

Liberty Not License

by Neil Rhodes

The sermon explores the distinction between Christian liberty and license, urging believers to live purposefully under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 49:23

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:9

Topics: "Godly Living", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the story of Samson from the Old Testament as an example of someone who misused the grace and power given to him by God. Samson was a judge in Israel for 20 years, but he abused his liberty and made poor choices. The preacher emphasizes the importance of living a life that aligns with God's will and not ending up with regrets. He encourages the audience to allow God to write the script of their lives and to make choices that will be recorded in the annals of eternity.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindell, Texas 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Turn with me this afternoon to Psalm 90.

We're going to talk about Christian liberty this afternoon and not being licensed. We might be messing with your lives a little bit today, but God will bring you through. Amen? Psalm 90.

This is a psalm of Moses. Lord Jesus, we thank you for the joy that is in the house, and we attribute the joy to you. We thank you, Lord, that we are a people that have been washed.

You've delivered us from the power of the enemy. Lord, you've opened up the snare of the fowler, and you've set us free, and so there's a joy in our heart this afternoon. We come to worship you.

Now, Holy Spirit, I ask that you take your word, and we know that we'll know the truth, and the truth will make us free. Now, let your truth be deep-seated in our hearts. God, help us this afternoon not to be hearers of the word only.

Deliver us from that, Lord. Help us today by the power of the Holy Spirit to be doers of your word, not only hearers, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

In Psalm 90, this is a psalm of Moses. And he begins, and he says, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. And he's writing this psalm in his latter years as he has traveled with the children of Israel from Egypt into the wilderness, and he's about to see them go on.

And so he's looking back over his life, and he sees the generations that have come and gone. There's been thousands of burials in the wilderness as that one generation that refused to go into the promised land have died in the wilderness. And so this is like a psalm of remembrance that Moses is writing, and he's looking back, and he's saying, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

So even though some have died in the wilderness, yet, God, you were with us. You've always been our dwelling place. Wherever we've gone, whatever place we have camped, you have been there always with us as our dwelling place.

Before the mountains were brought forth, forever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting. Thou art God. Verse 4. For a thousand years in thy sight, all but as yesterday when it is past.

Now, that doesn't seem to be such a profound statement, but, you know, when we look on the other side of our life, when I think I'm 52 this year, 51 years have come and gone, it says it could have been a thousand years. This is what Moses is saying. A thousand years.

Could it be 10,000? Could it be 5,000? It doesn't matter. When it's gone, it's gone. It's over.

We stand here today. Only the future remains ahead of us. And so that's what he is saying.

It says a thousand years in thy sight all but as yesterday when it is past. And as a watch in the night, it comes and goes. And so he's saying to us that life is so fleeting.

The New Testament writers say the same thing. God is trying to get across to us that when we're young and we're full of energy, full of life, full of zeal, life is forever. We do daring and dangerous things.

Before I was saved, I remember having this motorcycle and picking up my wife. She wasn't my wife then, but I would go to her house. She was forbidden to ride the motorcycle, but I wasn't saved.

And I would put on that motorcycle and we'd go screaming down the street 100 miles an hour. I'd open that throttle up as hard as I could. And I just remember life was, it would never come to an end.

Now at 51 years of age, I see the light at the end of the tunnel. And I'm beginning to realize that it is going by all too fast. And so this is what the psalmist is trying to get across to us, that before you realize it, your years have come and gone.

And really, if we haven't spent them for Christ, what are we taking with us? And so he goes on, he says, in the morning it flourishes. Well, he says in verse 5, in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. Verse 6, in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up.

In the evening it is cut down and withereth. That's how fast life is. It sprouts, it's cut down, and it's gone.

For we are consumed by thine anger and by thy wrath, we are troubled. Now look at verse 8, this is where I want to just take a couple of moments this afternoon. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins, in the light of thy countenance.

And verse 9, for all our days are passed away in thy wrath, we spend our years as a tale that is told. You see, beloved, for those who are sitting with us on the platform this afternoon, history is being written right now about your lives. You've made a choice, you've made a decision.

