

This Is No Soft Life

by Lee Shipp

This sermon emphasizes the call for faithful men and women to endure the hardships of life in Christ while remaining focused on their commitment to Him.

Duration: 54:34

Scripture: Jeremiah 20:9, Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 2:4-6, 2 Timothy 2:8-9

Topics: "Suffering"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the call of Moses and how God spoke to him. Moses initially hesitated and argued with God, which angered Him. However, it is emphasized that Moses was ordained for this task. The preacher also highlights the importance of not getting entangled with the affairs of this world, as it can hinder our ability to please God. The sermon encourages listeners to remain faithful and seek deliverance from any bondage that may be holding them back.

Transcript

I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to 2 Timothy. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. I thank God for faithful men.

I thank God for faithful men. I'll be honest with you, that's who this message is for today. It's for faithful men.

I trust that every one of you are faithful, but if you're not, I pray this will be a sword in your spirit, and in your heart, so that you will be stirred and moved by God. And if you're faithful, I pray it'll be a balm of encouragement and strength for these last days that we live in. It is a responsibility for us to not cast our pearls before swine, and that we are sure and confident that the things that we give, we give as a treasure to people who will be responsible with it.

And faithful men are definitely needed. We thank God for this, and for the women that are faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to take these things that will be given to them and do with them what Jesus shows them. And so he says in verse 3, thou therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.

The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel, wherein I suffered trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds. But the word of God is not bound, therefore I endure.

And he was calling upon them in verse 3 to endure. So he's not speaking something he's not going through. I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain, not attain, but obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, if we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us.

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. And I want us to look at this, we've seen it so many times before, but he says in verses 3 and 4, thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. That's faithful men.

You're not going to trust anybody to be a soldier who's not faithful. You send them back home. You don't go to war with them.

You send them back home. And so this message that Paul has given to Timothy is to faithful men. And when you find faithful men that you can teach, that will be responsible with what they receive, then endure, as he tells us, hardness.

I want you to understand this life with Jesus Christ in this earth is going to be hard. You've got to understand it. Now there'll be people who try to fool you with this, and people that try to entice you into another brand of Christianity, but it's another brand.

It's not the same thing. Seeker-friendly movements, purpose-driven movements, all of these various things will not deal with the hardness that is in this life as we follow Jesus Christ. But it's a falsehood and it's a lie.

And that's the reason it may not be hard for them. But to walk with Jesus Christ is going to be difficult in this world. And there can be no mistakes about it.

Now, people that are faithful understand that and they understand that we will endure it because we're soldiers of Jesus Christ. We understand that as our soldiers are in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we have family, we have friends, people we pray for that are about to be sent to Iraq, and we begin to pray for them. Why? Because we understand you're not going to a birthday party when you go to Iraq.

You're not going to a party at all. You're going into the face of death, and it's going to be hard. We were praying for a young man that talked about the rations that they had, the difficulties that they had to sleep in, the things that they had to eat, the discomforts that they were in as soldiers of the United States of America.

And it was extremely difficult. But he was a soldier. He knew he was going into difficulty.

He knew he was going into the face of the enemy. And so the Apostle Paul makes it very clear you're a soldier and it's hard. But endure it.

Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to my gospel. Remember that and endure this. And so he tells us in verse 4, No man that warth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

I don't know if you saw this in the news, but we had a commander in our services that was arrested because he had unhealthy relationships with the enemy. And he was fooling around with the enemy, not in a position of war or conflict, but in a position that was betraying the company and the country more appropriately. And he was betraying that.

He was entangling himself with the affairs of that life. And he was not pleasing those that had sent him to fight. And he's been arrested and he's in trouble.

And the Bible says that we as soldiers of Jesus Christ are to live to please one person. And that one person is Jesus Christ. It's not a multitude of people, thank God, that you have to try to please because you'll never do it.

You'll never do it. Part of the hardness of being a soldier for Jesus Christ is not the difficulties that come from without, but the difficulties that come from within. The people who get their toes stepped on, that you minister to, pray with, walk with, sit with.

It was the psalmist that cried out in his song. And it was a prophetic psalm as well, but it happened to the psalmist. But it was a prophetic psalm of Jesus Christ when he just weeps.

And he said, if it were an enemy, I could have handled it. But it was the one that I ate with, the one that I supped with that betrayed me. It was the one we took sweet fellowship together.

It was that one. I'm telling you, there's nothing harder than that. Nothing harder than that.

But faithfulness has to go on. Faithfulness cannot quit. Faithfulness sees preachers fall.

