

The Pineapple Story

by Otto Koning

The Pineapple Story illustrates Otto Koning's struggles with theft and cultural differences during his missionary work in New Guinea, leading to profound lessons on ownership and forgiveness.

Duration: 26:33

Scripture: Psalm 55:22, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:24, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 5:1, Philipians 4:6-7, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal experiences of being a missionary in a remote jungle. They talk about the boredom and monotony of their life there, but also the joy of being able to visit their children on the coast a few times a year. The speaker then attends a seminar where they learn about giving possessions to God and trusting Him to provide. They share examples of how God has provided for them, even when they gave away their belongings. The speaker concludes by expressing gratitude for God's faithfulness and the joy of experiencing the sunrise with their wife.

Transcript

Thank you. As you, possibly some of you have heard, the pineapple story took place in the country of New Guinea, used to be Dutch New Guinea, uh, Irian Jaya now, part of Indonesia. Right here in these swamp lands is where we had planted these pineapples.

I tried to grow everything there, but nothing would grow. The ground, the sandy soil was so bad. And so I finally tried pineapples because I didn't know what else to try.

God had put me there, my wife and I, among people who were just chronic thieves. They stole everything. One day, uh, one lady stood there and she had her necklace on, on the bottom of her necklace hung our only can opener.

And we were so glad to get that thing back. You know, we were hacking cans open with machetes, and it was a mess. My wife being a nurse, she sterilized that thing good and we got it back.

One day she said to me, Otto, I can't find the diaper pins to keep the diapers on the, on the babies. And the large, slight pins. And one day we, there stood a group of women, and on their ears hung our diaper pins.

And we were so glad to get them back because, you know, what else do you do? The other day I heard of a, a rock group here in America, which used safety pins on their ears. So I guess we're catching up with the jungle people here in America. Uh, and I suppose in music, some other areas, we're already ahead of them, uh, if that's possible.

But you know, they stole everything. And God sent me among those people, probably the greatest thieves on earth, to teach me the lesson that He wanted me to get, the lesson of Luke 14, 33, where it says, Whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple. Now, I'm Dutch by birth.

I was born in Holland. And us Dutch people hang on awfully tight to things we have. Uh, we just, that's the way, it isn't my fault.

Really, my father was that way. I got it from him. And, uh, and then I found out that he got it from my grandfather.

So it really isn't his fault, neither. But, you know, they call us stingy. I, you know, the word in their culture here was long-nosed.

The word for stingy. The long-nosed white man, they called me. And, uh, stingy missionary.

And I was fighting for all that I had. I mean, I was taught, you know, to fight back. I fought for everything.

Like, they stole my shirt. One guy, he's trying to sell me a fish he had my shirt on. You'd think the guy would wear it somewhere else.

I said, you know, nobody else is wearing any shirts around there. And I said, hey man, give me your shirt back first, and then I'll trade with you. Uh, they took everything.

One time, one guy came staggering, and he couldn't see straight. And then I realized that he's got my wife's subscription sunglasses on. Uh, she hadn't missed him yet.

Oh, it was crazy. He's staggering in like this. He doesn't know how to walk.

He has no clothing, just glasses. And then he's staggering in, and I took them off his nose. I said, now you'll be able to walk home.

And, you know, they took everything. I'd go to the village with my box. I had a cardboard box.

And when I went to visit them to learn language and so on, I just gathered up the stuff I found in their homes, you know, got it all back. They called me the missionary with the box. I didn't like that.

But I filled the whole thing up. I found stuff I hadn't missed yet. They'd say, one day I sat looking at this flashlight, and I saw, that's just like the one I got.

Amazing that these people would have one like that. Then I went home and found that they'd just gotten it the day before. They were chronic thieves.

They'd get my wife's attention at the front door and knock. And then they'd clean off the wash line at the back. There was no way.

There were so many of them, just the two of us. And we were fussing with them. And they said, Tom, you're always angry.

I said, hey, I was never angry until I met you people. This is true. Anger had never really been my problem.

I'd had other problems, but anger was never my problem until I met them. I said to them, hey, I could be a real good missionary if it wasn't for you people. You know, well, I heard a pastor say that here at home too.

So you must say, you know, I could be a good preacher, a pastor, if it wasn't for my people. A teenager told me once I could pass my grades if it wasn't for my teacher. And then I suppose the man that said I could be a good husband if it wasn't for my wife.

So you have natives around you too. So really, I think you'll be able to understand my story. But they stole all my pineapples, and I didn't know what to do.

I closed the clinic. I said, no more clinic. They said, you're going to eat all the pills yourself.

I said, no. I said, but if you, you're going to have to make a choice. You either get pineapples or you get pills.

If you keep stealing them, you won't get pills. Make a choice. And they kept right on stealing.

They were chronic. They couldn't stop stealing. And so they, I closed the clinic, and they all went off to their, well, no, they sat on my front porch with their headaches, you know, rubbing their toes.

Give me some pills. And I said, hey, don't sit here hurting. Go sit on your own front porch.

It doesn't hurt there. That's where you eat the pineapples. That's where your head is going to hurt.

And, oh, they weren't happy with me. But by the weekend, they let their babies die. Can you believe it? Blamed us, the stingy white men, the long-nosed white men.

Won't give us any medicine. And this grieved our hearts, of course, and we quick opened the clinic again and thought, well, let's forget about the pineapples. Let them have them.

Have the pineapples. We'll live, you know, and save their lives. And so we endeavored to do this.

And two or three weeks went by, and it was time to weed the garden again. They said, go on. Your garden needs weed.

Let me weed it. Oh, you know. And I said, hey, if you're going to eat all the pineapples, weed it yourself.

You know. But they, finally, I paid them to weed it, and I thought, I'll try something else. I hadn't, I'd grown these things.

They took three years before they ever produced fruit. And now they'd been producing fruit for a couple of months, and they stole them all, and oh, I was angry. And, you know, I didn't even know what it tasted like.

And I wondered what they tasted like. And people say, why didn't you beat them to it, to them? Well, they ate them while they were still green. They always, they ate everything green.

