

Penetrating the Spirit of This Age

by Mel Esh

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness, joy, and the fear of the Lord in penetrating the spirit of this age and living a life that is pleasing to God.

Duration: 1:21:38

Scripture: Deuteronomy 21:18-21, Romans 10:14-15, Philippians 2:12-16

Topics: "Spirit Of Antichrist"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of penetrating the spirit of this age and the sanctifying effect of missionary brethren. He shares a personal experience of witnessing an African woman watching a filthy movie on a plane and feeling compassion for those being influenced by the spirit of the age. The speaker emphasizes the need to be bright lights in a world of darkness and sin. He also highlights the unity and love among missionary families, comparing them to Paul's missionary band. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the urgency of salvation and the call of the gospel.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, praise the Lord. It's good to be standing on American soil again and seeing all your faces.

It was such a joy this morning to come into the house of God here, see familiar faces and all of you who are very dear to my wife and I's hearts. Missionaries do send greetings to you all. As you know, maybe some of you don't know, my wife and I were over in Africa for three weeks and just came back this past Tuesday.

We were spending time there on behalf of the mission board, visiting the mission stations and also spent time there at the retreat with all the missionaries together there. And so they give you all their greetings. Brother Aaron, I think you're here.

Klaus told me to give you a hug. I know that you went through a lot last weekend and his heart was going out to you and that's the way that he expressed himself to share with you. So, praise the Lord.

Well, let's stand for a word of prayer and then we'll move on from here. Father in heaven, we do worship you this morning. We thank you that you're so good to your children.

Father, thank you, Lord, for redeeming our souls from destruction, Lord. We have heard those testimonies this morning and we know that all of us together, Lord, could have our own story to tell how that you redeemed us out of a life of sin and darkness and hell and destruction and the power of Satan and his grip and hold on our lives. Father, we bless you this morning and we do pray, Lord, You know, we've been born of your Spirit and yet our souls need to be fed continuously and Father, I ask you this morning to give me grace to feed this congregation of believers here at Charity Christian Fellowship and enable me by the power and demonstration of your Spirit, Lord, to ably and aptly bring forth the Word of God to bear upon our hearts, Lord.

I pray, Father, that you would make application to each heart and life and soul in this room. Thank you, Father. We love you.

I trust you for this. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen. Well, welcome to all the visitors.

I see many of you here this morning and many of you I know. It's a joy to see your faces this morning among us. I'm sure some of you are here for the baptism and we're all looking forward to that as a congregation.

Let's turn our Bibles to Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2 and I'll start reading in verse 12 through 16. Verse 12, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the Word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. And I'll conclude there.

You know, as I went over, as my wife and I took the journey over to Africa, I began to notice, even on the plane already, there was, you know, many Ghanaians were traveling with us over there, whether they were from this country or were going back to their home country. Many of them were in the plane there. And immediately I began to realize, you know, I guess I'm not out and about in the world, you know, as much as some.

I realized, you know, this world continues to take its downward path. You know, all the, just the worldliness, the immodest apparel, and it just struck me. And even in Africa, it struck me, in the cities.

As I looked and, you know, beheld the influence of, I know the influence of America, much of it, and you're, you know, with the television and all that they've seen, it's really influenced and is influencing the cities,

especially there in Ghana. My heart was grieved. I was watching behind, in front of me, on the way over, in front of me, these days on the planes, they have little TVs for each seat.

And so in front of me, I was, I just happened to glance every so often, and this African woman was watching a very filthy movie. And my heart just again was bleeding for those that are being sucked into the spirit of this age. And so that's some of where my title has come from.

Penetrating the Spirit of this Age. And I'd like to have a subtitle. The Sanctifying Effect of Our Missionary Brethren.

Penetrating the Spirit of this Age. And then a subtitle. The Sanctifying Effect of Our Missionary Brethren.

I'm going to interweave our missionary experience, you know, visiting missionaries, with the message this morning. Just interweave some of the sanctifying effect that our missionary families and brethren had upon my heart, from my wife and I, and just bring much of that into the message here this morning. After an all-night flight, we left here at 7 o'clock and arrived over there at 5 o'clock your time, which would have been 9 o'clock their time over there.

And Matthew Woolman was there at the airport to pick us up. He's our business coordinator there in Accra. Many of you know Janelle and Matthew.

They were here for, Matthew and Janelle were here for a number of years, and after they were married, they moved out to South Dakota. So they're our business coordinators there in Accra. And Matthew took us back to the mission house there, and many of you have seen the Accra, those of you who have traveled over there.

And I was just amazed at how much of the roads are generally in Ghana at this time. There's many, Matthew was sharing on the way back, they have these huge top-heavy loads. I mean, they may be, I don't know, 18 feet in the air sometimes.

And some of these trucks actually topple over because they're going through these bumps, you know, these holes, and they sometimes topple over and crush vehicles that are passing them. And that happens, Matthew said, and I can see how it does. I can see very well how it happens.

They're so very top-heavy. So we got to the mission house. Janelle, Brother Aaron and Janice, it's your daughter, greeted us very hospitably.

She has such a hospitable spirit. It's a beautiful place there. And I'd like to just go through a few things this morning, because I know many of you have just come into the church maybe the past year and are not familiar with Africa and our mission stations there and so forth.

So I'd like to go just explain a few things about the missionaries and their surroundings and, you know, what is happening in their station there. But anyway, they have a beautiful compound, a grassy plot there, and there's a wall around the entire place. It's a beautiful place, just all of you who have been there and maybe have seen it even on slides know that it's a very beautiful setting there.

So Matthew and Janelle, they're doing very well, very well with their two children. I would say as I beheld their station, as I looked upon their lives, there's two things that stand out in my mind, and that is joy and faithfulness. Faithfulness in service and doing it with a joyful spirit.

And that's some of what I'd just like to share a little bit at this time. You know, Matthew is faithful. He goes out through the city in long lines of traffic, especially because of the road construction that is taking place.

