

Sounds of the Revolution

by Michael L. Brown

The Jesus revolution is a radical and profound change in society, in this world, in this generation by the power of the spirit in obedience to the commission of Jesus.

Duration: 28:22

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, Luke 14:27, Luke 17:33, John 21:15-17, Acts 20:24

Topics: "Faith Application", "Jesus Revolution"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful testimony of a Jewish man who survived the Holocaust and found faith in Jesus. The man's encounter with a fellow prisoner who gave him a small Bible was a turning point in his life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being doers of God's Word and not just hearers. He encourages the audience to have a deep and personal application of the teachings of Jesus. The sermon is based on John chapter 21 and highlights the foundation of the Jesus revolution.

Transcript

It's strange because I'm a New Yorker, I was born in New York City and raised on Long Island and we spent our first 30-something years, Nancy and I, in the New York and Long Island area and then I've been back so much through the years but now just called to be back on a regular basis and to also have a base in the coming days for Jewish ministry there that, you know, most of the people that walk around and look up at the buildings are the visitors and the foreigners but I'm just so blessed to be there.

You know, each week I just walk the streets and thank God I hear the late at night the horns honking and all the sounds of the street and it's just music to my ears and we figured out that the equivalent in the city here that, you know, if you can go out like Saturday night at midnight, Broadway or Times Square area, I mean the roads are packed in the city and there, you know, traffic everywhere and commotion everywhere and we did discover that there's an equivalent place to that here, which is Wal-Mart, but it's just neat to see as God's joined hearts together from so many backgrounds and so many places with a common purpose and we're glad to be in it together and we're going to take our New York crew tomorrow, we had some discussion and our student body is to good cultural places to take them to get them to know the area here and to get a real feel for the South and some of the special things that you have here that you don't have in New York, so tomorrow we'll be having dinner at Lambert's, so anyway, bless the Lord for his goodness and grace.

If you're visiting here and wondering if God may be calling you into the school of ministry, you've got to be at least 18, you've got to be serious, committed, living a holy life, it's not a rehab place, it's not a place just to try to find God while you struggle on the journey of your life, it's a place for those who sense God's calling and hand on their lives for his purposes in this generation, you may not know exactly which direction it's supposed to take, but you know that there's a sense of calling on you and you're a serious committed believer at least 18 with a high school degree or the equivalent, we invite you to pray about being part of the school and because we've just started a new trimester system actually the next potential enrollment time is in December, so there's still

time to enroll for the next trimester and I guess since we've just been making the announcement little by little we might as well make it, we have instituted an intensive and accelerated three year program, we're in the process of fully putting that in place, but we're starting it, all incoming students and those that have been part of the program can be part of it, but in and of themselves degrees are not significant, we don't exalt them, they're simply tools, they can open certain doors, they can be useful in our calling and in our service of God both in America and other parts of the world, but we've just recently been approved with our new three year accelerated program that after the three year program our graduates will receive a bachelor's degree and we know that in many ways

that's going to help further the cause of what Jesus has given us to do, so we wanted to share that and one neat thing I was waiting to mention until we had everyone here that I could say it with, when God spoke to us to start the school in New York City, there was one extra neat little thing he did, we felt as a leadership team here that one of our grads who's part of our ministry faculty here, Charles Seepield, Charles and Jenny, really felt were called to New York to lead our music and worship department there and they really felt that same calling and so Charles began to go off with us as we were planning, and then I got contacted from a friend that I'd known in the days when we preached a lot at David Wilkerson's church in the early to mid 90's, Charles Simpson, I had to call New

York, I had to lay the calling on his heart, he's been planning churches and pastoring in New York for years and he felt the calling to join with us in this new school and we felt this is God, this is a hand-picked person of like heart, so our first two full-time people that were going to be living there working in the city were two Charles's, Charles Seepield and Charles Simpson and anyway, why don't you guys just stand up for a second so everyone knows who you are, Charles and Charles, so Charles Seepield is sharing his testimony with me, parts of it I hadn't heard, it was real significant for him coming back into New York because 12 years earlier when he was in New York as a songwriter, as a young man trying to get his songs published and get in the music industry, he had to look

around at things and just feel, you know, he didn't like what he saw in the industry and he was walking in that area, Times Square area one time and there was a young guy preaching the gospel, it was in the winter, he was wearing a green coat and it was something different about what he was saying and the way he was saying it so it got the attention of Charles Seepield and before he walked away this guy offered him a little Bible, a little Gideon's Bible so he took it and read the words of Jesus and just poured through them in the months that were after that and that was the turning point in him coming to the Lord so he was sharing this with me and then began to share it as introducing to Charles Simpson because they were going to be working together, began to share it with Charles

