

# Radical Effects of the Resurrection

by John Piper

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of embracing suffering and sacrifice in the Christian life, drawing from the passage in Colossians 1:24 where Paul talks about filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions through personal suffering. The speaker challenges the audience to live a radical life of love and self-denial, highlighting the joy and hope found in the resurrection of Christ. The message calls for a willingness to endure hardships for the sake of sharing the gospel and displaying Christ's love to the world.*

**Scripture:** Colossians 1:24, Matthew 5:11, Philippians 2:30, 1 Corinthians 15:32, Mark 8:34, Luke 21:16, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Hebrews 12:2, James 1:2

**Topics:** "Embracing Suffering", "Radical Love and Sacrifice"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of embracing suffering and sacrifice in the Christian life, drawing from the passage in Colossians 1:24 where Paul talks about filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions through personal suffering. The speaker challenges the audience to live a radical life of love and self-denial, highlighting the joy and hope found in the resurrection of Christ. The message calls for a willingness to endure hardships for the sake of sharing the gospel and displaying Christ's love to the world.

---

## Transcript

I'm going to be reading a passage of Scripture from 1 Corinthians 15, and if you have a Bible, you can read it with me. If you don't, you can just listen carefully. Here we are in the New Testament.

It's Res Week, and it's all about the resurrection, and I want to read one of the most important passages about the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15. We'll start at verse 12 and read through verse 19, and one of these verses in particular is very very powerful to me. Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead, which he did not raise him from, if the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. I'll read that last verse again. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Before I pray, you set the stage in my life at this moment. Yesterday was my day off, and as usual, my wife and I went out for lunch, this time to Old Country Buffet, where only old people go, and I had planned that we should talk about something weighty and something significant relationally that needed to be talked about. I had prayed earnestly that it would go well, and it went very badly, so badly that all through the afternoon, we could scarcely talk to each other, and I just felt like crying all afternoon.

I've never had an afternoon like that. Every phone call, just, I don't want another phone call, and my wife and I always kneel and pray together before we go to bed at night, and we read from a devotional book called Light on the Path, and so we knelt. You can imagine how awful this is, right? This is just, you're hardly talking to each other, now you're going to talk to God, and we knelt beside each other as we always do.

It's a discipline. We'll do it whether we can or not, and I read the short devotional, and then usually the pattern is she prays, and then I close, and she asked, well, are we going to talk? Because you just don't go to bed with this tense, and uh, I told her that I couldn't find words to express what I was feeling, and she said, she just began to pray, and then I, I prayed for help, and then we closed our book, and and called into bed, and went to sleep, and I got up before she did, and left before she got out of bed, and just before I walked to the car, I walked into the room, and she waked up, and I kissed her on the cheek, and I said, it's not your problem, it's my problem, it'll be all right, and I left and came to Texas. So, that's where it is in the Piper household right now, and here's three reasons why I'm telling you that.

Number one, you need to know that when hotshot preachers come to campus, they are imperfect, fallible, emotionally embattled sinners who need a savior every day of their lives. So, beware, young people, of thinking too highly of any man. Number two, second reason why I told you that story, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are precious to me, not because they turn my life into a string of successes, but because they keep me from collapsing under my string of failures.

And the third and last reason that I told you that story was that hundreds of you in this room came to this room frustrated, and discouraged, and disappointed in something that hasn't gone at all the way you'd hoped, fearful that something in the future, tonight or five years from now, confused about theological things maybe, things you're hearing in classes, angry at somebody, full of lust perhaps, and you need to know that I have good news for you, but it's perhaps not the good news you thought it would be. Your final healing is as far away as your resurrection from the dead. However, your invincible joy of hope is as close as the risen Christ.

Let's pray. Father, in that setting of my own imperfections and inability to be the kind of husband I want to be, and this assembly of mainly students, all of them knowing that they're imperfect and aren't the kinds of Christians they want to be, and many of them here are not even Christians at all, and they came to check it out. In this context of human failure, I pray that you would not only exalt yourself, Lord Jesus, as a great Savior, but that you would do a a calling work on this assembly to put us in paths of love that are very costly, so that the world will see we live for joy beyond the grave.