There's long lines of traffic, bumpy roads. Faithfully, he's going out there into government offices and doing paperwork for the missionaries. Sometimes he goes into an office and is told, hey, you have to come back tomorrow.

That's how Africa is. They'll make you wait for three or four hours sometimes only to tell you at the end that they can't do it until tomorrow and then you have to come back the next day. So, in all of that, our business coordinator, Brother Matt, is faithful.

And that's what I'd like to just bring out in our lives, the need of being faithful to the calling God has placed us in. You know, you may be an employer this morning, or you may be an employee this morning. God is calling you to faithfulness right where you're at.

On the job site. That little task that has been given you, children. God looks at a faithful man and woman.

He looks for those who are faithful to what He has placed before them. And let's just turn our Bibles. I don't know.

You pray for me. God, give me wisdom what to let out and what to share on this morning. I have limited time here.

Let's turn our Bibles to Colossians 4. I just wanted to bring a few points out in our everyday lives in this area of faithfulness. Colossians 4 is talking to employers, to masters. Colossians 4, verse 1, "...Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving, with all praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ for which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak, walking wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." And here I see Paul sharing with the church here at Colossae. He's addressing masters.

And he's saying, be faithful to the calling that you have been placed in. First of all, he entreats them to be fair to their servants that are under them. But then he exhorts them.

Masters, you have time on your hands. Many times you have time. You have time to involve yourself in other matters.

Your servants are out on the job site. Yes, they're under your watchful supervision and management. But you don't always need to be there.

You know, you might have a manager, a foreman, who is watching over the employees. And Paul is exhorting them, the masters, in saying, you have time on your hands. You have time to pray.

Continuing prayer. Watching the same with thanksgiving. Pray for those.

Pray for those who are sharing the Gospel. Paul says here that for me, that a door of utterance might be opened to me, that I may speak forth the mystery of Christ. And I believe that was Paul's heart to those who he saw were masters.

He realized they had time on their hands. And he exhorted them to be faithful and to redeem their time and thus be able through prayer and through some other things that he shares here, to be able that the Gospel might penetrate the spirit of the age that they were living in. I believe that was Paul's heart to these masters.

He says, redeeming the time. I guess it doesn't say because the days are evil here. I think that's another passage.

But anyway, I'm just getting us down into our everyday lives that we are faithful to the calling God has placed us in and thus be able to penetrate the spirit of this age. Faithful as servants. Maybe you're an employee this morning.

Just turning quickly to Titus 2. Titus 2, verse 9. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. And, you know, very clearly it's bringing out here again that servants are to obey their masters.

Servants are to be at a place where they're not purloining or holding back. That word purloining means to hold back. To hold back what you could actually be giving to your master.

But, the opposite is true. If you are giving of your whole heart, giving everything, you know, with the ability that is within you, that you are adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. You know, that's the heart of God.

Whatever we're involved in, we're faithful to that calling. And thus, we're adorning the doctrine of God. We're adorning the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And we're showing forth, in that way, showing forth the Gospel that is able to penetrate, like it says in verse 12, this Gospel teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. And that's the heart of God. He wants us in our everyday lives to be able, by our lives, by our example, by the godly lives that we live, to be able to penetrate the spirit of this age.

Teaching by our godly lives that denying ungodly and worldly lusts is necessary to be clear with God and to experience His righteousness in our lives. Okay, let's go on. Faithfulness says in Proverbs 20, Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find.

The just man walketh in his integrity. His children are blessed after him. Then in Proverbs 28, 20, A faithful man shall abound with blessings.

So let's remember in our callings, whether it's the mundane things of life, like Brother Matthew going out to town, going out into the city of Akron, those long lines of traffic, and that dusty road, he's faithful. And through faithfulness, we can penetrate the spirit of this age as we live godly, virtuous lives before the Lord and before our fellow man. Joy.

Joy in hospitality. That's one thing I notice about the station too, is there was tremendous joy there. I just took note of that.

Janelle, she's full of joy in her service for others. And as she makes meals and serves the missionaries in one way or another. They experience joy in serving others a cup of cold water.

The joy of the Lord is our strength serving others, whether our children, a neighbor, or a friend, and doing it with joy. Yesterday we had a unique little experience. Was that yesterday or the day before, Barb? The cat in the tree there.

The day before, I guess. We had a unique little experience where we have some cottages off to the left coming in our drive. And my wife heard this cat just meowing and meowing.

She just heard her cry for a long time. So she decided to walk over and see what's going on. And here there was this cat that was up about 60 foot in the air, up in a tree.

And the neighbor said there that it's been up there for four days and nobody wants to climb or they had even gotten a fireman out to see if there's some fire equipment to get up in there. And so there was just nobody who wanted to, you know, take the time to an effort to rescue the cat. And so I thought about a brother in church here whose father is a tree trimmer.

And I thought, OK, I'm going to give him a call. And sure enough, the brother came over, joyfully climbed that tree with a weeping woman at the bottom. And I believe the glory of the Lord was manifested through it all.

He climbed up 60 feet with the harness, you know, his tree climbing equipment. And the cat was rescued. And the testimony of the Lord goes forth as we are involved in those types of things with joy in our hearts.

We do it with joy. And the woman testified, the woman shared with my wife, she said, nobody wants to. Nobody really cares.

She said only one other person cared. I think I was a fireman who had come out and looked if there was a possibility of getting the fire equipment in there and so forth. But anyway, let's do let's serve others with joy in our hearts, with a, you know, with with care.

And that's what I seen in Matthew and Janelle station there. They served others with love, with care in their hearts. And does the, you know, the power of Christ is manifested in the joy of the Lord.

Shines forth. And yea, we know that joy penetrates. Joy is what we heard this morning.

Many are looking for before they come to salvation in Christ. Okay, let's go on to the next station. Brother Kloss and Geraldine Cowan and their four children.

They're the brother Kloss is the headmaster there at Wawasi in the school there called Victory Christian School. And as many of you know, Victory Christian School has gone through many tumultuous times in the past. I know that many of you were involved in praying in our Saturday morning prayer meetings.

