

Conrad Murrell, Grace and Truth

by Mack Tomlinson

Conrad Murrell was a man of God who lived a life of radical trust in the Word of God, emphasizing the power of God and the Spirit, and leaving a lasting legacy through his ministry and biography.

Duration: 14:10

Scripture: Luke 18:27

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Faith And Trust"

Description

This sermon reflects on the miraculous work of God in transforming individuals into Christians, emphasizing the impossibility of fulfilling God's work without His power. It highlights the impactful life and ministry of Conrad Murrell, a man of God known for his humility, wisdom, and fearless preaching. The sermon underscores the importance of a radical trust in the Word of God alongside a genuine openness to the moving of the Spirit, as exemplified by Conrad Murrell's life.

Transcript

There is not one person who becomes a Christian without the mighty power of God falling upon him and making him a dead sinner live to God. That's a miracle of the highest order. God's still doing that.

The first time I heard the name of Conrad Murr was about 1977, and a friend of mine in Texas mentioned him, and I'd never heard of him, and began to send me sermon tapes by Conrad and some of his writings, and I had been in the ministry by this time about three years, and I never read or heard such things at all from anyone. Everything that God has for you to do is utterly and completely impossible. Now I can say this, if you can do the work that you're doing for the Lord, it's not God's work, it's your work.

And God, and I mean that, he never puts you into a realm or a situation that you can handle. And all I can say to anyone, that of course, it affects you utterly and completely. And so it was two years later in 1980, 79 or 80, that my wife and I and some from our church began to visit Conrad Murr's Bible camp in Bentley, Louisiana.

And then three months later, he came to our church to preach for a week. And that started 35 years of hearing Conrad Murr being under his ministry and observing his life of humility and godliness. And we just began to realize what a treasure he was, what an amazing theologian, what a unique man of God, what an amazing preaching gift God gave him.

And even though the phrase the Apostle Paul used to the Corinthians being unknown and yet well known, that described Conrad to me because he was so well known in his circles in the U.S. among churches. But outside of that circle, he was virtually unknown. And so his life is a remarkable life of a man of God that feared God, that did not care about impressing people, that did not have an agenda to become well known.

He just obeyed God and he did what he felt God gave him to do. And he pastored in Louisiana for over 30 years and led a family Bible conference of over, well, really 40 years. And his influence just became far reaching in the lives of Christians, preachers, pastors.

Well, I met Conrad Murl, I think in either 87 or 88, 1988. And he came with quite a reputation because I knew Mack and other men that had been really impacted by him. And so there was a sense of almost nervousness the first time he came to Denton to preach that I was going to get to hear him.

And it was just really quite phenomenal the way he carried himself and his relationship to God's people. So that struck me in the early first hour or two when he was with us. But then as he began to preach, of course, then I would hear him many, many more times after that.

He preached with a clarity or a sharpness that was really kind of unbelievable to me. The way he would cut through formalities and he'd get to just incredibly profound truths, deep doctrinal realities, God's Word, the glory of Jesus Christ, the fullness of redemption and how he would express it and put it in such clarity of terms and phrases. And some of them were really funny, just not that he meant to be, but they were just, he would make his point with such awesome clarity.

And I'm a young man, you know, at that time I'm in my late 20s, early 30s, learning and gleaning from him. So that's one thing. At the Bentley camps, those were amazing, the different camps I got to go to.

I can just picture him at the front and he would just stand there and smile and he would look across the room and you could just tell he loved God's people and he would begin to take questions. And sometimes he would let the group wrestle with the question some and then he would speak on his summary thoughts or whatever. So he was quite a teacher, preacher, man of the truth, full of the scriptures.

And the dinner tables, lunch table conversations were amazing. And then lastly, it's so worth mentioning, he had such a love for God's people. Like I said, I was nervous really the first time I met him.

But when we were with him and his love for me, my wife, my young children at that time, love for God's people, it was so authentic, so real, the way he just interacted, the way he cared for the young preachers at that time. I was still learning such fundamental things and yet he would take men like myself under his wings, encourage us, admonish us, and strengthen our hands in God. And it meant so much to me.

And he would love God's people. He was not about trying to intimidate people. He was trying to bring the truth into their lives, that they'd love God and love the Word and walk with God.