They never even knew bananas turned yellow. They ate everything green. See, they were in a society of chronic thieves.

You couldn't survive there unless you knew how to steal. The women would come to our house and would train their children how to steal, always using my pineapple garden as their training grounds. You know, they'd say, now check the windows, now get mommy that big one, so on and all that.

And, oh, those women. I told them, I said, you know, quit training. They'd beat the kids if they got caught.

No wonder they grow up the way they do. And so we opened the clinic again, and I thought, I've got to think of something else. I've got to get some of these pineapples, and we can't have these people walk all over us.

And so I closed the trade store. I thought they can do without the salt and the fish soaks and stuff like that, matches. They'd never had matches until we got there.

And I closed the store. Well, I told them a week ahead, and they kept stealing. So I closed it all.

Now they reacted. They were angry at me. They said, that stingy white man, if he doesn't share, no advantage living near him.

And so they moved out. They moved to their favorite hunting grounds further towards the ocean, this way. And we were left there with a grand vacation.

Can you imagine how neat that was? They look in every window, every moment of the day. Oh, friends, it gets to you after a while. There's no way.

We go on a picnic. They follow us. You know, they watch us eat.

They tell us when we've eaten enough. And then they, you know, they want the rest. You can't get it.

We could only get out of there and go visit our children that were in school up here on the coast. We'd get out maybe twice, three times a year. But the rest of the time, we were locked in.

They were watching everything we did. Now they'd gone through the jungle. Oh, was that neat.

I got all my letters written. I got all my reports in. Everybody thought I was a good missionary now.

You know, no people. And I have nothing more to do. And a plane comes, and we're dragging the rice sacks to the house.

And he says, where's your coolies? I said, they've gone through the jungle. And he says, I hope they come back. Well, I was still enjoying the vacation after three weeks.

But three more weeks. Oh, the boredom, the monotony in a jungle. Can you imagine sitting on a jungle island with nothing to do? No radio, no TV, no books to read, nothing.

Just eating pineapples. But oh, that was good. But you get tired of them, you know.

And I'm getting convicted, you know. It's only the home churches supporting me knew all I was doing here was eating pineapples. I could do this back in the States.

And my conscience bothers me because they send out the monthly checks to our support and so on. Finally, the plane came back again. Well, the grass was too tall.

And you should have seen the lines he left in the grass as he landed on that grassier strip. I knew I was in for it. I was in trouble.

He got on his plane, just shook his head. He says, Koenig, you know better than this. He says, get your people to cut this.

He says, where's your people anyway? He should have remembered. I told him before. And I said, they've gone.

He says, well, send somebody to call them back. Well, my wife wouldn't go. Hey, you can't blame her, folks.

Those spiders and those snakes in those jungles and those mud trails with slippery logs and leeches and what have you. She didn't know where they were anyway. He says, hey, I can't come back till you get that grass cut.

I'll call you. We had a two-way radio with contact with the MAF base a little north of us and with our mission headquarters. And hey, he says, I can't come back.

I'll call you ahead of time. How would you like to be a missionary back there in the jungle and the pilot that comes your way isn't going to come back? And you say, oh, God, I need my natives. I need my people.

I need a messenger. And one guy came, stood there smiling. And I said, hey, get that smile off your face.

I'll tell you what. I'm going to give you a job. You call all the people, and I'll pay you good.

And he smiled again and went off. And I said, thank you, Lord. You gave me a messenger.

And we waited it out in three, four more days. There they were. And they're yelling at me.

Two on, we're here. Two on, we're here. Well, hey, they didn't have to tell me.

We could smell them. Oh, they never bathe. Can you imagine it? Never bathe.

They can never sneak up on you. And I thought they'll probably steal my pineapples again. They did.

And now I tasted them. And now it's even worse. That's when you complain when you've had it good, and now you have to cut back.

And I was fussing. And they said, two on, you're always angry. You're an angry white man.

And that bothered me. You're stingy. And I said, no, I'm not.

Leave them alone. I'll show you I'm all right. But I tried everything to hard.

Finally, I got this German shepherd dog. He was a big, full-grown male shepherd. I got him up here in the mountains of New Guinea.

A missionary raised him. And all the day, when that dog was on the plane, they could only see the pilot as he landed. He was in the tail end.

All the people, like usual, crowded around that airplane to see what was in there, to see what they would steal next. And the pilot, oh, he couldn't get a door open. He said, can't you control your people? Get them to stand back there.

And I'd have a stick, you know, and tap them on the shoulder. Hey, get back. But, you know, you don't hit them too hard.

They've got nine-foot spears, right? And they're headhunters and cannibals, so you go easy. And, you know, I'd back this side off, and they'd be, and all those flies would get inside his cockpit, and he'd be fighting flies all the way home. And he says, oh, he says, get your people away.

Oh, there's another reason he would polish up that plane. Our people never use a handkerchief and get their noses against this glass. And, oh, he says, look at the mess they're making.

Can't you, oh, he was fussing at me. And I'd be fussing at the people, so we're both fussing at him. And, but this morning when that shepherd dog was in there, I almost encouraged him to get closer.

I thought this, oh, this, oh, you should have been there. You should have been there. When he opened that tail door of the plane, that full-grown shepherd jumped out, let out one bark.

You should have seen him run. I'd never, that was my best day of my missionary career. I, I never, I, they ran, and the dog, you know, they were up on my roof, up in the coconut trees.

They were everywhere, and he was, oh, it was unreal. And that dog did his job. No more pineapples were stolen.

I thought, I've got it. You know, I've, I've beat him finally. But, alas, I didn't.

It got worse. You see, the dog ruined our ministry. Nobody came loitering around our mission station anymore.

My wife had a clinic 200 feet away, and she says, Otto, get rid of the dog. I said, why? She says, come over to the clinic. Well, it was true.

All those hundred people, an average of hundred people would crowd in on her. Nobody wanted to be on the outside when the dog got loose. They'd yell, and I'd tie up my dog with this vine, but he could chew himself free in 20, 30 minutes.

