

Called to Die

by Michael L. Brown

The church today is in a crisis, and the main problem is its prosperity and softness, which has led to a lack of sacrifice and a failure to follow Jesus' teachings.

Duration: 1:08:32

Topics: "Death To Self"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher highlights the temptation faced by Americans to be lured away from God's true riches by temporal treasures. He emphasizes the abundance and comfort that Americans enjoy, contrasting it with the struggles faced by the rest of the world. The preacher challenges the audience to examine their priorities and question whether they are investing their time and energy into things that will ultimately burn. He urges them to focus on eternal matters, such as getting right with God and spreading the Gospel, rather than being consumed by worldly pursuits.

Transcript

I'm Dr. Michael Brown. Good morning. How many of you are here today? Raise your hands if you're here.

I'm glad that I'm here with you. I somehow have a habit of the first day meeting in these sessions thinking that they're 10 instead of 9.30. But the one thing I knew is I couldn't be late for this session because I was speaking. So, anyway, I just want to tell you briefly about our school and some of the things that are happening there.

And then we're going to get into the word together. We're kind of in a dream world right now in the midst of the revival. On the one hand, it's real life, it's real battle, it's intense, it's difficult, it's challenging.

It's the hardest work, it's the most severe attack that any of us have ever known. In Jesus' name, to open the eyes of our understanding, Lord. Lord, and to free us from the habit of hearing another message and being hearers of your word only and not doers.

God, give us focus, give us clarity. May we put our defenses down. May we truly give ourselves to your purposes.

May you show us, Father, what it's going to take for the fires of revival to spread throughout this world. Lord, I'm asking you not to hold back truth from us, but to be ruthlessly and lovingly honest with us, Father. Remove the scales from our eyes that we may see.

Remove the crust from our heart that we may receive and hear. May we be doers of your word and so be blessed. May we glorify you by life or by death.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen, you can be seated. Turn with me to Matthew, the 10th chapter.

If you want a message title, I have kind of an upbeat, happy, feel-good, ear-tickling title. Called to die. Does anyone have a watch on? Anyone tell me what time it is? 10.30. Matthew 10.

Before I read this scripture, I want to tell you where I'm going and why I believe the Holy Spirit has laid this on my heart. Most of the time in the revival, I play the role of teacher. In our day sessions, Friday and Saturday, in our school of ministry.

When I go out, I'm primarily preaching. Here in these pastors' conferences, this is not so much a teaching as more a word from the Lord. Preaching, seeking to stir things in you and change things in you.

We've been in the midst of a glorious outpouring here for three and a half years. And God has been moving in other parts of the country and other parts of the world for years before that. On the one hand, the church has never seen a day like today.

On the one hand, we are seeing the greatest moves of God. The most people coming into the kingdom. The most rapid growth of the church anywhere in world history.

This generation is living in it. The greatest harvest of souls around the world is taking place in front of our eyes in this generation. And there's a lot to be thankful for.

There's a lot to glorify God for. Many of you have testimonies that are absolutely sensational. How God revolutionized your life.

How God sent the fire of revival to your church, to your community. How awesome things are taking place. How you're living in a dream world.

I don't deny that for a split second. And yet I see that we are still in a total crisis here in America. I see that starting here is a point of reference with revival fires burning here and in other churches around America for several years now.

The nation is still in a total mess. Total stupor. Morally insensitive.

Young people shooting each other up in schools. Abortion still as legal as it's ever been. Homosexuals still as militantly out of the closet as they've ever been.

Trash on television. Trash in the movies. Selling as well as it ever has.

No moral conscience in the government it seems. We're in a crisis here. And then you go around the world.

I preach often in Europe. There are many European nations that have had the gospel for centuries. That have less than 1% of their population born again.

There are other vast countries like India that have had the gospel since the first century. And yet maybe 2-3% of that vast nation knows the Lord. That nation grows at the rate that the population of Australia is about 17 million people.

India grows by the population of Australia every year. So many millions of people being born that don't know Jesus. Something has to change if we're really going to see revival fires spread to the ends of the earth.

Something has to change if we want to see America shaken. Something has to change even if we want to see a harvest of 10% in some of these countries. Instead of 1 or 2%.

Just 10% which is still a small minority. Even if that was our vision. Something has to change.

You say we need more of the outpouring of the Spirit. We need God to do more. We need more power.

We need more anointing. We need more authority. That's all true to a certain extent.

But I tell you the greatest problem is that God needs more of us. The greatest problem is not on God's side. The greatest problem is not what He's giving.

The greatest problem is what we're giving. There's something more that God is after. We're going to have to change our whole mentality.

If we're really going to see the move of God go to the ends of the earth. If we're really going to see our nation shaken with the gospel. It's going to call for a total reassessment of how we live and what it really means to follow Jesus.

Matthew 10 verse 16. Jesus speaking to the 12. It applies to the 70 and on a certain level it applies to all of us.

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard against men.

They will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. He's just telling them this is what's coming if you're going to follow me. This is what's coming.

On my account you'll be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say.

For it will not be you speaking but the spirit of your father speaking through you. Isn't it amazing we love to quote that when we haven't prepared a message. That the Holy Spirit is just going to speak through us spontaneously.

It's got nothing to do with that. We love to pull that out. We don't like to claim the other part.

Lord I'm claiming the promise that you're going to speak through me. And that I shouldn't premeditate what I should say. We'll also claim the promise that you'll be flogged in synagogues.

Brother will betray brother to death and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me but he who stands firm in the end will be saved.

When you're persecuted in one place flee to another. I tell you the truth you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. A student is not above his teacher nor a servant above his master.