You who are going on short-term and long-term missionary trip today that have been prayed for and sent out, history is being written today. In the annals of eternity, God is writing down your history. When you give him the script of your life, he'll challenge your life and he'll take it.

He begins to write history for you. And this is a momentous time for you because God is writing down in the annals of men and women who have said yes to him in a certain direction. It's not a light thing that has taken place today.

And so Moses, he comes to the end and he says, we spend our years as a tale that is told. And that word tale in the Hebrew, hegeh, means to murmur, to sigh, to growl. It's that deep thought, that constant meditation.

Could things have been different for me? So at the end of this psalm, at the end of his journey, Moses, this man of God, he says, in other words, what he's saying to this great congregation as they're about to go into the promises of almighty God, he says, don't live your life and let it just become another murmur, a sigh. Oh, I wish it could have been different. It can be different.

Don't let it end up being a sigh, a murmur, a growl inside because all we have are the memories of the hurt, the pain, the things that came across our pathway that we never dealt with. And so he's saying that there's this opportunity that God can change. If you read the rest of the psalm and look at the last verse in verse 17, he says, And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us.

Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it. See, at the end of the psalm, Moses is saying that only by God, only by God do our lives and the purposes of our lives have any kind of meaning. He says, don't let your life end up as a tale or the script that is written and that you have great regrets on the end of your life.

I think of Samson when I was going through this psalm and just letting it meditate in my heart. I couldn't help but think of Samson, that Old Testament example of abusing the liberty that Christ or God had given to him. There's four chapters that are given to this judge of Israel and he was a judge in Israel for 20 years.

Yet, we see this man who misused the grace and the power that was given to him from God. God gave him a moment in time, spoke to his parents and said, I'm going to bring forth a child. And this child, no razor is to go to his head.

I want no wine or juice from any grape to go into his mouth. I want nothing to come near this person. I want him separated as a Nazarite unto me.

And so, God takes this man. He says, I want to use this person. But here he flirts with the world instead of fighting against the enemies of God.

Samson pursued lustful relationships while all the time embracing God's power. Instead of becoming a leader to combat the Philistines, he becomes lecherous. So, here is this man that God is giving this opportunity to.

He's placing his power on his life. He's saying, your life can have meaning and purpose. God makes a choice on his life.

And I believe it's the same choice that God gives to every single one of us through Jesus Christ. It's no longer an Old Testament one here or one here. When we come into the New Testament, this opportunity is granted to all of us.

That our lives can have a meaning. They can have a purpose. At the end of our life, there's not a murmur.

There's not just a growl. I wish it had been different. I wish I'd been born another generation.

I wish I hadn't have done those things. I wish this hadn't have happened. This is what Moses is writing about.

He says, if you allow God to establish your goings, He will take the work of your hands and He will establish it before you. The very desires of your heart, He says, I'll give to you. That everything in your heart and life that God chooses to do in your life, He says, I will establish that.

That your life can have purpose and meaning. That you can go home and put your head on that pillow and sleep like a baby, Knowing that that day you did everything that God asked you to do. I tell you, it's such a thrill in my soul as I was just letting this word minister to my heart and to my life.

And we come and we revisit this kind of a message from time to time. But it's God who is continuously taking a hold of our lives because He wants things that He has in mind for us to come to pass. So here is this man who holds lightly the anointing and then the secret of His power is exposed.

He loses His spiritual moorings, His discernment, and then finally He loses the power of God. It's only when He's in prison, when He's grinding the corn of the Philistines and He's in prison, I believe that God visits this man's heart one more time. And I can just see the sigh and His eyes have been taken out.

He's lost His moorings and there He is grinding corn for the Philistines. He's doing the work that the Philistines have given to Him to do. They mock Him.

They take Him into the arena. And this is the end of His life. But I believe that God in that moment of time revisits this man and says, It can be different.

I will visit you one more time. I will place upon you My power. And I believe that comes out of Samson's own heart and we see that he destroys more of the Philistines at the end of his life than in the beginning.

