

Harvesting Eternal Rewards - Part 4

by Josef Tson

Josef Tson discusses the importance of training preachers in Romania and the eternal implications of faithfulness and obedience to God.

Duration: 58:41

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:11, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Corinthians 8:3-4, Galatians 6:6, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Preaching The Word", "Supporting Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of preaching and teaching the word of God. He emphasizes the idea that preachers should focus on feeding and nourishing their congregation, rather than constantly fundraising. The preacher cites two scriptures, Galatians 6:6 and 1 Corinthians 9:11, to support his appeal for support from those who are taught the word. He also shares his experience of training preachers in a country under persecution, where even owning a typewriter requires a police permit. Despite the challenges, the preacher finds joy in knowing that he is pleasing God through his work.

Transcript

He depicted this country where there is a dictator who oppresses everybody, a country that is bankrupt economically, a country which in every respect is to be pitied today. And there was a strange sentence there saying Romania is short of everything but revival. And I shouted hallelujah.

See, everywhere in Europe the evangelicals are very small minorities today. And you have in Romania about half a million very aggressive evangelicals these days. Under persecution, in a country where even a typewriter is banned, you need a police permit to own a typewriter.

Now, in that country we had a vision to train a new generation of preachers. You don't have seminaries, you cannot print books because you cannot own even typewriters, let alone any other printing devices. And we got in touch with a group of missionaries who said we can help you teach in a new way.

It's a seminary in homes. But there is one big snag in all this. You need the books in Romanian language.

That is, all the books that are taught in a seminary, you have to make them in Romanian language and somehow have to put them in the hands of those students. And that was the challenge that came to me. A group of my friends there begged me to get out of the preaching ministry and pastoral ministry and come out and do the books so that they can train a new generation of preachers.

That was what made us accept this exile. It is very painful to be away from your country and not to be allowed to go in your own country. But what a joy for us to know that we have a thousand lay preachers right now who get training through our books.

In this five years and a half, we've made about 40 books. Now, to make one book in 3,000 copies, that is translate, typeset, edit, adapt to the Romanian culture, and then print somewhere in Europe and then deliver it to those students the way only the angels know, costs us about \$20,000 just for one title. We've done already about 40 titles.

My main occupation is to go around this country and beg for money. So that's what I do. I just go from place to place as a beggar and say, would you please help me to do those books.

\$20,000 for one title, that means 3,000 copies of that book, about \$7 per book, to give to those preachers there who want to be preachers if you train them. And you can train them if you send them the books. So as I started this begging, I met an old friend of mine who was many years in America and who knows America better than me.

And he said, Joseph, you are going to start on fundraising. Joseph, don't do it American way. Don't become an American fundraiser.

Joseph, you are a preacher and a teacher. Stay that. Just preach and feed those people.

And let their response be your fundraising. And that is just as a response to the fact you fed them. Let them respond in helping you do the books.

I was so happy to get that because I hate doing fundraising. It's not nice to beg. So I many times forget.

I just say at the end, in five minutes or so, look, I forgot. I have to tell you about these books and about that because I was so immersed in teaching and in preaching and I forgot that I had to do some fundraising. Well, I just have two scriptures for you before we go back to our subject.

First one is in Galatians chapter 6, verse 6. And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. This is one of the scriptures on which I base this appeal. And the other one is in First Corinthians chapter 9, verse 11.

If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? But I love another one. Now I don't go, I think that is in, yeah, that is in Second Corinthians chapter 8. I like this one. That is the most glorious scripture for fundraising.

For I testify, Second Corinthians 8, 3 and 4. For I testify that according to their ability and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord. That's fundraising. But listen, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints.

I shouldn't beg you to give to the Romanian saints. You should beg me for the privilege of participating in the help of the saints. That's the biblical way.

Would you start begging me? Now that is obeying the scripture. Thank you. We just started with the issue of testing.

I showed you what brother Paul says in Romans 5, what brother Peter says in First Peter 1, and what brother James says. Each one of them tells us that after we are saved, we should expect troubles. We should expect God to throw us mercilessly into all sorts of difficulties and problems.

Peter says it's like throwing the gold in a furnace to burn there until it melts. Why? For the testing of your faith. Now, what is the meaning of testing? Let me put it this way, and you see what I mean.