And, oh, one day, you know, they would yell at my wife, quick, quick, me first, me first, quick, quick, quick. Look, he's chewing the vine. He's going to come, he's going to come.

And they're all, she says, they're all pressing up on me. I can't even, I haven't got elbow room. I can't work with them.

She says, they're driving me up the wall. I'm going to be nervous, breakdown. She says, she says, I, I can't, I can't carry on like this.

Well, she says, I'm bending all the needles on them. They're so tense by the time they get. And so, she was right.

One day, I saw the dog get loose. You can't, you won't believe this. He's tore off with a piece of vine hanging on his neck.

Tore off towards the clinic. And all of a sudden, those sick people weren't sick anymore. I, hey, they'd bring him in on stretchers, and they'd run home.

Now, can you believe that? They, the ground is filled with crutches. The guy that couldn't even sit up is sitting on the roof of the clinic. Now, how do you, my wife says, well, I guess I'm all done for today.

I said, yes. But, you know, she was right. I couldn't, I ruined my ministry, too.

I used to sit on my step and learn the culture and the language. But now, no more loitering around there. So, I, I realized that I had to get rid of the dog, and I finally did.

And they clapped, they cheered. That's the best thing you've done since you came. And I thought, what do I do next? I tried everything.

I fussed with them. I did everything trying to get that garden, those pineapples. And finally, I drove a stake in the garden.

And they said, what is that, Tuan? All of them were there. And I said, this is a marker. All the pineapples on this side are yours.

All the pineapples on this side, they're mine. You leave them alone. They said, Tuan, you're giving half of your garden away? I said, yeah.

Now, that must be a record for a Dutch person, right? Fifty percent. Hey, I was losing it anyway. So, really, you're, if you're losing it anyway, you might as well give it away.

Isn't that right? And they stole both halves anyway. You know? As a matter of fact, it was even, even worse now. They'd get, I'd see a guy on my side of the garden.

I'd yell at him, and he'd jump over the line. And stand there and laugh at me. You know, with my pineapple.

Oh, that got me. I had promised God I'd never get angry again. Have you ever done that? I said, God, it's not right.

I'm a missionary. And how can I win these people if I'm angry and I get convicted many a time? And I promised God I'd never get angry again. And then a guy come to my store with a pineapple.

Tuan, you want to buy this? Look how nice and big it is. And I'd lost it again. And I had to confess my sin again.

And then I'd walk in my garden with my wife. And I'd see a nice one in the corner of the garden. I'd cover it with grass.

Nice one coming up. I thought in two weeks it'll be ripe. I'm going to get one.

And I'd hide it. But somehow they always found it. I'd come back and lifted up the grass.

And the pineapple was gone. I'd throw that grass down. I thought, those rascals, they're getting them all.

And I'd lose it again. And I'd have to confess that I was angry again. This went on and on.

How many times does God forgive us anyway? I'm so glad that it isn't 70 times 7. I figured out once, that's about a year and a third. Boy, if He stopped, then many of us would be in trouble. And God keeps forgiving when I keep confessing.

That's 1 John 1, 9. You believe that, don't you? If I confess, He forgives. And I'm so glad that's in the Bible. I was camping on that verse.

I struggled on. What do I do? I tried everything. And finally, I found out that the guys who were stealing them were the guys that had planted them.

And you know what they said? My hands planted them. My mouth eats them. They're mine.

I said, no, they're mine. Can you see us standing in the garden? He's yelling at me, they're mine. And I'm saying, hey.

I said, look, I bought this garden from the chief. I bought these pineapple plants from a missionary. I paid the pilot to bring them here.

What are you talking about? They're yours. Oh, he says, that's true. The garden is yours and the plants are yours, but the fruit is mine.

I said, what's your fruit doing on my plants? He says, it doesn't matter where it is. I said, come on. And I told the chief that I bought the piece of ground from him.

He says, yeah, that's their pineapples. I said, you know what? Their culture, they said, whatever you plant, that's what you eat. No matter whose plant it is or where it is.

So their hands planted them. They said, you didn't get your hands dirty. And so the whole village agreed.

And they said, we always wondered why you're angry over something you don't own. Do you ever do that? Really, isn't everything we own God's anyway? And if we fuss and stew over it, we're just wasting our time, really. And finally, I said, well, take your, after about two weeks, I said, transplant them into your own gardens.

I thought, I'm going to start all over again. I dreaded the thought three more years. Can you imagine this? Three more years to start all over again.

And I said, you men come back tomorrow and I'll take all the plants and plant them in your own gardens. They said, will you pay us, John? I said, no, I'm giving them to you. And they said, John, that's going to be sweating, you know.

You've got to pay for that. So can you imagine that I paid those rascals to take my plants out of the garden? And I lost a lot of sleep over this garden. I shouldn't have, but I did.

And while I didn't pay them enough, I guess they dropped them along the airstrip. They wanted months' pay for planting new gardens and preparing new gardens. And so nobody got the pineapples.

They didn't get them. I didn't get them, but I'm going to start all over again. I got a new load and I told them they're going to plant them and I'm going to pay them this extra beautiful machetes.

And I said, now you forfeit your right to own them. They're mine. I'm going to eat them.

Your hand's going to use this machete. And so they all sudden all wanted to plant them. And the year goes by and I said, do you still have those machetes? I said, don't lose them.

If they lost the machetes, I'd lose my garden. It was a very shaky, risky thing. I didn't have pineapples to worry about.

Now I worried about their machetes. They said, get locks on your doors. Well, they didn't even have doors yet.

But I was so glad to get out of there. I was going on furlough. And, oh, I promised my wife I'd never come back.

And she promised me the same thing. And we told God we'd go anywhere but to those thieves. And, you know, have you ever said to God, I'll go anywhere but there? You know what does God say? You know, He'll hold you right to it.

Don't say it. Don't say it. Because He'll say, He wants to make the choices in our lives, you see.

And it was soon after that that I attended the seminar right here in Chicago at McCormick Place. The basic seminar. I was sitting up in the balcony.

And that second night, Bill talked the whole night on right. Now, that's a long night on fighting for your rights. Because all I could think of was that crazy garden back there halfway around the world.