And many people fall away because some leader fell. But faithful men don't fall away. They continue.

They continue and continue because they're faithful. And they're not entangling themselves with this life. And they're living to please Jesus Christ.

Is this too loud? A little bit too loud. If you'd turn that down just a little bit, Jack. I want to thank you for doing it.

Now, in Jeremiah chapter 12, I want you to look at this passage because Jeremiah is talking to the Lord. And Jeremiah has hardness in his life. It's very difficult.

God called him as a boy to be a prophet. He sent him forth as a boy to be a prophet. Nobody listened to him.

Few people, nobody wanted to listen to him. And he was arrested. He was thrown into prisons, suffered at the hands of cruel men.

And a lot of times Jeremiah was confused. And his confusion, he's talking to God. He's laying it out before God.

Because this is the only person that can help me. And I need God to help me. And so he's talking to God about his difficulties.

In verse 1, chapter 12. Righteous art thou, O Lord. I want you to know, God, that's what I think about you.

Because I'm about to say some things that I don't understand. But I want everything to be based upon this foundation. You are faithful and righteous.

You're righteous. And I'm not by any means bringing something against your character. They're just things that I have to talk to you about that I don't understand.

So righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with you. Yet let me talk with you of your judgments. And these are the things that were hard for him.

Wherefore doeth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them. Yes, they have taken root. They grow.

Yes, they bring forth fruit. You're near in their mouth and far from their reins. But thou, O Lord, knowest me.

Thou hast seen me and tried my heart toward thee. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter. And prepare them for the day of slaughter.

These are the people that are giving Jeremiah such a difficult time. And Jeremiah is talking to God. And he says, listen, I'm your prophet.

I didn't ask for this. If you recall, God, when you were talking to me about it in the beginning, I didn't want to do it. I wasn't signing up.

And you refused my no. And you told me that you will not tell me, Jeremiah, what you will and will not do. I created you and ordained you for this.

And God, why is it that the enemies that are against you and against me, why is it they have you on their mouth, but they by no means allow you to rule their life? Why is it that they seem to be the ones that are happy? And they seem to be the ones that are getting along just fine. And God, you know me. You've tried me.

And Lord, it's just so difficult for me. This is hard. He says, why don't you just take them, God, and pick them out of the flock like the sheep would be gone to the slaughter? Why don't you just get rid of them, God? It's kind of like Jeremiah saying to God, listen, Lord, you've raised me up as a prophet.

I'm speaking your word. I'm suffering as a result of it. And most of my suffering is coming from these guys.

I don't understand it. You know, if I were you, I would take these guys and I would just get rid of them. And Lord, if we could just get rid of these false prophets, then God, I would be the only one.

And then Israel would hear you. I'm not understanding, God. Why does there have to be controversy? Why does there have to be adversity? When we're doing, you're God.

I mean, it doesn't have to be. You're God. You can stop them, right? That's what Jeremiah is saying.

You can stop them. And so he's talking to God about this. And he says in verse four, how long shall the land mourn? And the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

The beast are consumed and the birds because they said he shall not see our last in. And then God responds to Jeremiah. Now God's talking.

And he said, if thou has to run with the footmen and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trusteth, they wearied thee, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan? For even your brethren and they, the house of your fathers, even they have dealt treacherously with you. You haven't seen it all yet, Jeremiah. I'm just letting you know.

Listen, I'm just letting you know. I understand your complaint. I understand the hardness of it.

I'm not denying that it hadn't been hard, but I just want you to know something, son. You've been walking with footmen right now. You have been walking with people that aren't even relatives.

They're not even kin. And if they have wearied you and if they have so brought adversity against your life, what are you going to do when you start having to contend with the horses? And what God means by that is if these people who are your enemies and they're strangers in your life, and you didn't even know them until I raised you up, have brought you such affliction and such setbacks and weariness in this ministry. Jeremiah, what are you going to do when it's your family and your brothers and your sisters and your uncles and your aunts and they come against you? Because, Jeremiah, I want you to know Jordan's about to swell her banks.

And I want you to know, Jeremiah, you're about to stop with the footmen. You're about to keep up with the horsemen. And the horsemen are your relatives.

They're going to deal treacherously with you. What are you going to do then? We've got work to do. We've got a nation to warn.

We've got things to handle. What are you going to do, Jeremiah? And so for us this morning, what are we going to do? How are we going to continue with Jesus Christ? I'm speaking to the faithful, all right? I'm speaking to the faithful. What are we going to do? I hear it.

