

Good News for Selfish People!

by Paul Lloyd

The sermon delivers a powerful message about overcoming selfishness through the gospel to live a victorious Christian life.

Duration: 1:19:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:29, Luke 14:26-27, Luke 14:33, Philippians 2:1-8

Topics: "Selfish"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of helping parents recognize their unhappiness and the reasons behind it. He encourages them to reflect on their own lives and the joy they experienced when serving the Lord and their families. The speaker also discusses the contrast between the selfish carnal mind, which leads to death, and the spiritual mind, which brings life and peace. He shares his excitement about sharing good news for selfish people and believes that self is our worst enemy. The sermon concludes with a reminder that surrendering to God can lead to unimaginable blessings and a life filled with joy and peace.

Transcript

Amen, Lord, it's a privilege to be in your service, in your army, in your kingdom. You're the best ruler, the best king, the only one who's worthy to serve, Lord. Everything else is counterfeit, everything else is lesser.

God, we want to hear the word of the king this morning. We want to hear those marching orders. Jesus, we want you to speak to everyone here.

And Lord, I just yield to you, my self. I ask you to use me as a vessel. Lord, I pray that you would take my scattered thoughts and bring them into a place under the control of your Spirit, that we would see you truly today, God.

We want to see you, Lord. Nobody came here to see me today, but we've all come to see you. And may you shine, may you captivate us, may you dazzle us with your person, with your amazing being.

Oh, God, open our eyes to see you today. Deliver us from low seeing, low views of you, God. Open the eyes of our understanding, I pray, that we might truly see God.

Have your way and accomplish your purposes, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Do I look excited? I'm excited to be here today.

You know why? I've got some good news. Do you like telling good news? It's fun to tell good news. And I'm excited about these things I would like to share with you because I believe they're life changing.

And they've changed my life. The title of the message today is called, Good News for Selfish People. If there's anybody here who's not selfish, you can get up at this time and leave.

I don't think anybody's getting up. We're all selfish, aren't we? Don't we all face that? In fact, I think self is probably our worst enemy. Worse than Satan.

It feels that way in my life. You know, I can't blame the devil near as much as I can just blame myself. Of course, he's tempting, he's working through self.

But this is good news for selfish people. You know, I've noticed something about my children. You know when they're the happiest? It's when they're not thinking about themselves.

When they're serving, when they're in a mode to help out and serve and bless others, they are so happy. And conversely, when they're in a mode of, I'm not happy about something. I didn't get my way.

I wanted more. You got more than I did. I don't like the way that things feel right now.

When they're focused on self, that's when they're the most miserable. You know, and as a father, when I see them in that mode, you just kind of feel sorry for them, don't you? Because it's a hard way to be. Self is a hard taskmaster.

And when he's in control, things don't go well. And so when I look at my children and I see them in that, I'll often talk to them about that. You know, as parents, we need to help them to see that.

Oftentimes, to show them, you know, do you see that you're not happy right now? Why do you think it is that you're not happy? What are you sad about? What is it that makes you feel so bad? And to try to steer them to see that, you know, and I'll even remind them sometimes and say things like, you know, I miss that person that I saw earlier this morning or yesterday serving the Lord and, you know, serving the family. And I miss that person. Do you? You were so happy.

You were so free. The Book of Romans says it this way. It says, the carnal mind is death.

But the spiritual mind is life and peace. The selfish, carnal mind is death. The spiritual mind is life and peace.

I was getting ready for this message yesterday and I was thinking I really wanted to share a message or I felt the Lord wanted me to share a message about the ten virgins. You know, the five were foolish, five were wise. And I was going down that road.

I really feel like, I feel impressed that we're living in days of, I don't know, the last days or days of tribulations are coming and so forth. And that's when Jesus spoke those words. And I have a burden that we be, have oil in our lamps.

And so I was preparing that way and thinking that way. And I just, at one point, I just felt, I don't know, I just didn't feel like it was coming together. So I prayed.

I said, God, I need you to give me the word, you know, guide me. And he brought my focus to this subject of the good news for selfish people. How to deal with self.

How God's method of dealing with self. You know, the word gospel means good news, right? We've heard a lot this morning already about the good news that Jesus died for our sins. He paid the penalty.

All the things that you and I did, if we would add them up in this room today, if we could somehow see all the filth, the dirt, the garbage, it would be an awful pile, wouldn't it? If we could look at that mess, a stinking, awful pile of sin and self. Praise the Lord, Jesus paid for all of that. And when we get born again, that's the first thing, I think that's the first revelation we have, is the good news means I don't have to go to hell for all I did.

I don't have to bear the penalty. Somebody bore it for me. But the good news for selfish people goes a little bit deeper than that.

See, all that pile of garbage came out of self, didn't it? Right? Came out of the lust of the flesh and self, living for self. And praise God that it's forgiven. But what about after I'm saved? What is your view of the Christian life? Are you like me? My view of the Christian life after I got saved was praise God my sins are forgiven.

Now I'm going to do my best to live for God. And I'm not going to do those things anymore. Well, there's a problem with that.

And the problem is called self. Something's got to happen to self. And you have probably discovered, like me, that my best intentions just don't cut it.

My best efforts don't make it. I still did the things I used to do. Like Paul said, the things I would, I don't do.

And the things I don't want to do, I end up doing. Who is going to deliver me from the body of this death? I want to talk to you about the good news for that today. See? It's one thing to, I think Zach Coonan said it years ago when he was here.