It is enough for the student to be like his teacher and the servant like his master. What happened to our master? What happened to our teacher? How is he viewed? How is he treated? If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub the devil himself. How much more the members of his household.

So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark speak in the daylight.

What is whispered in your ear proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Verse 37 Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Let's say you didn't know anything about Christianity.

Let's say you didn't know anything about the gospel. And you just started reading the words of the New Testament. You would be in for a little bit of a shock.

In the Beatitudes Jesus not only pronounces blessings on the merciful and on the meek and on the pure in heart and on the poor in spirit and on the peacemakers. He pronounces blessings on the persecuted. Matthew 5 verses 10 through 12 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness.

And then he turns and speaks a direct blessing. Blessed are you. People hate you and they revile you and they insult you.

When they say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be glad. That's how your fathers treated the prophets of old.

Your reward is great in heaven. You're blessed when you're persecuted. He says in Matthew 16 If anyone wants to come after me, if anyone wants to be my disciple He must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Every single one of us is called to bear the cross. Every single one of us is called to follow in the Savior's footsteps. Those themes repeat it in Mark, in Luke.

You get to John's gospel and Jesus says Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He tells his disciples in John chapter 15 verses 18 to 21 If the world hates you, remember it hated me first.

And remember the world will treat you exactly the same way it treated me. Because it doesn't know my father and it doesn't know me. John 16 verses 1 and 2 He tells his disciples right there You're going to be put out of synagogues.

In fact, the time is coming when whoever kills you Thinks he's doing a service to God. And then in John 21 verses 18 and 19 He tells Peter how he's going to be hung up to die. You know what it says? He told this to Peter to show him by what death he would glorify God.

You're just reading through the New Testament. You don't know anything about Christianity or about the gospel. And you're reading through these words.

He's telling Peter by what death he's going to glorify God. Then you get into the book of Acts. The apostles are flogged.

What does it say in Acts 5 41? They left the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach for the Savior. Then you get into the 7th chapter. Stephen's killed.

12th chapter, James is killed. Paul persecuted through the whole book. You get to the teaching in the epistles.

What does it say in Romans 8 17? That we'll reign with Him. We'll be co-heirs with Him if we suffer with Him. Letter after letter after letter the same themes.

Paul writes to the Philippians in Philippians 1 29 and tells them to you it's given. It's your privilege on behalf of the Messiah. Not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for Him.

Paul's on a hard cry in Philippians 3 10 is that he can enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of Jesus along with the power of His resurrection. You get into 2 Timothy 3 12 and Paul expressly says all those who live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. These are just the facts of life.

He's saying you're in a hostile world. You're in a world that crucified the Messiah. You're in a world that doesn't know God.

You're in a world that bows down to the prince of this age, the devil himself. And when you follow Jesus there's going to be a life and death conflict. And everyone will have to take up the cross.

Everyone will have to deny themselves. Everyone will have to suffer in this world. Everyone will have to die to their own rights and die to their own agenda and die to their own purposes.

And some might even physically have the privilege of laying down their lives for the gospel. I'm not talking about dying in a car crash. I'm not talking about dying of cancer.

The calamities that this world suffers are calamities that everybody suffers. And if anything as people of God we have promises of protection and deliverance. I'm talking about willing choices that we make that cause us to lay down our lives for the gospel.

Then you get into the book of Revelation. And I'm just sampling verses through the New Testament. Get into Revelation chapter 2 verse 10.

As Jesus speaks to the church in Smyrna. And he's telling them hard times are coming. And the devil's going to put some of you in prison to try you for 10 days.

And after 10 days I'll deliver you and all be well. But you'll be put in prison 10 days. What? Hang on.

I just misquoted that. Sorry. I gave an American interpretation to it.

A contemporary interpretation. He says devil's going to put you in prison for 10 days. Be faithful to the point of death.

And I'll give you the crown of life. Steve preached not too long ago in Revelation 12, 11. They overcame by the blood of the Lamb.

By the word of their testimony. They loved not their lives even to the point of death. And he made the observation that we don't like to preach on the third part of that very much.

We love to preach on the power of the blood of the Lamb. And the power of the word of our testimony. But not of the power of consecration even to death.

This is just the language of the New Testament. Now let me step back for a minute. And I assure you by the time we are done.

Your thinking, your perspective is going to be changed. I'm just hitting you with scripture truth now. But in a little while your whole perspective is going to be changed.

And God's going to give you a challenge. To be a vessel of his glory to the ends of the earth. To be one that can be touched by the fire of God.

And take it to the ends of the earth. You start to look at the New Testament leaders. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus.

Off with his head. Stephen, boldly confronting religious hypocrisy. Stone to death.

Both of those men died. Because they were not trying to save their lives. They were trying to be witnesses.

I wonder what would happen to us. If we did not try to save our lives. But we tried to be faithful witnesses.

I wonder how that might play out. I wonder if some of our so called wisdom. Might not be also mixed with cowardice.

You know you go through the apostolic leaders. According to church tradition. Everyone except John was killed.

When Jesus said you're going to have to take up your cross and follow me. Grain of wheat has to die if it's going to bring forth a harvest. Every one of those men except John.

Who was exiled after torture according to tradition. Every one of them pays with their lives. Paul pays with their lives.

I mean picture you're training people for leadership. Say how come we need to keep training so many people for leadership. This must be a progressive company here.

You must be constantly expanding and starting new businesses and new branches. How come you keep needing new top line leadership? Oh because once you get to the top you get killed. Who wants a promotion in that business? This is just reality.

This is just what people experience. And the New Testament church was unstoppable. With all its problems and blemishes and flaws that you read about.

And the epistles and the letters to the churches in Revelation. This church was unstoppable. They even said.