But how was it for him in prison? Was it a murmur? Was it a complaint? Was it a tale that was being told? Was there a regret in his heart that he didn't respond to the things of God like he should have when he had the moment? Now, this afternoon, I want to spend time in the book of Corinthians. If you turn with me to the book of Corinthians, that was just by way of introduction. But turn with me to the book of Corinthians.

I want to read another scripture to you. In 2 Corinthians, in chapter 3, this is what the apostle says to this church. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3, he says in verse 2, You are our epistle written in our hearts.

So again, he's saying, now, it's no longer just a tale of regret. But I want you to catch what the apostle Paul is saying here. He says, You are our epistle.

He says, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. He says, your life has become an epistle. This Bible is a book of epistles, basically, that are written to us by men of God, anointed by the Holy Ghost, and we get to read them.

But he is saying, in all essence, that your life is a book that people read. Your life is a book that people take a look at. They take a look at your life.

They see how you live. And out of your life will come hope to somebody. We heard a powerful message this morning, that from my life, if I see somebody that was on the streets and homeless or suffering, what is my heart? I was so convicted.

I was telling Pastor Carter the other day on this, as we were just talking about some of these issues. And there was a man on the street. I mentioned this on Friday night, and I walked by.

I honestly didn't have any money in my pocket. I tell you, I would have given it if I had a dollar. I didn't even have a dollar in my pocket.

I got to see my wife after the service. Make sure I've always got some money in my pocket. But I never had a dollar in my pocket.

I honestly could say to him, no, I don't have any money. And it wasn't a plan not to have money so I could say that. Sometimes I think those things.

But I honestly didn't have any money that day. And then I went inside. And the man said, well, if you don't have any money, why don't you just go in here and buy me some lunch on your credit card? And I said, I'm busy.

And I went on my way. And I forgot it until we began to talk on this. And it was a course correction in my own heart.

You see, God was actually speaking to my heart. He wanted me, whether I fed that man or not, He wanted me to stop and listen. How do you want your life to count in this world? Does it only count if you stand behind the pulpit and preach to a crowd of people? Or does it also count with me, with the ones that nobody around is looking and seeing except me? That's where it really counts.

You see, God says, this is great. But what about the people I send and nobody else is watching you? Nobody else sees what you do. But I saw you walk by that man.

I saw the musings of your heart and the meditation of your heart that day. That you didn't stop. I could have done something.

I could have gone upstairs. I could have got some money. I could have come down.

I could have done something. But I didn't. And so, I tell you, I really repented in my heart.

I said, God, forgive me. I want every moment of my life to count. And so, the apostle Paul says, you're an epistle.

Now, if this man happens to see me in the street, what kind of a book does he read? Oh, here comes that selfish person who has no time. You see, we actually give people the title of our book by how we conduct our lives. They may not never open the pages.

They might never walk into my living room and sit down and talk with me. But they know the title of the book that's written on my life. What kind of a title does my life speak to people that I come in contact with? Do they see a kind, generous, or do they see an angry person who moves people out the way, gets frustrated? What kind of a book, what kind of an epistle am I to those that come and bump into my life from time to time? God's challenging me.

You see, the Corinthian church had turned their liberty into license. God wants us to be that written epistle by the Holy Ghost. Not written, it says here, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God.

Not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. You see what God is looking for? He says, I want to be able to write the rest of your life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Not just in tables of stone.

I just don't want to take a pen and have somebody write a book about your life. That's not what it's like. The paper, pen and paper, that might be nice.

We'll have a book about my life. I could do that. We've got a couple of books out there.

We've written something, but that's not what the Holy Ghost is saying. He says, no, I want to write the kind of lifestyle that I have for you, and I want to write it by the power of the Holy Ghost. I want your life to be written by God's Holy Spirit.

I want it on tables of flesh. That's not so hard that I can, that you're malleable in my hands, that I can mold you, make you into anything that I choose for your life. That's what I desire.

I want to be able, by the Holy Ghost, to touch your heart and say, go here, go there. That's why today is a wonderful occasion for me, because it's a confirmation in this word. Here are all these people making decisions to go.