Simpson who began to ask questions about where he was and what time and so on and so forth and it turns out that the man in the green coat preaching that day on the street corner was Charles Simpson so

it's just quite a wonderful thing to see how God brought that together, one of these amazing things and you see the lasting fruit in what God does and how his hand is just orchestrating things, amen?

So we're blessed to see what he's doing, good to see some old faces we haven't seen for a while, excuse me, not old faces, some of you are young, some of you are much younger than me but they're faces I haven't seen for a while, not old faces, not craggy, ancient, worn out, drawn down but just faces we haven't seen in a while, it's good to see some of you again and we're glad that you're here and the drama really ties right in with the things that God's laid on my heart and even though we want to be flexible with time and schedule I'll do my best to really get to the heart of this as quickly as I can because it's the foundation of the Jesus revolution.

So Father I pray that you'll give us ears to hear what your spirit is saying, give us an alertness, give us the ability oh God not to just mentally affirm, give us the ability Father not to simply be hearers of your word and not doers only, we're in a good habit of doing that, help us to break that habit and instead be doers of your word. May this have true and real and deep application in every one of our lives, in Jesus name I pray, amen. Turn with me to John chapter 21, John chapter 21.

There's an interesting little part of a verse that it would be very easy to read past but it is this truth that lies at the foundation of God's holy revolution. Whenever I speak of revolution which is quite often I immediately and always say that we are not talking about a carnal or worldly or earthly revolution. We are not talking about a revolution of violence, we are not talking about bombing abortion clinics and beating up homosexuals, we are not talking about hatred and anger, we are absolutely not talking about rebellion but we are talking about the kingdom of God affecting this world, the gospel of Jesus and the power of the spirit, God's people living out what is written in the New Testament in such a way that it has a radical and profound effect on an entire generation.

The great commission of Jesus is a commission to go and change the world and nothing less than that. And that's what we speak of when we speak of a Jesus revolution. Radical, dramatic, sweeping change in society, in this world, in this generation by the power of the spirit in obedience to the commission of Jesus.

And I want to just make plain something. If you were a religious Jew, you would read the Hebrew Bible, you would read the Old Testament but you would have a lot of traditions added on to it that would ultimately tell you how to read it. And you would read the Bible based on those traditions.

If you were a Catholic and you were reading the scriptures, you would be reading the Bible yourself but you would also have a lot of church traditions and ultimately those church traditions would tell you how to interpret the scripture. But if you say that you're a Protestant or Pentecostal or charismatic, which would be the great majority of the people here, or simply a believer in the word, then you would say we have no church tradition that can tell us what the scripture means. Ultimately the word must stand for itself.

There is no new authority. There is no further authority beyond the word of God and the Holy Spirit will never nullify or negate or contradict what is written in the scripture. Therefore, if we see plainly that Jesus says something, we must take him at his word.

If we see plainly that the word of God has a certain meaning, even if it goes completely against the grain of what we've learned, what we're accustomed to, what our church background might be, what our family tradition might be, it doesn't matter. There's no authority beyond the word. No one can come along later and tell you that Jesus meant something different or that the word meant something different.

When we rightly understand what's written, the only response is, yes, Lord. So Jesus repeatedly in his teaching, not just once, but repeatedly over and over again in the Gospels, Matthew 16 and Mark 8 and Luke 9 and Luke 17 and Luke 14 and John 12 and in Paul and Acts 20 and in Philippians 1, you find a repeated theme over and over and over again. And to sum it up, it tells us that the purpose of our lives is to glorify God and that to be true disciples, we must take up our cross and deny ourselves and follow him.

And if we try to save our lives, we lose it. If we try to if we will lose our lives for the gospel, we'll find it is a fundamental truth through the Gospels. And Jesus is speaking here to Peter.