It's one thing to mop up the mess. You know, he said that they have people who are insane. One of the tests of whether they're sane now, they put them in a room with the tap running and it's running over the sink.

And they give them a mop to clean up the floor. And they can tell whether they're thinking right if they turn off the tap. If they don't turn the tap off and they just keep mopping up the floor, they know that there's a few things missing still, right? Because you can keep mopping up the floor forever.

The tap is going to keep running, the water keeps going, and you're never going to end that thing, right? But someone whose mind is just there, they say, Okay, wait a minute. This water is coming over the sink, down on the floor. I'm mopping it up.

If I don't stop that thing there, I'm never going to stop mopping. So if he turns the tap off, they say, Okay, he's coming out of it. I don't know how true that is that they actually do that, but it makes sense to me.

So many people live their Christian life with a mop. And maybe they don't even realize that there's a tap that can be turned off. And so it's the continual mopping up of the mess.

Oh, I did it again. There it goes again. I didn't want to do it, but I did it.

And it seems like the Christian life is just mopping up the mess. And that's not very good news. The good news is you can turn off the tap.

How are we going to do that? That's what I want to share today, God's help here. Isn't sin the thing that discourages us in the Christian life? Right? Isn't that the thing that gets us down when we fail? God wants us to learn how to get the tap turned off. I'm not saying we'll be perfect, sinless perfection, but it's a growing process of Jesus Christ being more and more in control of our life.

And less and less of the mop up. What would it be like if all of God's servants were joyful, victorious? Wouldn't that be a wonderful advertisement for Him? I'm afraid sometimes I'm not a real good advertisement for my Father. Somebody might look at me at certain moments and say, Wow, if that's the way His God treats Him, I'm not sure.

Well, I don't want to be that way. Now, if you ever go to Washington, D.C., there's a museum there you really should go to. We just happened to stumble on it.

We wanted to go to the White House, but we couldn't get in. I guess you've got to plan that well in advance. So we went to this White House museum a few blocks away.

That was a museum about the workers at the White House. And it had this history of all these people who worked at the White House. Cooks, carpenters, painters, HVAC people.

You name it, go down the list. Cleaners. And they lifted up the fact that these are like regular people, but they had the opportunity to work in the White House.

In one sense, in a way, the presidents sort of come and go. But these people stay there for like 20, 30, 40 years. So here comes the new president.

Well, okay, that's great. But we've been here for 20 years already. There's a certain sense of camaraderie among these people, and there's a sense of the honor of their job.

You know, I do carpentry work and so forth. And after looking at that museum, we went to the back entrance there. They have like a gate and things you have to go through.

I saw a pickup truck going through there. It looked like a carpenter with his pickup truck. And I just imagined myself in that pickup.

And I thought, you know, that would be pretty wonderful to go to work in the White House every day. Where do you work? I work in the White House. Really? You know, they do it all the time.

They're painting the White House always. It doesn't stop. It's just a continual thing.

They're continually restoring this, that, and the other thing. And I'm sure those people really feel honored that they get to serve at the White House. Don't you think so? I guarantee you.

They're probably pretty proud of it. And isn't that the way we should feel about serving the Lord? Right? It's a get-to. But like I said, one of the things that robs us of that get-to is when we fail, when we sin, when self has the ascendancy and Christ does not.

And so we're not excited about the Christian life. It doesn't feel good. It feels like, why don't I have victory? I thought it was supposed to be so wonderful.

And I'd like to share this message today to hopefully make us more excited about serving Jesus, make us more victorious in our life. And I believe that there's some keys here that can do that. Let's turn to Matthew 16.

This is a really familiar story. Jesus wanted to know what people said about Him. Who do people say that I am? And 14, they said, some say you're John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, so one of the prophets.

And then He said to them, but who do you say I am? And Peter makes this wonderful confession. He said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. That was an amazing revelation.

Jesus said in the next verse that you're blessed, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father which is in heaven showed you that's who I am. And He went on to say, and I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And I'll give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Peter was feeling great at this time, wasn't he? Wow, that was a great commendation of him and of his faith. But then we all know the story right after this. It says, from that time forth began Jesus to show to His disciples how that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day.

And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, be it far from you, Lord, this shall not be unto you. He said, Lord, kind of putting my own words over my dead body. It's not going to happen.

They won't do it. I won't let them do it. And I believe Peter right here is a picture of flesh.

Okay, he's operating in the flesh. He's operating according to human understanding. This is my friend Jesus.

He's the Messiah. I'm not going to let them touch Him. There's no way.

He didn't understand the mystery of the gospel at this time. Jesus was trying to tell him that. He said, I'm going to go here to Jerusalem.

I'm going to suffer. They're going to kill me. And I'll be raised again.

But Peter didn't get it. And he began to rebuke Him. No way.

Jesus turned and said to him, get behind Me, Satan. You are an offense unto Me. For you do not savor the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Peter thought he was defending God. He thought he was doing the right thing. I'm going to protect you, Jesus.

I'm going to keep you from these awful people doing these bad things to you. Jesus said, get behind Me, Satan. You don't understand, Peter.

They're going to do that stuff to me. It's the very means of your salvation and the means of saving the world. And what I want to draw an analogy here today with this is, this is the way it is in our own life.

See, God brings us to these places of death where self is going to die. And what do we say? Far be it from Me, Lord. No way.

I'm not going to let it happen. I'm not going to die. He brings us to places of death through circumstances.

Maybe it's a job. Maybe it's work. You've got a boss who's got problems and he's making your life difficult.