One of the early leaders. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. That's the way the quotes been shortened for us.

You think going to the second century. You read the names of some of the most important leaders in the church. Polycarp.

Killed, burned at the stake. Ignatius. Killed.

This is what he says on his way to be martyred in Rome. He says I am the wheat of God. And I'm ground by the teeth of the wild beasts.

That I may be found the pure bread of God. This was the language of the believers in the first and second centuries. Do you understand that? We've often heard that the Greek word for witness is martyr.

That's not exactly accurate. The Greek word for witness. Martus.

Martiros. Meant witness. That's what it meant.

It had nothing to do with death. But because so many of the early Christians. In order to be witnesses.

Had to die. That the word became martyr. Do you understand? That to be a witness meant.

You're going to die. To be a witness meant. You're going to lay your life on the line.

To be a witness and to be faithful. Could well cost you your blood. Men you're wise might say goodbye to you in the morning.

As you went off for your day of work. And might never see you again. Why? Because you were going to be a witness.

It's interesting. That when you look in the book of Revelation. And there's seven letters to the churches there.

That two of them are commended without rebuke. Smyrna and Philadelphia. And the two that get the strongest rebuke.

Are Sardis and Laodicea. Let's contrast Laodicea with Smyrna. Laodicea.

You say I'm rich. Increased in wealth. And have need of nothing.

The prosperous church. The church that seems to have everything it needs. Impressive to everyone.

You say I'm rich. Increased in wealth. And have need of nothing.

And you don't realize you're wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. The church in Smyrna. I know your poverty and your afflictions.

And yet you're rich. One was rich in this world. And had nothing of God.

And the other had very little in this world. And had everything of God. The church of the 20th century.

The church throughout America. The church throughout Europe. The church throughout countries like Australia, New Zealand.

Prosperous parts of the world. Parts of the world that for the most part are not affected by persecution. That church has grown soft.

Listen to what A.W. Tozer said. That this world is a playground instead of a battleground. Has now been accepted by the vast majority of fundamentalist Christians.

George Failing said this. We Christians have given Calvary to the communists. They accept deprivation and death to spread their gospel.

While we Christians reject any gospel that does not major on healing and happiness. Communism in its early days spread through great sacrifice and great commitment to principle. Even though it was a totally destructive thing.

Another Christian leader said this. We are losing our Christianity because Christianity is a creed for heroes. While we are mainly harmless good-natured people who want everybody to have a good time.

One of my friends. Got other friends that here that work with him. In the former Soviet Union.

He and his wife and three kids in Kazakhstan. In the middle of nowhere preaching the gospel to Jews that don't know Jesus. And one of his newsletters.

This is just a regular couple that just said we've got to get up and do something. We've got to give our lives to God. We've got to touch people that don't know the Lord.

We've got to touch people that have never heard. One of his newsletters. He said something and I just jotted it down.

He said. By the world standards we Americans face the greatest temptation. In respect to being lured away from God's true riches by temporal treasures.

Our refrigerators are filled with food as we relax in our climate-controlled homes. Firing our remote controls at color TV and CD stereo systems. Leaving only to drive our air-conditioned cars to the nearest blockbusters video store.

Later to load the latest movies into our VCR as we launch and lounge on our comfortable couches. The rest of the world in the meantime struggles to survive another day. That paints a picture doesn't it? I've often joked about this.

But in America sacrifice is defined as. The remote control on the VCR isn't working. And I have to get up and walk all the way across the living room to.

And you know I got a big living room. It's real sacrifice to press that button. We read these things about death.

We read these things about imprisonment. We read these things about laying down your life. We read these things about called to die throughout the scriptures.

Bonhoeffer said when Christ calls a man he bids him come and die. And they're just words to us. There's very little reality.

Even the sting of persecution. Persecution to us for most of us. We've got some folks from around the world that have really suffered persecution.

But for most of us persecution is. Person gave me a dirty look because I had a Christian bumper sticker. They probably gave you a dirty look because you cut them off.

Because you were so busy praising the Lord you didn't see where you were driving. That's probably why they gave you a dirty look. But I mean that's about the extent of our persecution.

People at work don't talk to me too much. We know very little about suffering for the gospel. You say where are you going with this brother? Are you about to call us all the street preach in Saudi Arabia? I mean where are you going with this? Stay with me.

How many of you know who C.T. Studd is? That's one of our problems I think also in this generation. We don't know a lot of the heroes of the faith. The model that we have.

And it may be a godly man or a godly woman preaching on television. But that's pretty much the model that we have. Or a godly man or a godly woman standing behind a pulpit in a lovely sanctuary like this.

That's the model we have. The model of the godly Christian athlete is someone who's making six million dollars a year. But always keeps themselves composed.

And at the end of their victory glorifies Jesus. Or when they knock out their opponent in the boxing ring. And the guy's laying there unconscious.

Bleeding from his eyes, his nose broken. Concussion. That you know you stand up after making 30 million dollars.

And say I can only do this by the Lord Jesus. I have to give him all the honor and glory. Because I can only do this by him.

As the guy's laying there maimed. I mean those are the models that we have. Not like C.T. Studd.

Who just left everything. And some of these people right where they are. In the midst of sports and other things are godly witnesses.

And God bless them and God's using them. But the models that we have are not the models saying. I don't need 10 million a year.

I don't need 1 million a year. I don't need 100,000 a year. Because I'm going to preach the gospel to people I've never heard.

Oh but you sacrificed your whole career. Think. You could have had hours of highlights on videos.

Reverse slam dunks. The greatest home run of all time. Score.

What an awesome kick. I don't believe that in heaven. When someone scores a tremendous goal.