If when we go up there, we'll all have it equal, if there will be no differentiation there, what would be the reason of us being tested down here? You see, this would be absolutely meaningless. Tested? And then everybody will be equal, everybody will have the same. Why were we tested? And some have passed the test, some obviously didn't pass it so well, but there is no difference at the end.

You see my point? But if you take what Jesus said in Luke 16, if you are faithful over a few things, you are faithful over big things also. And if you are not faithful over the things entrusted to you here, you won't be faithful over the things up there either. Then the testing gets meaning.

You are tested for reliability, and the way you pass the test has an eternal consequence, because it determines your position up there. Now, let me make a little bit of Greek language with you. To test in Greek is dokimazo.

Testing is dokime. And this is the word used both by Paul and Peter and James. Now, actually, it's like a quality test.

You see, in every factory in this world, the last phase of the production is testing for quality, quality control. And there is a verdict, a stamp there. In a way or another, every factory has it other way, sticking a number there or whatever is their way of saying it was tested and approved.

Now, in the Greek language, for approved from dokime, that is testing, approved at dokime is dokimos, and the one that is rejected is adokimos. The whole issue is at that testing, what is the verdict that the one who tests you will apply on you? Dokimos or adokimos? Now, let me show you the two vital places where these two words are used. One is in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 24 to 27.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Here is Paul telling us not everybody will be at the top, up there, but you should aim at being at the top. Each one of us should aim to be at the highest possible place.

And everyone who competes in games, exercises self-control in all things, then they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we are imperishable. Therefore, I run in such a way as not without aim. I box in such a way as not beating the air.

I buffet my body and make it my slave. Lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be adokimos, translated cast away in older versions, disqualified in newer versions. Disqualified is actually the better word.

The verdict, the Lord, it's not the issue of salvation. Paul knows that he is saved. There's no discussion about that.

He is certain about that and he can say, that's clarified from now on, that crown of righteousness is mine, but I'll go to the quality control and I might get the verdict adokimos. Disqualified for positions at the top,

positions of ruling, and I don't want to be disqualified. So you had the other one.

He writes to his best disciple, to Timothy, 2nd Timothy, chapter 2, verse 15. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of God. Now, I read it again.

Be diligent to present yourself adokimos to God, translated in American standard, approved of God, tested and approved, tested or and disqualified in the other place. Timothy, you will stand before Christ and there are two possibilities there. Now you are saved, that's why you will be before the Lord.

You won't be before Jesus if you are not saved, but there before Jesus you may be ashamed because you didn't preach faithfully the word of God. You're a preacher and you may be ashamed before Christ. Can you grasp the horror of that position? A preacher who goes before his beloved Savior and Lord and Master and who has the verdict of the Lord, shame to you, shame to you.

Timothy, watch out for that terrible situation. Avoid it. You should aim to have him say approved, tested and found reliable, found unfaithful.

So this is Paul's ambition. We go back to 2nd Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 10. We all have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

But before he says that, in verse 9, he says, my ambition is to please him, because I am going to stand before his judgment seat. My ambition is, when I am at that judgment seat of Christ, to see a pleased judge. Now let me apply this in my own way.

My greatest concern is, is my boss pleased with me? When I was asked to define happiness, this is how I defined it. I was actually in England, I was studying there before I went back to Romania in 1972, and I risked my life in going back there. And they had somebody invite me at that time to come to the riches of America.

And I said, no, the Lord tells me to go there. Now, if I go to America and become rich, and somehow I look up and I see an angry God looking to me and saying, what are you doing in America? I didn't want you there, I wanted you in Romania. With all the riches of America, I would be miserable, because God is displeased with me.

But if I go to Romania and I get stuck in a prison, and from that prison cell I lift my eyes up and I see a smiling God nodding approvingly and saying, well done Joseph, that's where I want you. All my being would be inundated by happiness, because for me happiness is to know that my Father is pleased with me. And I did get in trouble, and I had to go for six months, almost every day, five days per week, to the prison for interrogation.

And in the morning as I was going there, everything in me cringed with horror. I never knew if they would let me come home in the afternoon. But I will always remember some of those afternoons when I came up out the prison at my back, I was on the pavement looking at the sky.

I had a favorite song that ends with that stanza, at the end of the day you will kneel down and say, Father are you pleased with me? He will whisper, son you've got a victory. And on that pavement I would lift my eyes up and that verse would come to my mind, Father are you pleased with me? And I would hear that still small voice, son you've got another victory. And all the happiness in the world was in my heart at that

time.

