. Why? For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

How did Paul get that? It's not genetic and no one taught him that. You can no more teach someone to be like Paul than you could do brain surgery. The spirit of Jesus made him unstoppable.

The same spirit that led Christ to the cross and he endured it, the nails, the crown of thorns, that spirit can get inside of all of us so we can become unstoppable. That same spirit of Jesus can get inside of every alto and make them unstoppable. No more complaining, no more hiding in the closet, no more worried about what people think, no more worried about rejection, no more worried about what the family will think, no more worried about anything.

All out for Jesus. If I live, I live. Listen, if I die, I die.

I'm gonna die anyway. What's the sense of living a long life if it's a compromised life? What's the sense of living a long life? You're gonna live forever, what's the point? The book says we're gonna live forever. How many are planning to live eternally with Jesus Christ? So I would say that's a long life.

So what does it matter if you live 60 years, 80 years, 90 years, what does it matter? It's the quality of our life, not the longevity. To hang around and be compromised and be complaining in your own little world, little cocoon, when men and women have lived for God and been unstoppable, unstoppable, indomitable. I don't even know what that means, but it sounded right when I just said it.

Come on, give me some props. I'm increasing my vocabulary here. Anyway.

All right, so let's just talk about these three and then I'm done, look. He brags and says, these guys, they're full of hot air. We gotta get to that message about how you know fake ministers because they're everywhere across the landscape.

And remember, they're always mentioning Jesus. So don't say, no, the guy says Jesus. You'll find out that these people were mentioning Jesus, but it was just another Jesus, another gospel and another spirit.

He says, I was in prison more than anyone. Now prisons there were dungeons, dark, filthy, vermin, rats, whatever. You didn't get clothes, you didn't get three squares.

If you didn't have a friend to bring you food and clothing, you rot and die. What do they care? That's the way it was. The prisons that he was in and he bragged about, I was in prison more than all of them.

I mean, who would think like that? Who today, what minister in America to defend themselves? But remember, let me tell you all the persecutions and weakness I showed and how I got beat down. Who would even talk like that because we have another kind of Christianity. We get props by statistics and by I won a book of the year award or something.

In prisons more than anyone, rat infested, chained, can't move, guards sometimes like they had on Peter when Peter was arrested to be slain. He says he was in more of those than anyone else that was preaching there in Corinth. Well, wait a minute.

If you went to prison once, why would you wanna go back again? Just stop preaching the gospel. Just stop mentioning Jesus. I mean, be real.

Who wants to go to prison? Paul wasn't thinking about prison. He was thinking, I gotta finish the race. No, I gotta finish the course.

What God called me to do, I'm gonna do, he would say. I don't care. So throw me in prison.

I'll get out of prison probably and then I'll go preach. I know, but if you do that, they're gonna throw you back in prison. Let it be then.

If God wants me in prison, I'll go to prison. I'll preach in prison. I'll sing in prison.

At midnight, I'll sing. Then he says, I was five times received from the Jews, 40 lashes minus one. This was in the ancient world an extreme punishment and I've done some research on it.

It's not pretty. Forgive the rawness of what I'm about to say. They stripped you naked.

Then they bent you over and tied your hands to a post. They had a whip made up of three strands, two from a donkey, one from something else. The reason you couldn't do more than 40 was most likely you wouldn't survive.

Mixed in with the pieces of the lash were pieces of glass and metal and little stones or whatever they could find to make it gruesome. So that the first third of the lashes were on your upper body, including your face. But when the person took a full swing and it went into the person's back or forearms or face or whatever, then the rest were on the buttocks and your legs.

The sound would be horrific and the metal and the glass would dig into the flesh so that when you pulled it out, the flesh would come and the blood would come out so that anyone who had this would be scarred for life, for life. He had that five times done to him. He probably, I have a whole new picture of him.

He probably was not a pretty person to look at. Scars everywhere and never complaining. He never complained once.

Just show me one time where he ever complained. No, I'm gonna do it for Jesus. I'll take it for Jesus.

I'm gonna stand for Jesus. You won't get me to back down. Oh yeah, you preach like that one more time in a synagogue, we'll beat you another time with 40 lashes minus one.

Do what you have to do because I'm gonna do what I have to do. Don't we need that in our spirits, in our hearts? Think of some of the stuff that holds us back. When I think back over the years in the ministry, the stuff that's discouraged and distracted people, the minutiae that sets people off.