God brought you there. Do you believe it? Do you believe it or not? Is our life under His control? Is everything that comes into our life something that God has allowed? Does God want to use everything in our life to accomplish His purposes? You're not too strong on it. You're not too sure about that.

He can use some things, but no, He's not going to use that thing in the back of my mind that I'm thinking of right now. God wants to use everything in our life. There's no accidents.

But we don't think it's God. We're like Peter and we want to get protected. Lord, don't let it happen.

Don't let this bad thing happen to me. It doesn't feel good, God. I need to get out of here.

I look back at my own life, you know. I prayed a prayer 16 years ago. I'd been a Christian for almost 15 years.

And I was sick and tired of living a carnal, defeated life. Because that's what it was. Half the time I wasn't sure if I was saved or not.

And the other half wasn't much better. And I just realized there's got to be something better than this. So I prayed at a youth Bible school.

I said, God, do whatever You need to do in my life. I want to be filled with Jesus Christ. I want to be a servant.

I want to have victory. I'm tired of living this way. And I really meant it.

Two weeks later, I got sick. I totally forgot about my prayer by that time. You know, as far as relating it to sickness or anything.

I got sick. Some of you were here then. You know that I, you know, I was really sick.

I was like kind of chronic fatigue type of thing. I couldn't function very well. I only worked five or six hours a day.

And I was just always tired. And I didn't see how God could be in that. That was not what I ordered.

That was not what I wanted. I remember just praying over and over. God, you know, heal me.

Show me what I need to do. You know, I'll be a vegetarian. I'll be a this or a that.

You know, I'll change this. So I did. We did all these things.

My poor children. Some of the older ones remember that. To try to get better.

But it didn't seem like a lot worked. And I really didn't think God was in this at all. It felt to me like death.

And literally I thought maybe I would die. You know, looking back now, I say God answered my prayer. He gave me what I asked for.

He saw where I was at. I want to walk in the country. I want to have Jesus be my life.

He said, all right, son. I've got some good medicine for you. Here it is.

He showed me I can't do anything. I couldn't heal myself. And I couldn't change myself.

I was stuck. And so one of the things that happened through that was I finally had to reach a place where I just said, okay, God, you know what? I'm yours. You can do with me as you see fit.

Change me. He used other circumstances in the midst of that. I felt like people didn't understand me.

You know, when people are sick like that, a lot of times people don't understand, especially people who never got sick. They're like, what's the matter with you? You know, come on. You look fine.

You look healthy. You know, it's all in your head. And I felt misunderstood.

Of course, Satan was heaping condemnation on me too, but I didn't feel understood. And I began to realize, God began to show me the way I was. You know what? The way you feel people are thinking about you, guess what? That's the way you've been thinking about other people.

And it began to do something in my heart to make me sorry and make me pray, God, change me. Take out that criticism. Take out that judging of other people.

All I want is mercy. God, all I want is mercy. And I don't know, if I hadn't gotten sick, I don't know how I would have learned that.

I don't wish sickness on anybody. And sickness isn't the only way God can do that. But one thing I learned through that, I hope I learned it, I'm sure I'll have more tests in my life, is that God knew what He was doing.

He was answering my prayer. He was saying, if you want Jesus in your life, self has got to go. The two don't mix together.

Jesus can't live through you if self is in control. Let me just say something about self. When I say self, the self life, I'm not talking about your personality.

I'm not talking about the certain things you like to do or the food you like. Those are part of self. But what I'm talking about is sinful self.

Self will, in other words, my way instead of God's way. That's really what I'm talking about. You're not going to change those other things.

God made you in certain ways, and that's good. So we're not talking about an annihilation of self where you just become this unrecognizable thing that you're not allowed to like. It's like the sister shared, sometimes we think that if there's something I really like, then God's going to take it away from me.

Well, sometimes He does do that. But you know what? A lot of times, the things He puts in us that we like, He doesn't want us to get rid of. He gave those likes to us, and it's okay.

In the right place, in moderation, and so forth. But we're so afraid that God is going to take away, is going to give us, we're going to ask Him for a fish, and He's going to give us a snake. Maybe I'll say it that way.

Right? Has anybody ever felt that way or done that? See, Peter looked at this situation here of Jesus going to die, and to Peter it looked all bad. If they kill Jesus, He's not going to be with us anymore. He's the Messiah.

We can't let this happen. But in reality, that needed to happen so Jesus could be with them all the time and be with us. Right? Look at what He says here now.

Now, I want to tell you some of the definitions of these terms in this next saying. He tells Peter, Get behind Me, Satan. And then He said to His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his own soul? You know, I looked up these couple words in here. I like to do that when I'm studying especially.

I thought, okay, what does it mean when He says deny? He says, If any man comes after Me, let him deny himself. So I looked this up in the Greek thing. It says, listen to this, To deny utterly.

To disown. If anybody comes after Me, he needs to disown himself. That hit me.

To affirm one has no acquaintance or connection with someone. If you want to follow Jesus, you need to affirm that you have no connection or no acquaintance with self. And again, I'm talking about sinful self.

Self will. My way. That old person who did all that self stuff.

Jesus says, If you want to be My disciple, you've got to renounce Him. Disown Him. Say, He is no longer in my family.

He's no longer Me. He's no longer part of Me. That's what Jesus said you have to do if you're going to follow Him.

You have to deny utterly. It's a different word than is used in some places where He talks about deny, where Peter denied Jesus, that type of thing. This is a different word.