God is writing upon the tables of their heart by the Holy Ghost. Who knows of the great things and the lives that they are going to touch in South Africa and China and the rest of the world? It's an awesome, awesome opportunity, beloved, because life is passing that quick, and every day and every moment is going to count. Now, the Corinthian church had turned their liberty into license.

Listen to this scripture. Go to 1 Corinthians 6. Listen to what it says in verse 9. You see, these people had been saved. The Bible says, Paul says, you've been washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of our God.

That's verse 11. But look at verse 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. So he's writing to the believer.

He's saying, be not deceived, neither fornicators, idolaters, nor adulterers, effeminate or abusers of themselves and mankind, nor thieves or covetous, nor drunkards, revilers, extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And he says, and such were some of you. But they were reverting back to it.

I started to go through the book of Corinthians. I found at least six of these issues that the apostle Paul writes in verse 9 and 10 were revisiting them in their lives. There were lawsuits that were taking place.

There were divisions. There was sexual immorality. There was abuse on gifts and the communion table.

There was heresy coming in. There was so many things that was going on in the life. And so here is the history of this church being rewritten.

What did God have in mind and the purpose of this church as we heard today? And I know it was God because we never talk about our message as what we're going to preach. And I just know that the message this morning, God is saying to Times Square Church, this is what I have in mind for you. Will history write something different? Will history record in the annals of eternity as well? Will they record that Times Square Church became something different? Or are we going to stay to the word of God and say, God, no.

I want to have the Holy Ghost write the end chapters of my life. I might have made decisions. You see what the Corinthian church were doing is they got saved.

But they wanted to continue to write their own script. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me and washing me and cleansing me. By the way, I'll write chapter 3 and then chapter 4. Okay, you can have chapter 5, but I'm going to do chapter 6 and 7 and 8. You see, God wants to write the rest of your life by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He wants to write the rest of the book. You might have done everything up to this point under your own ingenuity and your own strength and your own wisdom. But God says, give me a chance.

Let me begin to write the rest of the book for you. Let me begin by the pen of the Holy Ghost to begin to show you what I will do by the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. Let the end of your life be rewritten by God.

Beloved, a few, about a year and a half ago, by just an obscure means, I picked up a paintbrush and some oil paint. Just picked it up and began just to muse on some canvases. A year and a half have come and gone, and we've put out a couple of canvases, and I've just so thoroughly enjoyed just moving all this color on this canvas.

There's a thrill and a joy in my heart to see all of these colors, and you've got to know my personality and character. I'm not light on the--you know, I don't care about the cost. I'm not light with this paint.

Sometimes I like to take the tube and just put it on, and I just take that old brush or palette knife and begin just to move all these colors all over the canvas, and good is in the eye of the beholder. And some my wife looks at and goes, hmm. And others, she says, oh, that's okay.

But I was thinking about this. You see, even if I do a good painting in my lifetime, what do I want my grandchildren to ask about their grandfather? That he was a good painter? That he was a good person? Or do I want them to be able to look back and say, my grandfather was a man of God. My grandfather, he served the Lord, and his life was written by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Is that what we want? I want the end chapters of my life, beloved. I am so serious about this. I want the end chapters of my life.

I want it to be written by God. I want him to be able to script the last chapters of my life. So the apostle Paul, he comes to the place and he says, he's trying to correct the Corinthian church.

There are so many things that are going on in this particular church. There's so many things that they have got away from in the word of God. They've taken their liberty as it were, and it's become licensed.

They're getting drunk at the communion table. They're excluding the poor. They're having great feasts.

And you know, today there's a recurrence of this in some of the churches. I was listening to someone the other day and saying that they believe that the communion should be a great big feast. And so this church is going back to having great big feasts.

But again, like we heard this morning, the poor aren't at those tables. They aren't reaching out to those. So there's this excess that is going on.

And so this Corinthian church, there were so many things that were going on in the church. And Paul had to bring the correction to them. But how do you bring correction without it becoming legalism? How do you say to somebody, don't do this, do this, without it becoming a legalistic position? And then suddenly the very freedom of the gospel that he was preaching, how do you communicate to somebody to say God wants to do something different in your life? Well, you see, Paul takes three directives, and I want to just spend a few moments on these three directives.

