

God Enjoys the Impossible

by Otto Koning

God desires to show Himself strong on behalf of those who trust in Him and have a perfect heart towards Him.

Duration: 59:44

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, James 4:8, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Impossibilities"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a missionary who faced opposition and threats while preaching the gospel. Despite the challenges, the missionary's love for Jesus and dedication to sharing the message of salvation remained unwavering. The speaker then reflects on their own experiences of straying from God's path and relying on their own efforts instead of trusting in Him. They emphasize the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with God and believing in His ability to show His strength in our lives. The sermon references 2 Chronicles 16:9, which speaks about God's eyes searching the earth for opportunities to demonstrate His power on behalf of those with upright hearts.

Transcript

I'd like you to turn to 2 Chronicles 16, 9, and that's the portion about the, where that famous verse is that most of you know and probably have memorized about God wanting to show Himself strong on the behalf of those whose heart is upright before Him, and that's verse 9 of chapter 16 of 2 Chronicles. This, let's read the verse, For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on the behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him. Now this is a story of King Asa, and King Asa reigned for 41 years, that's a long time, and in the early part of his reign, he had a great victory, and the prophet reminds him of that in verse 7, how there was a huge army of Ethiopians and Lubams came up against him, and the king, being young, unexperienced, and so on, cries out to God, and God helps him in a great victory.

And that's usually what we do when we're new, and we haven't had the experience behind us, and we wonder what to do with new situations, and we cry out to God. Now, about 30-70 years later, he has a much smaller army, as a matter of fact, it's the northern kingdom, the Israelites come against him, and now he's got all this experience under his belt, see, and now he can handle it himself, and he goes to the king of Syria and says, help me against Israel. And what a foolish thing that is, but isn't that true, that you think you can do it now, you're further down the road, and you forget how desperate you were when earlier, and when you struggled, and you cried out to God.

And so then the prophet comes, the seer, his name is Hanani, in verse 7, Hanani, the seer, came to Asa, king of Judah, and then he reminds him, were it not the Ethiopians, a huge host, remember that, remember that victory of the past, remember what God did for you, it was a miracle how he came through, and have you forgotten, why did you now go to man for help instead of to God for help? What happened to your relationship to God? Don't you believe he exists anymore? Don't you believe he longs to show himself strong? And he says, hey, for God, he scans the whole earth, he's looking, his eyes cover all the earth, looking for opportunities to show himself strong, and you've just denied him of a huge opportunity to show himself strong, and you left God sitting there unemployed, and you've been to help as if God didn't want to do it. Friends, God is still wanting to show himself strong in this world today. Do you believe that? See, there's not many people giving him that opportunity.

Well, he points this out to him, and of course the king, he foolishly reacts, and he's angry, and he throws this prophet in prison. Now, whenever a king puts a prophet in prison, that king is almost done. You read that in the Old Testament, and that's what we see later on in verse 10, we read that Asa was wrathful to see him put him in prison.

In verse 12, you see Asa in the 39th year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great. Yet in his disease, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. What an amazing statement to have said about a man.

And then in verse 13, you see he dies. He's diseased and very sick for the last two years of his reign, and he dies. King Asa chooses not to go to the Lord.

He hasn't learned a thing, has he? The prophet said, look, remember back then you had this great victory? Now why did you leave God out? Get God back into your life. Go to him first. And the king puts Asa angry with him, and he doesn't learn a thing.

So when he's sick, he still doesn't turn to the Lord. He's still going to man. He still goes to the doctors.

And when you go to the doctor, you die. You see that here very plainly. And instead, he should have gone to the Lord.

And maybe I should... No, maybe I said something wrong. When you go to the doctor, you could very possibly die. Okay? In case there's some doctors here.

But isn't it something? Now, can you look back in your own life and you see back there that God... You cried out to God once, and God did a miracle for you once. And he really came through for you, and you praised him, and you gave testimony in your church or whatever. Now you're further down the road.

Now you pick up the telephone, right? And you say, call the doctor first. Or what do we do? And we leave God. You see, the world doesn't give God an opportunity to show himself strong.

They don't call upon him. They don't look to him. The only ones that are here to give God a chance to show himself strong is people like you and me, Christians.

And when the Christians don't do it, then God is up there stuck with all his power and all his wisdom and all his wealth and no place to use it. And that's got to be frustrating. Isn't that right? If you had all that... We read in his Word that he paves the streets with gold.

He's using it like concrete up there. And... Isn't that right? And then he knows where the mines are, right? Doesn't he know where the gold mines are? He put them there. Don't you wish you knew where they were? You'd go and dig it out, wouldn't you? Sure, and then you'd have to dig another hole to keep it safe in, right? And fools we are, God just leaves it right where it is.

But he, you know... Friends, God has got it. Isn't that right? Now, the second quality about God, he's got the wisdom to use it right. See, why most Christians don't... God doesn't give it to us because we would... Most of us are programmed.

We've gone through this in our minds. When my ship comes in, that's what I'll do. And, you know, that's something I've always wanted to do.

I always wanted. And somehow those phrases make it right. You see? Well, now I got it.

I've always wanted to make that trip or always wanted to do that thing or own that thing. And now finally, you know, it's possible. And that almost excuses spending it on yourself.

Now, when God sees our hearts and he knows we're going to spend it on ourselves, he doesn't get excited to give us wealth. Does he? And that's why we see so many Christians that are needy. And you say, why does the world have things and us Christians, you know, are struggling? So many Christians are struggling.