Way there above Australia. And the longer he talked, the more miserable I got. He said, give your possessions to God.

God takes good care of His property. And I thought, oh, I never thought of that. And then he said, whatever you give to God with the right motives, you'll never lack in that thing.

And that's so true. And that's so scriptural. Because if you give it to God, He's in control.

And whatever He's Lord of, whatever He controls, He does a better job. We can't. And I proved that.

I can't get away from pineapples now. Everywhere I go, people actually think I like them. Everywhere, you know, whatever you give to God, you'll never lack.

This is very, very true. But oh, he went on. He said, the people you fight with, you'll never be able to win for Christ.

Oh, that grieved me. I thought, that's right. Here, people have died on that mission field.

And I was their missionary. And they're lost forever in a Christless eternity in hell. And they're lost.

And all I was doing was fighting for pineapples while they were going into eternity. And oh, I was so grieved. I didn't think God would ever forgive me.

But He did. He'll forgive you no matter what you do. Isn't that true? And I sat there.

I was grieved. And I was weeping up there in the Bowling Bill. Didn't know I was there.

And others wondered what this guy was weeping over. And he said something else. If you keep fighting for your rights, you'll destroy your own health.

And I'd done it. My nerves were bad. I was on tranquilizers.

Missionaries shouldn't be on tranquilizers. No, should they? And I was on them. And my health was bad.

And I was hurting. And he says, you'll destroy your health. And I said, God, I've already done it.

And when he gave the invitation, how many need to put something on the altar tonight and give it to God? Boy, I raised, I think I raised both of my hands. I said, God, it's your pineapple garden. You do whatever you want with it.

And the peace of God filled my soul. And I walked out of that seminar as if I had a burden lifted that, you know, my shoulders were never brought enough to carry. A load.

And I said, God, I never have to be angry again. I never have to fuss and fight again. Oh, what relief, what freedom.

It's like getting born again, all over again. I got back to the jungle and stood there in the garden one night. I said, God, this is your garden.

If you want to give these pineapples to these natives, that's up to you. If you want to give them to your faithful missionary, I would sure appreciate it. Now, why do you laugh? I know what you're saying.

You didn't deserve any. I know. I confess that.

I said, God, I'm not a very victorious missionary. I don't know what I'm doing here, why you ever sent me here. But I did say to him, but I said, God, I'm your child.

And I feed my children. And you've got all kinds of good food coming up here in this garden. Now, that's really putting the pressure on God.

I hope you've never done that. I'm ashamed of that now. That's like twisting God's arm.

God, my kids aren't always good, but I feed them. But, oh, friends, I saw God grow pineapples on that same poor soil, sandy place, same gardeners, same climate, everything the same. And his were bigger and taller than mine ever were.

And God sure knows how to grow pineapples better than I can. And I'm getting suspicious as I go around telling the story. God can grow anything better than we can.

We give him a chance. But he isn't going to push us out of the way. If we're willing to let him do it, fine.

But if not, then he's going to let us struggle. And I reminded God how bad those people were, how the women danced with the bloody heads that the men took in head hunting, put them under their arms. And I described how wicked they were.

That made me look pretty good. And I thought God certainly would want to give all his pineapples to his missionary rather than to those rascals. But I'm still wondering.

God started to grow his pineapples. We're walking in the garden. The natives were looking at the pineapples.

I prayed. I said, God, the natives are looking at your pineapples. Well, I was looking at them too.

Everybody's looking at them. Who's going to eat those nice big ones? And I reminded them over and over again that I was a full-time missionary. I wasn't just a short-termer.

I was in this for life. And, you know, all this. And then the natives were really starting to look harder.

And I caught it. And I said, God, these guys steal them before they get ripe. If you want to get any of your pineapples, you're going to have to watch over this garden now because they're looking at them.

They're about ready to steal. They don't wait until they get ripe. See, I'm giving God some good advice.

I'm, hey, I've got experience. I, hey, I'm helping him. I'm on his side, okay? I hate to see God lose his pineapples, wouldn't you? I hate to see God get hurt.

So I'm really helping him out, and I'm advising him every day. And when they start, can you believe that they stole all God's big ones? I never got a one that whole year. As they got ripe, they stole them.

I didn't think it was fair. I couldn't believe it. They stole them all.

And I prayed about it, and I was angry at those people for it because, you know, now that they were stealing them, I yelled louder at them, and I got angry because I was doing this for God. I told the Lord, I'm getting angry for you. I'm on your side.

I'm not stealing your pineapples, God. They're stealing them. I told God that, just in case he didn't know.

And I'm angry. Now, I'd given the garden to God at the seminar, and here I'm still wearing myself out. And I came to the place, friends, where my... If you're angry long enough, you'll destroy your health.

And that's what I did. My nerves were bad, and my health was bad. And finally, I said, God, I fell on my knees before him one time, and I said, God, I can't help you any longer.

I haven't got the strength. I haven't got any fight left. You're going to have to look after your own garden.

If you don't, nobody else will. And I've literally... You know what God showed me that morning? Romans 6, dying to self, reckoning myself dead to sin. And God showed me that I should give up my right to own a garden.

Well, I was at the end of my health, at the end of my rope. So, I gave the garden to God one more time. I said, God, I died to the right to own a garden.

And I died to the right to eat pineapples. And I endeavored to live that way. And again, as I got up from my knees that morning on that mission field, the peace of God came over me again.

I never need to get angry anymore. I died to the right. I said, God, I'll never walk in that garden again.

I'll never even look at it. Now, I shouldn't have said that. The garden was right outside my window.

But... And for a while, I couldn't stop getting angry. Hey, I've been doing this for seven years, you know. And I see the thieves in my garden, you know.

And I used to yell at them, Hey, what are you doing in my garden? They'd say, Just looking, John, just looking. I'd say, Well, do your looking somewhere else, you know. But now that I'd given the garden away, I still sometimes get angry at them.

I forget, you know. And then God convicts me. And then I say, Oh, God, forgive me.