This word is a strong word that says you've got to deny utterly. Repudiate, renounce that self that was in control of your life. That self that led you to go your own way, do your own thing.

Sin. And I say to you today that that self is your greatest enemy and my greatest enemy. Do you believe that? That's our greatest enemy.

And I need this message today. I'm not just talking to you. I'm not speaking down to you.

I'm talking to myself. I need a reminder continually this is the Christian life. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

Let him renounce, disown, affirm that he has no acquaintance or connection with Him. I wonder how many of us did that this morning. Can we do that? Is that possible? Do you believe that's possible? I want you to think about your biggest struggle in self.

I know that all of us have struggles, issues. Think about it. Jesus said it's possible to disown, to affirm that you have no acquaintance or connection with that thing, that part of you.

To forget oneself, to lose sight of oneself and one's own interest. See, that is the true Christian life. That's where the joy of the Lord is flowing out of our life is when we're not thinking about ourself.

When we're serving others, like I told you about my children. When you're serving someone else, that's Jesus living through you. When you're focused about how bad the situation is or what I wish I had, now you're in the self mode.

Let's go on here. Jesus said to His disciples, you have to deny yourself, take up your cross, that's death right there, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it.

Jesus said if you're going to save your life, you're going to lose it. If you're going to be one of these people that just, you're going to hang on to your own way. I'm going to keep my will.

I'm not going to do what Jesus said. I'm not going to yield to the Holy Spirit. I'm not going to follow the Word of God.

I'll do it where it pleases myself. I'll do it where it doesn't hurt so bad. If you're going to be one of those kind of people, Jesus said you're going to lose your life.

He will keep his life. He's just going to say it's got to be My way, Lord. Yes, I'm glad you're willing to forgive sins.

I'm glad you're my God, but I've got to do it My way. That's not what Jesus said here. He said whosoever will save his life shall lose it.

And whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall save it. So I thought I want to look up what it means to lose your life. I looked up that word.

Very interesting. It says to lose your life it means to destroy fully, to put entirely out of the way, to render useless, to declare that one must be put to death. That's what Jesus said.

Whoever will destroy it fully, put it entirely out of the way, render it useless, declare that it must be put to death. He's going to keep his life. He's going to find it.

He's going to save it. But the person who insists that I've got, you know, I can't do that Lord, that's too hard, that hurts too bad, this isn't what I wanted. You're going to lose out.

See, the Christian life is about dying and being reborn. The Christian life, Hudson Taylor put it this way, it's about an exchange. It's supposed to be an exchange.

I get to change in. I get to exchange this old rotten self, this old miserable being that's caused me so much trouble and I get to exchange that for Jesus living in me. That's really what the Christian life is.

Isn't that good news? Maybe some of you are new Christians and you haven't experienced yet how bad the flesh and self is. Someday you will. But I'm sure there's other people here today.

You may be wrestling and struggling with how does this Christian life work and why do I feel defeated and why can't I get victory? I want to tell you the good news today. That is the Gospel. You get to change that in for Jesus.

But you've got to do it. Some of you were at the wedding the other week. I shared a little incident there.

I remember I didn't feel good in my own self about my daughter leaving my home. I really loved my daughter. It didn't feel good.

It was like, wow, I'm going to lose out. I had these bad feelings and I'm going to have a message tomorrow so I need to get ready. I'm struggling with all these bad feelings inside.

I also knew it was right and I was excited about it. But you know what I mean. There's that mixture of emotion.

And so I went down and I was talking to the Lord about it. I sort of told Him how I felt. This is how I feel, God.

You just tell God how you feel. Don't think you've got to make a great face for Him. Talk to Him.

Give it all to Him. Just like it is. He can handle it.

He's really strong. He's not going to shake Him. He's not going to make Him feel bad.

So go ahead and tell Him. And you know what, I heard this little boy say to me, isn't that kind of selfish? Aren't you being selfish? Well, it just hit me, like boom, right in. It was like, well, of course.

The reason I'm feeling this way is I'm being selfish. I'm going to miss out on that blessing that I used to have every day. And now I'm going to have it not so often.

And you know what I could do? Because I know what the Gospel is, I could say, Jesus, take that away from me and give me Your attitude right now. And guess what He did? I came up to the family and said, I got the victory. I didn't know I had defeat before that.

But I came up and I said, I got the victory. I am excited. It's going to be a great day.

And I'm going to shoot forth my arrow. And that's what I'm talking about. We don't have to carry the baggage.

We don't have to let self dictate how we feel, what we do. When we're in those moments, when we have those feelings, when we're tempted with that sin, that's the moment to cry out to Jesus right then. Say, Lord, there's too much of self.

Can You take over now? And that is the Christian life. It's not a waiting for God to just change me someday. You know, I know there's victory someday.

I know that there's grace. There must be somehow for victory. It's right now, today, right in this moment is the time that I can have the victory.

That's the only time I can have it. And in that moment, when you call upon the Lord, whosoever shall call upon the Lord, what? Shall be saved. Somebody said it, I think, earlier.

You know, salvation. Gretel said it. Salvation isn't just the one-time initial thing.

We've got to be saved all the time. I've got to be saved today. I've got to be saved tomorrow morning when I get ready to go to work.

You know, from self, from the devil. This is the good news. This is the Christian life.

This is what God offers. It's not rocket science. And yet, it seems so hard to grasp it.

You know why? Why? Because we think we still have some strength. And so, God's agenda and program is to bring us down to zero. Bring us down to the zero place where we don't feel like we have anything anymore.