I knew he was pleased with me. As I travel, as I get tired, and as I do things which I don't like to do, like begging for money, at the end of the day I kneel down and say, are you pleased with me? And my happiness is to know that he says, that's what I wanted you to do that today. That's my job for you now, and you've done it well.

You see, my passion is to please him, says Paul, and that's my passion. And when I fulfill that passion, I am happy. Because the supreme happiness will be when we go up and we meet a happy Lord who says, well done, well done, I love it, I love you have done, I love what I see in you, tested and approved.

And as Peter puts it, the test of your faith will have the result, praise, honor, and glory. You see, the result of this testing here is up there in praise, honor, and glory. So this is the biblical picture of us being tested.

Now, I told you a lot, a lot about this fact that in God's heavenly kingdom there won't be equality. And that immediately stirs a lot of people who have this egalitarian view of the Americans, and it's immediately disturbance. Can that be such a structured society? That doesn't fit with our feeling of justice or something like that.

Well, I have only one concern, to take you through the scriptures. So let's now look at what Jesus teaches us on greatness in the kingdom. Let's see first the text where he speaks about this being great or small in his kingdom.

Matthew 5 19. Whoever then annuls one of the list of these commands, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

This is one. Let's go to chapter 11 and verse 11. Truly I say to you, among those born of women, there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist.

Yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Again, the least in the kingdom of heaven. Degrees of greatness in the kingdom of heaven.

Then we go to Matthew 19, and let's read all that last three verses, or five verses, starting with 27. Then Peter answered and said to him, behold we have left everything and followed you. What then will there be for us? What do we get out of it? It wasn't a nice question, was it? But Jesus said to him, truly I say to you, that you who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or farms, for my name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first. Many who are first here will be last there.

So you will have surprises there, because God has very strange ways of assessing greatness. And then I quoted a lot already, Luke 19, verse 17, 18, and 19, where Jesus tells us that he will say to one, you take authority over ten cities, and you take authority over five cities, and that clearly indicates, even clearer, that there will be degrees of positions in the kingdom of heaven. Well, again and again, all the way through the Gospels, Jesus speaks, and speaks, and speaks, about some all will be great, some will be small there.

Does it surprise you, then you find again and again the disciples debating the issue, who will be the greatest? We are so quick to judge those disciples and say, wasn't that day a strange lot, always quarreling who should be the greatest? Well, wait a minute, it was the master who was speaking about some being greatest, and some being least there. So the disciples came to Jesus, and then said, Lord, will you tell them, explain to us that issue, who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? That is what you find in Matthew 18, verse 1. They really, we came with that to Jesus. Why did they come to Jesus? Because it was Jesus who was teaching it.

Now, there are three or four places where we find them debating it. You know that in none of those places does Jesus rebuke them for wanting to be the greatest. You see, if that was a wrong thing, Jesus would have said, now let's cease with that.

You should never approach that issue with me again. I should never hear you wanting to be the greatest. That's wrong.

No, just the opposite. He takes the question seriously, and he says, let me give you the prescription for greatness. You know, I want you to be the greatest, but you have to know how you will become the greatest.

Because in that kingdom, greatness will be measured by a yardstick that is very strange. So, Jesus gives them the measure of greatness in the kingdom in three places. There are actually three things that he says as prescriptions for greatness.

One is there in Matthew 18, verse 1 to 3. He takes a little child, and he says, the one who humbles himself as this child will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Now, the whole interpretation of that scripture hangs on the interpretation of the word humble. What is to be humble? Oh, you will have so many strange interpretations of that word.

But I always interpret scripture with scripture. So, that scripture is interpreted with Philippians chapter 2, where we are told to get the mind of Christ. And then we are explained what is the mind of Christ.

Although Christ was equal with God, when God demanded him to give up his heavenly glory and get down there, here is what Christ did, verse 8. And being found in the appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. He humbled himself by becoming obedient. He was up there equal with God.

And of his own accord, he said, I subordinate myself. I put myself down there, and I obey. And there will come a point where everything in me will scream, no, not this one.

But I will still say, don't listen to me. Go on, do what you will, not as I will. He humbled himself by becoming obedient, even unto death and the death on the cross, most horrible of all.