We live a kind of life that can only be explained, that there's something else besides what they're living for. And so come, Holy Spirit, I pray upon this room and do an extraordinary work here. I pray that in a hundred years, the stories will be told of what you unleashed here tonight.

I pray that on the other side of the globe, in Myanmar or China or Indonesia or Australia, the stories would be told before a hundred years from now about what you unleashed here tonight. So come, and exceedingly and abundantly beyond everything that I am able to dream, do a mighty, saving, sanctifying, spreading work here for your great supremacy in all things, for the joy of all peoples. I pray this in your name, Lord Jesus.

Amen. I'm going to mention two of my 20th century heroes before we're done, one of them right now and one of them near the end. My heroes are often people nobody's ever heard of.

A few of you will know the name Richard Wurmbrand. Richard Wurmbrand was a Romanian pastor and was imprisoned and spent over 12 years of his life in prison because of the communists and was tortured in prison and wrote a book, *Tortured for Christ*. And he came to our church once.

He's dead now. And he came to the Twin Cities another time. And I remember both of those times very distinctly.

I felt like I was in the presence of an extraordinary holiness. The one time he spoke to about 12 pastors, that's all. He walked up on the stage, and we were in the first two pews of this little church, and he sat in a chair to speak and took his black shoes off.

He unlaced them and took them off. I didn't understand that, but his wife, who happened to be with him that time, told us later that he was tortured, among other ways, by the way they beat his feet, and it simply felt better for him to speak without his shoes on. He told a story there about whether we would embrace suffering or not.

He posed questions like this. He said, if your wife is pregnant and another brother's wife is pregnant and you could choose, one of them had to be a child profoundly disabled, and you could choose which was yours, which would you choose? A life of faithfulness in the pain of helping a child grow up and deal with a disability or the life of ease? It was a series of questions like that. They were deeply moving to me as a young pastor.

This was about 25 years ago. I went and got some of his books, and I read this story in a book, and this is the one that launches me into the message. He told the story of an Italian Cistercian monk.

Now, the Cistercians are the Catholic order that are devoted to silence. They never talk. They do sing together, but except when they're singing and confessing their sins, the life is total silence and work and meditation.

And the abbot who's allowed to speak was interviewed one time by a television interviewer, and he asked him this question, what if you were to realize at the end of your life that atheism is true, that there is no God? Tell me, what if that were true? And the abbot responded like this in Bernbrandt's story. Holiness, silence, and sacrifice are beautiful in themselves. Even without promise of reward, I still will have used my life well.

Now, I wonder if you're remembering the last verse of our text that I read, which is the diametric opposite of what this abbot said. Paul said, if for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. So, why did Paul not agree with the abbot? Why didn't Paul say, even if Christ isn't raised from the dead, even if there is no God, a life of love and labor and sacrifice is a good life, reward or no reward, life or no life after the grave.

Why didn't he say that? Why did he say, if in this life only we have hoped in Christ, pity us, we're fools? This is a really important question for you and for all of us who are Christians in the wealthy West, especially America, the Disneyland of the world. It seems like in evangelicalism today or just Christianity in general, we are prone to offer Christianity to people and persuade them with the earthly benefits that it will bring them, psychological benefits of peace of mind, relational benefits. Maybe your marriage will go better after 38 years, for goodness sakes, or the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace.

I mean, be a Christian and you'll get your act together. Be a Christian and life will come together. It'll go better for you.

That's generally the way I think we talk, we evangelize. So, what's wrong with the apostle Paul? What's wrong with him? If there is no resurrection, in other words, if this is it, this is it, we're fools. What are we doing? Living like we're living.

We are of all men most to be pitied. So, what is wrong with Paul? Why does he say things like that? It's not a good sell for Christianity. His answer, I believe, is that for Paul, for the apostle, following in steps of his master, the Christian life was a life of freely chosen risk and suffering in the cause of love for other people in great need.