Then all of a sudden, that exchange looks pretty good. You mean you'll take my zero and you'll give me my hero, Jesus? It's a deal. Peter wanted to keep Jesus from dying on the cross.

If he would have succeeded, the Gospel would have failed. We do the same thing. We're just like Peter.

Lord, this will not be so. I mean, when I got sick like that, I was rebuking the devil. Satan, in Jesus' name, I rebuke you.

Get out of my body. I'm a child of God. Jesus, by His stripes, I'm healed.

But I did all these things to try to help. I wonder how God felt when He saw me doing all that stuff. Not that we shouldn't rebuke Satan, but God was in it.

And do you know I thank God for that? I thank Him. I look back and I say, Lord, I don't wish I ever threw that again. I don't wish that on anybody, but I thank You for what You did.

Don't kick against the prince. Don't kick against what God's doing in your life. The only moment of surrender that you have is now.

And I know, I guarantee you, in this room, with all these people here, there's stuff in our lives that needs to be surrendered today. Give it to Him. Give it to Him.

This thing that you don't like, this thing that doesn't seem to be working out the way you want it. Can you accept that as God's provision for you right now in terms of He's allowed you to go through this? He's brought you to this place? Surrender to God is one of the most difficult things to do in all the world. Because we're afraid if we surrender to God, what I get back might be worse than if I hang on to what I got.

We went to Maine last weekend and on the way, one of my children had a Bible. And we had all these water bottles with us to drink water. One of them spilled and the Bible got wet.

And they were really struggling with that. You know, my Bible is soggy. It's wet.

Now it's going to be all crinkly when it dries out. They were very down. It was a difficult battle to have a good attitude about that.

So I'm sitting up in the front seat driving and I'm thinking, you know, the thought just came to me. I wonder what they would say if I said to them, you know, seeing your Bible all wrinkly and wet like that makes me feel like maybe it's time to get you a new one. You know, one of those good Thompson Chain ones like some of your older siblings have.

So I said that. This little smile cracked out of the corners. What happened? They realized, I'm getting something better.

Who needs that old Bible anyway? I'll take a new one any day. You know, this wasn't a bad thing that happened to me. In fact, this might be the best thing that happened to that Bible, you know.

Because Papa said, he's going to get me a new one. And as I said that, you know, the Lord just spoke to my heart. How did you feel seeing your child struggle like that? You know, it didn't feel good.

I wanted to help them. I wanted to... I felt sorry for them because they were all wrapped up in this... This was one of those, you know, cheap Bibles that, you know, it's not really leather or whatever, but it's sort of... You know what I mean. They're not expensive Bibles.

And I'm thinking, why get so worked up about that? I always give my children one of these really nice ones. You know what this... And this is the time it feels like to do that now. What changed was they realized they got something better instead of what the thing that they thought was going to ruin their life.

They got something better out of it. Isn't that what God does? And then He reminded me of my own life. When I got sick, there I was, you know, reliving it through my child.

That's how I was. I don't like this. This is bad, you know.

It doesn't feel good. I'm just going to be miserable. And to realize that God was saying, Son, you have no idea what I'm doing.

This is going to be the greatest thing in your life. And I'm afraid that too often that's the way we treat God's work in us. We fight against it.

We don't want it. You know, yes, Lord, I want to die to self, but no, Lord, I can't handle these situations. Right now, this is too much.

Peter wanted to keep Jesus from dying and we want to keep ourselves from dying. Self is the problem. Self is the fountain from which so many troubles flow.

Why do we get bitter? Why do we get bitter? Is it not self? They did something to me. They hurt me. Guess what? We get to utterly disown, deny and affirm that we have no acquaintance or connection with that person that got hurt.

Jesus knows that we're all selfish. He knows it so much. He said, look, what you need to do is love other people the way you love yourself.

And I thought about it over the years. There was a time when I would have said I hate myself. You know what? I didn't really hate myself.

I hated the way self wasn't the hero that I wanted to be. That didn't look this certain way or didn't have this thing that I wanted. That's what I hated.

I loved myself. I wanted the best for myself. That's a lie that says you don't love yourself.

Everybody loves themselves. You know what's the most selfish thing a person could ever do? To take their own life. The world might look at that and say, oh, they really hated themselves.

No, they didn't. They loved themselves. They didn't like the way it felt, self felt, the way things went at that moment.

But they didn't care about anybody else. They didn't care about all the family members that were going to have to deal with the guilt, the pain, the feelings of being abandoned, maybe even hatred that would come in their own hearts or frustration. That's the most selfish thing a person could ever do, I think.

If you feel you don't love yourself, you're mistaken. You do love yourself. And the greatest way that you're going to find freedom is to utterly deny, disown and affirm that you have no acquaintance or connection with that old self.

You can keep your life and lose it or you can lose your life and find it. That's the Gospel. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

Take up his cross and follow me. For whoever will save his life shall lose it and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. Is that good news to you this morning? Does that strike you as good news or does that feel bad? I find that to be good news.

Because you know what? I was tormented for 23 years by that self that was out of control, that was a train wreck, you know, waiting to happen and happening, that was defeated by sin, that had a mind thinking on awful things and tormented by the songs, the rock music I put in there and the images of, you know, pornographic things that were in there. That tormented me. That old self was my enemy.

I find it a delight that Jesus came to trade that old thing for His self. That's not bad news. Let's embrace it as it is the good news.