Once, right in the middle of getting angry, God got to me. And I said, Okay, okay, go ahead, go ahead. Steal the pineapples, that's fine.

And I shouldn't have told him to steal them. But that's the way it came out. And can you believe that God brought me to a place where I waved at the thieves, stealing the pineapples.

And they said, He's gone blind. I was taking this pineapple. They said, His eyes are bad.

And I said, No, I saw you, man. I just didn't say anything. But now God dealt with me on that too.

I said, Hey, if you're dead to that thing, you don't worry about what they say. And so when they stole, I turned my back. And for a while there, I said to the Lord, I said, God, look this way, look this way.

You catch him right in your garden. And I don't think God was even looking, see. And God dealt with me on the whole thing.

Finally, I died to this thing. And I'm not fighting anymore. And this is when this group of natives stood there.

Highmore, a very intelligent fellow, said, Tuan, you've become a Christian, haven't you? And, oh, that's devastating. I said, Why do you say that, man? He said, You don't get angry anymore when we change the day, when they steal your pineapples. I said, I mean, does that make me... He says, Yeah, Tuan, you're a Christian now.

I thought, What about all the other good things I've done here? I've knocked myself out for these people trying to help them. Doesn't that count? No, they only remember when you blow it. You ever notice it? Your neighbors expect you to be totally perfect.

Right? Now, how can you be a witness? I wondered now, how does he know what a Christian was? Then I thought of it. For seven, almost eight years now, I preached about Christianity. I preached how Christ, what he's like, how a Christian lives, how he acts, how he reacts.

And they always said, Tuan, whenever you said that, we hoped we'd meet one someday. You see? Now, that's the difference between our walk and our talk, right? I'm preaching at them, but they're watching me get angry, and my message is nullified. And so here he stands, and he says, Tuan, why don't you get

angry anymore? I said, I don't need to get angry anymore.

I gave the garden away. Oh, you should have given it to me, he said. And I asked him some questions, and then he said, Tuan, who owns the garden now? I said, I'll tell you tomorrow.

Friends, I felt so bad at this point, because they just said, you know, you've become a Christian. I thought, I've blown it so bad. I should move to another tribe.

I don't know what to do. There's 150 tribes in the yellow side of the island, on Erie and Jaya alone, that are without missionaries, that have not received, heard the gospel yet. Can you believe it? And there are many more on this side, too.

And I should go to another tribe, but a missionary wouldn't find me anywhere else, a missionary pilot. He said, why do you want to go? I said, I've messed this up so bad, I want to start all over again. He says, well, what did you do? I didn't want to tell him.

I didn't want to tell anybody. I hadn't told my wife. You know, and I said, they just said, you've become a Christian.

He sat there laughing at me. He said, tell you what to do. Show them the difference, and you'll win them.

You know, I thought about it. But I remember that night, I went in the house. It was nighttime.

And Haimo says, Tuan, who owns them now? And one more question, Tuan, before you go to sleep. Who owns them now? I said, hey, I'll tell you tomorrow. I'm not going to talk anymore.

It's late. I'm tired. Come back tomorrow.

We talk every day anyway. So I looked through a crack in the curtain, and he stood there pointed at his people. They point with their chin.

He said, did he give them to you? And he said, do you own them? And he says, one more question, Tuan. I can't find the owner. Who owns them now? I said, I'll tell you tomorrow.

Go home. And they rounded the corner of my house. You know what they said to each other? They said, how can we steal if we don't know who owns them? You know, it was a difficult night for hungry thieves.

Can you imagine the agony of a hungry thief when he can't? You know, the biggest headhunter might own them. The witch doctor might own them. So all that night, I couldn't sleep, folks.

My conscience was, I was awake. I've just become a Christian. I felt so bad.

I was awake. I said, oh God, I'm starting all over again. I thought I was starting over at the seminar, you know, two years ago.

And then, you know, when I gave you control of the garden, I thought I was starting. Now I'm starting. How many times do I have to start over? And I felt so bad.

But you know the amazing thing? As I lay on my mattress that night, I heard commotion in the village. Everybody was awake. Those guys were at God.

They woke up everybody trying to find the owner of the garden. Desperate, hungry thieves. And I thought, you know, this is neat.

Finally, they're all losing a night's sleep over this garden. And it just made me feel so good. They went with torches through the next village.

Can you believe this? At night, snakes and all, they went through and woke up the next village trying to find the owner. Never did find him. And early in the morning, I must have fallen asleep because they woke us up.

And they were all around our house. And I woke my wife up. And I knew what this was all about.

But she didn't. And she's afraid. And she says, What is it, Otto? What is it? I said, Calm down, Carol.

Just calm down. No problem at all. I know what this is all about.

You'll enjoy this. You join me outside. And you'll enjoy this one.

Well, now, she had never. My wife is a night person, you know. And she'd never seen the sunrise yet in New Guinea.

And I'd often say, You've got to see the sunrise. And she says, Ah, she's smart. That's just a sunset backwards, she'd say.

Once she said, God wanted me to see the sunrise. He scheduled later on in the day. But, you know, it was beautiful.

It was really beautiful. That morning, my wife saw the sunrise. It was neat.

Curiosity got her. And there stood all those natives with their hands across their chest like this in the dampness of the early morning. All of them were there.

And I said, Good morning, men. What do you want? One shout. Who owns the pineapples? I said, I gave them to my God up in heaven.

And they started to rub their nose. That's how they think. You know, it's neat.

You can't laugh at them. You see the whole 300 of them thinking real hard, you know. They rubbed their nose.

And, oh, it's neat when you're preaching, you know. You at least know when your audience is thinking. It sometimes gets to be a real mess, you know.

And they never blow their nose. But anyway, you know, we think scratching. I used to think scratching my head, you know.

And they'd say, Thuan, you got those bugs too miserable, aren't they? You know. But they stand there. You know, you can't laugh.

We're pinching each other, standing there with a straight face, you know. You can't make fun of them. And so, Thuan, doesn't your God have any pineapples up there in heaven? I said, I don't know.

Gave them anyway. And they thought some more. And one guy says, Thuan, how many moons ago did you give your garden to your God? And I thought a little while.