Oh, yes, there was joy, unspeakable joy, but that joy, according to the apostle, was the joy of hope. Remember, he said, rejoice in hope, rejoice in hope. There is something coming.

Jesus said, for the joy that was set before me, or Hebrews said it about him, for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross. And that joy streams back into this world, but it's a joy rooted in hope. So, Paul is saying here that this hope of resurrection and what would come with Christ beyond the resurrection freed him to embrace suffering that he never would have chosen if he did not believe in the resurrection.

The life I have chosen is a fool's life, he said, if there is no resurrection from the dead for me and for those for whom I am suffering. There is a better way than Christianity to maximize your earthly comforts and pleasures. If your goal in life is to maximize the joy and pleasure and comfort and success on this planet, Christianity is not for you, most definitely not for you.

You can find another gospel and there are plenty of them out there to help you on that crusade. That's not what Christianity is designed to do and it won't do it for you. Paul knew this.

Paul knew when he wrote 1 Corinthians 15 that there was a better way to maximize comforts and pleasures on earth than Christianity, than following Jesus. For goodness sakes, he knew that, which is why he said these amazing words, if the dead are not raised, this is chapter 15, verse 32 of 1 Corinthians, if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Now, when he said that, if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, he did not mean let's all become gluttons and drunkards, because gluttons and drunkards in this life are to be pitied just like stupid Christians who have bought into a myth that isn't going to come true.

That's not the way to maximize your pleasures in this world, become a glutton and a drunkard. When he says, if there's no resurrection, let us eat and drink, he means be normal, be middle class, just eat and drink and exercise. There's an article by Lance Armstrong in the American magazine all about his crusade for people who are cancer survivors, me so far, and he said, eat near the farm and exercise every day.

And then he had this little line, the scale never lies. And I looked at the newspaper across the aisle from the man he was reading, obviously written by a woman, and said, the hips never lie. So clearly, people are concerned about health, and Paul said, that's exactly where you should devote your energies if you want to maximize your pleasures on this earth.

Heaven is irrelevant, hell is irrelevant, resurrection is irrelevant, eternity is irrelevant, but the scale, that's relevant, because you got to maximize how long you live here and how fit you are, or you won't enjoy sex quite as long as the other guy can enjoy sex or whatever else you like to do as you get older. There was joy in Paul's life, huge joy, but it was the joy of hope. Paul did not choose to be normal.

What did he choose? What is he talking about when he said, we are of all men most to be pitied if there's no resurrection. What did he do that was so pitiable? He would not have turned down the gifts that were offered to him so often by the churches. Second, he would not have pommelled his body so completely as to keep himself under such total discipline.

Third, he would not have risked his life again and again and again with mobs and oceans and thieves and false brethren. He would not have endured these crummy, backsliding Christians. He would not have gone without food and sleep so often as he did.

He wouldn't have risked imprisonment in city after city after city. He wouldn't have stayed single all his life because it was the loving thing to do. You just can't drag a woman into prison with you in city after city.

That's my calling and therefore I will renounce all sexual pleasure till I die and meet Jesus and experience something 10,000 times better. That's what he meant when he said, we are of all people most to be pitied if there's no resurrection from the dead. So if you want to maximize eating and drinking here, there's another religion that you can follow.

Almost all Americans believe it. We are called to be a remnant here, to live another way and to devote ourselves to another value and another age. So Paul did not see his relationship with Christ as the key to maximizing his comforts and said we are all men of all men most to be pitied.

Now why? Why did he choose that lifestyle? Because he chose it. He could have walked away from the Damascus Road experience because you know what Jesus told him. He said to Ananias who went to open Paul's eyes after he's blinded for three days, he said go tell him how much he must suffer on my account.

So when Ananias shows up and tells Paul what the deal is, you are now called by the living risen Christ and his mission for you is to maximize your suffering for the sake of the extension of his kingdom. Paul could have said no thank you and walked away and he didn't do it. Why? Know that as I turn at this point in the message to the why question, I really am here on a recruitment mission.