We prayed much for that station. Just seemed to be a spiritual stronghold there. And much was taking place there with sometimes teachers needing to be dismissed and the town being somewhat resistant even sometimes to our presence there and so forth.

Once I evaluated, you know, our brother and sister and the ministry that God has placed them in, I was just so blessed again. And I'd just like to share some of what the Lord is doing in that station. When I think

of that station, I think of the fear of the Lord.

The Bible says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. It also says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Yes, the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. And that's what I see happening in that station. The fear of the Lord is coming upon that village like it hasn't happened before.

The fear of the Lord is coming upon the teachers and beginning to come down upon the students. And God's Spirit is moving and working. You know, a year ago, I think brother Emmanuel shared a year ago how there was much cheating taking place in the school.

There was much... even the teachers were sometimes involved in helping the children cheat, especially during test time. You know, that's a big thing in Ghana. When the exam time comes, everyone... Of course, they want to pass, and the parents want their children to pass.

And the school teachers, they want their school to be known as a good school, so they forge people through despite bad grades or somehow they allow them to... They give them the answers sometimes, and much of that takes place in Ghana. In fact, you can basically not find a public school where there's not teachers involved in helping their students cheat so they can pass. Anyway, Kloss... Brother Kloss last year took a very clear stand.

He took a very clear stand against all that cheating and all that corruption that was taking place. And as you heard our brother Emmanuel share last year, at that time, basically all hell was breaking loose upon him and his family. And that's what took place.

You know, parents were beginning to... Parents would hold their children back or be on Kloss' back for what he was doing there. The children scoffed at him. The town gave him the cold shoulder and even had the public school officials saying he can't take this strong of a stand.

So it looked dark a year ago. Very dark. Looked like maybe the school would be closed down by the public officials.

So things didn't look real good a year ago. In the midst of it all, Kloss, our brother, remained unwavering. I learned so much just watching his life the few days I was there.

He just steadily moved onward and forward with that call of God that was upon his life. And lifting up the standard of the truth of God's Word. He held to it uncompromisingly.

Let's turn our Bibles yet to Deuteronomy 21. Just one short Scripture here. Deuteronomy 21.

I won't read the whole passage here. It's v. 18-21. Here it brings out about a stubborn and rebellious son and what the children of Israel were to do with such an one.

In v. 21 it says, And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die. So shalt thou put evil away from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear. And that is exactly what has happened.

The consequences for sin were brought down upon the people. In other words, they faced consequences. They were not going to pass their tests if they weren't diligent in their studies.

They were held back. They were flunked. There was consequence for sin and teachers being dismissed because of them allowing cheating in the classes and so forth.

And the town began to settle down. Like it says here, they were to stone... This was a consequence back then for a rebellious and stubborn son. They were to stone him so that all Israel, through the consequence of his sin, would hear and fear.

And that's exactly what has taken place in Wawasi. They have heard, and now the fear of God is taking hold of their hearts. And praise the Lord, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

It's the beginning of wisdom. And that's what is taking place in the hearts of the teachers, the students, and also the parents. It's affecting the town there.

And I just think of how it says in Isaiah, when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And that's what has happened. Yes, all hell broke loose in a sense a year ago, but God's Spirit has lifted up a standard against the flood, tide of evil and wickedness that came against the work there and against our missionary friends and family there.

And God is truly raising up a standard. And I'll come back to that in just a little here. It says in Ephesians 4.15 that we are to bring forth the truth in love.

And that's another aspect that I learned as I watched our brother work through, as he shared how he worked through things and difficulties in his station. And despite lifting up the standard of truth, there was not a rejection of the person. I don't know exactly how to explain it, but he shared the truth in love.

And as the love of God went out, even for teachers that were dismissed or fired and parents who were upset. There was one parent who was very upset at him. You know, he would walk past the school daily.

Klaus would try to greet him and he'd just look the other way. He wouldn't say a word. You could tell he was very upset at his child not being able to continue there at Victory Christian School.

And so, some of the things that he was facing were people coming against him because of difficult things that they were up against. And children being dismissed and so forth. And the parents were getting upset.

In all of that, Klaus continued to love. He continued to show forth. He continued to bring forth the truth in love.

At times, he would heap coals of fire on his enemy. And he especially had one enemy there who really was an antagonist. And today, I can honestly say the town is at peace.

The children are happy in the school. The teachers are unified. The town is getting more and more friendly.

And God is at work through the standard of righteousness that was lifted up. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A year ago, it looked like everything was going to be shut down.

But God, through our brother taking an uncompromising stand, God has lifted up a standard. And the Lord is at work in the hearts of the teachers and in the hearts of the parents. One of the parents said in this last parent, I think every three months or so, they have a parents and teachers meeting.

And one of the parents shared after the last meeting, this is the best meeting we've ever had. The parents and teachers meetings are completely at peace. Usually those parents and teachers meetings where the missionaries basically dreaded them because of all the parents griping about things and wanting sports in the school or wanting Independence Day marches and so forth.

But today, that station is at peace. I'm not saying there's no difficulties at all, but God has tremendously broken the backbone of that spiritual principality that we were praying against the last number of years. And I thank God.

I thank God for all of your prayers. I know that the Lord has used our prayers in breaking the backbone of that power and evil principality and power of darkness that was operating in that station. So let's take a lesson, brethren.

You know, when I think of the fear of the Lord, you know, some of you as parents, maybe you're lax sometimes. Maybe we're lax as parents sometimes in bringing consequence upon our children. But it needs to be lifted up.

The standard of righteousness needs to be lifted up in our homes. You know, to bring forth that there is consequence for sin that others may hear and fear. Others may hear and fear.

Maybe we're lax as pastors sometimes. Of course, it needs to be shared in love. So I bless God.

My wife and I, we were just so blessed in hearing how God has raised up a standard in that station there at Wawassee. Truly, the spirit of this age is penetrated through effectual prayer and lifting up the standard of truth in redemptive love. Okay, let's go on to Tanner and Rebecca's station.

