

2006 Heart-Cry - Journal Reading and Message

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer shares his journey of faith and reliance on God's provision in ministry, encouraging others to trust in God's promises.

Duration: 58:20

Scripture: Psalm 34:10, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7, Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:2

Topics: "Living By Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the goodness of God and His plans for believers. He encourages young men to seek and avail themselves of God's promises through prayer and perseverance. The speaker shares a personal testimony of wrestling with a particular issue for many years and experiencing a breakthrough through prayer. He also highlights the faithfulness of God in providing for their ministry despite financial challenges. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of relying on God alone and the abundance of promises in the Bible for believers.

Transcript

It is a tremendous privilege for me to be here with you and today do something that I rarely ever do. There is a great need, especially for young ministers, to realize that the promises of the New Testament are for today. And that God works in a magnificent and powerful way to those who, by his grace, believe him.

When I was converted to the University of Texas at the age of 21, a man came up to me, as I have said many times, and put several books in my hand. One of those books was the autobiography of George Mueller, and I was absolutely astounded at that little volume. And I read it and reread it and reread it, and I thought it was the most marvelous thing.

But at the same time, I thought it was a simple thing. I thought it was reasonable. It seemed to me to be reasonable.

And I want to share some testimonies this hour regarding that and then talk about some promises that we should press into. But there's always a danger in doing this, of being lifted up with pride and such. But I feel that there's a need to hear that our God is a living God.

And some of you young men who are so keen and so interested in being theologically sound need to understand, you can reduce God down to a proposition and its intellectual death. And God will raise up a

man and use him whose theology and knowledge is not as pristine as yours. If his heart is there and he's believing God.

And so I started off in the way that I knew of George Mueller doing it. As you know, he was quite a he was quite a rascal before he was converted. He was a horrible young man.

The only thing I've ever beat George Mueller at is sin. I was horrible. Beyond all description, horrible.

Terrible. The worst of sinners. Self-centered.

Wicked. Egotistical. Vain.

Horrible. I hurt people. And I didn't care.

A liar. The greatest liar you could have ever known. You would have founded me.

I lied just for the fun of lying. And then I was converted. The undergraduate library of the University of Texas.

And I received these books and I read Mueller. And it seemed to agree with what I had, the little I had read in the Bible. And I began to think, well, I'll practice this.

And I know I made a lot of youthful things in the name of the Lord that I did. That was probably just raw zeal. I remember that we had a big citywide campaign that was coming up.

And I felt like the Lord had laid on my heart to give away the money I had for that summer's meals. To give away all that money to that particular endeavor. And to trust God.

And what happened was, for some reason, my friends were working as waiters. And a lady just heard that I was, that ran the business, heard that I was living with these boys. And that I hadn't found work yet.

And she sent a meal home every day for three months. Well, there was one day she didn't because my friend left it on the table. May God be his judge.

But for three months, every day, a meal. And a meal unlike I could have purchased with my own funds. And then began to just live and seek to do that.

To make the needs known to God alone. And then to go off to Peru after seminary. Went out through just a small local church.

A dear group of brethren in Illinois who have always been a support and a help to me. Waldo Baptist Church. And went out to Peru.

And the missionaries used to, the Peruvian pastors used to laugh whenever I would preach at their churches. They'd take up an offering because they said I was the only missionary that was actually poorer than they were. But God met every need all the time.

And as God began to work in the ministry, I began to see indigenous missionaries. Men that lived on \$75 a month and had started 15, 20 churches. Men of whom the world is not worthy.

Many of them uneducated, unshaven, mountain men. And that God just gloriously was using in his power. And I felt that the Lord wanted us to start a mission that would biblically help support the indigenous church.

Without interfering with the work that God was doing, but rather promote it. Not to make them dependent, but to stand alongside with them as a brother. And so we began heart crying.

And I began to think immediately, you know, I had very little funds for myself. But along the way, God had been training me to believe him. I remember my third year in Peru and we had outgrown the little building we were in.

The church that we had started. And there was this place that they wanted \$750 a month to rent it. That's a fortune in Peru.

But we were working with children who were out on the street because of the war and had no place to take them when they were sick. And our church had no place to go and there was no. So I went and I looked at this place and I thought, well, that's twice really the support of what I was receiving.