He's given him words of restoration in a threefold way after Peter had denied Jesus three times. Peter is called now to feed his sheep. And he says in verse 18, Jesus speaking to Peter after his resurrection, I tell you the truth.

When you were younger, you dressed yourselves and dressed yourself and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. And look at this.

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, follow me. Notice it does not say that he told this to Peter.

It's speaking about Peter being crucified. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down because he said, I'm not worthy to be crucified the same as my master. Jesus does not say this to Peter to indicate that he will glorify God by death.

That's not what's written. Peter had already pledged his life, his blood, his heart, his soul for the gospel. Jesus had already made it a requirement that if you followed him, you had to take up your cross.

He didn't say you have to be willing to take up your cross. He said you have to deny yourself, take up your cross, which means the end of your life and the beginning of a new life in him. It means not only death to sin.

It means death to human will. It means death to fleshly desires. It means death to the love of this world.

And now I live to do the will of God. End of subject. Everything changes.

Our orientation changes. When Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old is past.

Everything's become new. He wasn't just talking about a change of lifestyle. He was talking about a change of orientation that you look at the whole world differently.

So Jesus did not need to tell Peter that he would glorify him by death. That was already a given. He was simply telling Peter by which death he would glorify.

I've often shared the illustration when our daughters were younger. There was a dog we had had. Kind of the girls grew up with it.

My mom and dad got this dog from us after Nancy and I got married. Nancy had the dog and then they got it. And our daughters, as long as they were alive, these little kids growing up, as long as they can remember, there was this dog, this Irish setter named Tara.

My dad had passed away and the dog was just a house companion when my mom would come in in the day. And then the dog was getting older and she got sick. And finally, we realized we had to put her to sleep.

It's sad. You know, you grow up with this dog and the kids, your daughters, they've grown up with this dog at grandma's house. And I told my mom, she went out with our daughters and I said, tell you what, I'll just bring Tara in.

I'll just bring the dog in. You don't worry about it. So they went out and did something, got some ice cream or something like that.

And I went and brought the dog in. It was sad. You know, we've known this dog for years and a whole bit.

You get sentimental and all this. Came back to my mom's and then I was going to drive the girls home. Nancy was home doing something else.

I was going to drive home now with our daughters. And they were a little sad, but they were doing OK. Little kids and they were doing OK.

And I said, now, girls, you know, you're doing well. You know, the vet put Tara to sleep, but you're doing well. They said, yeah, you know, it's hard, but we're doing good.

And I said, now you understand what happens. They said, oh, yeah. I said, so well, tell me what happens.

I said, well, she was really sick. I said, OK. So she went to the vet.

I said, yeah. And the vet gave her a shot. I said, yeah.

And then she fell asleep. I said, and? They said, and? I said, well, the vet put her to sleep. And? They said, and? I said, and she's dead.

She's dead! Tara's dead! And tears start streaming down. Tara's, oh no! Tara's dead! What they thought was put to sleep meant that she'd be at the vet for a while and sleep. And then when she was better, she'd come back.

And it was a little sad that she had to stay at the vet. They wouldn't see her for a little while. You know, it's almost like one day it dawns on you.

You mean when we say by life or by death, you actually mean death? So all this stuff about, you know, we take up the cross, the cross before me, the world before me, that the cross is not just a religious symbol or a word in a song. It's, mm-hmm. See, that fuels every revolution.

That's at the heartbeat of it. That's a foundational principle that life as it is, is not worth living, but the cause is worth dying for. That's what fuels revolutionary movements in the world that do not have eternal life, that do not have Jesus, that do not have intimacy with God, that do not have heaven and hell in front of them.

Any of you here that are Americans, remember the inspirational words of Patrick Henry, give me liberty or give me death, because life like this is not worth living. Because life, in his words, at the cost of chains and slavery is not worth living. Give me liberty or give me death.

That's the cry often in the secular realm. That's the cry often in the world. But there is a profound spiritual truth here that we need to take hold of.

And if we take hold of it, then we really live. If we take hold of it, then there's nothing and no one we bow down to except King Jesus. He said this to Peter, to indicate by which death Peter would glorify God.

The kind of death by which he would glorify him. You know that it had to be a question on the mouths of the other disciples. Well, what about me? He gets to be crucified.

What about me? I just want you to hear something. This is according to tradition. We don't know for sure.