And I said, well, I said, oh, we learn to think like that too, you know. Matter of fact, I was in our mission candidate school. And way up there on the top row, as I was saying this, a guy let out this loud sneeze.

And somebody else shouted, he blew his mind. And so, I guess you can, I guess you can blow your mind in more than one way. But anyway, here they're standing there thinking.

They said, I thought a while. I said, oh, maybe, I said five, six moons ago. And then the strangest thing happened.

They started a commotion start. And they started to talk. And they started to get louder.

And they got excited. And they got angry. And I heard snatches of it.

And they said, Thuan, get in there. Go in your house and get on your knees. Tell your God you want the garden back.

I said, oh, I don't want the garden back. I've been so happy not owning it. Have you ever been happy not owning something? Oh, I can sleep again now.

My worries are gone. My anger is gone. My health is improving.

My nervous system is improving. Hey, I'm so happy not to own it. And don't envy the rich man.

He's got more worries than you'll ever have. But friends, I said, no, I don't want. We want you to own the garden.

I said, why? He says, you're the cause of all the problem. You tell your God you made a mistake, because you did. You tell Him you made a mistake and get it back.

I said, I didn't make a mistake. I feel it's the best thing I've ever done. They said, oh, Thuan, but you did make a mistake.

I said, why are you saying this? Well, you're the cause of all the problems. They'd had powwows. They'd had talks.

They'd offered witchcraft to the demons. You know why? Because nothing was going right in the village. After I gave my garden to God, everything started to go wrong for them, because they were touching God's pineapples.

And He can take good care of them. The rain wouldn't fall. The gardens wouldn't grow.

They'd let the fish hook in the river. Nothing would come up. They'd hunt, and they'd never get any pork.

We hadn't gotten pork for months. They said our women aren't getting pregnant. There's no babies being born.

We're going to be outnumbered by the enemy tribes. They said everything is wrong to them. They'd been making sacrifices to the demons.

They'd been having talks. Who has wronged them? Who has turned them off? What is wrong? They couldn't find a problem. And all of a sudden, they stand in front of my house.

And they said, missionary, it's you. It's you. You're the cause of the trouble.

Get in there and get the garden back. And I said, I don't want the garden back. Well, we want you to own the garden.

We never gave you permission to give it to your God. He is not to own any property around here. And I said, hey, why don't you quit stealing his pineapples? Ah, Tuan, you're so dumb.

That won't work. I said, why not? They said, well, you know what it was? They're chronic thieves. They couldn't stop stealing any more than some of us here can stop worrying.

And we should be able to stop, because we have the way of escape, right? 1 Corinthians 10, 13. When you're tempted, you resist Satan, right? Resist the devil, and he'll flee from you. We should be able to overcome our chronic besetting sins.

They could not, because they were deceived. They were controlled by Satan. They had never faced temptation and not yielded.

And they said, you know, when they get near the garden, they smell the pineapples. Satan makes them feel hungry, right? He does that to some of us, too. We get near the fridge, and we get hungry.

But Satan controlled them totally, you see. And they said, Tuan, that won't work. You get the garden back.

Oh, I didn't know what to do. I said, I don't want to own the garden. Oh, they come at me.

They got all the spears, you know. Now, at this point, they're showing me the spears, all the heads of the spears, with the ugly ostrich bird claws on the top, sharp. They start, and you see them all start to move.

They start pulling the bows back to see if they still work, you know. They start playing with the bow strings. Boing, boing, boing, boing, boing, you know, until you hear it.

You know, you really get the point, don't you? You don't want to get the point. And they're getting angry. Tuan, get in there.

Pray. And my wife says to me, I thought you said this was going to be funny. Oh, it wasn't funny anymore.

I did some quick praying, and God gave me a name. Haimo, that's very sharp native. I said, Haimo, where are you? I want to talk to you.

And Haimo comes out of the crowd. And he stood there and laughs at me. I said, Haimo, why are you laughing? He says, Tuan, you can't be a Christian and own the garden at the same time.

And I said, Haimo, you're right. Now, what was he saying? This verse that had troubled me. Unless you forsake all that you have, you can't be my disciple.

Discipleship means lordship. You can be born again and fight for your rights. But you can't be his disciple, because if you're his disciple, then he's your lord.

Then he's lord of all. And only lordship, when he's your lord, that's the Christianity that witnesses to others. That's the Christianity that shows.

The others, see, and they say, you can't be a Christian and own the garden. You'll be an angry white man again. And I said, Haimo, you tell them.

And they were getting angry. And you know what they said at this point? They said, Tuan, we give you the privilege of living with us. Oh, brother.

You know? They thought I'd gone all over the world and found the nicest people anywhere and live with. That's the way they thought that. I said, Haimo, you try to talk to him.

And I step out of the way, you know. And he, and they're looking at him. He says, quiet all your people.

He says, hasn't this Tuan been a nice Tuan to live with since he's become a Christian? But if we make him take the garden back again, he'll be an angry white man again, a miserable fellow. Why don't we let him own the garden? And they said, Haimo, you're crazy. If he owns the garden, if his God owns the garden, well, then we'll die.

Haimo, you're going to starve too. And they're all getting angry at him now. He says, hey, just a minute.

He says, look, if you can't leave those pineapples alone, walk the other path. You can get to the river the other way. You don't have to go by his house here.

You know what he was saying, the equivalent he was saying? Like we say, if you've got a problem with alcohol, don't go by the tavern. That's what he's saying. He says, you won't smell them.

You won't even know they're there. Let his God own them. Then he can be a Christian.

I said to Haimo, I said, I really want to be a Christian, Haimo. I've so enjoyed being a Christian. Let me be a Christian.

And he says, he really wants to be a Christian. Let's let him be a Christian. They start rubbing their nose again.

What are we going to do with Tuan, you know? And I'm just waiting this thing out. And finally, one guy says, Tuan, does your God see in the dark? I said, yes, he does. And that was the first realization that they had, that God knew everything and could see in the dark.

And most sin is carried on in the dark. And they realized that God could see in the dark. And that really worked for us.