He uses himself. You see, he takes his own life and he says, I want to show you how to live. So he's not going to give them a legalism, but he's going to show them by the book of his life.

He says, I want to show you what God is writing in my life. And if you see what God is doing, then God will do that in your life. And so the presentation of the apostle Paul to them is, he's inviting them to come and read the pages of his life that God is doing.

Can you allow God to come in your house? What happens if the pastors, if Pastor Carter and myself and Pastor Patrick decided to come visit you one day? We knock on your door and we just called you up and said, oh, by the way, we're just down the street, can we come visit your house? What are you going to be doing? Get those magazines, quick. Let's pick them underneath there. Turn the videos around.

Don't let them see the titles of the videos. The DVDs, quickly, put them under the carpet, hurry up. Hello, Pastor, how are you? Did you get the Bible out? Put the Bible, quickly.

Son, go and get the Bible right now. You know that this is our devotional time now. So he brings the clicker and he says, are you sure, Dad? This is when we normally watch this program.

See, and so the apostle Paul, could you invite us into your life today? See, the apostle Paul, in bringing correction to this church, he does it in such a powerful way. He says, be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ. He's going to open his life up.

He's going to say, there's certain things about living for Christ I want to show you by example. Read the pages, and if it touches your heart, then follow me in where I am going. Look at this in chapter 6. Turn the page, look at verse 12.

He says here, all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient. Now look up. The word expedient here means to be carried together, profitable.

It means to be joined together and to bring in that which is going to be profitable for the ongoing journey. So he says, he makes it very clear. He says, I want you to understand that when you come to Christ, all things are lawful.

All things are yours. In fact, when he talks about all things, it's over 30 times in the book of Corinthians. He makes it known to the believer that all things are yours, that God has given you so much.

Listen to this scripture. Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours. Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours.

He says, all these God has given to you. You are Christ's and Christ is God's. And so he's saying, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.

So what does he mean by this word expedient? Well, it means on the positive side, it means that which will propel me forward. That which will bring into my life that helps me go forward. So he says, all things are not profitable.

So there are certain things in my life that don't propel me in the way of Christ. Oh, I can do them, but they don't propel me in the way of Christ. See, I can go and do those things.

I can go play golf. Beloved, I make daily choices. My choices are simple.

I'm very myopic. My life is very singular. But it's by choice.

We come to the house of God. We go to our apartment and we come back again. We could make a lot of friends.

We could go play golf. I could be perfecting my golf swing. I could be doing a lot of things.

Not illegal, but not profitable. They don't propel me. I would rather choose to have a call from my dear friend and senior pastor, Pastor Carter, and he says, you want to meet me for a cup of coffee? You ask my wife.

As soon as that phone rings, I'm already changing. I'm coming right now. Why? Because the fellowship that we have propels me.

I come away from our time of fellowship together. I'm not just saying it because he's sitting here. I'm saying it because this is a reality in my life.

I want to add those things and those relationships in my life that propel me forward. I want to go ahead. I want the end of my life to be scripted by the Holy Ghost.

I don't care about a golf swing. I tried it once, and they asked me to leave. No, they didn't.

But I want to add those things to my life that propel me. And so the Apostle Paul says, all things are lawful, but I want you to take a page out of my life. I want to show you that I make steady choices every single day of my life on those things that are going to propel me in the things of Almighty God.

I choose those things. I choose to get up. I choose to read.

I choose to walk with and fellowship with those that love the Lord Jesus Christ with all of their heart. And see the reward of that, beloved. Mark chapter 16 verse 17 says this, These signs shall follow them that believe.

God says, the person who says, I want to walk in the ways of Almighty God. Not for the unbelievers, just for the person who believes. The person who says, yea, Lord, this is what I want in life.

I want to be propelled forward. God gives us a promise. He says to you, I want to show you something.

He says, all these signs shall follow them that believe. Now, Friday we were dealing on this word follow. Here in this particular book of Mark, the word literally means to have an attendant standing right by you at all times.