Tanner and Rebecca Leiby. They have two children. Dale and Camden, they're back there in Tulaway working with the Gunja tribe.

And we went up with classes. Saturdays, we went up with classes and then somebody met us with a vehicle which we drove back into their station. And almost at their house, they have this huge gully.

And this is the rainy season, so the gully was, you know, quite full with water. So I was wondering, you know, Tanner was actually driving. And he came out to meet us there.

And it probably came up to the lorry about this high. The lorry is the vehicle there. And he drove right through with his diesel engine and out the other side.

So you know how it looks back there, Rick. Or you haven't been to that station yet. Not to Tulaway.

You've been to Kafaba. But anyway, they were sharing. It was interesting.

They shared that just recently, just recently there was a few, I think two young men or a boy and a girl, whatever, walked through there. And one of the young men put his foot down to take the next step. And here he felt this slithery thing moving.

You know, from underneath him. And here he had put his foot on a crocodile that was down in there. So I don't think he was hurt.

But the town is very, you know, this is a big thing. I'm not sure if they even trudge through there anymore. You know, without a motorcycle.

I know they go through their motos, if I'm correct. But anyway, they live back in. Their house is right in the town of Tulaway there.

Like I said, Tanner is working with the Gunjas. And when I think of Brother Tanner and his wife, Rebecca, I think of the scripture where it says in 2 Corinthians 4, it says, we are perplexed but not in despair. It says we're cast down but not forsaken.

We are persecuted but not destroyed. Always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body. And that's what I see happening with our brother.

You know, his wife at this time is laid up quite a bit. She's been diagnosed with Lyme's disease. Many of you know that and are praying for her.

Continue to pray for her. She does get fatigued very quickly. Making of a meal basically almost wipes her out.

So pray for our sister. She's on treatment presently. The treatment came just before we came home here.

An oral treatment that she's taken by a local doctor here that prescribed it. But when I look at their spirits, I see a rejoicing heart in the midst of it all. In the midst of it all, their spirit is at a place of rejoicing and joy and vibrancy.

There's faith there. They're not down and out and discouraged and living in the slough of despond, but their spirit is being sustained through continued faith in Christ and His grace and trusting His grace to be sufficient. And that's what I see in their station.

God is at work despite the sickness, despite some of the things they've gone through. Tanner actually came home here in May, as some of you know, for some important meetings here. And they've actually only been in their station... Let me see.

How many days in the last three months? I forget exactly. About ten days maybe. But it was very... Until we had gotten there, they had hardly been in their station.

It was ten days before we got there they had been in their station. So they were basically out of their station for three months with Rebecca's sickness. They had moved to Accra.

But in the midst of it all, God is working and lifting up a standard as well. He has a little carpenter shop there and He's building... I just love it. He has this little carpenter shop and He's there planing with the hand plane and sawing with a hand saw.

And here comes these... I didn't see it, but He was just sharing with me that the village, the men of the village, usually in the evening especially, they come and they just sit around there and watch Him and talk. Of course, He knows Gunja by now. So they're sharing freely with one another.

And His aim and goal, His desire is to build a relationship to such a place with them that when He gives them the Gospel, they can't easily shrug it off. You know, He's built that foundation with them of establishing a relationship. You know, He's living there in town and He's among these people, so His

desire is to establish relationships with them.

And then, like I said, that the Gospel can't be shrugged off easily. There's a blind man in town who's beginning to open his heart. I was blessed.

I went with him to see the blind man. The blind man is there and he mentioned something about... I know from being a missionary in Ghana in the past, I know some of the words in Gunja are the same as the Dogbani that I know. So I heard a few of the words and the blind man was asking him something about Jesus.

Yisa, which is Christ. And Tanner told me later, yes, that he is opening up his heart more and more. He's saying at this time, he's still confused.

You know, what about Muhammad? What about Jesus? These are Muslims. What about Muhammad? What about Jesus? You know, where does that all fit together? At this time, he's saying, you know, I want to be in heaven with Muhammad and Jesus. You know, he's still not totally persuaded over into the Christian faith, but he's beginning to make comments.

Another thing that Tanner is known by, he's known in his village as a man of God's Word. And that really blessed me to hear that. He's known as a man of God's Word in the village.

So, a foundation is being laid. Again, I believe by example, seeing their lives, seeing Tanner and Rebecca live their everyday lives with a joyful, vibrant spirit, with the many sicknesses and difficulties they've gone through, and also, you know, as he's beginning to share the Gospel, he's beginning to be known as a man of God's Word. The spirit of this age is penetrated through dying, and behold, we live.

Not I, but Christ. That's what I see happening. It's not them, but Christ living through them.

And it's beginning to penetrate the town of Tulaway there. Just in small ways, I'm not saying there's anything great yet, but we're trusting God that more will take place in the months and years to come. Okay, then, going up to Weston Station, Weston Libey.

I've never seen the roads worse than they are in Ghana at this time. I mean, the roads are bad. I'm not sure if it has to do with the government, the new government.

They have a new president in there since the first of the year. And the roads are just very, very bad. Weston and Charity, they have two children, missionaries to the Kukumba tribe, who Daniel also works with.

And it so happened, Ross told me the day before that we're to leave early in the morning that they're having a Suna, which they call in English an outdooring. It's a baby naming ceremony that they have for children in Africa. Basically, the way the Old Testament had it, the child was circumcised.

From what I understand, a name was given to the child at that time. I'm not sure about the circumcision part, but the child is named about eight days after the child is born. And as you know, Weston and Charity recently had a child.

Stephen is his name. They're at the Nilargo Hospital. So they had the outdooring the day that we arrived there.

And that was very interesting. There were many, probably about 100 people showed up. Hudson, which is their first son, his name means God with us.

And then West got to share a little bit with those who were there. And he said, Stephen means that it is well with us. And then he also said that Stephen was one who forgave his persecutors.

And then he brought in the whole Dagumba-Kakumba conflict of years ago. This was back about 15 years ago. And those things are still raw in many people's minds there because many people died and there was tremendous atrocities and much took place there in that conflict that brought people to death with those two tribes warring against each other.