We're fairly sure that John and probably Matthew did not die martyrs' deaths. But here's the rest of the initial apostle. I don't want to be an apostle.

I really sense the Lord's calling me. You know, John, I just really felt the Lord told me that you're an apostle. I was like so humbled by it.

But I felt, you know, he said, Steve's an apostle. We're going to be apostles. Jesus called us.

Hey, high five, man, this is cool. We'll call it Apostles' Anonymous Ministry. Wow, we get to be apostles.

Maybe one day in movies they'll have like Peter. So I wonder who'll play Mike and who'll play Steve. Won't this be wonderful? Hey, they're the twelve apostles.

That's us. Just walking with Jesus, you know. It's all about him.

It's all about him. We're the twelve apostles. When Jesus isn't looking, you know, writing down autographs, you know, Peter, John.

I know I'm exaggerating, but I'm trying to make a point. It's exciting. Called by God.

Anointed by God. Lord, will you pick me? No, just this one, this one, this one. Okay, you're apostles.

All right, Lord, what do you have? All right, let's see. Peter, you'll be crucified upside down. Andrew, Peter's brother, you'll be crucified on an X-shaped cross.

Jacob, James, son of Zebedee, beheaded. Philip, crucified upside down. Bartholomew, drowned here.

Let's just make it that these are the names here. Drowned in a sack. Thomas, speared to death or shot with arrows.

James, Jacob, son of Alphaeus, stoned to death or crucified. Thaddeus, shot with arrows. Simon the Zealot, crucified.

Somehow, when they made this pledge, and when they said, we will follow you, and when they took up their cross and denied themselves, you didn't have to ask them for an interpretation on what it actually meant. Peter, what do you think Jesus meant when he was talking about by which kind of death you'll glorify him? I mean, what do you think he actually meant? You didn't have to ask Peter as he was being crucified what the Lord meant. And you didn't have to ask Paul what he meant when he said, I eagerly expected hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage that now, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

And then, boom, his head is chopped off. Do I expect that most of us here will die martyrs' deaths? I doubt we'll have the privilege to. Is that my point, to say, walk around morbid, walk around joyless, walk around planning out your funerals? Are we going to, as soon as this meeting's over, are we going to have a fundraiser by selling funeral plots for everybody here? Think ahead.

No, I'm talking about something very powerful and very life-giving and very life-transforming. But I'm trying to speak in such a way of reality that it jars us, that something concrete takes hold of us, that we get beyond the euphoria, that we get beyond the excitement, that we get beyond the, oh, praise the Lord, revival. Oh, glory to God, Jesus, revolution.

Oh, hallelujah, the new thing. And we look at this thing soberly and understand what Jesus is really talking about, what the Word of God really means when it tells us, if we save our lives, we'll lose them. If we lose our lives for the gospel, we'll find them.

What's Jesus talking about? I want you to understand something, because this is what holds us captive almost all our lives, because this is what robs us, because this is what stops us from doing something effective for the King. This is what gets us, at most sometimes, half or three-quarters effective if we really go for it. It's somehow that we have the save our life mentality.

It's somehow that we do not understand this fundamental gospel principle, which is really the true principle of revolution. I've often quoted from a black leader that was part of a violent civil rights movement, the Black Panthers, that fought violence with violence. But Elaine Brown articulated the feeling of many of her fellow citizens at that time, when she said this.

She talked about being a Black Panther. She said it was invigorating. Made life bigger than you, she said.

And then she said these words, even the notion of dying for something bigger than you was far more powerful than living out a life of quiet desperation. There was a certain line that was crossed. There was something that happened in the thought process of this woman and her contemporaries.

The means they used were destructive, ugly, wrong means. And most of what the world tries to achieve, it achieves through rebellion and anger and violence, and it replaces one bad system with the worst system. The way of Jesus is totally contrary to that.

But you see, there was a certain breaking point, a certain point that she came to and others came to when they said we'd rather die fighting for freedom and fighting for what we believe in and fighting to bring about change than to lead a life that's not really life. So therefore, they were willing to step over certain lines. They were willing to lose reputations.

They were willing to be outcasts. Why? Because at least they were standing up for a purpose. That was their mentality.