It's like having your personal valet all the time standing with you. And so the Bible says the reward of saying, God, you write the script of my life by the power of the Holy Ghost. And God says, I'll tell you what I'm going to do then.

If you want me to lead your life and take you on and take you into the things that I have for you, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you a personal valet. He's going to stand there right with you.

These signs will follow them. So whenever you go into your house and you see the devil coming in, you can say, devil in the name of Jesus, you get out. And those signs will follow.

The power of the Holy Ghost is going to be with you at all times. He says, I'm never going to leave you nor forsake you. The person who says, I want to be propelled in the things of God gets the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Bible says you can cast out devils. I tell you, mothers, you go into those rooms and you see all those kids and you see what they're doing. You go into those rooms and the Bible says you can cast out devils.

You walk around that room and say, God, no devil's getting this kid's life. See, this is, God says, these are the signs that will follow you. You'll be able to speak life into them, speak with new tongues.

I used to say ugly things to them, but now by the scripting of the Holy Ghost, He's rewriting things on the table of my heart so that when I speak, I speak life into people. Start producing that which is going to have life in people. Say, God, bless them.

He's a good kid. She's a good young lady. You start doing those things by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Life being re-scripted by the Holy Spirit. Number two, he says the things, he goes on and he says in the same verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, chapter 6, excuse me, verse 12. This is what he says in the second part of it.

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful, but I will not be brought under the power of any. He says, you've got to understand.

The enemy has a power. Now, he's a liar. He's a liar from the beginning, but if you believe his lie, you give him.

See, the word there, power, it says, I will not be brought under the power. It's exhortia in the original language, and it means the right to act with authority. So, when the devil comes in, he says, what the apostle Paul is saying, literally, he's saying, if you believe the lie of the devil, if you're going into areas and situations, you're actually opening yourself up to the lie of the devil.

And when that lie comes in, you're giving him the right to act with authority over your life and to bring you back into captivity. So, this is what he is saying. He says, I will not allow, I'm not going to place myself into any situation that opens up the door for the enemy to bring in any power that will bring my life back into captivity.

But people do that. So many go out and they turn on things, they go visit things, they get involved in things, that God says, I don't want you doing that because you don't understand. Paul says, I'm not going to bring myself and allow the power of soaps to satiate my mind.

I'm not going to go there. I'm not going to go to those places. You see, disease is infectious, but health is not.

You can go into these places and you can be infected by it, and the enemy gets in and he comes with authority. Paul says, I'm not going to allow my life, take a page out of my life. I'm not going to go to places, I'm not going to do things, and it's a choice that you make.

It's a choice that you make. I'm not going to go there so that the enemy can have an opportunity to bring me in under his power. Lastly, turn with me to chapter 10, 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Again, all the way through here, the Apostle Paul is saying these things to them. He says, look at verse 23, and he's really taking a page out of his life. He says, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.

And he's already dealt with that in chapter 6, verse 12. All things are lawful, but all things edify not. So he says, I want you to understand that does my life cause somebody who's watching me to search themselves, or does it cause them to stumble? All things don't edify.

All things are lawful for me, but all things don't build up. The word edify there means to build up. Everything that I do just doesn't always seem to build people up.

We have a lot of people who have the ministry of tearing down. They just seem to be able to come in, and you're trying to share something with them, and they just have that ability to tear you down. To tear what God is doing down.

It's an amazing ministry. And the Apostle Paul says that he is not going to go there. He says, all things are lawful, but all things edify not.

There are certain things that will cause people to stumble, to fall. He says, you've got to be motivated. If you want to see God working powerfully in your life, then you've got to have a heart that says, God, I want to build every single person that comes in my life.

Give me the chance, Lord, to build them up by my lifestyle. You see, the Apostle Paul was dealing with divisions, fornication, lawsuits. Let me ask you a question today.