And so I gathered together these missionaries who I knew were very godly. And I had them all go with me to look at the building. And I was sure that they would all say that it's nonsense.

And every one of them that walked in that building said this just seems like the place that God would have you to be. So I borrowed a pair of dress pants from a Peruvian friend of mine, went and met with the lawyers. And then I had a day in which I had to have a certain amount of money and and and I didn't have it.

And the night before this missionary who I know is from he's from Georgia, he's back here now. He had very little money himself. He said he and his family were in their nightly prayer meeting and God had laid it on all their hearts to give the money that he was saving up for a roof to give it all to me.

And it was the exact amount needed to pay the guarantee. So I went in and I signed the papers and I paid the guarantee and then I walked out. And in the reality of what I had done, I'd signed my name and to something that costed more than, well, twice the monthly support.

And that month, God tripled our support without any man ever knowing it. And never once did we miss. And so God began to train.

I remember one time praying for two weeks for Bibles, Bibles, Bibles, Bibles. And a man came back from the States, a missionary by the name of Johnson, his last name Johnson. And he goes, you're Paul Washer.

And I said, yes, he calls me on the phone. He said, do you know anybody in Kansas City? And I said, no, I don't know anyone in Kansas City. And he said, well, someone in Kansas City walked up to me and gave me a thousand dollars and said to give it to Paul Washer for Bibles.

And so God, God is real. But you see, one of the great problems, one of the great problems is that unless you cut yourself off from the arm of the flesh, you'll never see God work. Unless you cut yourself off from the arm of the flesh, you'll never see God work.

And so God began to train and and so we began to support missionaries. I remember laying awake at night in my bed thinking, how on earth am I going to get one hundred and fifty dollars required this month to help this indigenous pastor missionary that we're supporting? And God never once failed. And it's been many, many years now of doing this.

And there's only been every with George Mueller every month or every year. So he he would give a report from his journal. And I never felt the freedom to do that until about two years ago when when the Lord one day I walked in the office and I felt just so impressed of the Lord.

Get out your notebook and begin to write, because what you write that I want you to let other people know about. And so I'm going to read from the journal that's over about two months, period. The last few months have been the leanest of our ministry.

Since June, we have lived every day from hand to mouth several times. Darren, John and I have not received our salaries. In spite of this hardship, all the men and women in the field have received their support without exception.

And we in the United States have never lacked food or sufficient funds to pay our bills. Praise God for his faithfulness. And now sit here in my office.

It's nine a.m. and I begin to write the account of our struggles and the faithfulness of God. It is mid month and none of our workers have been paid. Darren, John and I have passed another week without receiving our salaries.

Seven hundred dollars came in this weekend. Also, I received one hundred and fifty dollars for preaching in a conference in Lexington, Kentucky. I will preach to a mission of Mexican immigrants this afternoon.

I usually receive fifty dollars from them. I am encouraged this morning by a promise in second King seven. November 21st on Wednesday, the 19th, three thousand three hundred and seventeen dollars was deposited.

After paying certain bills that were due, we remained with two thousand six hundred and thirty eight dollars. On Thursday we received twelve hundred and forty seven dollars. Today we received three hundred and fifty in the mail.

Thirteen hundred that came through an anonymous donor who left the money in my truck. And a hundred dollars was given by a staff worker. This leaves us with a total of five thousand six hundred and thirty five dollars.

We will not pay the U.S. staff this week since not a single missionary on the field is yet to be paid. Never has there been such lack in the mission. November 24th, I came into the office this morning and Darren informed me that there were certain expenses totaling one thousand nine hundred ninety four dollars that were paid last week, but had not been recorded.

Therefore, we begin the day with three thousand six hundred and forty dollars instead of five thousand six hundred and thirty five. This was a great discouragement, but we have regained our composure and look to God once again. This is Gideon's call.

This army is too large. All human possibility has to be destroyed so that the victory will be ascribed to God alone. God has taken away from us even the little strength we thought we had.

We have nothing to hope in but him. We have seven days before the end of the month and not a single missionary has been paid. Mission giving usually goes down in December because of the Christmas holidays.