I receive letters. I receive phone calls. Pastors call.

Believers call. People call from various places. We read it in magazines.

We read it from other pastors that are reporting. And probably nobody reports it more than David Wilkerson, who reports about how people are fainting. And people are becoming exhausted in the ministry.

And people are becoming weary. And we're living at the very end of the age, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And God is telling us, hold on.

I know it's hard. It's going to get harder. But remember, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, according to my gospel.

Don't give in. Don't faint. Don't give up.

Be faithful to me. Live to please me. Just live to please me.

Wake up every day and have this consuming thing in your heart. Well, I wonder what the church wants me to do today. Or I wonder what the pastor wants me to do.

Or I wonder what my wife wants me to do. Or my husband wants me to do. Banish all of that, because you don't have to be cumbered with that.

That's getting tangled up with the cares of this life. Just wake up and say, Lord Jesus Christ, I am yours. You are mine.

I am your soldier. You are my general. What do you want to do today? What do you want to do? How do you want to use me? Where do you want to send me? Because it'll be different for every one of us.

Some of us may preach to multitudes. Some of us may never have an audience of people to preach to. But God will use us through intercession and prayers, spiritual warfares in the secret places where nobody ever sees you.

And people may even wonder, well, I never see them doing anything for God. I never see them preaching. Never see them teaching a Bible study.

I never see them singing. I never see them. You have no idea how somebody might be locked up in a secret place, worn against hell for the sake of God's kingdom, that it would be done in the earth.

You have no idea. But we have to be occupied with God and with what he wants. So don't get entangled with this world.

Now, Paul said in Romans chapter 12, and the Phillips translation says that the world is trying to squeeze you into its mold. The world, and kind of in 2nd Timothy, where Paul's speaking about getting entangled with it, it's like the world's coming after you with its ropes. And it just wants to get you all tied up with all of the things that the world has.

They're running after money. They're running after this. They're running after fame.

They're running after position. They're running after this, to please this person, to please that person. And the world comes with its ropes.

You don't really know it. But hopefully in the end, it just wants to tie you up. And you're just all knotted up.

And you can't please anybody now. You can't please anybody because you're all tied up. Thank God Jesus can free you.

He is the deliverer. He breaks bondages. He snaps those cords that maybe the world has entangled us with.

If you're a faithful man or woman tonight, and you have found yourself tangled up with the cares of this life, Jesus Christ is in this house today. And He can break those chains. And He can set you free and continue you on that road of faithfulness.

It is not over. Faithful men are not men who never fall. They are not men who never fail.

And they are not men who never sin. Faithful men are men who believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the glorious right hand of His Father. From there, He gives power and anointing and deliverance and forgiveness.

And faithful men rise up not in their worthiness. They rise up in the fact of Jesus Christ being alive. And they go on.

They go on. And they go on. And Satan knocks them back.

And they stand up. And they go on. And Satan confounds them.

And they're confounded. And they shake it off. And they say, well, I don't know what's going on.

But Jesus knows what's going on. And they go on. They go on trusting Him.

They sin. They repent. They confess it.

They get up. And they go on. Because they're faithful.

Faithful men. Faithful women. And that's who Paul is speaking to in the lives of Timothy.

Jesus laid it out for us very carefully. And He said, there is a cost to this. And the cost is everything.

You can never buy this with money. But you will pay for it with your life. If you're going to be my disciple, you have to come after me every day.

And you have to take up your cross. And you have to follow me. Now, don't take up somebody else's cross.

Just take yours up. And follow me. Deny yourself.

And walk after me. If you try to save your life, you'll lose it. But if for my sake you lose your life, you shall save it.

That's what Jesus said. That's the cost of discipleship. He's not playing a game.

He's not trying to fool people. He's not trying to see how many numbers He can get. He's not trying to just simply build a mega church and deceive people to come in.

And then maybe one day when they get around to it, if it doesn't offend anybody, when you've got a mass multitude of people from the lost to Muslims to everything else in between, and then you're afraid to ever preach the gospel because you're going to offend everyone. Jesus never did that. I'm telling you the cost before it ever starts.

It's everything. I want you to know the world's going to hate you just like it hates me. If you're of me, if you're walking with me, if I'm living in you, the world's going to treat you the way it treated me.

The world's going to hate you. The world's going to despise you. The world is not going to watch you.

The world is not going to accept you. It's going to hate your message. It's going to despise it.

But I want you to know I haven't promised you this world. I've promised you mine. And I promised you my life.

And my resurrection is your resurrection. And my future is your future. So endure it.