Do you want to be the greatest? Jesus says, here is the prescription for greatness. Because I did that. I humbled myself.

I became obedient unto death. Now read verse 9 in Philippians 2. Therefore also God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. That's greatness.

Why that greatness? Well, the verse starts with therefore. He humbled himself by becoming obedient totally, absolutely. Therefore God highly exalted him, giving, putting him above everybody else.

This is the first requirement for greatness in the kingdom of God. Passion for subordination. Passion for obedience to God.

Somebody asked me the question this morning. It was in one of those questions. What about the impure? There in Ephesians 5.5, I only commented on the covetous man who will have no inheritance.

But Paul says the impure and the immoral also. Why don't they have any inheritance? Well, the issue in every sin is disobedience. Every sin is disobedience to God's commands.

And if you go around disobeying God, he looks to you and he says I cannot rely on you because you don't want to obey. You don't want to subordinate yourself. You see, in Jesus there was passion to do the will of God.

My food and my drink is to do his will. My brother and sister is the one who has the same passion to do the will of God. The passion to obey God.

I don't say a word that he doesn't tell me to say. I don't do anything that I don't see him doing. I am here only to do what he expected me to do.

You see, the first step to greatness is total subordination, total obedience. And let me repeat, every sin is an act of disobedience to God. And it's horrible because you say, God, it doesn't matter what you say.

I want that and I'll get it. And he says, fine, but you goof it. Your greatness is gone because you don't want to obey me.

So that's the first condition of greatness. Let's go to the second one. The second one is found in two places.

The first one is Luke 22, starting in verse 22. It's at the Lord's supper. There is also a discussion there again.

The issue comes again. Who is the greatest in the kingdom? And Jesus starts by telling them what is the measure of greatness in this world. He says, look, let's see what the world thinks about greatness.

In this world, the kings are the greatest, aren't they? But even the kings are not equal. How do they measure the greatness of a king? Well, by the number of subjects they have. If you are a king over a million people, you are a king, but not a big one.

But if you are a king over a hundred million people, that's some king. So your measure of greatness is the number of your servants or subjects. Now, in my kingdom is exactly the opposite.

In my kingdom, we measure greatness by the number of people you serve. How many people do you serve? Do you have a passion to serve others? Are you bent on serving? The second place is in Matthew 20, and I like to read the words of Jesus from that place. Matthew 20, verse 25 to 28.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you, he doesn't stop you to wish to

become great. Again, if you want to become great, you shall be, that one should be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave.

Just as me, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Again, we have Jesus as the example. Now, you want to be the greatest.

That's fine. You want to be the first. That's good.

But you know, we measure greatness by the attitude of servanthood, by this your desire to be a slave of everybody. Now, everybody wants to be a leader, and you have in America, I was just told this afternoon by somebody who has done a research in last year, here at the Navigator's headquarters, they identified a hundred and four books on leadership. They put together all the bibliography on leadership, and they found a hundred and four books.

I can hardly wait to get the list. And they knocked down the list, and they identified about 12 that are really good. And I asked this man, I said, what do you find the heart of the teaching of leadership, Christian leadership? And I loved it, because it was exactly what I found too.

This man told me, the heart of leadership is servanthood. That is a good leader who leads by becoming the slave of the others. His concern is their needs.

And you see, the Lord wants me to be the leader in my house, in my family. But that doesn't mean that I am there a sultan who is served by everybody. I am a leader by being attentive to the needs of the others in my family, and being there to serve, to care, to supply their needs.

That's my leadership position. Whoever wants to be first among you has to be the slave. Do you still want to be the first? I beg your pardon? Now that is to be like Jesus.

Because Jesus, when he came down, he asked his father, Father, what do you like to be my position as a man? And the father said to him, Son, you don't expect anybody to serve you. You are not there to be served. You are there to wash their feet and feed them at the table.

And you are there to be killed for them. That's why you are there. Show them what is our way of greatness.

Our kind of greatness is that. We go to the third prescription of greatness in Jesus' teaching. Now this is the funniest story I find in the Bible.

I don't know, is it the funniest or the one that would make me cry? The story is there in Matthew 20. It starts actually in 19, there where Peter asked that question, what are we going to get out of it? And Jesus tells him, you, the twelve, will get twelve thrones. Now, apparently, there were two other disciples overhearing the discussion.