Whenever we think of those people who have had the greatest influence on our lives, for myself there are four or five men that I can think of immediately that have had a tremendous impact on my life. And yet if I was forced to pick one, I would probably say that Conrad Murrell certainly had the greatest impact on my ministry and one of the greatest impacts on my life. I met him just after I graduated from college and I was just at a stage in my life where I needed something other than the standardized answers that I had heard on different biblical questions.

And that was the first thing that impacted me about Conrad was his wisdom and his biblical approach to answering questions as opposed to a made-up theological approach to fit some kind of system. And the second thing I think that impacted me the most about Conrad was the sense of reality of God, the power of God upon his life. And both of those things were there together.

A radical trust in the Word of God and a testing of every miraculous thing by the Word of God and yet an openness to real works of the Spirit, real miraculous things in the Christian life. And this was something really wonderful for me. Over the years I have seen and many of you have seen men who tend to emphasize the Word of God at the expense of the moving of the Spirit and others that emphasize the Spirit at the expense of the Word.

But with Conrad Murrell there was always both. And this followed through for years. After I became a pastor, many times when we were in a real crisis time, I would call Conrad Murrell to ask his opinion.

And the things that he told me were unusual, and different than anyone else that I've ever counseled with, the things that he said and the approach to problems. So this was one of the great things that of course I was very indebted to him for his wisdom. During those times of pastoral crisis he was a great help.

It was always wonderful to bounce thoughts off of him and get new ideas. And he was very unconventional in his approach to theology, and yet not like some men who are basically heretical because they have such new approaches. He was always subordinated in his mind to Scripture and to the Word of God.

As I reflected on his life as his ministry began to move toward being finished, I sensed that his life should be recorded because it was too much of a fragrant life, too much of an influential life for a record not to be written. So that brought about writing his biography, Conrad Murrell, Grace and Truth. And it's over 600 pages from his birth to the present.

His conversion, his calling, his ministry over the years, the ministry of the Bentley Grace Camps, his writings. And then at the end of the book there are two appendices on rare writings that are included that are so valuable and so rich that many in our generation, even who know of Conrad, would not have seen these writings. So we believe the Lord can use Conrad Murrell's biography to touch a future generation.

The book, I'm excited to read it. It will bring back memories for me in that time period where I actually got to meet him. And it will bring new things into my perspective on his life that I don't even know about.

So, Brother Max, labor is so appreciated, but it will be a legacy. It will be a legacy I think that will impact countless Christians in the days to come. I'm very grateful for this new biography that Mack Tomlinson has written, primarily because I hope it will give a feel to those who have never met Conrad.

Of course, it will be a great blessing to everybody who knew him because it will refresh many memories and give us further insights into the man. But also for those who never met him or never heard him, it will give a little taste of the man himself. Many anecdotes are shared and things from his personal letters to other people and many pictures of the past.

So we trust that this biography will be a great blessing to the people of God. As Mack said in a different interview, he's someone who is unknown and yet well-known. This is the very same verse that I thought about and have thought about many times over the years.

This is a man who is unknown, and every time I read the verse I think of him, unknown and yet well-known. Many, many people affected by his life, many other people never heard his name. It was truly one of the greatest privileges of my life to have met Conrad Murrell and to know him.

I'm grateful for this biography. It would really be a great help for preachers and young preachers to read this book. Not at all because of who wrote it.

That's immaterial. But because of who it's about. Conrad Murrell, the man he was and is, the message that he preached, and the manner of life he lived.

Conrad was counterculture his whole ministry. He was fearless and he did not try to please men in his preaching or his ministry. He was loving, but he never catered to follow the changing trends of the church world or of the evangelical world.

He was always counterculture. He was driven only by the Bible. And it shaped all his views and his convictions, not only about theology and the gospel, but about methods.

His manner of life was one of holiness and humility and graciousness. But in the pulpit, he was fearless. And sometimes the force of the truth through his preaching was almost overwhelming.

Many would say he was the wisest man they've ever known or ever heard preach. So Conrad Murrell is a marvelous example of what a minister should be, of what a preacher should be, of what a preacher's life should exemplify. And so that's why this book should be read, by preachers of the present and preachers in the future.

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