I'm not here to entertain you. I'm not here to even just get you believe in the resurrection. I'm here to recruit you into this kind of lifestyle.

It'll look different for all of you but it will be the embrace of risk. It'll be the embrace of suffering. It'll be the embrace of pathways of love that you know will be costly because I know that in America today the only kind of lives that are really going to change people is that kind of lives.

You can grow a church without that gospel way easier, way easier than you can grow a church with that gospel but it isn't a church filled with radical lay your life down go to the nation disciples which is the only kind I'm in kind I'm interested in and I would just love if I could just get maybe a tenth of you as radical as the apostle Paul was. What a difference it would make in the world. So as I asked the question, why do you do this? What's he after? What's driving him? I hope, oh God, let it be that some of you would embrace the same calling.

Why does he embrace this life? I'll read you the verse that gives his answer. It's Colossians 1:24 and it goes like this. Now I rejoice in my sufferings.

That's a very strange statement, isn't it? Rejoice in my sufferings. I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake. He's talking to the church when he says your.

And in my flesh, I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. For the sake of his body, that is the church. Now that's an almost heretical thing to say, isn't it? In my flesh, which is suffering, I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.

What in the world, Paul, do you mean lacking in the afflictions of Christ? Who in the world do you think you are saying that there is anything lacking in the afflictions of Christ? We know from Paul's own writings there was nothing lacking in their atoning worth. The afflictions of Christ was the price that bought our forgiveness of sins. The afflictions of Christ was the place where all the wrath of God was absorbed for all those who would trust in him so that nobody who trusts in Jesus will ever have God wrathful at them anymore.

The afflictions of Christ are the consummation of his earthly obedience so that a perfect righteousness is wrought out for you so that when you trust in him, that righteousness is counted as yours so that when you stand before an all-holy God, he sees perfect righteousness and welcomes you into everlasting joy. There is nothing lacking in the atoning worth of Christ's afflictions, and Paul is the one who taught us that. So what does he mean when he says the reason I have embraced a life of suffering is so that I might fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ? What does he mean? I'll tell you what I think he means, and then I'll give you my argument for why I think that.

I think he means that what is lacking is nothing intrinsic to the sufferings and what they were designed to achieve. What is lacking is a personal, in-the-flesh presentation to those for whom he suffered. It's there.

It's 2,000 years ago. It's on a hill, Golgotha. It lasted several hours and then it ended.

Now, how do these sufferings get to the nations? How do they get across the campus? How do they get into our extended family so that they can do their work there that they were designed to do and which they are so completely sufficient to do? How do they move? How do they get transferred so that they can accomplish something for others and not just for us? And Paul's answer is, the sufferings of Christ, the afflictions of Christ are completed, that is, are transferred and brought to their complete work when in my sufferings they arrive in the life of somebody else. In other words, God designed that the sufferings of his son for all the centuries following would be carried and presented to people in the sufferings of his people. Your sufferings do not sneak up on you as though there were some extrinsic and strange and foreign thing that has nothing to do with God's purpose for the world.

Maybe we've got to read that verse again. Now I rejoice, this is Colossians 1 24, I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake that in my flesh and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. The church is being gathered, the church is being strengthened, the church is being built up, inspired, and sent through the sufferings of its ministers.

And you are its ministers. Any suffering that comes into the life of a believer is designed to bless somebody. Don't waste it, don't waste it.

Now that's my answer. Let me tell you why I think that. We try to ground it in the scriptures.

There's an analogy to Colossians 1 24 in Philippians 2. Just listen carefully, you can look it up later if you want. The situation is this in Philippians chapter 2. The church in Philippi, which is over in northern Greece, wanted to send to the apostle Paul a love gift, probably clothing, books, money, maybe some dried foods, I don't know. Paul is in prison in Rome, this church loves him.