Endure it. It's hard. Endure it.

That's just the cost. I was going through the Bible because we don't have time for Christian church history. But these are the things that we're told of the great men of the Bible.

Elijah suffered hardness. He was rejected by Israel. He was rejected by the leadership of Israel.

He was sought after to be killed and had to live in hiding for a number of years. John the Baptist was beheaded. Ezekiel was put to death by his fellow exiles because of his faithfulness and boldness to denounce their idolatry.

And they killed him for it. Moses, his life was threatened innumerable times by the people he was leading out of slavery into freedom. David faced stonings.

He faced spies. He didn't know who he could trust. He could only hope that what God has promised me God will fulfill.

Daniel was thrown to the lions. Joseph was disowned and sold as a slave. Isaiah, the great prophet, was thought to have died by being emplaced inside of a hollow tree where they cut him in half.

Jeremiah was stoned to death. Silas was thrown in prison. Andrew was crucified on a cross in the shape of an X. He hung there for two days before he died, the whole time exhorting the people to come to the truth of Jesus Christ.

Barnabas is thought to have been stoned to death. Bartholomew was crucified with his head downwards. Some legends say that he was flayed to death.

James, the Lord's brother who wrote the epistle, was cast off the temple wall. John was exiled to Patmos, boiled in oil, and lived to an old age with great suffering. Matthew was killed by the sword.

Matthias was stoned and beheaded. Peter was crucified upside down. Philip was crucified.

Simon was thrown in too. Thomas was lanced through while he was praying. Paul, he was in prison.

Five times whipped by the Jews. Three times beat with rods. Once stoned.

Three times shipwrecked. A night and a day in the ocean. Frequent journeys.

Dangerous from rivers. Dangerous from robbers. Dangerous from his own people.

Dangerous from Gentiles. Dangerous in the city. Dangerous in the wilderness.

Dangerous in the sea. Dangerous among false brothers. In labors.

In hardships. Sleepless nights. Hunger and thirst.

Cold and exposure. This is the life of the faithful who follow Jesus Christ. It is not that bogus junk that is being passed off today that is deceiving multitudes on the eve of the coming of Jesus Christ.

This is the life of those who follow Jesus Christ. This is the cost. But they died.

They sealed their testimonies with blood and they arose to an excellent resurrection. Now I want you to go to the heart of this message with me. Exodus chapter 4. And I want you to see this.

This is the call of Moses. And God speaks to him. God ministers and gets through to him.

Moses is yielded to go do what he has to do. He was rather reluctant about it, if you recall. He told God, you've got the wrong man.

God knew who he had. And we come to something very interesting. I mean, when you just read Exodus 4 and you read the argument or the arguing that is going on between Moses and God.

And Moses, listen, Moses drove God to anger. Now the Bible says you can be angry and sin not. So Moses brought God to anger.

I mean, God is really serious about Moses doing what he wants him to do. And God went through a lot. He did a lot to bring Moses to the place where Moses would submit.

All right. So this is an ordained plan. All right.

I want you to hear that. I want you to know that this man, Moses, is ordained for this task. But this is so important.

And oftentimes we just skip past this. We don't really know it because we hear the Exodus. We think Moses mightily leading Israel out.

But wait a minute. Look at this. After all of this happens, he says in verse 22, you will say unto Pharaoh chapter 4, verse 22, thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.

And I say unto you, let my son go. That's what Moses to say to Pharaoh that he may serve me. And if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay your son, even your firstborn.

That's what he's supposed to go say. Now, Moses is traveling and he's on his way back. It came to pass.

This isn't in the same conversation. Time elapses. And it came to pass, by the way, in the end that the Lord met him, Moses, and sought to kill him.

Now, think about that. I mean, that's worth just stopping for a moment saying, wow, this is an ordained man. For a specific task.

And God has gone through a period of time while Moses argued with him and God gets him to submit. And now God is seeking to kill him. Turn to Genesis 17.

Keep your place here in Exodus 4. But turn to Genesis 17. Moses knew this, but for the moment it was ignored. In Genesis 17, verse 9. And God said to Abraham, you shall keep my covenant.

Therefore, thou and your seed after you and their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you and your seed after you. Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations.

He that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of your seed. He that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money must needs be circumcised. And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my covenant. Now back into Exodus chapter four, verse 24, the Lord sought to kill him.

Zipporah, Moses's wife, took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at his feet and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go. Then she said, a bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision.

Because of the circumcision, I thought about this and I was looking at this, this story in this illustration. There's just a couple of things that just kind of jumped out to me. And I want to share this with you.