In football or soccer. When someone breaks a record. Hitting a home run.

That all the angels stand up and God says. Oh did you see that shot. Whoa.

I don't believe that you know. When we go before heaven. That a Christian athlete is going to be there.

And the Lord Jesus is going to ask him for his autograph. On a baseball or a football or basketball. Those things just do not matter.

We make them into gods. We elevate them as if they're so important. We bow down to that.

Those things consume us. Fashion. Entertainment.

Sports. Materialism. We are idol worshippers.

C.T. Studs said he was born in an aristocratic family. One of the wealthiest most prominent families in all of England. He and his brother were master cricket players.

He could have been one of the great sportsmen of his whole generation. He left everything. First went to China.

Then ended up spending the rest of his life in Africa. Labored. Sacrificed for souls.

And that made sense. I'll tell you when one of those Africans came to Jesus. Heaven stood up and took notice of that.

Hallelujah. Our missions director at our school just showed me a picture. He wanted me to see this man.

He said listen. Nobody ever preached to this tribe in Africa. They were just there earlier in the year.

Nobody would go preach to them. Nobody ever reached them. We sat down with the chief.

And we shared the gospel message with him through an interpreter. There's the picture of the chief. And he kept saying wow.

Wow. And wow meant I completely agree. This is absolutely right.

And he began to say Jesus Christ is the light that we need. This is a wonderful. The guy got wonderfully converted.

The chief of the whole tribe. And John our missions director said but nobody ever went and told them the message. I'll tell you.

Heaven took notice of that. Heaven said look at that. They didn't say look at that when a home run record was broken.

And thank God people. Great athletic achievement. Wonderful.

Pushing their bodies to the limit. Wonderful. Fine.

Beautiful artwork. Beautiful music. Fine.

Wonderful. But that doesn't matter. The angels don't take tours of our picture galleries.

But they peak down over the balcony when people are getting right with God. That's what excites them. That's what stirs them.

That's what matters in the light of eternity. All the other stuff is going to burn. You got to ask yourself are you putting most of your energy and effort and time and desire into things that are just going to burn.

C.T. Studds said the first five years when he and his family lived in China. Five years there was not a day when they left their house without a barrage of curses from the neighbors coming at them. Five years.

When God was challenging C.T. Studds about his future he read this track written by an atheist. I don't know if you've ever seen this. About this time he says I met with a track written by an atheist.

It read as follows. This is an atheist. God used it to challenge C.T. Studds.

Did I firmly believe as millions say they do that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny and another. Religion would mean everything to me. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity.

Religion would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labor in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone.

I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs would occupy no moment of my thoughts.

I would strive to look upon eternity alone and on the immortal souls around me soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season and my text would be, what shall it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lose his own soul? And Studds said, I at once saw that this was the truly consistent Christian life. When I looked back upon my own life I saw how inconsistent it had been.

I therefore determined that from that time forth my life should be consistent and I set myself to know what was God's will for me. Challenged by an atheist. Let me talk to you for a minute about martyrdom.

Why is it in the Middle East right now that Hamas terrorists blow themselves up, young men blow themselves up to take other lives. Well why do they do, you know there's a long line of them ready, ready and willing. Listen to the way they think.

These are the words of Hamas. But he who takes up a gun, a dagger, a kitchen knife or even a pebble with which to harm and kill the enemies of the faith has his place assured in heaven. An Islamic state is a state of war until the whole world sees and accepts the light of the true faith.

This is the word of an Islamic leader actually from Iran. Or here, listen to this, this is the mother of a Hamas terrorist referring to her son's suicide bombing on the last Sunday of December 1994. Wounded 13 people took his life.

What did she say? This is the mother. I am very happy that my son has reached paradise. He has made us very proud and brought dignity to the entire family.

I don't feel pain and I'm not crying, this is like a wedding. Now listen to me, this is demonic, this is devilish, this is destructive, this is the taking of lives and yet there's a mentality I'm willing to lay my life down for this

cause. That's why suicide bombers are so effective because you can't stop it because people are willing to give everything.

If people were willing to blow themselves up on a plane, security would be almost impossible. Why do they have that mentality? Because they're disillusioned with this present world. Because they have a strong hope in an afterlife and because they're willing to die for the principles they stand for.

That's what the devil has put into people for destruction. What about pioneers? What about soldiers who fight for a country? Here's a man, 1947 was fighting for the statehood of Israel and was captured and was going to be put to death by the government. He's a young man.

Listen to what he said. Of course I want to live. Who does not? Let me just say this, the Bible is full of references to loving life and being blessed by God in this life.

And His joy is our strength. There's nothing morbid about God. There's nothing dismal or dreary about God.

Heaven is not depressing. And the most glorious scenes that you get in the Word are like Stephen being stoned and looking up to heaven and seeing Jesus. We're not talking about something God forsaken.

We're talking about something glorious. We love life and that we give ourselves fully to do the work of God. We enjoy what He's given us.

We enjoy our families. We enjoy our fellowship. We enjoy the blessings of this world.

But we understand we are passing through and we understand our life is not for us but for the purposes of God. We're here to fulfill God's purposes, period. There's no other reason why we are here.

Heaven is better than anything we'll have here. Listen to what this young man said. Of course I want to live.

Who does not? But if I am sorry that I am about to finish, it is mainly because I did not manage to do enough. There's not a religious man, not a godly man, just a man who wanted to see statehood in Israel as a Jew. I too could have let the future fend for itself taking the job I was promised or left the country altogether and lived securely in America but that would not have given me satisfaction as a Jew and certainly not as a Zionist.

So what I have to do as a Jew is stand up for what is ours and be ready for battle even if in some instances it leads to the gallows. This is how America was founded with a similar spirit, give me liberty or give me death. A similar attitude and that was just for something in this world.