And there's even Christians in debt. And, you know, this shouldn't be with that kind of a father. We've been talking about the father-son, father-daughter relationship here.

Well, the father-son, our relationship with God, and he's got all this gold wishing somewhere to use it. But then he's got wisdom to use it right. He doesn't give it to one that's going to spend it on himself, put himself first.

You know, then he says, oh, he's going to be buying a boat and he'll be sailing on Sunday morning instead of worshipping me. And so God knows better. So he's got the wisdom to use it.

And we see today these people that win lottos and athletes that win these great sums of money or earn this so-called, and then their whole family's ruined. Isn't that, you know, their whole thing is messed up. And so God has the wisdom to use it right.

God has the wisdom to know who to give it to. And he's got the power to use it right, hasn't he? He's got wisdom and he's got the knowledge how to use it, and the power how to use it. And there's God in heaven with all his wisdom and all his wealth and all his power.

And he's looking and he's saying, oh, I'm looking all over the earth. I'm looking for opportunity to show myself to, self-strong to show. And friends, the Christian church has gone along with the world in this thing.

And we're going at it the world's way in our homes and in our families and in our lives. And because of that we struggle because God is dealing with us. He wants us Christ-like.

And that's why, friends, never, the statistics of the world don't count for the Christians because God is in our lives. They may say, well, you can do this, you can buy this, you earn so much, your wife earns all this, and so on. And it'll work out.

It doesn't work out for the Christians. God deals with us on a different standard. Don't be fooled by what they say.

And so, this king, what a mess. He struggles with this great disease because he does, he leaves God out and he goes at it the way of the world and so on. Let me give you an illustration.

I lived in Huntington, West Virginia. And there was a man there, brought his little blind boy to the school. And to the Christian school where my children went to school.

And this was a very poor man. This little boy was about 11, 12. And I met him in a second-hand store later on.

I couldn't believe it. This is the man. He owned that shop there.

It was a very poor establishment. And we could see that he wasn't wealthy. And I said, you're sending your son to the Christian school? I saw you there bringing him in.

He says, yeah, he's going to be blind. He says, there's nothing they can do for him. He's going to be a blind preacher.

And he wants to be a preacher so bad that he said, dad, can I go to Christian school so I can learn to be a preacher? And so, he said, it's taken everything we get. We got to get him there. They had hardly nothing.

And money went into that. And I said, then you're a Christian. He said, no, I'm not, but my son is.

Amazing. And he says, he's a good one. He was proud of his son.

And he says, he's got a lot of faith. I said, he does. He says, tell me something about him.

And then he said, you a preacher or something? It's amazing, us preachers. We've got to watch what we're doing. I'm in my old clothes.

I was looking for some parts for something. And I didn't look like a preacher at all. At least, I didn't think so.

But somehow, he knew. So, you preachers, be careful. You can try to disguise yourself.

But, hey, people, somehow, they know. And he says, preacher, and this was his question, that he asked everyone that ever witnessed to him, and every preacher he met. He said, when, preacher, when has God done the last miracle for you? Does God do any miracles for you? Now, can you imagine, he asked that of any Christian.

When has God done the last miracle for me? And, if he were to ask you that, when has God done the last miracle for you? In other words, God wants to show himself strong on our behalf, but have we let him do it? That's really the question. And I said, well, I said, sir, I can't tell you the last miracle here. It'll take quite a while.

It was the hitchhiking story. Some of you might have heard the situation that God got me into when we were between jobs and had no money and how I had to get through these meetings to this pastor's conference in order to schedule more meetings. And how I hitchhiked from West Virginia, Huntington, to Rives Junction, Michigan, to the Revival Fellowship meetings there, Labor Day weekend.

And that was some years ago. And it was just a series of miracles. It's just, you know, it's almost too much.

And people wonder if I'm telling the truth. But God did that. And then after that, he supplied me with all kinds of cars.

I mean, God could have done that before I went hitchhiking. But it's strange, isn't it? And so over the next so many years, I was giving away cars after that. And he says, you're different.

I said, no, you, what about you? What about, what kind of miracles? And then he gave me one. He says, well, last Easter, he says, my son had six dozen of eggs. I don't know where that little fellow got six dozen eggs, but he said he had six dozen eggs ready for Easter to be colored.

And his mother had said, we're going to dip them in paint, and we're going to paint them. And he was excited about that. And he said, I took him to church.

And at church, the preacher, he says, that preacher, he says, he talked my boy out of four dozen eggs. He says, apparently they were going to have an Easter egg hunt. And my son said, the preacher said, how many can bring four dozen, at least four dozen eggs? And this little boy sitting in the front row put up his hand.

He said, boy, you've got four dozen eggs. He said, I got six dozen eggs. He said, okay, write down his name.

And so they wrote down the man that brought them home. He says, I never, he says, I take them to church, but you never know when they're going to get through over there, so they bring them home. So the man that brought them home picked up the eggs.

And he said, the little boy said to his parents, he says, well, mommy, two dozen is enough for us, really. There was only three of them in the family. You think so? And so Wednesday came along, and they're going to paint the eggs, and he wants to help his mother.

His mother wasn't ready yet. So he goes to the fridge and gets the eggs out. And a mistake had been made.

Instead of two dozen being there, there was only one dozen there. One carton was empty. His father told me, he says, I don't know what happened.

Somehow it was left in there. Anyway, he only had, and he felt kind of bad about that. But he said, oh, that ought to be enough.