I want to share this with faithful people. I want you to understand it. First thing that just came across to me is Zipporah really doesn't have a spiritual mindset here.

The thing that I jotted down is this temporal men, temporal men, carnal men. Are always more afraid of momentary pain than they are of eternal consequences. So what about you? It's a way to see if you're faithful or not.

Are you more afraid of momentary pain than you are eternal consequences? The Lord is seeking to kill Moses. Some of the commentators say that Moses was probably very, very sick, near to dying. Knowing that it's because he has not circumcised his son.

You see, Zipporah is okay with everything. She has no problem, no problems at all. You're a great shepherd, Moses.

You love God, Moses. Wonderful. I love God too, Moses.

This is great. You want to go to Egypt. You want to see your kin.

You want to see how they're doing. If they're still alive. Wonderful, Moses.

Moses has been to Jethro, Zipporah's father. Talk to him about it. Go in peace, brother.

Go in peace. Check on the believers or Israel in Egypt. Go in peace.

All these things we've got to do. We've got to do something for God. We've got to do something for Christ.

There's a hungry world out there. We've got to feed them. There's a thirsty world.

We've got to give them something to drink. There's people's feelings that we have to be considerate of. There's people's emotions that we have to be considerate of.

There's things that we have to do. There's ministries that we have to fulfill. There's people that we have to tell.

There's people that we have to check on. Let's do all of these things. But you can't come preach the cross.

And you can't start preaching about the blood. No, let's do the humanitarian stuff. I mean, yeah, Jesus is coming.

These are the last days. People need help. People need hope.

But if we come in here preaching the blood and we come in here preaching the cross, they're going to think we're a bloody people and it's going to offend them. And I think this is so interesting. God did not seek to kill Zipporah.

He didn't seek her. He's coming after Moses. Why? Because Moses is the appointed man.

Moses is the faithful man. Moses is the commissioned man. Moses is the preacher.

Moses is the prophet. As it goes with Moses, it goes with Israel from this point on. I cannot have a man go and represent me, speak for me, be a prophet for me, who is not in covenant with me.

And if you have not come to me by way of the blood and the cross, we have no covenant. We have no covenant. Dare you represent me.

I will come after you. I will come after you. Now, according to Jeremiah's concerns and cries, maybe there's a mass of people out there that seem to be getting away with everything from the mockery and the blasphemy and being belligerent about Jesus Christ and everything else.

And they stand in pulpits and they teach Bible studies and they mock the blood and they mock the cross and they mock Christ. They mock all of these things and they seem to be getting away with it. But you can't get away with anything.

You know what I'm talking about? You can't get away with anything. Other people can get away with it all, but you can't get away with anything. Why? Because you're gods.

That's why. Rejoice in that. Rejoice in that.

You're not a Zipporah. You're gods. You're a Moses.

You're commissioned. You're appointed. You're set apart.

You're anointed. You're his. You're saved.

You're sanctified. Washed in the blood. You are in covenant with God.

And maybe there's people all over this land and all over this world that stand in pulpits that have never been commissioned. They've never been anointed. They've never been called.

They can tell jokes and they can make people laugh and they can make people feel good, but they're going to feel good all the way to hell because they don't preach the blood of Jesus Christ. But God won't let you do it. He won't let you do it because you're anointed and you're set apart.

And I'm not just talking about me and Randy. I'm talking about every one of you. I'm talking to faithful men.

That's who I'm talking to. I trust every one of you in this room is faithful. But if you're not, you know who you are.

I'm talking to faithful men. And God said to Jeremiah, he said, listen, the footmen have wearied you. The horsemen are coming, Jeremiah.

The family's coming, Jeremiah. The agitation there. The agitation there.

The travesties there. It's coming from them, Jeremiah. What are you going to do at that point? And we see it here with Moses.

Let me tell you something, Moses. Listen, just try to see it. Moses was never in any greater danger in his life.

Not when he was a baby. When Pharaoh and them were trying to kill all of the young babies, two years old and younger. You remember that? He was never in grave danger there.

God had a plan. He had a plan, right? Wasn't in grave danger there. Moses walked into Pharaoh's court and he demanded that Israel be released and set free.

And he was never in as grave danger as he was in with his wife. He took Israel through the promised land and there are many revolts and people would stand up and people wanted to accuse him and people wanted to kill him and people wanted to remove him from leadership. All these things that he went in.

But he was, and though those were dangerous times, he was never in a position that was more dangerous than in the position that he was in with his wife. Because you see, it was right here in the home. It was right here.