His letter to the Philippians is the sweetest, most tender, affectionate letter in all the New Testament. So you know there's a wonderful relationship here between Paul and the Philippian church. So the Philippian church sends this love gift to Paul in Rome in the hands of Epaphroditus.

Knowing that the journey is dangerous, you carry anything valuable, it's dangerous. Epaphroditus almost died in taking this love gift from the Philippians to Paul. It says that in verse 27, Paul says he was sick to the point of death.

And then he writes back, having received the gift, he writes Philippians back to the church in Philippi, and he says in chapter 2 verse 29 that they should honor people like Epaphroditus. He risked his neck, he got sick, he almost died. Now come the words that are almost identical in the original language, you can even hear it in English, with the text in Colossians 1 24.

Listen to verse 30 of Philippians 2. Because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to fill up what was lacking in your service to me. Same words, fill up what was lacking, not your afflictions this time, but your service to me. So what was lacking in their service to him? Let me read the answer from a commentator from a hundred years ago.

Marvin Vincent gets it exactly right. Listen to what he says. The gift to Paul was a gift of the church as a body.

It was a sacrificial offering of love by Christ on the cross. What was lacking was the church's presentation of this offering in person. This was impossible.

And Paul represents Epaphroditus as supplying this lack by his affectionate and zealous ministry. I think that's exactly what the words of Paul mean in Colossians 1 24, when he says, in my flesh, as I rejoice in my sufferings, I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. What does he mean? The afflictions of Christ were a love gift to the world.

They are there for anybody who will have them, and they will cover anybody's sins, and they will remove the wrath of God from anybody who receives them. And they will establish a righteousness for anybody who embraces them. But people don't know them.

They can't see them. They can't get their hands on them. And God has a solution for that, and it's Colossians 1 24.

I will send you, Paul, and I will show you how much you must suffer as you fill up what is lacking in my afflictions, namely a personal presentation to the world of my afflictions. But now make sure you see this, because it's not simply a personal presentation like tell the gospel. That's essential.

I'm doing it right now with my mouth. That's essential that we open our mouths and tell the old, old story. That's not what Colossians 1 24 is saying, however.

Colossians 1 24 is saying, in my flesh as I suffer, I transfer the sufferings of Christ visibly, tactically into the lives of neighbors, into the lives of nations. They see my suffering as I proclaim to them the suffering of Christ, and they see Christ in me. I got an email last week from Wendy Pittman.

We have a lot of people at our church your age, a lot of them. About 200 of them are in the nurture program, which means they're in a two to five year plan to go to the mission field. They are my kind of people.

We just sent Nathan and Shelly Snodgrass to Central Asia last Saturday night. Little baby Nora in their arms can't tell the people where they're going. It's too dangerous to tell where they're going.

Wendy and her husband are already there, and someone threw a grenade in their backyard last Tuesday or so a week ago. What would you do? They have little children. They don't know if the grenade was intended for them or for the soldiers next door, which complicates matters, and dozens of our people are in situations like that, and I would kiss their feet any day of the week.

I am not worthy to untie their shoes, and that's what he's talking about. Notice it isn't just that he says we are completing the sufferings of Christ by taking them to the world in the form of our own willingness to suffer, but he's doing it with joy. I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.

I don't want any of you to follow in this pathway if you can't do so with joy, because you just make a bad name for Jesus. Grumbling sufferers for Jesus are a contradiction in terms. What marks Christians as the light of the world, and I'm not making this up, I'm getting this from Matthew 5, is joy in suffering.

Do you remember Matthew 5? Let me just give it to you. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men persecute you and revile you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad in that day, for great is your reward in heaven. The resurrection will sustain this joy through anything. You know what comes next? This is a sermon on chapter 5 of Matthew.

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, it's good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. So I would ask you, in that flow of thought, what is the tangy salt and the bright light of the Boiler? And the answer is, rejoice in that day and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

To be happy when all is going well witnesses to nothing but ordinary human life. But to be glad with Paul while suffering, to transfer the afflictions of Christ to some new person or new people group, that's a

miracle. And the world asks, what is the reason for the hope that is in you? Because they can't account for the way you live.