He said I write these lines 48 hours before the time fixed by our oppressors to carry out their murder and at such moments one does not lie, he's going to be hung in 48 hours. I swear that if I had the choice of starting again I would choose the same road regardless of the possible consequences for me. Let me talk to you about the church now and I'm going to encourage you today but I'm going to encourage you by calling you to be a living sacrifice.

I'm going to encourage you by calling you to give your lives unconditionally to the fulfilling of the great commission by life or by death. To unconditionally give yourself to see God's purposes fulfilled in you and I want to say this honestly I've written books with similar challenges through the years and I examine my

heart I lay on my face before God because I'm a rich American I don't mean I'm rich compared to other Americans I mean I'm an American with plenty therefore I'm a rich American compared to the rest of the world. I've got a beautiful home I drive a comfortable vehicle I've got a big office with a massive library of books One thing I don't have is a fancy wardrobe but that's just the way it is.

And I ask myself what gives me the right to say this? I haven't been put in prison for Jesus I was put in prison once briefly in a pro-life rally thing that was a few hours In fact I remember when we were on the bus and we were being taken away they had these handcuffs on these plastic handcuffs that were really tight and really hurting and one of the guys was really in a lot of pain and he was asking one of the police officers could they please loosen the handcuffs and I said come on man we don't get to suffer anything ever at least have a little pain you know we're not going to die of this it's not going to be babies at least we get to say we suffered a little bit for standing up for a cause you know I've been in some situations in India where I knew if I preached a certain message it was going to be life threatening and we've had crowds take over the platform with knives and razor blades I've been in some situations where I knew the consequences if I preached what I did what would happen but still I never had a hand laid on me just spat on once by a religious Jewish man that was mad at me and I asked myself can I really preach what I'm preaching and I tell you and I speak for every one of us in the revival there's no hypocrisy here we have absolutely to the limit that we know how pushed ourselves and given ourselves to the work of God and have lost whatever semblance of normal life we once had I tell you that before God it's not uncommon it's not uncommon that you almost go through a crisis in your own life because as far as you can see there's just service of God, revival, day and night meetings you look you don't even have normal life to do normal things pastor was talking the other day about just getting to spend time with his grandchildren how long was it since you've done it months his grandchildren remember being on the platform one night when Steve collapsed and passed his arms because he just couldn't go another minute he was too exhausted we've all had times laying in bed crying because we're so tired and you can't sleep and there's just this push, we've gone for it Kerry Robertson here how old are you brother? 65 years old, his average work week is about 70 hours plus he goes out every other week and preaches but everyone up here and listen I'm not saying that this earns us a place in Fox's book of martyrs please understand I'm not saying you know look at us we were so tired one night we started to cry you know give us a halo and a crown what happened to you?

I was tortured for my faith I had all my fingernails pulled out what happened to you? I was strung up on a rack for months at a time what happened to you? I was boiled in oil what happened to you?

I didn't see my grandchildren for a few months I'm not trying to put us in that same class but the point I'm making is in the midst of where we are because that's all we're in right now in the midst of where we are as far as we have been able, we are running the race and we have completely given ourselves to the purposes of God and if you walk with us over a period of a week or two if you walk with us in our own schedules you would get blown away, but I'm telling you it's the only thing that makes sense it's the only thing that makes sense, and I believe that at least to a certain extent I can bring you a challenge and say we're doing this the best we know how we've stretched ourselves out and all of us don't really think about well it would be wonderful to have a nice long life and

retire and see grandchildren do this and see your kids grow up to do this that would all be wonderful our younger daughter would be the first wedding in our family, getting married January 10th I'm really excited for her and for Ryan about to be son-in-law I look forward to having grandchildren and all that but there's only one thing that moves me there's only one thing that burns within me and that's will I run the race and

finish the task God gave me to do, period that's it and if it means run at top speed for another five years and then lay down your life as a martyr wonderful, if it means run your race for another year, and then that's it Jesus takes you home, wonderful, if it means run your race till you're not, whatever it means it's just about finishing the task it's not about what

we can get out of this world or having the best retirement fund, be practical sure, but that's not what it's about God, what we have one short little life even if we have 80 or 90 years, one short little life and we're called to run our race, we're called to run with perseverance, Paul writes to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 9 and he talks about the people in the world, in the Olympic Games verses 24 to 27 in 1 Corinthians 9, he talks about what they will do listen to what he says they discipline themselves they go into strict training so as to win a prize you've ever seen an athlete at the time of the Olympics they have been working and working, sometimes 6, 7, 8, 10 hours a day in special diet and they have honed their body to the limit and then athletes come from around the world

and the top one just wins by a nose just by a half a second or a tenth of a second or an inch they've given everything if they came in a little slack, if they didn't watch their diet if they didn't exercise properly, they'd never make it you can have a boxing champion who's ferocious, but if he doesn't train properly and discipline himself he gets into the ring with a bum and he gets knocked out they push themselves they give themselves to the limit to the absolute possible height of human athletic achievement Paul says they do it to win a prize, earthly prize so that's going to fade, we do it whoa, whoa, whoa, what was that Paul? we do it, they do it for an earthly crown we do it for an eternal crown we do what? we live with the same focus, the same intensity the same commitment, the

same zeal that an athlete does come on, there are people that are musicians and they'll practice 6, 8 hours a day go through the same exercises over and over to be excellent musicians there are people to make their money, their work Steve talks about it many times you go past the business places late at night and there they are the office buildings and people are burning the midnight oil and making extra buck they'll work 2, 3 jobs, they'll work crazy hours, that's just for money we'll do it for athletic things, we'll do it for material things, we'll do it for earthly goals, Paul says no, we do it for a crown that'll last forever the way we live, our commitment, our devotion, our focus, our sacrifice our zeal, should put all the others to shame should put the athletes to shame and the

musicians to shame and the business people to shame they should look at us and say, that's commitment listen to the attitude of some who've given everything for the mission field some who've given themselves to be martyrs this must be our attitude friends, we are going to have to change if we're going to see revival fire spread I believe God has gone about as far as he can with our level of commitment and he has poured out his spirit enough to say, ok, will you take the next step church will you be willing to lose your life will you be willing to lose your reputation will you be willing to recapture the spirit of heroism C.T.