It wasn't in the world. It wasn't out there. People that didn't know the message, people that didn't know the covenant, they didn't know.

We go out there and we talk about Jesus and we talk about his cross and we talk about his blood. Hey, let me ask y'all something. Come on, let me ask y'all something.

Those of you that go preaching, those of you that preach on streets, those of you that have been to other countries, those of you that have taught and you spoke about the blood of Jesus Christ and the cross of Jesus Christ and the covenant that we have with him. Did you ever have a revolt among the lost? Or did you have the lost humbled by the anointing of the Holy Ghost and many coming and saying, we want to be saved. It's been in the church.

It's been among the people. It's been in the family where they say, we've got to tone this thing down. We got to tone it down.

You're a bloody man, Moses. You're a bloody man because of circumcision. And I want us to understand that this same accusation will come to the church in these last days in a more aggressive way than it has ever hit the church before.

Because if there ever is a move of God before the return of Jesus Christ, it has to be through the blood of Jesus Christ. And that will be attacked. And it will be attacked from the house.

Tone it down, pastor. Tone it down. Tone it down, evangelist.

Tone it down, missionary. Tone it down, teacher. Because if you preach this religion and the blood and the cross and death and giving your life and taking up your cross, who is going to want to follow that? Why lead a multitude of people to hell by pampering them all the way to it, giving them a falsehood? Let it be hard here.

Let it be difficult here. We're going home. I mean, think about it.

We're going to walk on the kind of stuff that men spend their whole life trying to get. The city of God, the streets are paved with gold. I mean, that's what men are living for today.

I just thought about that. I mean, Jesus said, if you try to save your life, you'll lose it. If you lose your life for my sake, you'll save it.

Men are forfeiting their lives to try to obtain the world. They want the gold. That's what they want.

They want the riches. They want it. That's what man wants.

And that's what he's after. People don't give their tithes because they don't want to give up their gold. People don't give offerings because they don't want to give up their gold.

People are not going to buy a Bible for the people in Panama because they don't want to give up the gold. They've worked hard to get the gold. Let me tell you something.

We who are faithful to Jesus Christ, we'll walk on gold, golden streets. We lose our life to gain it. We're going to have it all.

We're going to have all the gold you could possibly want, all the riches you could possibly want. But we find that those aren't the things that are appealing. It is Jesus Christ.

It is Jesus who appeals to me. It is Jesus who draws me. It is Jesus who is consuming me.

It is Jesus who is convicting me. It is Jesus who is dealing with me. And oh, God, how I want to please him.

Why are you convicted of sin? I mean, you hear this. People have sinned. People that preach these other flaky things, they've sinned.

Why are you so shaken by your sin? I never get so messed up about sin like that. I never do. I mean, you know, you just sin.

You confess it. You just believe. And you go on.

I say, whoa, wait a minute. I said, I've offended the one that I love. I said, it's not just some rote motion that we go.

I've offended the God who has saved me and redeemed me. It hurts me to hurt him. It's a relationship.

And that's the blood of this religion. That's the cost of this cross that we are called to bear and we are called to take. The preacher must circumcise the heart of his hearers.

He must do it. You faithful men, you faithful women, don't you ever compromise this word. Don't you ever compromise this truth.

I pray may it be a balm to the faithful. May it build up courage. May it build up in exhorting and encouragement and healing in their life, a fervency and a zeal for the last days.

But I'll tell you, if people are not faithful and people are not righteous and people are not committed, you circumcise the heart, brother, with the preaching of God's word. Now, listen, there's a difference between circumcising a heart and killing a heart. You circumcise the foreskin.

You just peel off that flesh over. You're not killing anything. You're not killing anybody.

But I'll tell you, it's got to be painful. It's got to hurt to cut into that skin. It's got to hurt to peel back that flesh.

It's got to hurt. But after all of the pain, there's covenant with God. And that's what we're telling you.

You can go out here with the law and the letter of the law and you can kill everybody. He didn't send us to kill, but we are sent to circumcise hearts. We're to make men and women feel the sting of their sin, feel the pain of their sin so that they fall before God as they did when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost.

What must we do to be saved? They were grieved and agonized over their fact that they have killed the prince of life. This is the anointing and the power of the Holy Ghost. What did she send us to do? Probably one of the greatest preachers of our day.

I just admire him and respect him. He was a Baptist minister, Adrian Rogers. He made this statement and it was in his, I think his last book before he died and I wrote it down.