Look what it says in Luke 14. It's a similar passage. Luke 14.

Alright, Jesus said, If any man comes to Me and hates not his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and his own life also, he can't be My disciple. Now, we studied this. We studied this in our discipleship classes.

He's not saying we should hate our parents like we think of hate. He's saying if anybody does not love less all these other people than what you love Me, you can't be My disciple. Look what He says now in verse 33.

He says, so likewise, after He tells these stories about what it means to take up your cross, He says, whoever of you that does not forsake all that he has, he can't be My disciple. You know what it means to forsake all that you have? Go look it up in the Greek concordance. It means to say goodbye.

Does that sound a little familiar? That sounds like what we just heard about denying yourself and losing your life, right? Have you said goodbye to all that you have? What does it mean when you say goodbye to something? You're leaving. And this is not the goodbye like see you tonight, goodbye, that I say to my wife. This is goodbye.

Goodbye. If anybody does not say goodbye to all that he has, he can't be My disciple. You know, again, I see this tying in with these virgins.

To be one of those wise virgins, you've got to say goodbye to everything else. You're not going to have oil. Where does the oil come from? In our lamp, it comes from fellowship with Jesus Christ, His Spirit in us.

You've got to say goodbye to all that other stuff. I pray that we could say goodbye to some things here today. I want you to think about it.

Think in your mind right now. Is there anything tormenting you? Is there anything bugging you? Is there anything that has a grip on you? Is it something you want to buy? Is it something you've got to have? Some possession? Is it some relationship you feel you need to have? Or some... Jesus wants you to say goodbye. That was such a beautiful testimony this morning.

Isn't that what Gretel said to her dream of becoming a nurse? She said, Lord, I don't want to do anything if it's not Your will. That's exactly what I'm talking about here. I say goodbye to my way.

And you know, God rewarded her. That's so encouraging. You know, He's not out to make our life miserable.

He's not out to ruin you. He's not out to say, yeah, well, you're never going to do that because I know how much you'd enjoy that. No.

No, she gave it to Him and He brought it back in a clear way. Yes, this is what I want you to do. And you know what? When you surrender it to God and then He gives it back to you and you know He's given it to you and you know it's His will, then you can go forth with a boldness, a joy and a faith that I didn't make myself make this happen.

I'm not doing my own thing. God gave it to me. It's mine.

And when you're living in that state, you're going to have victory. You're in victory. Where so many defeats come from is that battle.

I don't want to give it to God. I don't want to give it up. It's too important to me and I'm afraid to give it up.

If I give Him this, it could be a relationship with a person. It could easily be somebody that you feel should be your mate for the future. Let's say you're not married.

There's that process there of giving that up. I pray that we could give up some things here today if we need to. God's not going to give you a stone.

God's not going to give you a serpent or a scorpion. He's going to give you something better. Amen? He'll give you something better.

Even better than you could have dreamed or thought up yourself. Some of us have been defeated by self for a while. You know, we have these issues in our life.

I don't know what your issues are. But we all have stuff that is our problems, you know. And they're kind of like the giants.

Offentimes when we get saved, God just delivers us from certain things right away, right? Certain giants, it's like He just knocked them down. He slayed them. They're out of my life completely, you know.

We all can think of that. Other things, for some reason, He doesn't seem to do that. And even in the Old Testament, it says that He left some giants in the land.

Why? So that they would know how to fight. So that your children will know how to fight. And furthermore, that God will get the glory.

So, here's your giant. We talked about Goliath today in the children's lesson, right? Don't those giants in our life feel like a nine foot tall, big, hairy, you know, giant? There's no way we can beat him. I mean, when I think of how really big Goliath was, I just am amazed that David would go against him.

He was huge. Nine foot six inches. You know, the tip of the spear weighed 15 pounds.

He didn't stand a chance against that giant. But you know what? He knew the secret of what we're talking about here today. That giant is defying my God.

What if we would think about the giants in our life that way? This sin, this bitterness that I'm struggling with, that keeps coming back to me and I can't seem to get rid of it, this giant is defying God. And have the heart of a David that says, God, this should not be. This may not be.

I defy You and I come against You in the name of the Lord of hosts. Isn't that the spirit that we need? It's sad when you think about it. All those men of Israel, every day, even 40 days, he came out there and he defied them.

They all sat there and they heard him. They looked at how big he was. None of them went after him except this one boy.

You know, a shepherd's boy with his sling and his stones. He alone said, this isn't about how strong I am. That man is defying God.

And therefore, I know that God wants to bring him down. Does God want you to bring the giants down in your life? Does God want to bring down the giants in your life? Let me say it that way. Is it right that a child of God should be continually defeated? Does that glorify Him? It's not right.

The good news is that the heavenly exchange program is open. You get to give that old self and you get in return the life of Jesus coming through you. We're meant to live that way, I believe, every day, every moment.

Why don't we take Him up on the offer? Why don't we embrace death? You know, the versions in Revelation 14 that says the 144,000, they are those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Where does He go? Let's look at Philippians 2. Where did Jesus go? It says in Philippians 2, If there is any consolation in Christ, if there is any comfort of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any vows and

mercies fulfill My joy that you be like-minded like Him, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That's where the Lamb went when He was here on earth.

That's where He's going to bring us. And what happened because He went to the cross? God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name. It's above every name.

That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Have you said goodbye? I'm asking you and I'm asking myself here this morning.