They were brothers. So they went aside, and one of them said, Brother Jimmy, did you hear what the master just said? Yeah, Brother Johnny, just imagine, there will be the big throne of the master. Then six thrones on one side, and six on the other.

Wow, what a great thing will be sitting on those thrones. But Johnny immediately says, but Brother Jimmy, I hate being at the extreme one. That would be to be the last.

I want the one near the big one. And Jimmy says, I would like the other one at the other side. But how can we do that? How can we make the master to give us the best thrones? Oh, says Johnny, Jimmy, Mommy can do that.

You see, Mommy was cooking for the whole party. And let's go to Mommy and tell Mommy about the thrones, and let her go and beg the master to give us the best. Isn't it funny? And there is Mommy coming to the master.

Master, I just heard that there is going to be thrones, six on one side, six on the other. Now I want my two lads have the best of them. What would have you done to be the lord, the master? You would have looked at them and said, this is the ultimate in presumption or in vain glory or not Jesus.

You see, Jesus takes them absolutely seriously with that. And he says, there is one issue to clarify. I don't think that you got the most important fact when I spoke about those thrones, that it involves sacrifice.

Only they who leave everything for me will get that. So will you to be able to drink the cup I am going to drink? And you know that the cup is crucifixion. Will you be able to be crucified as I will be? Yes, master, we will.

And Jesus looks through the events of the future, and he sees James as the first apostle martyr, and he sees John with the longest martyrdom and suffering of all. And he says, you are right. You will drink the cup, so you will have thrones.

Now, which ones will be decided by my father? That's not my prerogative to decide. But didn't I make it clear now for you? There will be no throne without a cross. You got the picture? If you want the thrones, it's good.

I want you to sit on those thrones. I promise them to you. But for that, you have to be crucified as I will be.

And you know what Paul tells Timothy in 2nd Timothy 2.12? If we endure, we shall rule with him or reign with him. Ruling with him comes as a consequence of enduring the cross with him. Romans 8.17 says the same.

Coerce with him if we suffer with him, so that we be glorified with him. It is our suffering with him that produces glory. Look at 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17.

For our momentary affliction works for us an ever-increased weight of glory. Our suffering works our glory. The bigger the sacrifice you make with the Lord, the bigger the position, the greater the throne.

Now, do you still want to be the greatest? Jesus has spoken and has spoken about being the greatest in the kingdom. And here is what he says about greatness. In order to be great, first you have to subordinate and to obey.

You have that heart bent on obeying God if everything in you screams no, and you still go on obeying him. If you have that attitude, you are like Jesus. The second is servanthood.

If you from now on look around and say, what are the needs around me, starting with the needs of my wife or husband, with the needs in my family, in my airline, in my other job, wherever I am, where does my God want me to serve? How many people bless God because you exist? In how many people you invested your life? How many people feel that there is glory for them because you went one day in their life with a

servant attitude? And this is being like Jesus again. And the third one is sacrifice, renouncing at your own interests, putting all your being on the altar and saying, here is me, dispose with me. Self-sacrifice.

If he consumes it or not, that's his business, but you come to him and say, here is me, all of me. Take me, use me. I am sold into total slavery to you.

That is being like Jesus. Therefore, God exalted him because he was submissive, he was servant, and he sacrificed himself for others. Now, you may ask me, Brother Joseph, how can I apply this? Because I live in this affluent America, there is no suffering here, or there is no sacrifice here.

It's easy to speak about that in Romania or in Russia or in China. How can I apply that teaching here? Let me apply it quickly, then let me give you a few scriptures again. I'll start with this.

There are two kinds of suffering. There is a suffering that comes over us uninvited. We don't beg for it.

The issue is how do we take it. That's the only question for us. But you know that there is a suffering that we choose.

There is an invitation to that in the scripture. Did you ever hear a entitled invitation to suffering? I have a sermon with that. I made it about two years ago, preaching in quite a few places since then.

An invitation to suffering. My text is 2 Timothy 1.8. Paul says, join me in suffering for the gospel. Isn't this an invitation? Join me in suffering for the gospel.

Here is what Paul means. Galatians 4.19. Beloved for whom I am in birth pangs until Christ is formed in you. Your church's purpose should be that Christ be formed in every member of the church.

But the question is how many people are in birth pangs for that? There are people who say, until everybody is mature in Christ, I suffer like a woman giving birth. That means I go to my pastor and say, pastor, I don't know how to help others grow in Christ. Would you teach me that? I will give up some of my free time to get training for that.