Studd wrote this little book called Chocolate Soldier about lovely chocolate Christians that melt in the sun he said, the otherwise Christian the Christian who's not a soldier as a chocolate Christian dissolving in water and melting at the smell of fire sweets they are, bonbons lollipops living their lives in a glass dish or in a cardboard box each clad in his soft clothing a little frilled white paper to preserve his dear little delicate constitution now Studd can preach this he can be more blunt than I can be or any of us can be because of what he lived through to the chocolate Christian the very thought of war brings a violent attack of fever well the call of battle always finds him with the palsy I really cannot move he says I only wish I could, but I can sing and here are some of my favorite lines I must be carried to the skies on a flowery bed

of ease let others fight to win the prize or sail through bloody seas mark time Christian heroes, never go to war stop and mind the babies playing on the floor, wash and dress and feed them forty times a week till they're roly poly, puddings so to speak round and round the nursery let us ambulate sugar and spice and all that's nice must be on our plate listen to the words of John Bradford this is the spirit of Christianity the spirit of true commitment to Jesus he's gonna stand before the queen his life is in her hands, you know what he says if the queen be pleased to release me I will thank her if she will imprison me I will thank her if she will burn me I will thank her he was burned at the stake thank you queen you know this is a send the fire conference has it ever occurred to you that God uses human torches oh I appreciate that figure of speech brother that's a very nice figure of speech I'm gonna be a human torch I'm not talking about a figure of speech there's the famous story of Bishop Hugh Latimer and Dr.

Nicholas Ridley as they were about to be burned at the stake about four hundred years ago and one of them turns to the other as the flames are starting to, I mean this is flames your own body about to be burned you ever get near a fire, this is serious and one says come on, play the man come on we're about to light a torch in England which by God's grace will never go out I mean hear their own bodies going up, but that's that's life sacrifices for me to live as Christ and to die as gain that's exactly what Paul was talking about by the way I asked him to turn the air conditioning off in here so we could at least sacrifice a little during this message I don't know how it is out there but it's hot up here just another jewel in my crown in the fox's book of Mars thank God for water you know

I love to read about missionaries about people who've lived lives that make sense in the light of eternity and you see if God hasn't sent you overseas or out of your district to be a missionary it's only because he sent you where you are to be a missionary and you have to have the exact same attitude that someone who left everything and went overseas to preach you don't suddenly become a missionary it's not suddenly you get off the boat or you get off the plane in another part of the world and the angel wings just come out and suddenly there are all these people that are lined up, we are heathen, please reach us with the gospel you just say I am the missionary that you have been praying for it doesn't work like that you've got to infiltrate the society and make an impact just the same,

you've got to learn the language it doesn't just happen that now you go somewhere else now you become a missionary if you're not a missionary here you're not going to be a missionary anywhere else you say but you don't understand where I am, nobody wants to hear the gospel and they've heard it over and over, well then get out of there and go somewhere else where people have never heard and they will listen to you but that would mean sacrifice oh, a recurring theme of this message you have to ask yourself why wouldn't I go then you start to think well my kids education that's become an idol because I've got to get them in the best school or our lifestyle that's become an idol or for me, you know, eating new foods and things like that we're going to let people go to hell because we don't

like the menu that was an amen in ancient Babylonian what did Amy Carmichael say listen to this this is written 52 years after she sailed for China and then of course gave her life in India listen to this the night I sailed for China March 3rd 1893 my life on the human side was broken and it never was mended again but he has been enough 52 years later she makes that statement Henry Martin as he sails for India, he was on the boat he's writing down in his journal oh the images we had of what it was going to be like you know his guts being torn out he's leaving everything leaving everything that was dear to him and he said it's not so wonderful Amy Carmichael made some interesting statements she didn't see apostolic miracles happening and she said no wonder apostolic living has ceased no

wonder apostolic miracles have ceased and she looked around at the world and she said Satan is so much more in earnest than we are he buys up the opportunity while we were wondering how much it will cost I found this quote in one of my books from Richard Wurmbrun tortured for his faith over 14 years in Romanian prisons listen to what he said extremism should be the norm for a Christian every day as we watch the news we see that sin is exceedingly sinful it can be defeated only by exceeding love hope, joy and self-sacrifice God himself does not give with measure the devil is not holding anything back is he? the world is not holding anything back sin is not holding anything back terrorists are not holding anything back false religions and false cults are not holding anything back why are

we, we who have the treasures of eternal life we who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit we who have been redeemed by the blood of God's own Son we who are assured eternal bliss and joy and satisfaction why are we holding back?