They start to understand God. And another guy says, Tuan, your God's big, isn't he? I said, oh, yes, he's big. He controls the rain.

He controls whether your wife gets pregnant. He controls whether your fish, whether you catch fish, whether you shoot pigs. He controls whether your child gets sick.

Everything, you can't even breathe without God's help. You'd die if it wasn't for God's sustaining power in your life. Oh, God is big.

They said, I'm not going to steal pineapples anymore. And about half of the crowd quit stealing because they were afraid of God. And, you know, when you have a fear of God, that's when you start to, that's when they got converted.

The other half still stole all the pineapples, so I still wasn't getting any. But they brought them to my store, and I bought them from them. And now, that isn't in a pineapple storybook because Bill didn't want to put in there, you know, he didn't want to propagate buying stolen goods.

And you can understand that. And he was right. But, you know, I thought, well, God's given them to them, so maybe I can buy them.

You know, but the strangest thing happened now. I ordered a group of people that weren't stealing anymore, and they came to me, and they said, we're not stealing anymore, John, your God's too big. I said, good for you.

I said, no, you ought to be a Christian. I was trying to win a church, and these people became converted. And I started training these preacher boys.

And one morning, they woke me up early, and they said, Tuan, come out here. And I came out, and I said, what's this? And they had all these pineapples laid on the front porch, and they said, Tuan, take them in the house. It's not right for our people to steal your pineapples.

Take them in the house. I said, what do you mean by this? They said, Tuan, we can't watch them anymore. We're going to the jungle for a while.

And so, I said, what do you mean? You know what they'd been doing? The preacher boys had taken turns watching the pineapples at night. Snakes, mosquitoes, and everything. While I was sleeping, and I didn't know it, without pay, they were guarding the pineapples because it wasn't right that their people would steal my pineapples.

I couldn't believe this. God sure can take good care of His property, can't He? And He delivers them to Him. I said, look, they're God's.

They're not mine. And I gave each man his portion. I took a portion myself, and we all thanked the Lord together.

And I was amazed. I said, God, You deliver them to my front door. I don't even walk in the garden anymore.

I don't even know if they're growing. If the garden needed weeded, I first thought, well, if God owns the garden, He can weed His own garden, right? And, you know, that's not the way you do it. Friends, I become the manager.

I'm the steward. He owns it. I'm working for Him.

If the garden needs weeded, I send the men to weed it, you see. And, oh, God did marvelous. You know what happened to the thieves? They kept stealing.

Well, once it went this way with the pineapples, I gave my banana trees to God, too. Oh, friends, the way God can grow bananas. We had to prop up the trees.

The bunches were so big, it's soft-stemmed tree, and they would fall over, and the papaya and the coconuts, and we gave the whole thing to God. And really, we were exporting fruit now. The MAF plane would come, and we'd load it up, and I'd send it to other missionaries, and they'd say, where'd you get this beautiful fruit? How is it that you got assigned to the paradise of the South Coast? You know, I mean, the Garden of Eden.

What did you do to deserve this? It wasn't a paradise until I gave my fruit trees to God and everything. And they say, how do you keep your people from stealing them? And I could share with them, give your possessions to God. God takes good care of His property.

And I could share with them this whole principle of yielding your rights and surrendering your rights. But, friends, an amazing thing happened at this point. The thieves were still stealing them, and the preacher boys caught on.

Inevitably, when somebody stole, something would happen in his house. Somebody'd get sick, house would burn, his chickens would die. Something would happen.

God would have the pressure on him. And the preacher boys said, have you been stealing the Tuan's fruit? And they'd say, yeah. He'd say, oh, that's why.

His God's on you. He's big. And they'd walk.

And all these thieves started to get afraid every time it happened. You know what we found on the front porch? We found bananas and pineapples and stuff brought back overnight. The curse had gone on.

The pressure was on. And they brought it back hoping that it would be lifted. And now we're finding everything.

Everything they ever stole from us we found on our front porch. That's how God got it back to us. And it was unreal.

And friends, the pressure was on to the place where they didn't want to steal anymore. They're afraid. And you know, I didn't know what to do.

I couldn't even get guys to weed the garden anymore. They didn't want to get in God's garden unless they died. And now I'm going on vacation.

I had to be away three weeks. And I said, Now look, when I'm gone, take the fruit. Use it.

It's yours. I can't eat it. It's all... I turn it over to you.

As long as I'm gone, it's all yours to take. Don't let it rot on the trees. Don't let it fall off the trees.

I'd come back three weeks later and the fruit was rotting under the trees. And it was rotting on the trees. I said, Why didn't your people eat it? You need it so much.

Ah, Tuhan, you saying it is one thing, but you're God. He's something else. He's big.

You see? And I couldn't believe it. Now I couldn't get rid of it. Hey, let God have control of your things.

You'll never lack. I was exporting it. If the planes didn't come, I'd carry it to the village here and eat these bananas.

Some guys wouldn't even eat them until I took a bite first and then they'd eat the rest of it. This kind of thing. I couldn't believe it.

God sure can take good care of His property. And you know, this is the way it is all the way around this circle. Notice here.

The altar in the center. All these areas of our lives. You know, I learned the area of possessions and gave everything.

Oh, they stole the silverware and finally we gave that to God. Then they stole the shirts and finally, I remember one day a guy stood there with my with a special nose bone, my ballpoint pen right there in his nose. Right there he stood.

And I I pulled that thing right out of his nose. And you know, the day I did that, God got through to me. And I God must have been laughing at me or crying over me.

See, I given all the stuff outside to God and now I'm fighting over the silverware and they and they oh, they're stealing everything from inside the house the house boy you know, dropped the silverware on the floor kick it through a crack baby brothers under the house catching it. It was so fast we'd never caught him. And then I finally caught on to that and stopped the cracks in the floor and now they're smuggling it out in the garbage pail and everything went out there.