We have no reason to hope at all in the flesh. God alone can save us. On Saturday, the twenty second five hundred and twenty four dollars came through the mail.

I also found the check for fifty dollars in my Spanish Bible that came from preaching in the Mexican mission in Mayfield, Kentucky, three weeks ago. Self-pity, resentment and grumbling are all crouched at the door and their desire is to have us. I pray that God might give us grace to overcome.

I am looking forward to deliverance. We'll call a prayer meeting in a few minutes. We grew.

We drew great strength from our morning prayers, but but gathered together at lunch for the same. By his good spirit, we were encouraged to trust the Lord. I felt peace that this would not be our end, but that God would be our helper in the final hour.

Our greatest desire is for God to make a name for himself through our inability. Before 15, I went to the mailbox and was excited to find it full of envelopes. I soon discovered that only one was for heart cry.

It was from a donor who I did not recognize. I opened the envelope expecting a donation of twenty five or thirty dollars. But to my surprise, it was a check for three thousand.

I let out an audible shout for joy while still in the churchyard. I met with Darren and John for prayers of thanksgiving to our God who's helped us this day. The first thing tomorrow morning we will set about paying the missionaries from Peru.

It matters little to us that we still lack funds to pay missionaries in 14 countries. God has helped us today and given us hope to trust in him. We deposited November 25th.

We deposited six thousand eight hundred and fifty seven dollars in our account today, which gave us a total of seven thousand four hundred ninety seven. We wired the support to the missionaries in Peru, paid our phone bills and have a remainder of one hundred and eighty dollars. Even though we do not have the necessary funds to finish out the month, we saw the need to take on two or three more missionaries in Peru and help some of our veteran missionaries with their very special needs.

Much time has passed since we last took on new missionaries in Peru. But in our hour of greatest need, God leads us to believe him for more missionaries. God always seems to ask more from us when we have less to give so that his great supply and loving kindness might be revealed.

Twice today we met for prayer. We are waiting for the mail, which usually arrives around three thirty. At the moment, we have one hundred and eighty dollars and six days remaining to provide support for the rest of our missionaries in 14 countries.

I just received the mail in the mailbox. There was not one letter for heart cry. We must continue to wait for God's deliverance.

We will pray when Darren returns from sending the money to Peru. We have nothing but his presence, but it is enough. November 26, today, the heart cry staff is going to celebrate Thanksgiving together and we have much to be thankful for.

This morning, Darren, John and I gathered for prayer. It was one of the best times of prayer that we have ever had. I felt led that God would send someone to us before the mail arrived who would give a gift to the mission.

At midday, a brother from Kentucky came to the office and gave us fifteen dollars. It was a great confirmation to all of us that God had heard our prayers and that he was with us. At one thirty, we met again for a time of prayer.

I felt a great impression that God was asking someone somewhere to do something, and whether out of fear or lack of faith they were struggling, was submitting to the Lord. After a time of prayer, the burden was lifted. At two forty five, Darren brought me the mail.

Praise the Lord, we received an additional one thousand three hundred ninety five dollars. It was enough to pay the missionaries in Siberia, Ukraine and India. After wiring the money, we finished the day with forty dollars and forty four cents.

There were four days left in the month of November. The staff will miss another paycheck this week, but we have food and our bills are paid like the oil in the widow's jar. God has stretched our resources and kept the destroyer at bay.

We will meet again at three p.m. for prayer. Darren just came in and asked if we could send thirty extra dollars to the missionary in Siberia. This will help him buy more firewood to keep his family warm.

I agreed. We now have ten dollars and forty four cents in our account. Praise the Lord, what a privilege he's granted us.

Yesterday was Thanksgiving and the mail was not delivered. Today I knew that we would receive two days worth of mail and support. I was hoping that there would be more support because of this.

We received one hundred and seventy five dollars. We now have one hundred and eighty five dollars in hand. We need 60 times this amount just to pay our men in the field for this month.

We have two more days. We must take guard against doubt, despair and self-pity. Tomorrow is another day.

We'll look to God. November twenty nine. Two hundred and twenty dollars arrived in the mail today.

We now have a total of five hundred four hundred and five dollars. Tomorrow is Sunday and there will be no mail. Monday is the first of December.