So tell me where I can find a good school for that. I go in my evenings or free time, weekends, I give up my golf, I give up my TV or whatever is your entertainment because I got birth pangs. Or let me quote another from Paul, 2 Corinthians 1.29. Does anybody fall in sin without me burning? Is anybody weak there without me losing all my power? Question again.

When somebody falls in sin in your church, how many people get on fire? Oh, most start gossiping. But you see, there are people who say, his or her falling in sin is my business and I am in flames until I restore that brother or that sister. Pastor, can you help me, teach me how to restore people who fall in sin? At least I will fast and pray for that.

At least I will go and visit and say, brother, don't think that we forgive you or we forget about you. We forgive you and we want to restore you. And you know, sometimes that statement does the miracle in itself.

Even if it's not on the moment, that person will not forget you. And in a year or two, when they will be restored, they will say, you know, it was that statement you made. That is what started me on the way back.

Now, Paul goes on in 2 Corinthians 12.15 and says, I gladly spend myself and all I have for your souls. Are you ready to spend yourself for others? Do people see that you are ready to sacrifice something for them, at least sacrifice a weekend to go and help them repair their car? That's a servanthood attitude. And they see that and say, what makes you do that? And then you share Christ with them.

You ask the question, why don't people take me seriously? Whenever I want to witness to them, they just brush me aside as non-significant, insignificant. Well, let me share this experience quickly with you. I didn't attract multitudes to my preaching for a few years when I started my ministry.

In the mid-seventies, the Romanian government made a plan how to stop our young people from going to universities. They would identify them in the high schools, tell them if they don't write a statement that they give up going to church, they would tell them you will never get to a university. And the plan was to send their names to every university in the land and fail them at the entry exam.

We found out about that plan, which was meant to be secret. You see, Romania signed international agreements against discrimination in schools, and they wanted to keep that secret. And we found out, and there were six of us who decided to risk our lives for our children.

So we wrote a paper with all that, and we sent it to international institutions that are concerned with human rights. We were arrested because we betrayed the state secret. We were charged with treason.

We were beaten. And we went six weeks through that very harsh treatment with the shadow of death over us. Due to this big, big press for us here, big interventions on our behalf, the Romanian government said, well, it's too detrimental to us.

We cannot put them in prison. Better leave them free and solve that problem. Stop all that action in the schools.

And we were set free, and order went to the schools to stop all that action. And all of a sudden, the whole country found out we got the victory. I went to preach next Sunday, after I got free, to another town.

They couldn't believe my eyes when I saw so many people running to hear me preach. So I asked someone, he said, what happens here? How do you explain this multitude? And that man looked to me and he said, Joseph, let me tell you why I am here tonight. And then you understand everybody.

Joseph, you don't have children in high school. I have two. You could have stayed quiet in your place, but you didn't.

You stuck your neck out for my children. You got a beating for them. And because you got a beating for them, they can go to university.

Well, Joseph, now I'll sit down in that pew and you can preach to me whatever you want. I am there to listen. Never realized before that I had to demonstrate first that I am ready to die for them.

Then they listened to my preaching. I was scared. But I told others afterwards, younger people who are coming after me, gifted ones, and I told them, you know, you have the gift, but you still don't have the weight of authority.

You have to go through a fire. And people have to see that you go through that fire victorious. And when you come out of that fire victorious, then there is weight in your preaching.

But the biggest test is that those people see that you are ready to sacrifice something for them. Beloved for whom I am in birth pangs, do they see that you are in birth pangs for them? I am on fire for you when you fall in sin. I am ready to sacrifice everything I have for you.

Do they see that in you? An attitude of servanthood and self-sacrifice. And when people see that, they listen to your message. And God looks to you and he says, well done.

You are just like my older son. You are just like Jesus Let's bow our heads. Oh Lord, we have seen Jesus.

We have seen Jesus in humility, in subordination, in submission. We've seen Jesus the servant washing the feet of Judas. We've seen Jesus, God made man, nailed on a cross, screaming in pain.

We've seen Jesus and we've seen greatness. Oh Lord, you are calling us to greatness. May we accept that kind of greatness that we see in Jesus.

Give us the grace. Give us the fullness of the Holy Spirit to help us to be like Jesus. Amen.

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