And so there's those things are still on their minds at times. And so he very wisely just said, you know how Stephen forgave his persecutors. And can we forgive those who have done us wrong? And then the chief got up at the last and he said, because of this, we are better.

I was just blessed. He said because of all of this, we are better. And that was basically his comment.

So Weston is doing well. Him and Charity are doing well. Weston is teaching 12 leaders of 12 villages.

Three of them he wants to take time to more personally tutor. And a big prayer request is that you can all pray for his literacy. Most of these men, I think there's only one that can in a limited way read and write.

Most all of these men are illiterate. And so all they know is what they hear. And there are leaders already of village churches that are forming.

So a big prayer request of Weston's is that these men would learn how to read and write. He's he is thinking about how to go, you know, about all of that. He may he may get involved in starting some kind of program there.

Also, Weston will be the principal sent one, which the students are leaving here in September. They'll be moving to Tom Lee at that time. Tom Lee is about four at three, four hours from their station, especially because of his back.

As many of you know, he's had some back problems. Pray for West. He's being sustained, but he has to be careful to keep praying for him.

You know that that back of his. Would be sustained and and especially in travels, it sometimes gets difficult with all the bumpy roads. One of the highlights in their ministry that I was so blessed with, Weston Charity prayed for a certain woman who had eight miscarriages and had gone to many doctors after prayer with the couple and Weston and the leaders.

Furthermore, praying for her, she conceived and and after eight months of of of carrying the child, she birthed a little healthy child in their culture. It's believed that when a when a child is born prematurely, which eight months is somewhat premature, that the child is actually not a human being, but a spirit. So the leaders, they prayed, they prayed protection upon this woman.

I think this was a woman who's not even a Christian yet, but somehow Weston and charity had a heart for the woman and prayed for her. And and, you know, God answered. But so the leaders prayed protection upon her.

And so far, the child is healthy and doing well. And we thank God for the Lord's grace and protection there in that situation. So, like I said, he's working with about twelve leaders of twelve villages.

Pray for him in this. He's he's continuing to meet with these leaders periodically and disciple them and minister to them, teaching them the all things of Christ in Weston's ministry. He's gone through some difficult times the last few months, you know, through some accusations that have come his way.

And I just I just thought about the Scripture in Second Corinthians. It says, giving no offense that the ministry be not blamed. And as I watched their lives there and there in Katani, the village where they live, that was truly the case.

They were walking blameless as I saw before the Lord in what came their way. They were, you know, like the Scripture says there in Corinthians, it says we're to be blameless. I mean, we're to give no offense that the ministry be not blamed.

And it says in necessities and watchings and prayers. And I know through it all, he was up at times nights praying. But his spirit is being sustained.

God is sustaining him, giving him grace to continue to press forward, move onward, and fulfill the responsibility and the call of duty that he's called to there. The spirit of this age is penetrated through having a Christ-like spirit at all times. I'd like to highlight that with their ministry there.

Hello, I'm Shanna. Just two or three more stations and I'll be through here. Hello, I'm Shanna Penner.

They're the Scent II program. They're involved in the Scent II program, which has not started yet. But they're Daniel Keniston's assistants.

They're in Ghana for this program that I don't think I'll take the time explaining the program. But anyway, they're a new couple. And I was blessed in going to their station.

They're new to the culture. Well, Hillel was there for two years, but Shanna is fairly new. So, it's kind of a blessing to watch people who are in the newness of it all.

They're being purified. They're being stretched. They're adjusting to the culture.

Shanna was having some sleeping difficulties. And I was so blessed during the retreat. Well, Barb and I, we ministered some to them there.

We were asked to. I had some sleeping difficulties when I was in Ghana about ten years ago. So, we ministered to them some there.

And during the retreat, the missionaries banded together. Especially the sisters. In the sisters' meeting, they just encouraged her.

And during the retreat, she just slept the whole way through night times. And ever since then, from what Ross shared in our mission board meeting on Thursday, she's still doing well. Although they are not back at their station yet.

They're in Pyong. So, let's remember that the spirit of this age is penetrated in this world that we live in through us expressing love one for another. The Bible says, by this shall all men know that we are His

disciples if we have love one for another.

And I'd like to, you know, just again this morning, bring to our minds that it's not in word only, but it's by example. It's by our life that is lived that the world looks on and sees Christ. They see Christ not just by the Gospel we share, but by the lives we live.

God's heart is that we penetrate the spirit of this age through godly lives that lift up a standard against the flood tide of evil, wickedness and darkness, and the devil himself. Gush Egu, we were there as missionaries. Some of you know that we were there eight years ago.

It's about eight years ago that we came home. That was probably the most difficult, almost the most difficult time I had in the village there. Just realizing that some of our friends have died since we were there.

Some of them have passed into Christless eternity. The town, they still remember us quite well. Of course, they're very warm toward us.

I told a brother last evening, I said, Brother, it's really it's almost cooler in Africa than it is around here. And he said, Now, don't you get the fever. What he was saying, don't get the fever to go back.

And I can honestly say, the Lord really burdened my heart during that time. I don't know if it's just a burden of prayer or if God is calling us back sometime, but I was exceedingly burdened as I was there. The very area that we lived in, the very area, they call it Na'ili Fong in their language, the very area we lived in just about a year ago, there was a conflict with the new government.

There's two parties there, the NDC and MPP. And anyway, a conflict arose between the MPP and the NDC. And our area there is mainly NDC people.

And the MPP are the majority in town. So they up and decided to raise a major ruckus in town there. And they went through, they burned whole compounds.

Almost every compound that I went into there in Na'ili Fong, that had their compound burned. Of course, their huts are built up again and they've been replaced. But this is still very traumatic to them.

One man, one old man, who was so glad to see us, but he showed me his bullet wounds on his back. Three people were killed in the conflict there, by the way. But the people fled.

I mean, the people fled out into the bush, to other villages. There was tremendous, right where we lived, there was tremendous conflict. And 41 compounds were burnt.