And they stole everything from See, and finally we realized we better give the stuff inside the house to God too, you see. And I never give anything to God until I lose it. Are any of you like me? Are there any Dutch people here? Jim Elliot said he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

And you know, but the opposite is true. He is a fool who keeps fighting and struggling for that which he cannot keep and ruins his health. Isn't that true? And friends I finally gave my wife and I gave the silverware and the stuff and the clothing to God.

I remember when I was down to the last shirt and I saw that red plaid shirt going on the line and I said, Oh God I'm going to lose that shirt. And I quick gave it away. I said, God, you're going to lose your shirt today because I can't keep it any longer.

And you know that thing stayed on the line all day and people didn't even see it. I asked them the next day I was wearing it, didn't you see my shirt? They said, No, we never saw it. It was unbelievable.

And then how God supplied us with silverware and with shirts and stuff that were issues. We never lack in those things neither. God's got a real joke going with us.

We got more silverware and more shirts than we can wear and we can use. And friends it is that true. It's true with now God finally realized you know the joy God had when he saw me graduate from grade one in his school.

See, this is like his school. I didn't know there were eight other more areas that God was going to see me through. If I had known that I would have quit I think.

I would have got discouraged. But I finally got this whole all my possessions on and I said, God, I don't own anything anymore. And the day I pulled that pin out of his nose I said, God, the diaper pins and the pens and everything is yours.

Inside and out I don't own anything. That's the way I want to live. I can sleep good now.

And then God put me in the second grade. Now everybody is wasting my time. They had me fixing their harmonicas and fixing their shovels and their pots and wasted all my time.

And I was so frustrated I was afraid not to do it because I wouldn't be able to sleep at night because I did that once. Didn't fix it and they were angry at me and I had a lot of trouble. Couldn't sleep.

And God had them steal all my time. And then finally again my nerves were bad and I gave that on the altar and God blessed my time. You know what missionaries said that came and visited us? You and your station are up to ten years ahead of every other station on the southern swamplands.

I couldn't believe that. You know what? I'd given my time to God and started fixing their junk with a happy heart and a rejoicing spirit and they called me a Christian again. They said, you've become a Christian again.

By the time I got around the circle they were sure that you could lose your salvation. But you know, because I myself when I was struggling in this area of time I thought I'm so backslidden. I was so happy back when I gave my possessions to God and now I'm struggling and I'm so backslidden.

No, I'm not backslidden. I'm in grade two, you see. And then as soon as I gave that to God God put me in this reputation and I almost got sent home from the mission field and God let my reputation hit rock bottom and then I gave it to God too.

And then they put me on the field council and I became leadership. You know, if you humble yourself God exalts you but I gave my reputation to God. It doesn't matter what missionaries think of me.

It matters what God thinks of me. It doesn't matter what people think. It matters what God thinks.

But in every area I fought and then almost losing our children and dying out there in a jungle with no doctor and no help and then waiting until they're almost dead and then giving them to God. Oh, friends, why do we wait so long? Why don't we just let God take control of every area of our life? And as we've preached this we found in the area of health when people surrender their right to be healthy how many people get healed. It's just so beautiful.

You know, when they say, all right, God, I'm going to quit fussing about this. I'm going to quit praying about this and pleading. I'm going to surrender.

You get so much more done, folks, by surrendering and rejoicing than by pleading and begging. And so surrender and rejoice and let God have His way and let Him do and never ask again. God knows the desire of your heart.

He knows what you've prayed in the past and let Him do it in His time. And I find that people surrender their right to be healthy so many get healed. God says, hey, they've learned a lesson involved with this problem and that's the way it is in every area of our circle.

But I fought in each area and I struggled and that's miserable. And the more you fight and the more you struggle the worse the problem gets. And my brother John was a missionary in the Dutch Antilles and there these Dutch people down there had this Dutch swing.

Have you ever seen a Dutch swing? You'd really get banged around on that, wouldn't you? I don't think it's a Dutch swing. I don't really think it is but that's what he said. And then he says, two engineers came from Holland and they solved the problem.

And he said to me, he said, well, what's the matter? I didn't laugh. He says, don't you like my joke? I said, no. It reminds me of my pineapple garden the way I struggled.

The more I struggled the worse it got. I mean, I lose my health besides now, my nervous system. And I said, no, I said, this represents us solving our own problems.

I used to say, but I don't say it anymore, I used to say that this represents a church problem after the board gets through with it. But that doesn't sound very good. But God has ways of solving our problems.

He had a branch there all the time. Friends, as long as you try to solve your own, God won't push you out of the way. He's waiting for you to let Him do it.

I think we should all bow our heads. Will you all bow your head with me? Maybe God is speaking to you about a garden you own. Are any of you doing what I'm doing? Are any of you losing your health or your nervous system? Or you're struggling and fighting and they're saying, hey, you're losing your witness because you can't win the ones you're fighting with? Would you say to God right now, right where you're sitting, Lord, forgive me.

I give my garden to you. Have your way. And would you say one more thing? God, remind me to do it again tomorrow morning.

Surrendering rights is daily. Every day we have to give it to, after we confess our sin, then we surrender our rights and say, God, it's yours again. And then you don't have to worry about it.

You don't have to fear. You don't have to get angry over it. Oh, and you'll have all this free time if you don't have to worry.

And you'll be rejoicing. No load will be lifted. Just like Pilgrim when he came to the cross, remember? And that burden fell off his back and rolled down the hill.

Remember that? And he was free. You can go out of this place tonight free with peace in your heart, with joy, like you don't believe possible. When you give that problem, let God have his way.

I would like to ask this question. How many of you are giving something to God? Would you raise your hand? Praise the Lord. There's a lot of hands all over the place.

Oh, that's good. One more question. How many here are struggling? Would you raise your hand? Yes, there are people struggling.

I appreciate your honesty. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, these dear ones that are struggling, would you bring them to the end of their rope in quick time? Would you help them to see so that they wouldn't have to ruin their health and their lives? Father, we pray that everyone in this place tonight might come to the

place of surrendering their rights to you, letting you be Lord of all, so that the world might see that we're Christians now by our life, and that we might become witnesses to you, and might be able to win those around us, our neighbors, our natives, whatever they are, to you.

So give us all a great victory as we surrender to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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