I love to see how people understood they were marked for life somehow this always moved me when I read this James Taylor, the father of Hudson Taylor founder of the China Inland Mission one of the most famous missionaries in church history Hudson Taylor listen to the prayer his father prayed his wife Amelia is pregnant it's 1832 this is what Hudson Taylor's father prayed especially in those days with the mentality that only a man could really go on the mission field if he was going to go by himself because of the hardship and difficulties of course many women went as well, this is what he prayed dear God if you should give us a son grant that he may work for you in China and then Hudson Taylor as a boy when I am a man I mean to be a missionary and go to China we surveyed our students the

other day, over a thousand full time students, we surveyed them and we asked them, how many of you feel called to give the rest of your life to overseas missions work, and about 70% raised their hand now among them we have some that 2-3 years ago were drug addicts or strippers in bars or convicts and we have others that are surgeons or doctors or ministers, we've got the whole range from 17 to 70 years of old, but they understand their life must count in the light of eternity Ravenhill Leonard Ravenhill's famous quote that he hit Steve with all the time and hit me with all the time and I'm sure his son was raised with it David was raised with it, are the things you're living for worth Christ dying for the Bible calls us soldiers Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 to endure hardship as

a good soldier of Christ Jesus those of you that have been in the military you understand that you are no longer your own when you're enlisted, you wear what they tell you to wear, you wake up when they tell you to wake up, you eat what they tell you to eat your hair is cut the way they tell you to cut it and you may be on the front lines and sent to a place you don't want to go, and either you kill the enemy or the enemy kills you, that's life as a soldier John Hyde famous intercessor said this I know but one word obedience I know how a soldier will obey an order even to death and he said I can't expect to look Jesus Christ in the face and obey him less than a soldier his commander there's the famous poem by Tennyson the charge of the light brigade what does it say about those soldiers

even though there was a wrong command, what does it say about them theirs not to reason why theirs but to do and die soldier is at someone else's disposal, we are called to be soldiers friends, if we're gonna see the enemy defeated in this young generation that's been raised up if we're gonna see the enemy defeated in Islamic nations, many of whom have an average of one full time Christian worker for every million souls if we're gonna see the gospel sweep through America I don't mean that everyone in America is gonna be safe but a harvest of multiplied tens of millions and hundreds of millions around the world if we're gonna see it happen friend we're gonna have to change our whole way of life, our whole attitude we're gonna

have to give ourselves to the work of God, we're gonna have to

lay our lives down as living sacrifices on the altar, we're gonna have to take up the cross we're gonna have to have it as a slogan the great commission by life or by death oh thank God for religious liberty, thank God we can gather here without being persecuted right now thank God we're not being tortured for our faith right now thank God families aren't being separated our kids are being taken from us to be raised in some atheistic or Islamic school, thank God for that but I wonder how much more time we'll have with this if we don't use it I remember something your dad said David, if we don't learn to concentrate in prayer, we'll learn to pray in concentration camps let me just say a few more things and bring this to a close I tell you I'm gonna encourage you but I'm gonna encourage you

by a total call of commitment and we're gonna build you up, we're gonna love on you, we're gonna bless you somehow in these conferences God always gives me a word of challenge, of course you get a word of challenge every night too but we're gonna love on you, we're gonna encourage you, those of you that are burnt out and discouraged and can't even see your way out maybe the way out is just to say Jesus here I am maybe the way out is to say God the problems are more than I can even manage and I'm so bogged down with this stuff I can't even concentrate on the gospel God you gotta do something radical maybe instead of trying to get the problems fixed you just need to completely step out and say Lord here I am it's that place of being yielded it's that place of full surrender where the glory

comes down I want you to consider right now around the world that our brothers and sisters are suffering things that are unspeakable that between 100 and 300 thousand believers have been killed annually for many years now for their faith in Sudan alone as many as one and a half million Christians have been slaughtered for their faith by radical Muslims I mean it's common for Sudanese Christian men to be crucified nailed to trees right in our own day nursing mothers have a breast chopped off to leave them so their little baby will starve to lack of milk the boys are taken and put in Islamic schools where some of them will learn with chains the girls are taken if they're old enough they're sold into prostitution otherwise they're sold into slavery this is happening every day and yet we

think we're heroes if we fast one day a week or we get up for 6am prayer or preach the gospel on the street one time and somebody gives us the finger as they drive by in their car you know a famous story from Vietnam a pastor that was killed by the government for preaching the gospel and his wife was sent a bill for the bullet that was used one of the Iranian martyrs an assembly of God leader in fact he was in prison and tortured by the Iranian authorities for 9 years he spent 2 years in solitary confinement in an unlighted cell measuring 3 feet by 3 feet 2 years no life he was then sentenced to death for apostasy he was released from prison and murdered as soon as he got out of prison they found his body July of 94 you know what he said when he was on trial this is after the solitary

confinement after the torture the God of Daniel who protected his friends in the fiery furnace has protected me for 9 years in prison and all the bad happenings have turned out for good and gain I'm not only satisfied to be in prison for the honor of his holy name but I'm ready to give my life friends that's what it's gonna take we gotta step back and we gotta look at this it's like when Wigglesworth was praying by the bedside of a young woman who was dying and while he prayed in the middle of the night she died he said it's time to change strength it's time to move into another level of faith I say church of God I say leaders in the body of Christ it's time for us to change strength it's time for us to shift gears it's time for us to adjust our mentality gone must be the days of watching

television more than we pray reading the newspaper more than we read the word having months and months go by without quality witnesses having months go by without pouring out our heart with tears for the lost having months go by without our church burning for souls those days must be gone those days must be utterly trashed where the sports scores get our heart and get us excited if our home team wins or loses or if the new appliances came in on time or if the new computer arrived or if the car is doing well or if the building project is doing well and our hearts are up and down over those things but eternal things don't matter those days have to go how serious are you about fulfilling the great commission how serious are you about seeing revival fire spread to the end of the earth I'm