How many families are going through, how many Christian families today, husbands and wives are in the process of going through the law courts, deciding on who's going to get what, because we're not going to continue this relationship or this marriage any longer. How many are contemplating divorce, and we've got children in this, and God will take care of them. You see, the Apostle Paul says, you know, if things aren't working out, you feel like you want to go in this, but is it building up? What about believing God, who's an almighty God who can change the heart? Why do we want to go that route? Why are there lawsuits? Why are we taking out lawsuits one against another? Why are we going to the law courts and going to the world and saying, you know, resolve these problems? And what's happening to the kids? Are they being built up by what we are doing? Beloved, in Matthew chapter 19, he says, Whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

In other words, what he is saying, God is saying there, he says, I can do the joining. There's not a single marriage or a relationship that I can't work on and join. He says, there's not a situation that I can't take a hold of and make it a difference.

What about those, are they dealing with all these situations, lawsuits, unwise relationships? How about these young people getting into unwise relationships? You know what the best safeguard for a good relationship in life is? Live for Jesus Christ. If you live for Jesus with all of your heart, you're going to have people who have the same kind of heart standing around with you. He says, that's the safest guard for not getting somebody who's going to mess your life up.

Well, how do I know I'm going to get the right person? Live for God. Because you'll certainly know if you're hanging out with people who are living for God, it doesn't take one week or two weeks and you know that person's a phony. And I don't care how handsome the guy is, if he's not working, his handsomeness isn't going to pay the bills.

It doesn't matter how good he looks or how strong he's working out in the gym, if he doesn't have a job and he's not serving God with all of his heart, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to find that out. You just serve the Lord. The Apostle Paul is saying, live among people and when you come and walk among each other, build each other up.

Hey sister, I got a word for this week and I want to share it. Hey brother, I got a word this week. Do you want to hear it? No, I don't want to hear it.

Okay, maybe that's not a brother I want to walk with. You see, beloved, we are called to build each other up in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul says, if you want to see God scripting your life and ending the chapters or writing the book of your life by the power of the Holy Spirit, he says, then these are the things that I do.

I take every opportunity to allow God to build every person. I come and contact them, build them up in God. Take their life and just show into them.

A meal, maybe some clothing, maybe a word of encouragement. But these are the things that the Apostle Paul was dealing with. He said, I want God to write the rest.

He says, in closing, go back to that scripture in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 2. He says, you are our epistle, written in our hearts. He says, man, you've got to see that your life, you've got to see that your life is the paper on which the pen of the Holy Spirit is going to write his purposes. You've got to see your heart as a

heart of flesh, that God says, I'm going to come into the table of your heart and I'm going to begin to script into your life the purpose, the reason for living, why you are here, why I called you, why I saved you.

Not for a freedom to just go live like you want. No, I've got bigger plans than that for you. I want to begin writing the chapters of your life.

If you give me an opportunity, the Apostle Paul says, why would you want to have somebody else write about your life when the Holy Ghost can do it today? When the Holy Ghost can begin writing upon the table of your heart. And you know what? A book is not that old that God can't begin a new chapter. There's some seniors here.

We've got a lot of young people here. But how many people are here over 50 and you're just sitting in this? Don't put your hands up. I'm just sitting here in the service.

But I want to say to you today, for those that are like me, 50 and older, I want to tell you, God can open a new chapter in your life. Old men shall dream dreams. God will begin to put a vision and a dream in the heart.

Just because the body ages doesn't mean the Holy Ghost gets old. The Holy Ghost is as young today inside of me as the day I got saved. He renews me every single day of my life.

Hallelujah. Beloved, my altar call is so simple today. The altar call is simply this.

You might have been saved and you've been writing your own chapters of your life. But life will come and go so fast. I want to give you a challenge today.

I want to give you a Holy Ghost challenge. It's not a convicting sermon where you've got to come and confess all your sin today. I want to give you a challenge.

In the annex, I want you listening to me this afternoon. For every person like these on the stage who've said, God, I've been writing my own scripts on my life for some time, but I give you the control of my life. I want you to begin writing the next chapter.

And as Pastor Carter shared this morning, maybe some of you are afraid to take the next step. Maybe you're afraid to hear the Holy Spirit say to you, China, India, Africa. Maybe you're afraid of it.