He said this, I am willing to compromise about many things, but the word of God. So far as getting together is concerned, we don't have to get together. The Southern Baptist Convention as it is doesn't have to survive.

I don't have to be the pastor of Bellevue. I don't have to be loved. I don't even have to live, but I will never compromise the word of God.

He circumcised hearts from his pulpit. He circumcised hearts. If you circumcise a heart, you listen to me, those hearts will come after you.

I have found this. I have found, I have never, I've never met anything more horrible. Not any devil in hell could even compare to the wrath of a human who wanted to remain in his carnality when the truth was brought against him.

I've never met anything more wicked. I've never met anything more horrible. I've never met anything more painful than a human who loved darkness more than light and despised that light when it came to him.

These are the types of people that will rush upon you and gnash you with their teeth like they did Stephen. That's hardness. I'm telling you, that's hardness, brother.

But you will see the Lord standing at the right hand of the Father to receive you. But if you're his and you're commissioned and you're anointed and you're set apart and you're his voice and you're sealed with the Holy Ghost and washed in the blood and filled with his spirit, if you misrepresent him, men aren't going to come after you. He's coming.

He's coming after you. I'm talking about every one of us. This isn't just for pastors, for faithful men, faithful men.

I'm telling you, whatever you're going through, endure it, endure it as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. I'm moved by this because Jesus is coming today. I'm moved by this.

I want this to be my life because Jesus is coming today. I'm expecting that. I'm expecting it.

I'm expecting him. I've got my lamp here. I've got my oil with me.

He's coming today. I'm not going to be a fool and say in my heart, my Lord delays his coming. No, he doesn't delay it.

He's coming today. If he doesn't come today, I'll be saying it Monday morning. He's coming today.

And I've got my lamp and I've got my oil and I'm waiting for the cry of my groom. He's coming today. He's coming today.

I'm enduring. I'm a soldier. I'm going home though.

This isn't my world. He's coming today. I'm going home today.

I'm going to be with my family today. I'm going to be with my God today. I'm going home today.

It's the expectancy. It is the hope. It is the belief.

I'd rather be with a small group of people in a little vacant store, singing hymns off key and saturated with the power and the presence of God than to be in most of the shams you'll find on practically every street corner you go to. Give me the reality, oh God, of your great spirit and your great truth that when I walk into the sanctuary, God, my heart is circumcised. Dare you, Moses, go after my people, Israel and Egypt, uncircumcised, before you can bring them into the fulfillment of my covenant.

You must enter it first, Moses. Circumcise your son. Circumcise him.

Oh, to God, that we would be so God-filled, so spirit-filled, so consumed with God, such power, such anointing, such life, that the people in Baton Rouge would have to reckon with us, that there are less policemen on the streets, because there's the presence of the Holy Ghost among his people in a particular church, and it doesn't have to be 5,000 people or 10,000 people or 15,000 people, but just a people, just a people who want to be filled, just a people who want to be faithful, just a people who want to be clean, a people who want to be free, a people who love him, a people who want to love him, a people who want to

make him known, a people who want to glorify him, a people that wants to lift him up, a people that wants to magnify him before the others, a people that wants everyone to know how wonderful and glorious my Jesus Christ is, and the people in the town will have to reckon, and churches will have to reckon, because they don't preach a soft gospel at First New Testament church. They don't preach some seeker-friendly message. They don't preach something that's so easy, you can't tell if you've been dealt with or if you've been patted on the back.

They can't tell if what they've drunk there. It's a hard message. It's a truthful message.

It's a direct message. We're pierced like arrows have been shot into our heart, and yet look at those people. They're happy, and they're free, and they're delivered, and they're rejoicing, and they're singing, and they're delighted, and they're, we don't get it, we don't get it, and this is the reason they have to reckon with us.

We've come by way of the blood. We've come by way of the cross, and it is a true life. Oh God, let them see that reality.

Let them see that reality. It is a true life. We're beneficial to this society.

We're beneficial to this neighborhood if God lives in us. If we're a faithful people, we ought to benefit it. Crime should be less.

Dope addicts should be converting to Jesus Christ. There should be a, there should be a turnaround in the community because we're faithful. Faithfulness is not something we are because we sit around and say that we are.

Faithfulness is not faithless because somebody slammed the door in our face, and we're going to go to the next door and witness. Faithfulness is our life willing to be given to Jesus Christ so his life can be lived through us, and that's faithfulness. God, give us a church like that.

God, give us a people like that. I don't care if there's 10,000 people in it, 20,000 people in it, or 20 people in it. God, give us a people who will get into altars and pray because they believe that you are.