almost done but let me give you a couple last quotes how many of you holding your hands in english bible today english bible you know what it cost you to get that bible in english it cost William Tyndale his life he was killed why do we think we're just going to kind of sit back we can get a database of all the churches in our community and a database of all the unsaved people our community will win the world it's not going to happen sitting there at a computer I'm at a computer for hours everyday writing but we're not going to win the world just sitting there we're not going to win the world with a new church growth conference we're not going to win the world by going to exotic places of the world and flying around them in planes and binding spirits we're not going to win the world by

doing that friends we're going to have to assess things and say am I willing to give my life you know who wins the battle you know who wins the war whoever is willing to die for the principles they stand for and that daily life of a martyr this is not my life I live to do the will of God whatever the cost whatever the consequences that's what fuels this revival friends and that's what fuels everything God's doing around the world there was a quote that influenced Amy Carmichael by Francis Collier missionary to the Zambezi this is what he said the evangelization of the world the evangelization of the world is a desperate struggle with the prince of darkness and with everything his rage can stir up in the shape of obstacles vexations opposition and hatred whether by circumstances or by the

hand of man he said it is a desperate struggle it is a serious task oh it should mean a life of consecration William C Burns great revivalist in Scotland then gave his life for China last century he said believe me it is not with folded hands and drowsy consciences and hearts full of the cares of this life but denying ourselves taking up the cross bearing the reproach and by following the lamb whithersoever he goeth that we shall enter the kingdom you know what struck me recently I can't boast the way Paul boasted I'm not looking to be put in solitary confinement I'm not looking to be tortured stubbing my toe hurts me as much as it hurts you stubbing your toe I mean these things are just unimaginable what our brothers and sisters have gone through but it struck me I can't boast about my

sufferings very much I wonder if God will ever entrust me with a walk that's close enough to him and a walk that's enough of a threat to the devil that I'll be able to boast about my sufferings on some level like Paul did that I'll ever be front line enough that those are the consequences I wonder you know some of us we boast because we were carried out of the meeting after being slain by the spirit Paul boasted that he was carried out of the city after being stoned but a little different John Lake who was used by God in mighty works in South Africa earlier this century he was in Los Angeles and one of his missionaries wrote him from the heart of Basutoland Mr.

Lake he said the soles are worn out of my shoes and my feet are bleeding my shins are cut and my body is sore but this is what Lake replied brother your shoes are worn out and your feet are bleeding for the Lord Jesus Christ men's feet have bled and their body is sore for the service of the devil many a time and

surely we can go just as far and a little father for the son of God and eternal life everybody stand with me I want to say one last thing to you then we're going to pray and God's going to touch you today God's going to change you and God's going to raise up an army you're here because you're serious I want to challenge you to change your whole mentality towards ministry wherever it needs to be changed I want to challenge you to examine what it really means to follow Jesus and to ask yourself where is the evidence of the cross in my life I want to encourage you to look at your own life as a living sacrifice to recognize as Paul wrote to the Corinthians your life is not your own as he wrote to the Colossians you've died and your life is now hidden with Christ and God I want to encourage you to change your attitude to death to pray for the sick fervently to value life to cherish it to take proper care of yourself as best as you're able and yet to change your attitude John and Betty Stamm trained for years to go to China young couple with a baby they went to China's missionaries and before they left Betty Stamm wrote this poem afraid of what? to feel the spirit's glad release to pass from pain to perfect peace the strife and strain of life to cease afraid of that? afraid of what? afraid to see the Savior's face to hear his welcome and to trace the glory gleam from wounds of grace afraid of that? afraid afraid of what? a flash a crash a pierced heart darkness light oh heavens art a wound of his a counterpart afraid of that? afraid of what? to do by death what life could not baptize with blood a stony plot till soul shall blossom from the spot afraid of that? that's it leave this world go to be with Jesus afraid of that? wasn't long after that that she and her husband are being paraded down the streets in their underwear being made a mockery of in China and their heads put down on sharp blocks their heads put down on blocks and sharp knives cutting their heads off afraid of that? it's a quote I got from a book of quotes Steve compiled some years ago James B.

Taylor the world may frown Satan may rage but go on live for God may I die in the field of battle and one of the counterparts of C.T. Stud sent him these words shortly before his death let the victors when they come when the forts of folly fall find thy body near the wall translators forgive me for the poems I hope you got the substance of it across that's got to be our attitude for me to live as Christ to die as God I want to consecrate the rest of the years that I have to do in the will of God with heart soul mind and strength whatever it means you may go out of here and not even know how your lifestyle has to be adjusted you seek God you make some adjustments you seek the face of God you shut yourself in you go after him you give yourself to fasting you turn off the TV you get rid of some other non-essentials for a while and you seek his face say Lord my life's got to count he may tell you stay right where you are and be faithful and I'm going to move in awesome ways in your church your community he may bring you into total upheaval and say this is what I'm calling you to do but go after him and realize take that whole mentality and from here on it's just as if I got on a boat and set sail for a foreign country never to return it's just as if I said goodbye to my family and went to the martyrs gallows from here on my life belongs to Jesus from here on I'm going to do the will of God it doesn't mean you neglect your family it doesn't mean that you neglect the things that you have to care for in this world it means your whole perspective changes Father in the name of Jesus I know you laid this on my heart and I know you've shown me clearly that the only way that we will see the fires of revival spread and the only way that we will see the nations ablaze with your glory Father is if we will give ourselves unconditionally to your work and no longer hold back if we will move beyond our own superficiality Father and take the plunge I pray God that your fire would fall on every sacrifice offered I pray that you would breathe into the spirits of everyone here a spirit of absolute dedication and consecration and that you would find for yourself a people who are willing in the day of battle by life or by death in the name of Jesus friend if you feel the need to respond to this call I want you to come and kneel around this altar right now

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