So the boy, anxious and excited to help his mother, got the pot on and started boiling the water, and got that water boiling hot. He didn't know any better, but he dropped those ice-cold eggs into the hot boiling water. You know what happened? The eggs cracked open, and the white came oozing out, and the whole pot was full of egg whites, and the little boy stands there by the stove crying.

And he's crying. But you know, the fortunate thing was, he was a poor boy. He only had a small pot, and he could only get seven in.

He still had five good ones. You know, what a blessing to blessing of not having much. And so he has five eggs.

And now his father and mother heard him cry, and they said, well, talk, whatever. His father said, son, you've learned something. I hope that you'll learn this for life.

You don't do that. You don't put ice-cold eggs into boiling water. But apparently the father, he didn't offer to go and buy him another dozen eggs to make up for him.

They were a poor family. Maybe they didn't have the money. And so there was no alternative.

The boy has to pray. You know, that's the problem with us. We've got wheels, and we've got money, and we buy another eggs to take care of our kids' problem.

Isn't that right? We've got big pots, and we've got fast wheels, and we've got money. And if we don't have money, we go to the bank, get some. But here it is.

What a blessing that they couldn't get credit, or they didn't have it. Anyway, the boy ends up praying by the stove and saying, God, please heal my eggs. Now, that's quite a prayer request.

A chemist will tell you that egg white can never turn back to a liquid again once it's a solid. And he prays. Now, can you picture God in heaven saying, Hey, did I hear that right? What was that? Hey, does God panic up there sometimes? No, no, no.

I don't mean you guys praying. I mean a child praying. These children have faith.

See, this child has been told that God can do anything. And you can pray about anything. And he believes that.

Now, God brags about the faith of a child. He doesn't say anything about our faith much. Does he? And now, can you imagine those angels so helpful to God, saying, God, remember what you did with George Miller? The bread truck broke down right in front of the orphanage, and they carried all the bread.

You can do that with the egg truck. That'd be simple. But that isn't what the boy prayed now.

He said, no, no, no. He asked, heal the eggs. Another angel might say, ah, Master, why don't you have that Christian lady that wants to please people, the one that's going grocery shopping this morning, and show her the house, and just have her put it on her heart to carry in a bag of groceries.

Take the one with the eggs in it. It'd be something we can... Ah, that would have been a miracle in a sense, wouldn't it? And that's the kind of miracles we give testimony about, right? God says, no, no. He asked me to heal the eggs.

Friends, I somehow believe that God never panics up there when we start praying. I mean, now let me ask you something. Did God panic when Elijah on Mount Carmel, he's trying to pray to get that fire started, and he got seven bales of water and poured them all over the altar, and was soaking wet? Now, did God panic? See, now, suppose you'd been there, and say, now, just a minute, old man.

I mean, did God say, hey, Elijah, you're making it hard for me. Do you ever try to help God out to get your prayers answered? You know what I mean? Help him out. And then, of all things, Elijah poured seven more barrels on there.

Wow. If you'd been in the crowd now, what were you thinking? We're going to find out who God is. Boy, we're going to find out who God is.

And then the third time, he had to go all the way down the hill, probably to the Mediterranean Sea. It hadn't rained for so many years. And get that water, barrels of water, up the hill.

Can you imagine? This took time. And he pours it. Now the whole thing, the whole moat around the altar is filled with water.

There's no doubt. He hadn't hidden any fire under that. Everybody knew that.

If there was fire hidden under it, it wasn't there anymore. And then he's, can you imagine God saying, Elijah, step back. I'm going to hit it dead on.

Dead on. And God, God just, well, he did it and he, God didn't panic at all. He, as a matter of fact, God's thinking up there, hey, give it some more water.

The more water, the better this is going to be. He's set me up for a good testimony here, for a big one. You know, isn't that, isn't that what he's doing? Hey, friends, is that what you do? Ah.

Now that's the difference. Would we, hey, think this over. Would we let the problem get bigger and say, God, we're creating a bigger opportunity for you to show yourself? Aren't we, aren't we quick to panic and say, oh, man, we've got to do something here.

We've got to run. We've got to whatever right now to stop this from getting worse. Because somebody said this is probably, you know, 1% possibility of this being fatal.

And no doubt it's going to be me. Hey, you've got God, just a minute. You've got a big God.

God enjoyed it. He would have liked to have had more water on that, but, you know, they would have lost a crowd because they're taking too much time. Now think of the other one.

In Daniel, the fiery furnace, they would not bow the knee to the image of the king. Remember, to the false idol. And that king in a rage, and I believe God stirred him up in his rage, he got so angry, he says, stoke that fire seven times hotter.

Now, friends, that thing was so out of control that because the strongest of his soldiers cast the Hebrew children in the fire, they died right there at the door. They weren't even in it. That's how, that thing was so out of control, I believe God probably helped the thing from exploding, you see, in order to pull this out.

Now, this thing was so hot, and God, you don't see God up in heaven panicking and saying, hey, easy on the heat, you guys. Easy on the heat. I'm going to have them walk around in there, but I mean, there's a limit.

No offense. There is no limit with God. There is absolutely no limit with God.

And we've got to realize who God is. And then it'd be a whole lot easier for us to live with our families and our situations and our needs. God is far greater than any limit we can imagine.

And so God says, stoke it some more, give it the fire, give it the fuel. And then that thing is so wild that now the, and then he has them walking around in there. Just, he loved it.

Now, you take the story of Gideon. We could go on all day. Gideon is up against the enemy of Midianites and the Amalekites, I think.

Amalekites, Midianites, anyway. 150,000 of them. And Gideon has 32,000 troops.