Most of the missionaries have not been paid and the staff has only been paid twice during the entire month. We are in dire straits. We have made our need known to no one.

We wait upon the Lord. Our greatest interest is his glory. I cannot see how our fall would bring encouragement to the saints, but I do see how it would justify the carnal.

They will say that we were foolish and proud to have believed that a ministry could prosper without making its needs known to anyone but God. Many young believers have been encouraged to trust God because of his dealings with us. It would have been better to have never started than to be the cause of their unbelief.

God, we deserve to fail, but please do not let us fail. Your glory is at stake. Oh, God, please get a name for yourself.

I preached to the Mexican mission this morning, November 30th, but once again, they forgot to give the promised support of gas money. I was informed this evening that someone gave one hundred and fifty dollars to the mission in the morning service. We now have five hundred and fifty five dollars.

Tomorrow is the first of December and we have yet to pay most of the men for November. This has happened only a few times in the history of our mission and never when the amount needed was so great. I can hardly bear to ask the staff to go another week without their salaries.

I know that they will do it willingly, even joyfully. We are in the greatest need since our beginning. We will wait upon the Lord and see what tomorrow will bring.

We have no reason to hope in the flesh. If help comes, it will come from the Lord. I spoke with my pastor today, knows all our troubles and would cut off his right arm to help us.

He knows that the Lord has pressed upon us the prohibition to make our needs known even to our own church. I know that every person in our church would come to our aid if they knew there was such a problem. I even know that several people throughout the country and they would gladly meet our every need with one donation.

But the purpose of our mission is depend on the Lord alone. He is our patron. If he wants this mission to continue, he is faithful and able to let his people know.

If he does not help us, then we should not be helped. Although we recognize that God has had his hand upon us, we know that he does not need us. If the HeartCry Missionary Society perishes tomorrow, it will not hinder God's great work on the earth.

December 1st, when I arrived this morning, Darren told me that someone had given \$100 in the Sunday evening service. We now have \$655. I was thinking again about how the mission where I preached on Sundays had failed to provide the promised gas money for the last three weeks.

There are wonderful believers and would do all in their power to help me. It seems that the Lord has made them forget. He is drying up every well dug by human hands that he alone may be our only fountain.

I feel like Hagar. She and her boy were sent away because he was not the child of the covenant. When the water that she was carrying was gone, she laid her boy under a bush and sat a bow shot away because she could not bear to watch him die.

I do not feel God's presence. I feel like I have been sent into the desert as one who is not a child of the promise. All our resources are spent.

I want to lay the mission down and run away, for I cannot bear to see it die. Satan tempts me to anger and grumbling, but who am I to speak a word against the Lord? I have not been worthy of even the least of all

his mercies. He has shown me throughout the years, even if he slays me, even if he abandons me to hell, even then he would be worthy of praise.

He has already done more for me than I could ever deserve in a thousand lifetimes of service. I will trust in him regardless of the outcome. I know these things.

God is good, wise and powerful, and our circumstances are not the result of some defect in God. This trial is ordained with perfect wisdom by an absolutely sovereign God who has promised to do us good for the sake of Christ. He works all things together for our good.

Even this, the story of Hagar and Ishmael, ends in a great salvation wrought by God. If he opened a fountain in the desert for an idolatrous pagan whose child would grow up to be a persecutor of God's people, will he not help us, his children? Although there are many daily tasks to be accomplished today, the priority of our heart will be to pray and wait upon the Lord. I went to the mailbox this afternoon and found an envelope containing two hundred and eighty seven dollars.

This brings our total to nine hundred and forty two. December two. Today was a good day.

Our families came to church to take pictures for December issue of HeartCry magazine. We were filled with joy to watch our children and to play with them. How the Lord has blessed us.

I went to the mailbox today and found envelopes containing six hundred and twelve dollars. I had hoped to send support to more men today, but it was not God's will. We met this afternoon to pray and to discuss what the Lord would have us to do.

We know that we are able always to trust him, but we do not know what he would have us to do. Since John is not a U.S. citizen, he must continue to be supported by the mission. Darren and I have the possibility of looking for work elsewhere.

We determined to wait upon the Lord to the end of the week. If funds do not come, then we will look for work. We prayed.