Have you said goodbye to yourself? Have you disowned yourself? Have you said, I have no acquaintance or connection with that old person? That's the way to the victory in Jesus. It says in 1 Corinthians, you are not your own for you are bought with a price. Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, which you have of God? You're not your own.

You're bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. I don't know about you, but I need to be reminded of this a lot because I so quickly get in that mode of I like what's comfortable for me.

I like what feels good. I like what I like. Instead of that surrendered mode of God, I'll take what you give me.

And whatever you have is better than what I can come up with. Do you want to do God's exchange today? You can give Him your rags and you can get His riches. You can give Him your wretchedness.

You can get His righteousness. You can give Him what's messed up and He'll give you what's wonderful. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies in living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. May God help every one of us to embrace the death and the resurrection. I feel like I've had a trouble communicating here this morning.

I get this point across, but I hope that God can use it. I guess what I see, you know that story I shared about my child. There's some of us here today, I believe, that like the child whose Bible got wet and it looked like it was ruined.

You're afraid that if you give God everything, He's going to take it away. He's going to make it worse. He's going to ruin it.

And the Heavenly Father's looking at you and He's saying, I've got things for you that you can't even imagine. I've got good things that I want to bless you with. I've got joy.

I've got peace. I've got every good thing. Please, don't fight against me.

Don't fight against this thing in your life that feels like death. Don't fight against this difficult relationship. Embrace this as an opportunity to let it go, to let self go, to let Him die, to utterly renounce Him.

And I just felt like the Father wanted me to communicate that. That He wanted to tell me that and He wants to tell you that. It's a great exchange program.

And He's not going to give you stone. He's not going to give you something bad. And I pray that somehow by faith we can reach out today and really believe that and make a surrender to Him if there needs to be that.

May God help us. I know I've told you the truth today. I know I've told myself the truth today.

The question is what am I going to do with it? And what are you going to do with it? We're going to be tested. We're being tested. I believe that we're going to pass the test.

God doesn't tell us things to torment us. He tells us things because He wants us to pass. So let's take it in that spirit.

Amen. Good news for selfish people. Brother Paul, thank you for being faithful to the Lord.

He spoke to my life and speaks to me. The exchange life. I thought of Jesus talked about that also in another place.

But if we look at Luke 14.26 where He says, If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. And then if we go to Mark 10.

In Mark 10, in verse 29, Jesus said to His disciples these words. The disciples said, Lo, we have left all and followed Thee. In Mark 10.28 they said, We left all and followed Thee.

Then Jesus said these words in verse 29. Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left houses, brethren, sisters, or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My sake and the Gospels, but he shall receive and hundredfold now in this time houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, and children and lands with persecutions and in the world to come eternal life, the exchange life. I believe there is a lot of brothers and sisters in this room this morning that can identify with that.

We had to let go. Surrender it all. But God gave back, even in this life, a hundredfold.

And He is still doing it. But it is interesting that He adds that little phrase in there, with persecutions, death to self, denial, suffering. It is in dying that we are born.

It is in giving that we receive. Amen. Well, maybe you have a testimony today.

Maybe you have a confession. I don't know about you, but I face it. I believe every day.

I think I face it every day. Self, my way, or the way of Jesus, the way of self-denial. Maybe you have something to share this morning.

Raise your hand and the ushers can get a microphone to you to be edified together here. There is a hand on the brother's side. Just feel free.

As the Lord leads. Yes, Timothy. I was blessed with this message this morning.

It definitely speaks to my heart. One of those things that I think of is, in my life, the idea of a place to live. Since we are married, we have been in various different places.

And I believe God wants me to surrender that to Him even more. And to allow Him to guide each step. I know He always has.

And as we look ahead, that He will continue to do that. That I don't let my strivings, my ideas, my will, my interests take priority. But rather, let Him speak to me through this time.

The one thought that I did have as I was also meditating on the difference between the two kingdoms. This idea that Peter, that Jesus presented to Peter, was so difficult to receive because Peter was so ready to see the kingdom here on earth as he could see with his eyes. But, if we get a little bit of a picture of it, God's got a different kingdom, a heavenly kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.

And it operates on totally different principles than what we can see with these eyes. I think if we would understand a little bit of that idea of the key that Jesus wanted to give to Peter in the kingdom of heaven. Thank you brother.

Is there anyone else to share this morning? Brother Luke? Paul, I think you answered this morning. Jesus promised that He came to give us life and give it more abundantly. But so often I'm not living in that abundant life.

Probably many of us can confess the same thing. We don't have that abundant life, but I think you gave the answer. It's because there's too much self there.

Our self is in the way, that's why we don't have that abundant life. Peter did get to carry out what he said he would do. Like Christ said, they're not going to take you away.

As far as he got was just cutting off one of the servants of the high priest's ear. That's as close as he got, then he ran away. And it gets too often ideal of itself that way.

We just want to pull off an ear and then run away. Rather than like David hit it squarely at the very spot that it was just needed. The only release of damage that that one stone could have done.

Thank you brother. I know for myself what really was attractive to me as a seeker after the depth of truth of the spiritual life and I knew there was more to the spiritual life than I was experiencing was to see joyful Christians. Joyful in their God.

Exuberant. Loving the Lord and full of faith and zeal. Rather than long faces and downcast.

I want what they have. But you know the price for that is death to self. And absolute total surrender.

I can identify with what Paul was saying when he was talking about being sick. It was like, Lord change me. I come to the end of all my resources.

I checked out all these different diets and everything else and I'm still not better. Lord have mercy on me. All I need is mercy.