Unfortunately, Jesus was not at the center of it, and the thing just brought about more violence. But hear me, there is a spiritual truth that we must grasp, and especially here in North America, with our material riches, with the exaltation of sports and entertainment, with everything being so big and so wonderful and so beautiful, for the most part, we fall for the deception, we fall for the illusion that this world as we know it is really everything and it's really wonderful. That this world as we know it is really what we should be living for.

That somehow, even though we know the Scriptures tell us, don't love the world and the things that are in the world. And if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, it's not of the Father, it's of the world.

And the world and its lust pass away, but He who does the will of the Father, the will of God abides forever. We say that. We can quote it.

We can affirm it. We can try to stay away from certain bad sins, but it's talking about more than that. It's talking about the paralyzing, destructive influence of the love of this world.

What's God talking about? What is it that dominates us? What is it that stops us from really going for it? What is it that holds us back? So many here, you're desperate, you cry out, you want your life to count, you seek the face of God with tears, and yet there's something that stops us. I'm not talking about if you just do this, all of a sudden all kinds of miracles will happen. If you'll just take this step, all of a sudden the heavens will break open over you.

No, I'm talking about your own life coming out of captivity into freedom. What is it that holds us back? It's a desire to save our lives. What do I mean? What was Jesus talking about? There's an example I put in the Revolution book.

It came from a book about one specific chapter in the Holocaust. Concentration camp called Treblinka. I remember I was preaching one time and was away on the road and came across this book and started reading it.

Couldn't put the thing down. Could not put the book down. I lent it to a friend and he started reading it, couldn't put it down.

Scott got hold of it. You just start reading, you get absorbed by the story of it. This was another concentration camp where hundreds of thousands of Jews were slaughtered.

But when they came into the camp, the train station where they came in, it actually looked lovely. Painted nicely. There was even a clock painted.

Nobody noticed that the hands weren't moving. But it wanted to give them the sense, the illusion that everything would be okay. Just like this world.

Everything will be alright. Don't panic. Because there were enough of them, if they just panicked and fought, they could have done something.

They'd heard rumors, they'd heard reports and different things. Concentration camps and gas chambers and things. But you think, not me, it can't be, it's too impossible.

And then, sometimes they'd only be there a few weeks, a few months, they'd be exterminated. Why did they fight? Why did they start a revolt? It's all about human nature. The question is, if you know you're going to die, why not do something about it? And this was the thought process.

Well, if we fight, if we try to bring about change, if we take a stand, then for sure we will die. But if we can save our lives, if we don't fight, if we don't resist, perhaps things will change and perhaps we can live long enough and perhaps somehow there'll be an end to the concentration camps and we'll be liberated and we can live. And in point of fact, by not resisting, they guaranteed one thing, that every single one of them

would die.

And there was one group that had the specific job of taking the bodies of fellow Jews out of the concentration camps, dragging them out and throwing them in the crematorium to be burned. That was their job. Think of what they're doing.

They know that there was a group doing this before them and that group is not there anymore. And they know they're dragging the bodies of their fellow Jews out of the gas chambers, dead, to be burned in the crematorium. But they needed to be kept in better shape, fed a little bit better, given some extra privileges.

Why? Because they needed to be stronger for the job. And they needed to be kept alive a little longer. You think, well, they of all people should have revolted.

But somehow the same thing got on them. We're alive today. We had a meal today.

We're doing better than the others today. If we fight, we die. Maybe if we stay alive, we can preserve life.

But all they were doing was guaranteeing their death sentence. And then one Jew escaped from the camp. When he got out in the surrounding villages, as soon as it was found out he was a Jew, he had to flee and he went to another area.

As soon as it was found out he was a Jew, he had to flee, he had to flee, he had to flee. So he allowed himself to be captured to get back into the camp to tell the guys, it's over. Do you understand? It's over.

This is happening with the full knowledge and complicity of the surrounding communities. They're all against us. We're all going to die.

We need to have a revolt. But how do you have a revolt? And we can't even get a stick, let alone a gun. And some of us are only here a few weeks or a few months and then we're dead.

And we can't communicate. And if we fight, we'll die. And what do we do? So the talk went on that there was this paralyzing fear.

It's going to make sense to you in a moment. There was one Jewish man as he was being brought in, in the cattle cars, squeezed in there.

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