He's outnumbered five to one, almost five to one. Now, if you were that captain, you'd get on and you'd say, God, there's only five guys fighting with each one of my guys. We haven't got a chance.

God, what do I do? And God says, oh, I'll tell you what to do. Get rid of some of your men. You could say, Gideon saying, who said that? But you know, Gideon did it.

Why, that's better than some of us would do. Gideon did it and he ends up with 10,000 men. He's outnumbered 15 to one.

He gets on his knees again and says, God, what do I do now? Get in. Get rid of some more men. You see how God sets it up.

He knows this is going to be in the Bible for all the ages to come. And then he's down to 300 men. Now he's outnumbered, somebody told me, 500 to one.

It's getting better. And he probably would have liked to have cut them down more, but he had to have at least 300 to surround the camp of the Midianites. I mean, there was such a big group there.

So 300 was about where he had to stop. And then Gideon says to God, God, we don't have any weapons. They took all our weapons years ago.

And he says, oh, no problem. Get each one of you a clay pot. Weapons.

Real sharp. God has a sense of humor. Don't you think he was, clay pot, we're going to throw it at them.

But we only got 300. Only 300. And then he said, get each one of you a torch.

Going to burn them. Get each one of you a ram's horn. We're going to kill them with sound.

And that's how, and you know, but they did it. That's so beautiful about the whole thing. They did it.

They did what God said, even though it was way out. I mean, it was so ridiculous. I mean, we're going to fight a bear, a huge army with a clay pot.

Now, and then they, and then they do that. And you know the rest, how God defeats that terrific. And God got the glory.

It's got to be obvious who gets the glory. That is such a main part of this thing. God wants to show himself strong.

He will not share his glory with a man. You see, he will only, and what I love about Jesus in the New Testament, I mean, he's just like his father, God. I mean, he does the same kind of thing.

In John 9, they cry, say, come quickly, come quickly. Your friend Lazarus is dying. He's very sick.

And Jesus, what does he do? He stays two, three more days where he's preaching, as if he hadn't even heard him. And then finally he makes his way, and on the way he heals some people. And finally he gets

there.

And he says, and they all say, oh, if you'd come. And he says, well, open the, roll away the stone. He said, we can't do that.

I mean, this is, he's already decaying. I mean, it's going to smell bad. I mean, if you had come, but now there's no hope.

And that's just about God's time, isn't it? He says, oh, that's why I waited. Now, he didn't tell them that, but that God would be glorified. And then, you know, he waits till he's good and dead, you know, till there's no doubt about him being dead, till they could smell it, right? That's it.

And then when Peter's in jail, remember that? All these quaternions of soldiers at the door and at the gates and chains on his hands and guys sleeping up against him and he's all this, you know, and God says, oh, this is neat. Isn't it? And I see the more amazing the problem, the greater the challenge to God. God enjoys the challenge.

God enjoys the impossible. God is the God of the impossible. And when we see these things like this, you know, can you imagine? Peter doesn't believe in himself.

He gets up, you know, and follows the angel. He's outside and he wonders if he's dreaming. And he comes to the door of John Mark's house and they're praying in there for Peter, you know, because Peter's going to probably die in the morning.

And he's praying and Rhoda comes to the door. Remember that? And Rhoda says, hey, Peter's at the door. Peter's at the door.

They said, no, no, Rhoda, what do you think we're having this prayer meeting for? Peter's in jail. Now, this is the church we're all trying to be like, that first generation of the church, the church with all this faith and all that, you know. So we've come a long way.

Friends, they were needed, isn't it? But, you know, the story, probably the favorite Bible story is the feeding of the 5,000. The bigger the crowd, 5,000 men plus women and children, 20,000 people maybe, the bigger the crowd and the smaller the lunch, the little boy's life. That's just about how he works.

He says, now I'll take this very small lunch and feed this whole big crowd and have 12 baskets full left over. So when the little boy in Huntington, West Virginia, that I personally know, my wife here knows him, when he prayed, God healed my aches. God says, wow, this is neat.

I like this. I've never had one of these requests before. How many here have asked God to heal your aches? A hell of a number, you see.

All right, so God, and all of a sudden the boy jumps up and down for joy, stands by his stove screaming and yelling and jumping, and the parents came in, and the father said to him, what happened? He said, God healed my aches. And the father looks in the pot and the mother looks in it. I checked this story with her.

I wasn't going to use it as an illustration in a message, that's for sure, until I knew that this was verified. I later talked to the wife, and he says, I can't believe my husband told you this. I said, why not? He said, well, he told it a couple of guys at first, and they laughed at him and made him feel so silly that he never

told it to anybody since.

So, but yeah, it happened. We ate those aches, he said. There were seven aches in that pot.

They were totally perfect aches. Water was still boiling away. And the father said, he went to the counter and felt those cold ones.

He thought maybe it's exchanger. But there was five cold ones still there. It had never been anywhere near the pot.

And there were seven. He said, son, what happened? He says, daddy, just like the white came squeezing out, so it squeezed right back in. He saw it.

He saw it go. And I bet God got the right white and the right ache. What do you think? I believe.

And he, they marked his aches. You were two. They put a little X on those aches.

They painted those seven as well as the other five. And he says, on Easter morning, we couldn't wait for Easter morning. He says, we grabbed for the ones with the little crosses on them, little X's on them.

And he says, sir, I cut the first one right clean in half. He said that yellow was right in dead center. The white was around it.

It was perfect. Well, he had told his boy, we can't paint them because the shells are cracked. You know, the paint will get inside.