A compound usually consists of about three, four, five, six little huts. And those were, many of them were burnt completely to the ground, along with their belongings. The people, most all of them that I talked to, they lost everything.

That man that had the bullet holes, he showed me two bicycles, you know, that were just charred. I mean, the frame was there, but that's all. So, we came away with a tremendous burden there.

I thought of the Scripture. How shall they preach? Romans 10. Romans 10.

Then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. So, you know, the Word of God needs to go forth there. The Gospel of Jesus Christ needs to be preached.

Maybe some of you would want to carry that on your hearts, the town of Gush Egu there especially, and the Rugumba tribe as a whole, which my wife and I were a part of back a few years ago. Okay, let's... Brother Ross and his family. On our way down to Tamale from Gush Egu, again, the roads are very, very bad.

And there's these deep holes at these trucks. These trucks loaded with wood. I mean, again, they're 18 foot in the air probably.

And here's these young men up top, sitting up top, you know, of these trucks that go over the bumps. I told my wife, well, I watched myself. Usually these trucks are going very slow.

So I watched myself for when they were on an even stretch to pass them, lest, you know, lest they come over this way and somehow they're thrown over upon us. I told my wife, I never sit on top of those loads. I mean, it is... But anyway, like I said, the roads were very bad.

It took us four and a half hours. What usually took us about two hours to get to Tamale. It took us four and a half, four hours because we, yeah, we did something there in Tamale afterward.

Anyway, Ross and his station, the children, they're doing well. I was blessed with Ethan. There's their son, Esther and Ethan, by the way, are twins.

As some of you know, they're doing well. And Ethan, he runs errands. And he's just, again, his spirit and heart is into it.

I mean, he's fulfilled. I can tell in his position that he's been given, you know, running errands for the missionaries. And sometimes the missionaries need units on their cell phones.

And he has a whole, somehow in his account, he has the units, you know, that he has a, like a bank of units that he just has to, when one of the missionaries requests for more units, he'll just send them somehow to their phone. And so he's involved in that way. Esther was spending time down with Tanner and Rebecca, helping Rebecca out there when we were actually at their station.

Ross oversees the general direction of the missionaries and the worker overall. He travels to the stations, helping the missionaries through problems and difficult situations. Sometimes they come to, you know, to town to seek advice from him.

One time Weston shared with me, and I was just so blessed with this. Weston, he shared with me how that he was working through a difficult issue at a given time. And, and he called Ross and I guess Ross gave him some counsel over the phone.

But the next day, Ross was at his doorstep early in the morning unexpectedly. It just so blessed our brother. So, you know, the field director, he's overseeing, encouraging, exhorting the missionaries and thus the work continues to move forward.

Truly the body of Christ is beautiful as it flows and functions together. You know, as we see the body of Christ functioning together. This is how the Gospel penetrates the spirit of this age.

Through us as a body, being a whole, functioning together. You know, Ross as an administrator, like it says in 1 Corinthians 12, it says to some, he's given administrations, operations, and different giftings for the body of Christ. And that's where Ross is finding himself as an administrator there, fulfilling his calling, and thus the Gospel continues to penetrate the spirit of this age.

So, I'd just like to bring to our hearts again this area of faithfulness to the call that God has placed upon your life in the body. Because as the body functions effectually together, the Gospel penetrates and moves forward in power and strength and authority. Brother Ross is also discipling some of the leaders in Gush Egu and the Tamale churches.

He connects with the overseer of the Saligan churches. I'm not sure if Brother Samuel is here this morning, but Brother Norbert is doing well with overseeing. In other words, Ross meets with his brother who oversees the three churches or four of them maybe, that Samuel Keniston had worked with back a few years ago before he came home here.

Some of you know Ephesia too. She's come back to the Lord. Praise God.

So, she's actually living with Ross at this time. So, that was a note of rejoicing there. Okay, John and Sarah.

We did not go to their station. John and Sarah, no. They live what is called at a station in a village what is called overseas.

In other words, in the rainy season, if you know the rainy season in Ghana, when it rains, it pours. It might do it on an average of every other day. You'll have a rain storm for an hour or two.

So, the gullies and all the gutters and valleys, much of them are filled up with water during the rainy season and are impassable. You can't get through with a vehicle. Only by a canoe or swimming or whatever.

And so, that's the case there. We would have to go way up and around to get to their station. By the way, their station, the name of their village is Bali, where they live.

John is over, and I should mention this. We didn't visit their station, but we went together to the retreat from Sotamali to the retreat center where the missionaries meet. It's about, I don't know, six hours, six, eight hours.

And so, we went together so that we could have a time of connecting with them. And they are doing well. They're still in their youthfulness.

I was just so encouraged in my heart in relation to our marriage. I mean, it just seems like they're back there by themselves and they basically only have each other, so they're still hanging on to each other wherever they go. I was just so encouraged in, you know, just observing them and things the Lord just kind of put in my heart concerning our marriage.

You know, it's good for the Lord to kind of, you know, stoke us a little in those first love, in that first love of our marriage. And that's what God did in my heart as I observed them and watched them. He is

overseeing two... He's working with two men in the village there.

There's about a month... I forget how long ago it was, but a few months ago, I think it was, an organization came in there and showed some films. It was a very charismatic organization from what John said. They actually left the village.

They didn't want to be... You know, they didn't want to have to hear it all. And I guess the women were dressed very fashionably. But anyway, this organization, they had some meetings there and I think showed some films and so forth.

And John and Sarah came back just before it was over. They hadn't realized it wasn't going to be over, so they came back. And so all of a sudden, the man that was heading up this crusade, he said to John, I have 130 converts.

There's 130 converts and I'd like to hand them all over to you. You know, they just came in and wanted to leave again. And they were converts.

You know, they claimed... I mean, many came in from other villages. And so John, he didn't know what else to do except, you know, say, OK, I'll work with it the best I can. And well, so it's all shaken down.