You see, don't you, why I said a little while ago that those of us who live in the West, and believe me, I'm not pointing any fingers at you here. Look at this, I have a coat on and a shirt, trousers, shoes on my feet, socks. I'm staying at the hilt.

I will fly on an airplane tomorrow with a think pad in my lap. I am thoroughly Western and thoroughly endangered. You know, we had a another young missionary couple who emailed me the night before I was to commission them.

They were inviting their unbelieving family to come to the commissioning. We always put our young missionaries before we send them out, put in front of the church, pray for them. And parents get really mad at me.

I had a parent one time say, if my son doesn't come back, I will kill you. So their parents were out there and they said, would you say something to help them understand that it's okay for us to take their grandchildren to this hard place? They were going to Somalia in fact, Darfur. So here's what I said.

I think I remember. This just came to my mind. I presented them.

I didn't know who their parents were out there, but I said, you know, Jesus never said it'll be hard for a missionary kid to get into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus never said it's hard for a person in Darfur to get into the king of heaven. Jesus just said, it's hard for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven.

And so the most dangerous place to raise a kid is America. I don't know whether those parents got any help from that or not, but I do. I have raised four sons.

I'm raising one daughter who's 11 years old right now, and I know what the danger is, and it isn't suffering. The boys, one of my daughters-in-law just had a biopsy on her stomach last week, and that two weeks waiting for the biopsy was the best two weeks of their marriage, I think. I mean, I would say so.

It's when you walk next to eternity that good things happen. Things get real. You're not just playing with Jesus anymore.

He's real or he's a fake. This is a myth or I'm real. So, joy is there because the resurrection is true and real.

So, let me close with a story or two that illustrates what I'm saying. I said I would mention one of my other heroes. The first one was Richard Verbrand, 20th century hero.

My other and other 20th century hero is J. Oswald Sanders, great missionary statesman. I was at Trinity Seminary in Deerfield, Illinois, a few years ago working on a book, and word came that J. Oswald Sanders was going to be in chapel. I was just hiding in an apartment.

I didn't want anybody to know I was there, but when I heard that J. Oswald Sanders was going to speak in chapel at age 89, I knew this might be my last chance to see him. He's gone to be with the Lord now. And so, I snuck in and sat in the back row, and I remember this story that he told.

Here's a little parenthesis of something he told that also made an impact on me. I'm 61. He said he was 89 telling this story.

Old man, walked a long time with Jesus. He said, when I turned 70, I began to write, and I've written a book a year since I was 70. 19 books since he was 70.

That's better than golf, fishing, lollygagging around in some coral reef while you're supposed to look cool tanned at age 70? Really? Oh, give me a break. Put some clothes on and do something significant. So, that's the parenthesis.

Now, here's the point. Here's the story he told. I've got it written here.

Let me just paraphrase it with my own words to understand that when I quote it, I'm making...I've got the exact quote, but I'm going to say it in my own words. An itinerant evangelist in India, very poor, walking from village to village, sharing the gospel. Sometimes received, sometimes spurned.

It's long hours late in the day, and he comes to one more village. He's not sure if he has the energy, but he goes in, and he receives a terrible reception, and they literally drive him out of the village, and he's frightened, and he's exhausted. He lies down under a tree and goes to sleep, and just at dusk, he's startled and wide awake, and he's surrounded by the villagers and the big man in the village.

He thought, oh, what's going to happen? And the big man said, we wanted to come see what you were doing out here, and now that we have seen your blistered and bleeding feet to bring us this news, we would like you to tell us again what you said in the gospel. That's what Oswald Sanders told, and it's a perfect illustration, I think, of Colossians 124. I complete in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.

Now, those blistered and bleeding feet do not add one iota to your salvation. They simply display the value that you put upon Christ and the love that you have for people, and thus, they become a kind of embodiment of Christ's own afflictions, displaying the authenticity of the message so that people are willing to listen. This is relevant at so many levels.