And he says, we held them to the light and there was no cracks. He says, God healed the shells too. He says, and then he says, I peeled some completely, very carefully, and that membrane was in place and everything was perfect.

They were perfect eggs. And he says, that's what my, my boys got faith. And he bragged about that faith.

And you know, some people say, is that really true? And I told this in a Baptist church. And they had a hard time with it. And I said, all right, let me ask you a question.

How many believe that God created everything out of nothing? I'll believe it. Baptist doctrine. I said, wouldn't it be far easier to make eggs out of egg material than out of nothing? But see, because it happens in our day, we have a hard time with it.

But what a blessing for a family that's poor that cries out to God. And that's what we had there on the jungle of New Guinea. We had a, these people cried out to God.

And I was there, I came back from the mission field, my wife and I came back from the mission field 18 years ago. When we left there, we had three small churches going. After about eight years, there were no missionaries there.

And all of a sudden, I realized that there were no missionaries with our people, so I felt it my responsibility maybe to go back and I thought about it, and to go back at least for a trip. My wife still has liver damage, so she can't go to the tropics. She's fine in a cooler climate.

But, so finally I started taking trips back, and I went, my son, my oldest son went back once to make, to see if God wanted him to be a missionary there. And then my son and I went back after a number of years in 89. Last year in 93, neither one of my sons were able to go with me, so I was looking, praying for somebody to go with me, and I met a fellow named John Gilliam, who was, lives in Arkansas.

And he was willing to go with me. And we went through and got to all these churches, and I was so thrilled. In three villages there were churches where I had never thought there would ever be a church.

One was a village of Jufo, where my wife and I first came, and they ran us out of there. They didn't want us there. Friends, these three villages, I never prayed for them.

Well, I prayed for them for a while, but then I gave up praying because I thought there's no use. Have you ever had people so wicked and such a mess that you didn't want to erase your prayers on them? And you just, you know, and so I didn't even pray for them. I thought there's nothing can change them.

And I went to those villages. One was that Habu village, and a small group there, and there were Christians there, and I sat there, could hardly preach for the emotion because... And the other one was this Ichi village. What a name, Ichi.

And a government post. And there we preached to them in Indonesian, not in Awu, because there were so many government workers in the service, and the people had learned some Indonesian there. And amazing that there was a church.

And then that final place was the Jufo where we lived. And they had built that little church right in the spot where my house used to stand, standing there. They said, well, this was a missionary's place.

Let's build a church on it there. And I preached there, and there was these Christians and two ladies there, except the Lord that day. I don't know if you remember.

But friends, we went on from church to church. And then we got caught there in the middle of the jungle, and we couldn't make it to this Sorokia village. And so there was this bivouac, they call it, this jungle house, and we were so tired, and we were falling because we couldn't see well, and it was dark.

And we said to the carriers, to the men with us, we're going to sleep here. We're going to hang our mosquito nets here. We can live here with nets, you know.

And they went on to the village in the dark. They said, we'll come back in the morning when it's light to get you. So we stayed there in the dark.

And that thing, we had some candles and some lights. We had flashlights. But anyway, we hung our nets up.

And just before we went to sleep, there was this man came to the door. And John tried to, he started to talk to him in English. He was so taken, this guy in the dark, you know, who is he? And finally he realized he didn't understand English, so I started talking to him.

I said, who are you? And he says, my name is Marcus. I said, what village are you from? And he told me. And I said, are you alone? He said, yeah.

I said, what are you doing out here in the night? He says, I'm hunting pigs. He had a flashlight. I said, you are by yourself in this jungle? He said, yeah.

Aren't you afraid? No. You're not afraid. See, friends, these are spirit worshipers.

They're animists. They were fearing demons. The demons are out at night.

The demons are in these jungles. And I'd get such depression going through these jungles many times because the demonic thing was so strong in the early days. And I didn't even want to go through these jungles many times.

I'd feel sick so often, so discouraged. I didn't want to go. I'd be depressed in those jungles.

And yet I didn't know how to react to this. I didn't know my authority that I could silence them in Jesus' name, and command them to leave me, like James 4, 7 says. I didn't know all this.

And here I'm a carnal Christian, or certainly not a spirit-filled Christian, not knowing his authority, trying to reach an animistic people of spirit worshipers. There's no way you can do it. And I remember the fear I had through these jungles.

And I said, aren't you afraid? The people used to say, they used to show the scars where they got beaten in the jungle by maybe just a hand or a stick, and they didn't see anything else. Unbelievable things happened. They showed me the scars and so on.

And, you know, I said, you aren't afraid of this? No, come on, I'm not afraid of this. This fellow is maybe almost 18, whatever year, about that. He was born, you know, about the time we left.

And I couldn't believe that. And then when we got to the village, I found out that the houses were built far apart. They used to build close together because fear of demons, you know, they'd all be together.

And now they're scattered and they have more privacy. And I said, I can't believe this. Aren't you people afraid anymore? And they said, no, we're not afraid.

And when Marcus said, I'm not afraid in that jungle, I said, then you must be a Christian. And he said, no, I'm not a Christian. I said, you're not a Christian, and you're not afraid.

I said, how can that be? And friends, what we concluded, which I believe is absolutely true, because I had told John ahead of time, I said, John, you might get depressed, you might get discouraged. We'll stick together, we've got to encourage each other. That's the way it is in those jungles.