It's basically eight, eight women besides these two men that are meeting. And I think the women are from the village. And so there is a little essence, a little church that is kind of forming there.

And God is working to... It seems like maybe these women either have... are very serious or have been saved. I'm not exactly sure of all the dynamics there. So anyway, I was... Like I said, their vibrancy of spirit.

They have an excellent spirit. And God is continuing to manifest His glory just simply through their countenances. I mean, their countenances express the glory of God and the joy of the Lord.

And again, I thought of marriage. The spirit of this age is penetrated through loyalty to each other in our friendships and marriages in a world where much has broken down in regards to marriage. You know, the spirit of this age is penetrated through godly marriages.

The world can look on and say, behold, they love each other as husband and wife. They've been married 17 years. They've been married 20 years.

And they still love each other. We all know that there's many marriages that are falling apart in this world that we live in. And so that's what I thought of the Song of Solomon when I watched them.

And God is just breathing His life through them and their love for one another and their love for the work of God there in Ghana. And they are praying about taking on the Katigo Station which involves the Dugumbo work. Ross has presented that to them.

Pray for them. They want to make a decision by the end of the month here. So pray for John and Sarah that God would give them wisdom in that and understanding of His will.

Okay, down to the retreat. The missionaries. This is basically my last point before concluding.

The missionaries meet at a grounds in Kumasi, which is kind of central in the country. They meet together every half year, every six months, just to be together as a big missionary family. When I think of them being together, I think of Paul's missionary band.

They're a missionary band. They're just banded together. They love each other.

There's unity among them. And at the retreat, they're station sharing. They share what's going on in their respective stations.

They're singing. We had a campfire. Playing of games.

I don't know if I've... I played soccer when I was there. Oh, I haven't. I didn't feel that wiped out or tired for a long time from playing a game as I did when we played that game of soccer there.

Another joy at those... Another joy at the retreat grounds was just seeing Kloss's and Ross's children. You know, Kloss's, they have children about the same age as Ross's. And that was such a blessing, just to see the two families that they have companionship.

They have friends. And they were very much, you know, intermingling with one another and into each other's lives. And the friendship was very evident.

Barb, my wife made some... We took some breakfast foods along the river. And the missionaries were very blessed with that. We had... We served them cereal, which they're not used to having in Ghana.

Cereal's too expensive to buy, basically. They were so blessed with the cereal and the... What do you call the others, Barb? Bagels that we took along the river. And one time, Adriel... This was Adriel, Ross's son.

These children, I mean, seven... We told them, 7.30 in the morning, breakfast is ready. I mean, they were gnawing at the bit. At seven... About a quarter after seven, they were there at the door just kind of waiting.

And Barb was... One time, Barb was helping. I mean, one of them was helping, Adriel. Ross's son was helping Barb bring in food to the table.

And Barb said to... Commented to him, she thinks that they... We have about everything, you know, that is needed for the morning. He reminded Barb that you didn't bring the cereal out yet. So they really enjoyed those breakfasts.

I'm not sure if they'll do it every year or not. But it was a blessing. They just flowed in from 7.30 to nine and we got to chat with them.

And it was a joy. Another thing that happened at the retreat, each year, each time we go, we take some gifts along for the children usually. And so this time, this year we took boomerangs along.

I don't know how many of you know what a boomerang is. It's something that you throw and it basically spins around and comes back to you. And I mean, they were just... They were just delighted with these things.

And on the ground there, there's trees. And these things kept getting hung up in the trees. So they would have this volleyball and be throwing it up time after time, trying to get this thing out of the tree.

And some of them were climbing the trees to try to get them out. And it was... It was a joy to watch the children just enjoying the ground there. Much green grass there.

As many of you know, Ghana, there's hardly any green grass in the villages and towns there and even the cities. Barb had some sisters' meetings and a treasure hunt with the children. Missionaries always look forward to my wife coming along.

Okay, back to Accra. On the way out to Accra, we were traveling behind this little taxi. And we came up to a tractor and a wagon that was a big tractor.

This was a tractor with a cab, like a Ford, one of the bigger tractors there. And so we came up upon this tractor and right in front of us was this little taxi. And from what I remember, I mean, Matthew thinks it immediately swerved out, but from what I remember, it was following the tractor for a little while and then thought nothing was coming.

And all of a sudden, it darted out into the other lane and just like that, there was a tremendous crash. We saw it take place before our eyes. Another taxi hit it kind of on the side because it had swerved out to that angle that it basically hit it on the side.

And in no time, there was many vehicles stopping and helping the people out. A few of the women were pretty badly injured, especially one. I'm not sure about the other one.

But we soon left. They were taking care of things, but just reminded us, you know, reminded me this morning when the testimonies were being shared. You know, maybe there's someone here who's not saved this morning.

How quickly life can be snatched away in a moment of time, just like that, that car had hit that other taxi. And those women were in, especially the one was in tremendous pain. They carried her.

She was bleeding. But I don't know if she made it through. But, you know, how quickly life can be taken away for us who aren't saved, for some who aren't saved here this morning.

That means a Christless eternity. So let's take seriously when we hear a testimony of salvation and the call of the gospel upon your life. OK, we met Monday evening of this past week.

We met Melinda Shirk and a few other girls that came in. And then Tuesday morning we flew back home. So in summing up the message, let's just turn back to Philippians 2. Philippians 2. We're to be bright lights in this world of darkness and sin that we live in.

Again, it says here, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights. I was blessed in summing this up. I'd just like to give two testimonies yet.

Brother Klaus, he took a trip to Benin when we were there in the country. Actually, we went with him when we were going to Tanner Station and he dropped us off there. But in Benin he stopped at an S.I.M. missionary station and the missionary personnel, they looked at his family and they said, Klaus, how did you do it? They've seen the modesty.

They've seen the example of godliness in the children. They said, how did you do it? I mean, the director or whoever was there, he went to his co-laborer there and he said, look at this family. Look at them.

And he just beheld their godliness. And they talked about Muslim outreach. And as I remember, the impact that the lifestyle that they were living would have on the Muslim world as missionaries, as we think of going into the Islamic world in the future and so forth.