But you know, God isn't going to just spring a nation like that on you without it becoming a desire of your heart. You see, the Holy Ghost, when He begins to script these things on the tables of your heart, He knows your personality. He knows your life.

He knows how He can take you and mold you. So my challenge this afternoon is, do you want God to take the book of your life? And not like Moses and say, at the end, a murmur, a grumble, a sigh. But do you want to say, God, today, I give you the book of my life.

I want you to write the next chapter, and then the next chapter, and then the next chapter. All the way through to the epilogue. God, write it.

I give you the freedom to write in my life your purposes, your calling, in Jesus' name. Let's stand together. Father, we call those in the annex and those here in the sanctuary.

You know that you've been speaking to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Lord, there are some businessmen here and businesswomen who have lost their moorings. You've got them in that strategic place because you want to use them powerfully.

There are others here, single mothers, who feel like all they've got is just this. But that is God. And it's a wonderful calling.

Lord, there are some seniors here who feel like, I know when I was praying, that they feel, well, I don't have much time left. But that doesn't mean that you can't begin writing a new chapter in their life. And, Lord, we've got so many young people who have got just the very beginnings of their life.

Oh, God, I pray that every young person would hear the challenge of the Holy Spirit and say, God, I want you from chapter one of my life all the way through the end to write it according to the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. You come this afternoon if you want God to write on your heart today a new chapter.

You're tired of the old book? You want a new chapter written? You just step out. You come down to this altar today. The Holy Ghost is going to begin to write new words in your heart.

I believe that. For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. See, the Holy Ghost will write it day by day.

The Holy Spirit is going to write on the tables of your life every single day. He'll renew you. He'll renew your vision.

He'll renew the call. He renews you day in and day out. It goes on to say, He says, For our light affliction is but a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen.

And this is my word for you at the altar today. Don't look at the things that are seen today. There might have been another pen writing in your life, and the result has not been that good, and we're going to give that to Christ today.

But don't look at that which is seen. But today, I want you to see that the things which are not seen, for those things which are not seen, the things that have been written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. And so God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, young people, He's writing.

He's going to write on the tables of your heart the script of the purpose that He has for you. I believe it with everything that is within me. We don't say it just to get an altar call going.

We say it because we totally believe it in our heart that our God, our God has a plan and a purpose. Give Him the freedom to write it, and He'll do it, and you'll be thrilled. You'll be thrilled at the chapter after chapter He writes.

Pray with me. Lord Jesus, if it's not helping me go forward with You, then I let these things go. If they're friends, if they're things, programs, whatever it is, if it's not helping me go forward with You, I let it go.

Lord Jesus, if I have come under the power or the spell of the enemy by opening a door I should not have opened. I confess it. I give it to You, and I thank You that in Jesus' name, in one moment of time, right

now, the power of the devil is broken, and he will not write his script on my life.

His script is misery. It'll send me to hell. Thank You, Jesus, that His pen is broken.

From this moment onwards, no more ink in on the tables of my life by the power of the devil. Lord Jesus, I thank You and give You the right that right now I invite You to open up a new page in my life by the Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit. Take the pen of God and begin scripting in my heart those things that God has for my life.

I want to hear it. I want to read it. I want to live it.

Lord Jesus, I give You my life. Take me, Holy Ghost, and use me. Let people read my life and let them see life in Jesus' name.

I believe that this work has been done. I am washed in the blood. I have a brand new page, and the devil cannot condemn me.

The blood covers all the old, and I come into the new in Jesus' name. Today is the beginning of a brand new chapter with Almighty God, and I give You thanks in Jesus' name. Hallelujah.

Glory to God. Hallelujah. Worship Him today.

Just worship God. He's given you a brand new beginning, beloved. Hallelujah.

Thank You, Jesus. Lord Jesus, I thank You that You began a brand new chapter in my life. I am eternally grateful that You took me even when I was wasted, and You began to write a new script.

I thank You with all of my heart, Jesus. And now, Father, I thank You that You've done it for everyone in the house in Jesus' name. Amen.

God bless you. This is the conclusion of the message.

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