You'll feel that evil. And one day, about halfway through our trekking around that jungle, I said, have you sensed any problem, any evil, like I warned you of? And he said, no. He says, I've been rejoicing, Lord, I've been praying, I've been singing, I don't sense the powers of darkness at all.

Then he said something, he said, I sense more powers of darkness in Arkansas when I'm hiking with my church group than here in New Guinea. That's what he said. But what we conclude is this, the churches are so strong in their faith.

There are so many Christians there now that the powers of darkness have left those jungles and the powers of darkness are on the wane and they can't be happy there anymore. Isn't that right? Wouldn't you

like to live in a place where the powers of darkness and the principalities are weakening and leaving the area? And the beauty of it is, Marcus, because we got that at Syracuse Church, and Marcus was one of the ones that was saved that morning as I preached. I said, you've never taken the hand of Jesus before? He grabbed my hand.

He said, you've never started taking Jesus' hand and walked with him before? He said, no. And that's amazing. What we found out was that the unsaved people in a community profit and are blessed when the church is strong.

Isn't that something? Because here was Marcus could go hunting at night in a jungle and he wasn't a Christian, but the powers of darkness isn't that, so even, that's how we need to have a church strong in faith and so on. So we sent many, of course, with two of us coming in that jungle, you know, from the outside, all the people of the village would come and listen to us and they'd stand outside the churches when they couldn't fit in the churches and many were saved and we led many people to Christ. We probably led more people to Christ there in the couple of weeks of travel to those ten churches than I'll win to Christ the rest of my life in America.

These people are hungry. When you show them that there's a relief from this fear of demonic fear, show them that there's an answer that they're down to the fear of death, wow, of course, these people are so poor they don't even have clothing. Well, they're starting to have clothing now, but some of them still don't, but they have nothing to give up for Jesus.

You see, they've got to get rid of their rich craft. And friends, we saw so many people come to know the Lord and then we came to those final nights. You know, they used to have those demonic dances and dancing and these were immoral and then it would go into gross immorality and everything else.

That was their entertainment during the days when we were there. And now, for their entertainment, they have sings at night. Sometimes they sing all night.

We were at one and we, John and I, we were tired, we left at one o'clock and they decided they'd go home too then. But they sing for entertainment the gospel songs. Wow.

Here I am, you know, at the rate America is, there shouldn't have been anything there. And there they're singing the gospels. They make their homemade guitars, put fish line on them and strings and little ukuleles.

The one place they had this big bass, took two guys to bring it to the church that had only one line on it, crocodile line on it, this plastic line, the boy was never in tune, most of them aren't. But the thing is, they make a joyful sound and they're singing away the gospel songs. And we were just amazed.

And then we were in this village of Haibu and maybe some of you have heard me preach on the weapon of love. And these guys which took me so bad in that place and threatened me so bad and caused me such great fear in the years. They were there at the meeting and in that village there was this young preacher boy, a very intelligent local man there.

And he finally stood up in the meeting and he said, Tuan, you didn't... You know, they had always thought that I had come to that area because I'd gone all over the world and found the nicest people anywhere and lived with them, you know. That's what they thought. And he said, you didn't come here because this was such a nice place.

You came here to tell about Jesus. I said, yes. And this was 31 years after I first came there.

They finally realized. I'd given up and it wasn't that important anyway. But they finally realized.

And he points at me and he says, this man left his home and this man left his parents and left his family and left his village and came here to tell us about Jesus so that we could sing like this so that we could know him so that we could go to his heaven. And all of a sudden they start to think. They rub their nose when they're thinking, you know.

And they're thinking, this is why. Is this really why you came? I said, yes, this is why I came. But you never knew it.

I didn't think you'd ever realize it. And then they said, terima kasih, Tuan. Terima kasih.

And that's a word for thank you in Indonesian. And they stood up and shook my hand and some hugged me. And they said, Tuan, thank you for coming.

There wasn't even a word for thank you in their own language. Thank you for coming to tell us about you. Because now they're starting to reach out and they realize that it isn't easy.

You know, there's persecution. There's, you know, whatever. And they said, you came here.

And then he went on and gave this kritis speech. And he says, you know, this is the village of Haibu. He says, do you remember how our fathers and our older folks and even some living today treated this man? How they threatened him with arrows and how he saved their lives? He says, he kept coming back and he kept coming back and we threatened him, told him never to come back.

He kept coming back. And aren't you glad he kept coming back because now we're Christians. And for the first time they thanked me.

And friends, that was just more than I could take, almost. These people thanked me for coming. You know, Mr. Gothard, I'm so thrilled with this seminar with the institute.

I'm so thrilled that after that second furlough I came to the seminar and learned to give those pineapples to God. Because friends, I was finished. My health was gone.

My nervous system was gone. I didn't want to go back. I was struggling so bad.

My wife didn't want to go back. We were finished. We didn't know what we were going to do back home here.

But then I gave my garden to God and then the thing on restitution, I got to ask forgiveness. That's the only thing made me go back. I went back and asked them for forgiveness for the way I'd been their missionary.

And the closest anyone I ever got to heaven was seeing this missionary angry or running from them in fear. And now God taught me and it was through that seminar that God gave me answers. And I started to appropriate those answers in that jungle all by myself.

My wife and I both went to the seminar twice that furlough. And for that reason, there's a tribe one out there today and they're going to be in heaven. And friends, they got more faith than we have.

Now why is that? When their baby gets sick, what do they do to hold them up? Say, God, the baby is sick. God heals the baby. And when they don't have no food to eat, see, they have no banks to go for loans.