But that was the testimony of that S.I.M. missionary. You know, he was looking on and he was saying, Klaus, how did you raise a godly family like that? Another one in Accra. A pastor asked Brother Matt, Brother Matthew Wallman, he asked him if he could share a message on modesty.

Again, he saw an example that was being lived down and it just so blessed me. He said, if I share, the pastor said, if I would share a message on modesty, half my congregation would leave. He said, Matthew, can you come and share? And I'm not sure if he's going to take the opportunity or not.

And please, I'm not lifting up modesty as the thing that draws people to Christ. I mean, not just by itself. But what I am lifting up is that we're presenting a Gospel that is being lived out not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

The Bible is clear that the love of God is perceived this way. If you really love your neighbor, you will be showing forth a Gospel that draws them to Christ not in word only, but by your lifestyle. By the way you live.

We must have a Gospel that is lived out in deed and truth and not in word only. And that's what I'd like to present here this morning in closing. That we as God's people are continuously lifting up the Gospel of Jesus Christ and penetrating the spirit of this age through our lives.

Employees on the job site. Employers with where you're at in your calling. You're making good use of your time.

Fathers and mothers with where you're at. You're redeeming the time with your children. You're lifting up a standard.

You're bringing the fear of God to bear upon your homes and families that others might hear in fear. All of that is happening. And thus, the Gospel of Christ penetrates the spirit of this age.

People are looking for something that works. Something that's different. Something that's really, you know, something that they see that, like we heard this morning, this world, when we live for this world and go after the things of this world, it only adds to the void that's already there.

So people are looking for something that will fill the void. Looking for something that will truly satisfy and truly have some meat on it. And thus, you know, as I observe the missionaries, the examples of our missionary brethren are such.

They go through pain, difficulty, trials, sickness, temptation. And through their lives of example, as the Gospel is preached, it penetrates the spirit of the age. Let's be thus.

Let it be thus with us. That we're living out our real Gospel that we're professing. We're living it out in our everyday lives.

At home, with our neighbors, like I shared, just a cat incident, you know, may open a door for us to go back and share the Gospel. That we're loving our neighbors, we're caring, showing forth care. If we truly love them, we'll not be sharing the Gospel in word only, which I already shared.

And I believe this is a Gospel that penetrates the spirit of this age as we live out that which we profess. Through difficulty, through temptation, through trials, that we show forth that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. So let us live our lives in that way.

I believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ will continue to penetrate the spirit of this age in the area that we live in. Amen. God bless you.

Amen. Thank you, Brother Mel, for that good report of the missionaries and what God is doing there. Truly a blessing to be a part of a work like that that is going on.

To us here as a mission board, I can say it's such a joy to have Brother Ross over there being overseer, watching over the missionaries. It really brings stability to them on the field, and it also brings such rest into our hearts to have that therein. I also want to say that I also likewise, as Mel, when I go there, I'm so blessed with their godly lives, the testimony of godliness is so special, so precious.

And that is a great blessing to us. So I appreciate that. May the Lord continue to bless them as they serve Him in that way.

As I was thinking about what happened there at Wawase compared to a year ago when my wife and I were there, we walked through that town and just the bristles, you know, and that town against class was very evident. And now, one year later, it's just turned. And I think about that and I ponder what spiritual warfare really is all about.

What has happened? Why has there been a change in the spiritual atmosphere of that town? Is that through, if I could use the charismatic sense, preying against the principalities and powers? And I believe we need to do that. But the reality is that the power of Satan is broken by the godly life. Godly lives.

The lives of the Christians affects, may I say, affects not only the people around us, but it also affects the principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in higher places. And sometimes I've been pondering that. What is it that really affects the Christian life most? Are we affected by heavenly things, good or evil? Or is what happens on the earth affects them? You ever think about that? And I've pondered and prayed about that.

I thought, you know what? When Jesus, a human man, died on the cross, in a literal death, that affected the heavenlies more than anything else ages to come. And so we likewise are called to live godly and to lay down our lives, but stand for truth. That affects the world.

The world, may I say. So, thank you Mel for that good report. And yes, I do agree that our lives are challenged and many times sanctified in a sense by the lives of our missionaries.

It's good for a congregation. Well, we have we're about at the end of our time here, but I wonder if there's any visitors here that would like to share a word of blessing or testimony or something on their hearts this morning. Could we just give the visitors some opportunity to say something if there's anyone here like that? Just a very brief opportunity here.

I didn't embarrass you, did I? We're blessed that you're here today. Alright, I see one hand. Yes, I would just like to thank the Brotherhood here for Brother Mel for sharing and for contributing to this beautiful morning we had here.

I would like to praise God for meeting with us this morning. And I just want to share a short testimony of my faith in prayer has been tremendously increased in in some things that I've been praying for in recent weeks that have been answered and especially with Brother Arrow here sitting and testifying that he wants to be baptized. It's a tremendous faith has been tremendously increased in God and I'm just praising the Lord this morning.

So I just want to share that. Thank you, Brother. And I know that our prayers also do affect those things very much.

Not just our godly lives, but our prayers united with that really does make a difference. So, thank you, Brother. Is there anyone else that wants to share or feel the blood of the Lord? Just share briefly here before we close.

We're blessed to be here this morning and to hear the testimonies of what God has done in these new converts lives and just blessed to hear that and with knowing Ben and Sadie for a couple of years here in their walk together and how they came together as they went apart and how they came back together just really blessed me and touched my heart to hear her testimony and also blessed by Mel here, what he shared on his trip and how people around the world are praising the Lord and reaching out. Blessed by that. Thank you, Brother.

Yeah, I felt so blessed to hear the testimonies and to see the clear redemption of of Saul now shining the glory of God and I also thought about the godly lives and how it drew me too. I didn't know much of Uncle Moses and their children's lives but I knew enough that there was something there I wanted so just keep pressing on godly lives. Amen.

There's always somebody watching us, isn't it?

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