I was heavily engaged in the rescue movement in the cause of pro-life, sanctity of life, anti-abortion back in the late 80s, early 90s, spending nights in jail and getting dragged away from Planned Parenthood, and I would be often the one charged. We would gather people early in the morning before we'd go sit down in front of a clinic, and they would say, okay, say something to inspire us, and I'd have the same message every time. We did it for about two and a half years.

I would say, you know, don't you, that the cameras are going to be there, and only one thing will persuade the American people that we have a cause, silent, quiet, meek, suffering, not feisty, ugly, strident words with the pro-abortion people across the street, and one of the reasons that movement failed is because there were so many wackos in the Christian pro-life movement that could not live out this verse. In my sufferings, I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions, not in my strident words, not in my clever radio talk show get-the-last-word demeanor. There's so much crummy right-wing religious nonsense on the radio that it makes a terrible name for Jesus, and there's not enough Colossians 124, and therefore not enough Christians are saying, if Christ has not been raised from the dead, I have chosen a very foolish lifestyle.

One last story, then I'll be done. You know, Jesus calls us to some absolutely crazy, radical ways of life. They're not the same for everybody, and usually when I get to this point in a message along this line, I will get letters of criticism.

I got one last week after I preached at Southern Seminary to the effect that, so what do you want us to do, live in a cardboard box? No. Jesus said when he watched a widow put her last two coins in the temple offering, he watched her do this, and he commended her and said she gave more than all the wealthy because out of her poverty, she put in all the living that she had. Now, if I preached that and walked away, I would get letters.

So, what are you going to expect her to pay her rent with? Now, you got to understand, Jesus is not into giving you lists and prescriptions. He's into shocking the hell out of you, literally. There's way too much hell, hellish love for money in everybody.

So, Jesus has to shock his disciples and say, that's beautiful, that's beautiful. But to disabuse you of any notion that I or Jesus want you all lockstep in the same way, just remember when the rich young man came and said, what must I do? The bottom line was, give away everything you've got to the poor. Follow me.

When Zacchaeus came down out of the tree and Jesus shows up in his house, he gave away 50 percent of everything that he had, and Jesus said, salvation has come to this house today. I'm not here to give percentages. It's you and God.

I'm here to plead with you to be freed from the American dream and to live the kind of life in the cause of love on the Calvary Road with Jesus, cross on your back, self-denying such that so full of joy you will make the world stand up and notice. That's all I want. Whether it's in a suburb that's wealthy, you have to align yourself with many painful people who don't know what to do with their kids and are brokenhearted, or whether you're going to go to the city where you will live in a cardboard box to identify with the street people of Calcutta.

I can't tell you that, but God can, and I have come to Texas A&M in the hope that there would be a band that would be raised up from this number or others on the campus that couldn't make it here who would say, okay, I don't know what the suffering might be. I don't know what the risks might be. I don't know what the price might be.

I just know that on the other side, there's a resurrection, and there's a Savior who is infinitely valuable, and he will make any sacrifice I make worth it in the end so that I can count everything as rubbish for the surpassing value now and later of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Let's pray together. Oh, Father in heaven, you are a great Savior.

Whom have we in heaven but you, and on earth there is nothing that we desire besides you. Our flesh and our heart may fail, but you are the strength of our heart and our portion forever. Father, I pray for these young people who are here.

Oh my, what a diversity of people are in this room. So many different gifts, so many different levels of unbelief and belief in this room. Would you, Holy Spirit, come and reveal Christ as supremely precious and valuable and worthy of every possible sacrifice that could be made to display your value.

And Lord, don't let us do it as an end in itself. Forbid that anybody would become an ascetic here just because it might be cool to go without. Grant, I pray, that we would love people, love the hardest people, love the distant people, love the people who don't have any access to the gospel, and the only way to get it to them is to risk our lives.

So God, let there be a great awakening at Texas A&M University.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/spaU8NyKKt0.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-piper/radical-effects-of-the-resurrection/>

# *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)**