You know what I mean? When they're out, then they say, God, we need provisions. Huh? And then when the enemy comes in, looks like it's going to be battled, they have no insurance, people take care of them. They have nobody to take care of them.

And they cry out, God, the enemy's coming. That protects them. And they're always praying, God, there's always somebody sick or in need and they're constantly depending upon God.

And God comes through to them. And God shows Himself strong. And, you know, we had that.

We were there in the jungle, and our baby would get sick too. Remember my wife holding the baby up to God. Sometimes I would say, God, there's no other way.

We can't get in touch with anybody until maybe tomorrow morning, and then the doctor's far away and the plane might not even be able to get here. God, we need, there's no, this child's going to die before morning. And we had this time and time again, and God healed the babies.

Oh, friends, and God, when you're in a place of need, and God always took care of us. And I came home after 14 years out there in this jungle with four healthy children. Now, all those scorpions and all those centipedes, a bite of that centipede, that large one, would kill a child.

The snakes all over. I've killed snakes in my house. My wife has killed snakes in the house.

And all the headhunters and all the cannibals and all the disease. And 14 years later we came home and we've got four healthy children a day. Nobody would insure us.

You better believe it. I went to Akron, Ohio, my wife's hometown. I went to, there was a sign in the window, you know, a life insurance man.

He said, re-insure anybody. He had the sign there. So I thought, just for the ride, I'll go in and see what he says to me.

And he asked me for a lot of questions, and then it came to the question that I was waiting for. What do you do for a living? And I said, well, I'm a missionary to the headhunters and cannibals in New Guinea. And he says, no, no, he says, no, really, what do you do? Well, I had to prove it.

I had to get my mission card out and prove it. He says, get out of here. I said, take your sign down.

I was neat, so I did it again. Just that's the kind of guy I am. Poor insurance man.

I hope there's no insurance guys here. I bet there is. A crowd this big.

But anyway. Well, you couldn't blame them. We had the churches praying for us, right? Do you pray for missionaries? I hope you do.

We can't count on it, you know. We can't get insurance, remember? If we could get insurance, we wouldn't need your purse or bed. Hey, God looked after us all through the years, right? And then we come home.

Home, we have a phone on the wall. Aren't those nice things? You know, when your baby gets sick, you just call the doctor. You don't have to pray.

So, we did that for some time. And then I said to my wife one day, I said, it was so much cheaper out there on the mission field. Why don't we do that again? And that's what we endeavored to do.

Now, don't take this too far. If your child is bleeding to death, get a doctor's help to stop the bleeding or whatever is necessary. But when you have opportunity, remember, God enjoys the impossible.

Let the thing get a little worse. Don't worry about it. Let it get worse.

Give God a bigger opportunity. Until the doctor says there's no hope. Then says, God, is this setting you up right? Are you ready to move on our behalf? We're giving you an opportunity to show yourself strong.

All right? So, give it time and give God an opportunity. Go to the church. Have anointment oil.

Meet the requirements of James 5. And, you know, we had one little girl that came home. One fellow came home so sick. And maybe it was the last time when we came home.

And my father-in-law in Akron, Ohio there, man, he says, Otto, we've got to call a doctor. That little girl is going to die in our home. And we don't want that.

He says, I said, Dad, let's pray first. And what could he say? He said, Deacon, you know, and so he and Grandma knelt. And the parents, Carol and I knelt.

And the rest of the siblings, the other three children knelt. And we prayed over this little girl. Now what do you think God thinks of when he sees grandparents and parents and children kneeling together around a sick child? Huh? Does that hold weight in God's eyes? So get your children in on it.

To pray for the ones that are sick. When somebody asks you to pray, when you hear some sick person, bring your children along to help pray, okay? They've got more faith than we've got, folks. You can't go wrong.

All right, now, so we, that night was prayer meeting and Grandma stayed with this sick little girl and my father-in-law stood up and says, oh, folks, you know, when the prayer goes, I've got a little granddaughter, she's so sick, and Otto, he's got this strange, and he had to be careful what they say, you know, he's going to give her 24 hours. He says, but I don't think we've got 24 hours. So, no, you don't have to make it 24 hours, you can make it whatever God lays on your heart.

And he says, I think she's going to die tonight in my house, he says, and he's almost weeping. And that little church there started to pray and they started to weep and pray. God saved a girl, God healed this little girl.

And we came home and she was a little better and she went to sleep. That little girl slept the whole night through and in the morning she was perfectly well. And God had answered the prayer of God's people.

And we went to church Sunday morning and her father stood up and he says, oh, thank you for praying. Oh, God, this is a miracle. The little girl the next morning is perfectly well, she's perfectly well today.

There she is on the front row there, she's sitting right there. And the whole church started to clap. Now this church never clapped.

I mean, you don't clap, I mean, it was spontaneous. They clapped and prayed and the whole church was edified because that little girl was healed like that. That's what God wants to do.

God wants to show us some excitement. God wants to show himself strong, folks. Now go home and ask God, what way can I help so that you can show yourself strong? When has God done the last miracle for you? See, when you go to man, when you go to the banker for the loans, when you go to the doctor so quick, you go to the insurance man and you go to everybody else for help.

When your car breaks down, you find a mechanic. Why don't you? God can fix Japanese cars. He can.

God can make anything run. He can make him run on anything, too. Hey, God loves it.

And you come finally to the garage to replace a part and he says, how could you drive this thing? This thing can't run. I said, well, it did. Isn't that right? God can push.

The angels are strong. They can push you. But friends, there's always that choice we have in here, America.