After he got beat once with that, you would think if he was like us, yo, hey, you know what? I thought serving Jesus was great. I'm not down for this. I mean, where's God when you need him? Come on, isn't that the way? Come on, I do counseling for decades.

Everybody's complaining about something. Everyone's a victim. My mother didn't tell me enough, she loved me.

You know what? I feel for you and that is a problem and God has to help you. But come on, don't mention that with that. Please don't say that.

Who of us here has trouble like that? Who's scarred here for life? You remember where Paul says, I think it's in Colossians. He said, don't push me because I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ. That's what he was talking about.

Not nail prints, all the beatings he took. 39 times five, figure it out. 190 something, 195 strokes.

Then he said, I've been beaten a couple times with rods. And the rods were, I mean, talk about diabolical. They would lay a person down and get his arms close like in a straitjacket so he couldn't move.

Just like when they flogged him, his hands were out like that, tied. Pieces of flesh coming out all the time. The rods, they laid you down on your back, but you're tied.

And then they lifted up your feet. So you're making like a right angle almost. And then some big dude would come with a big metal rod and beat you on the bottom of your feet.

Break bones, smash you on the bottom. You know how sensitive the bottom of your feet. And here they're taking full swings at the bottom of his feet.

And he's saying, I did all that for Jesus. But remember, in everything give thanks. And rejoice in the Lord always.

And again, I say unto you, rejoice. As I read this and been meditating on it and praying, I'm ashamed, I'm ashamed of myself that I ever complained about anything. What have you and I gone through compared to that? But what I'm saying to God for you and me this morning is God, give us that same spirit that was in the apostle.

Make us unstoppable. The devil is gonna try to throw something at all of you behind me and in front of me. You make up your mind to serve Jesus, share Christ, stand on your job as light and as salt, the enemy's gonna attack you.

Now you gotta make up your mind. Oh God, give me that spirit that I'm unstoppable. Unstoppable.

I don't tell you these things that it's to be depressing. I tell you these things that because before you play basketball game, before you play football, like they're gonna, NFL is gonna have all these games. Most teams are not gonna be surprised by one thing the other team does because they've been watching film.

This is what the other team does. This is what the Patriots do. This is what the Giants do.

This is what the Steelers do. So that when you get in the game and they do that, you're not like, whoa, I didn't know they could do that. And this is why the Bible gives us this so that we know how the enemy works.

And we know, come on, let's be ready for this. Let's get this on. When I think of how bold I was playing basketball, six, seven, six, eight guys shoving me because I was a point guard and all that.

And it was in me, I'll shove you right back. Meanwhile, I knew they could kill me, but I had to act like I was tough. You know, no, don't you push me.

They'll look down at me like that. I'm not gonna back up. Well, if I was gonna back up playing basketball, why should we back up for Jesus? How many wanna never back up? Put your hands together, come on.

I wanna make a motion. If you're in favor, you can say aye. I make a motion that for the next week, we don't complain about one thing.

All in favor, say aye. Not one thing. I don't wanna hear one complaint.

Choir, if you come near me, don't complain about anything. I wanna hear one, because when I read that, I go, oh God, no, God, please, please. I had a guy came to New York City, a church that really needed a new pastor.

The guy came, was a good preacher. Came, the church voted, let's ask him to come. They told him, we want you to come.

He went home, he called back, and he said, I can't come. Why, what happened? We thought you were coming. No, my wife says there's too much traffic.

There's America for you. Imagine, call of God, where does Jesus want me? No, I don't go by that, too much traffic. Think of some of the reasons people don't go to church, don't serve God.

Some of you, you're not involved in a thing. You could be helping people. You could be running a Bible study.

I don't care, two people do a Bible study like the people in the Negev. Just do something. No, I was, the church split, and they don't appreciate, and there's God, and they don't appreciate.

There's cliques, and just think of what we buy into, the distractions, the silliness. Everybody in the building, lift up one hand high. Everybody in the building, lift up one hand high.

Repeat after me. Dear God. Dear God.

Thank you for your word. Thank you for your word. Make me unstoppable.

Make me unstoppable. In myself. In myself.

I am weak. I am weak. I am selfish.

I am selfish. But through Christ, I can do all things. Make me strong.

Make me bold. No matter what. If people like me, or they don't like me, I'm gonna stand for Jesus.

I'm gonna do God's will. Nothing will stop me, because the spirit of Jesus is inside of me. In the name of Christ.

Amen. Amen. Come on, let's put our hands together.

Come on, loud. Praise the Lord. Everybody stand.

Give somebody a hug, a soldier hug. Come on, everybody.

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