And then God begins to show us our own needs and how unmerciful and unloving I am and we are and begins to deal with self. And for me it was very clear. I mean it was just like the Lord spoke it.

That exchange life it's waiting for you when you surrender all to Jesus. But oh how difficult. How long I struggled.

Another night with the frogs. Right? Brother Emmanuel shared that the other Sunday. You know one more night with the frogs.

You know finally we are just so desperate. And so tired of this self. And we're ready to say this is it.

I surrender. Lord change me. Anybody here like that this morning? If you think God wants to meet you.

He can do it. Yes. We have another testimony here.

Over here on the sister's side. Right? I just say amen to the message. I can truly say myself has been my biggest enemy.

But I can also identify with the children that when you give up when you surrender God gives you a joy that's where we can truly say that the joy of the Lord is my strength. Praise the Lord. Amen.

And right here. I see it's who we identify with. I can choose to especially as a woman feel lots of feelings that can be negative and can be disheartened because of what I see.

What I'm focused on. And self can rule if we let it. At any moment in the day.

And when I identify with Christ I can let go of the feelings that so dominate me when I'm thinking about when I'm letting my thoughts dwell on the things of this earth or the things of my feeler. And when I choose to let go of those of the identity with self and disown it affirm that I have no connection with self will lose sight of myself and its interests. There's freedom.

There's joy. You can watch a baby go from screaming to joy by a choice by the focus of his attention. We as adults don't want to let go of our feelings that quickly.

But we can deny ourself and let joy of eternal realities fill us. That's what I want to do. Amen.

Thank you. Does someone else have the mic? Back there. Okay, go ahead in the back.

Hi, my name is Emily. I could relate to the message. I was struggling, I guess, with being able to surrender things onto the Lord and trusting Him because when He said something like if you give something to the Lord and He's not going to give you a serpent and I was struggling with that.

And right now I feel like when I was able to give it and let things leave it into God's hands I was able to experience His joy and His peace through the midst of my troubled times. And He's opened doors for me in many areas where He has been blessing me. And so this message was confirmation also.

And I would say also it's been allowing the Lord by surrendering also He helps you develop take you to another level spiritually. When you open you rely on Him trust in Him have faith and He takes you to

another level spiritually where you can see things from a different perspective and be able to move forward and being able to enjoy what He has for you instead of you taking things into your own will. Thank you for that testimony.

There's a hymn that speaks about only those who surrender it all to Jesus know those full joys. I know we sing it here sometimes I'm not getting the words exact. We never can prove the delights of His love until all on the altar we lay.

Yes. Amen. Thank you brother.

Someone in the back. Yes. I'd like to thank you for this message today.

Especially where David stood up against a giant and said you're defiling the Lord and I realized that I had giants in my life that were defiling the Lord and I just thought that was very good. It just opened my eyes to see things in a different way. Thank you very much.

Amen. God bless you. Yes.

Another one. I was very thankful for the message. I've been struggling in my life and I would ask that you pray for me because I just there's some things that just look so appealing to me in the self life but I want to be free from it.

Amen. Bless you. God bless you.

Thank you for sharing. God gives grace to the humble. I want to pray for you.

Is there anyone else? Yes. Another hand on the brother's side. Yes.

I've never been here before but I appreciate the Spirit of God. I feel the Lord is using this message and I also ask for prayer that God would help me to conquer giants. And I ask your prayer.

Thank you very much. Amen. Bless you, brother.

Anyone else desire prayer? Request prayer? Want to pray together here in just a moment? Brother Paul, you communicated very well. I know sometimes certain messages we wrestle with more. But God bless you, brother, for laboring in the Word.

Praise God. Let's pray one for another. Why don't we stand and pray now and then we'll have some further thoughts and direction.

Father, we thank you for speaking to us today, Lord, through your Word, through your servant. Oh God, bless this Word to fruitfulness in our lives. We don't just want to be forgetful hearers, but Father, we want to apply this Word to our hearts, to our circumstances, our situations, Lord, our battles, Lord, the giants in our lives, Lord.

Thank you, Jesus, that you are more than conqueror and you came to you were manifest to destroy the works of the devil and of flesh and of self. Oh God, I pray that today we would take fresh courage and take fresh hold on the promises and the Word of God and in humility surrender and yield all to Jesus, fully surrendered to the Lord. Father, for these that have asked for prayer, for Henry Martin, Lord, we just pray for him and pray, God, that grace would abound in his life, Lord.

You said you give grace to the humble. And we confess our faults one to another and pray one for another that there may be healing. So Lord, we pray for our brother Henry, healing and victory in his life.

For Jesse Stolfus, Lord, we ask you would have mercy upon Jesse. Father, you would minister to the very depth need of his heart and soul, Lord, and bring deliverance and healing and victory. Matthew Miller, oh Lord, bless him for opening his heart here today and sharing and requesting prayer.

And Father, we just pray your grace would abound in his life, Lord. Bring him great victory and overcoming grace in the days to come, Father, to say no to self and yes to the embracing of the cross of death and surrender to Jesus and then the abundant life that is in Christ. Oh God.

Father, take us on as a congregation, Lord. I know many more of us could have shared requests for prayer and testimonies of need and failure. So Father, we look to Jesus today that you will continue to work in our hearts and lives, Lord.

And Father, maybe you would have us to go to someone and just personally, one-on-one, open up our lives and share an area of need that we could pray one for another and be healed. Grant us your grace and your mercies, Lord. We thank you.

Thank you, Lord. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

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