We can go to man or we can go to God in everything. Oh, so many men go in debt to buy their car or derives a new car because he's got to drive home and don't want to break down. See, there's no God to help her so, you know, you've got to get a new car, but a new car can stop, too.

But what that wife needs is the presence of God in that car and God's blessing. And you've got to give that car to God and you've got to give that wife to God every day. And say, God, as long as you don't give me the money for a better car, we're going to have to drive.

And God's teaching your faith in an old car. So every one of you go home and rejoice at your old car and thank God for it because it's given God an opportunity to show himself strong. And there's so many ways that can be done.

For instance, there was a missionary in one of those islands out there and he had a place with terrible poisonous snakes and he had three little sons. And these sons, at first when they were real small, they were in the house, but then they started to play outside and there's the poisonous snakes. And he was a man given to worry and he worried about his sons and told his sons to be careful.

And finally, he just couldn't handle it anymore and he said to his wife, let's go home. And when these boys are old enough to realize the danger, then we'll come back and be missionaries again. And their home state was Louisiana.

If you know anything about Louisiana, there's lots of snakes there. And that's where this church had given them this mobile home that was free. Somebody gave them.

They had no home. And they settled there and the boys were under the mobile home, exploring, you know how they do, and ran into a nest of rattlesnakes. The two boys were badly bitten.

You know, the little one, the last one is way behind. You know how he crawls way behind. And fortunately he was.

But these two were badly bitten and they screamed and cried and the father crawled out and pulled them out from between the snakes. That's the thing he'd left the mission field for. Right? And in his despair, he starts realizing, oh, they get bit here in America.

And they were a long way out of the nearest hospital and he had this double cab truck, you know, with a little back seat and he puts those boys back there and he cries out to his wife and his wife was in the washroom and she couldn't come and he says, I'm taking my boys to the hospital. And he, in a frenzy, got behind a wheel to save time, to save his boys. He has to back his truck out this way and as he backed up, he ran over the third little boy and killed him in the driveway.

And he tore, and he didn't know it, and he tore out the driveway, praying as he went, oh God save the boys, oh God and grief and guilt for I didn't trust God on the mission field. And by now the wife had come out and she stood at the kitchen window and saw the body of the little boy. She ran out, took the little boy and in her grief she got back to the door, that's as far as she got.

And there they found her dead. She died from a heart attack. And he sped off, and while he was, by the time he got to the hospital, those two boys were also gone.

And he was the only one left. And grief, and all of a sudden he realizes, oh God, I should have trusted you out there. You see what he did? He took it out of God's hands and he's going to take care of himself, his family.

He's going to take care of them, you see. And that's what we do when we go to man. When our faith will grow only as we put our more dependent upon God and less dependent upon man.

But for us to be more dependent upon God, we must know who God is and that God enjoys the impossible. We've got to, our faith must grow. And then less dependent on ourselves and other people around us.

That's where God wants us. That's God's goal for each one of us men. That we grow in faith.

And this man realized what he's done. And he lost a whole family. And I don't know what happened.

I've tried to get in touch with him. I don't know what happened. He's either a real strong Christian today, or he's maybe lost his faith.

I don't know. He couldn't be the same, that's for sure. I've been praying for him and many people prayed for him.

But friends, you know, as I started thinking about this dear missionary, I thought about myself. I've got four children, he had three. Friends, I myself have done that very thing.

I've walked out of God's path and started taking care of my own. And done, did things my way to help the situation. I've done the very thing that he's done.

And I've got four healthy children today. Now why is that? How can you explain that one, friends? Am I any better than that man? No. It's the grace of God to me.

His grace so great to me. I should have lost them all because I've done, I should have lost my wife and children out there too because I've many times, I mean, you know I got angry, fighting with them about the

pineapples. Did everything my own way.

Tried to fix my own Dutch swing. Remember that? And instead of letting God take care of it. Finally I understood when I'm all broken down, health is gone.

But friends, what man is there here today that hasn't taken matters in his own hands instead of giving it to God? And you've tried to push your way and solve your problem and struggle through or somehow make it go. Is there anybody like that here? Why yes. So what do we deserve? No better than that missionary in Louisiana, friends.

And if we all really think it through how many times we've gone our own way, did our own thing as if God wasn't even up there. We didn't call on him and somehow the grace of God you're here today and your family may still be intact or whatever. Minus.

Friends, we ought to thank God for his grace and his infinite mercy upon us sinners that go astray like the prodigal son so often. And God somehow takes us back time and time again. God wants his job back.

Will you help? He doesn't want to be unemployed. He doesn't want all that stuff. Will you help God get his job back? Will you give him opportunities to show himself strong? Would you look to him? Let us all pray.

Heavenly Father, we just thank you for your grace. As I tell the story again about the missionary, I realize, God, that should have been me. You don't owe me anything.

I've walked out of your way so many times, too many times and I care to confess, admit. And these dear brothers of mine sitting here have done the same thing. And God, your grace is so great.

And of all things, we thank you this morning for your mercy. We thank you for your blessings. We thank you for allowing us to live on with our wives and children.

Oh God, forgive us. And Lord, help us now to turn this thing around, to not go along with the world running to man as if there's no God up in heaven. Lord, but may we know and may we be conscious of your presence and may our faith grow and may we give you opportunities, Father, to show yourself strong in our behalf.

That which is so long to do, so that you have a way to use all that power and all that wisdom and all that wealth that you have there and that you've been waiting to use while you saw us struggle and scrimp and try work our way through this life. Help us, oh God. Help each one of these men.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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