Give us a people that love your word, God, and are not ashamed of the blood of Jesus Christ, and not ashamed of his cross, and not ashamed of these last days, and who are living to expect you to come. Oh, God, give us a people that are craving to be filled with the Holy Ghost. God, give us a people who not only seek forgiveness of sin.

God, give us a people who are disgusted with their sin, who hate their sin, who repudiate their sin, who want to abandon their sin. Oh, God, give us holiness in the most joyful of ways so that truly, God, the life is a mystery. Oh, God, give us that.

Are you here tonight, today? Are you here today? I'm talking to the faithful. You're faithful because you would rather hear Jesus than the greatest preachers in the world. You would walk 20 miles, and you would bypass all of the junk, and all of the flakiness, and all of the jokes along the way from the best orators of the day just to get to that little hole that nobody knows anything about, but Jesus is speaking there.

Those of you that are faithful and say, I'd rather be more aware of the divine presence of the living God than trying to wonder how important the people are that sit around me. I'd rather that. Let people know.

Let people know. We're not ashamed. Jesus is coming today.

Let people know. Let them know what this church stands for. Let them know who we are.

Let them know that we stand for the blood. We stand for the cross. We stand for the Jesus of the Bible.

Let them know that we stand for holiness and righteousness. I'm going to tell you something. No one is more defiled than the man you see standing up right here.

I by no means try to present to you a faultless life. God knows that better than I know that. So corrupt, so evil in my desires, so weak in my flesh, were it not for the grace of God, I would outdo everybody in sin.

I by no means try to stand up here and pretend to a holiness. I'm not holy. If there's holiness in me, it's the holiness that my Savior has given me.

And the hunger that I have for holiness is the hunger that he has put within me because he lives there. And the way I feel about sin is not because Lee is some good guy. Lee is not a good guy.

Take it from me. And I'd be a fool to share with you my whole heart. But I'm a wicked man.

I'm an evil man. But I repudiate sin because I love my Savior. And he's been good to me.

And he gives me grace. And he gives me forgiveness. And I don't want to just be forgiven.

And I've learned, I've learned how wonderful, how truly joyful it is to walk with the Lord. And I know what it's like to have that contamination of some rebellion and some sin and some act that I have committed that has wounded him. And I despise it.

I despise me. Oh, God, let me decrease that Jesus may increase. Oh, God, it's holiness for Christ's sake.

And all to God that we would be the most joyful people on the planet earth. Because you can have all these things without joy, which is the characteristic of his kingdom. Something is truly amiss.

Stand with me. God says the preacher is a soldier. He is a fire, a voice, an alien, the offscoring of the world, fools, friends of God and companions of the Almighty.

Those are the faithful. That's who we are. Lord, in the name of Jesus.

Oh, God, I pray that you would move, Father, like this would be a service like no other. Lord, this would be a meeting that nobody could have planned. Nobody could have anticipated.

Father, nobody in this meeting, nobody in this room may have any knowledge of it. But God, for that faithful man, let this be such a balm of encouragement and exhortation because you're coming today. Oh, Father, I pray that that faithful man has been lifted up.

I pray, Father, that that faithful man has been filled with zeal in the Holy Ghost, God, to endure it, to go on. Oh, Father, I pray that you would cause us, Father, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. God, to lift up the name and the glory of Jesus Christ.

Father, to worship you and to please you, Father, that this house would be filled with the praises of our God. Lord, that the glory of Jesus would emanate from this place and from our lives, God. And, oh, Father,

that whether the reproach or whether the travesties or whether the adversities come from without or from within, we speak to you in a way Jeremiah did, Lord.

Your word burns in our hearts like a fire. It is in my bones. I cannot shut it up.

Oh, live in me, oh, fire of God. Live in me, oh, fire of God. Make our homes faithful, God.

Make our men in First New Testament church faithful. Make our women faithful. They may never stand behind pulpits, but, oh, God, for faithful men and women.

No matter what people say, Lord, let our hearts be circumcised. God, we come to you to abandon sin, to speak of it plainly with you, God, to confess it for what it is. And for what it's done, we want to live, Lord, like you're coming today.

Clean our hearts, clean our minds, clean our thoughts, clean our homes, God. Jesus is coming. People are lost.

Jesus is coming. People are without hope. Jesus is coming.

People sit in darkness, and Jesus is coming. Oh, let there be faithful soldiers who do not get entangled. Come and join us.

Oh, God. Oh, the kingdom seekers, lay down your lives.

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