John was the last to pray at the end of his prayer. He asked the Lord to open Gabby's womb that she might conceive. He no sooner closed his prayer with a man than Gabby came into the door with tears in her eyes and announced that the doctor said she was pregnant.

What a tremendous blessing. The news could not have come at a better time for two reasons. First, it showed us that God answers prayer.

Secondly, John's financial resources are almost depleted, and yet his financial needs will be greater than ever. What an opportunity for God to get a name for himself. This morning, Charo called December 3rd, my wife, about the medical bills for the birth of our son Evan.

To our astonishment, they were all paid by someone who wished to remain anonymous. We had told no one of our bills. We do not have the faintest idea who God used to bless us.

It is a great encouragement for all of us at the mission. God is able to tell others of our needs. I went to the mailbox today and was blessed by the Lord's kindness.

The donations totaled \$2,500, and we now have \$3,100 for the missionaries. One dear family that sponsored us for years with \$1,000 a month sent \$2,000 for November and December. This is not the first time that the Lord has directed them to give when it was most needed.

Another blessing came from the Mexican mission that had not given any gas money for three weeks. They sent \$150, which was given to the mission at 5 p.m. Darren left to make a deposit. We were able, by God's good grace, to mail support to Benin, Ghana, and Nigeria.

I received a letter today from Ernesto Zacarias. He sent photos of the construction of our new church in Villa Salvador. It was truly a blessing to see all the people gathered inside the new building.

A few months ago, we gave our last \$1,000 so that the construction could continue. It might have seemed foolish to many, but seeing the people gathered in that simple building in order to hear the gospel is reward enough. December 5th, this morning, I went to the doctor for blood work.

It seems I'm going to have to have more operations. We were greatly blessed today. The Lord provided \$2,770 through the mail, and someone gave John \$20, which he gave to the mission.

Our total is \$3,146. Darren was able to send the support to Zambia. We closed the day with \$1,700.

We lack nearly \$4,700 to pay the missionaries in Romania. Darren, John, and I will not be paid again this week, but the Lord has seen our need. A dear family in the church sent groceries to the office today and gave each of us a Walmart card to buy more groceries.

In the end, we will have more supplies in our home than if we had been paid our salaries. God never has given us a reason to doubt his character or his promises. I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging for bread.

What grace! He declares the wicked righteous by the blood of his dear son. He prepares good deeds for them by his sovereign will. He empowers them by his spirit and then he rewards them for what they have done as if they had done it.

What grace! What marvelous grace! In such grace we will wait upon him. I would rather be a beggar in the courts of God than to sit in the seats of the mighty in the greatest halls of this present age. I would be the weakest of all his children that I might see greater portions of his grace.

I would be the most incompetent that I might see greater measures of his strength. I would be the most helpless that his strong arms might carry me. I would be the most destitute that his right hand might feed me.

At noon, Darren paid \$33 worth of bills. He also discovered that a check for \$150 that we received yesterday was not signed and must be returned. We lack \$4,000.

December 8th, \$655 came in over the weekend and \$1,500 came in the mail today. After paying bills, we have \$3,000. December 9th, only two checks came in today.

One for \$50 and the other for \$4,000. Praise God! That gives us a total of \$8,700. After paying Romania in several bills that were due, we were left with \$644.

The support for November has been paid. We received a total of \$3,000 today. December 10th, December 11th, we received \$1,462.

December 12th, today \$745 was divided up among the staff to pay all our due bills. No donation came in today. But we were also notified that \$1,000 more was in the bank than what we thought.

We end the day with \$5,000. December 15th, \$340 came in and I received \$200, \$250 for preaching two services in New Hampshire. This morning, Darren made a deposit.

December 16th, \$1,900 came in today through the mail. Today we paid for the printing of our magazine as well as missionaries. December 18th, \$325 came in yesterday through the mail and \$358 today.

Today again, \$1,200 was divided up among the staff to pay more bills. December 19th, \$300 came in today through the mail. We made a deposit of \$983.

In the afternoon, an anonymous donor sent us \$180. December 21st, there was \$1,200 worth of donations in Saturday's mail. December 22nd, \$1,525 came in the mail today.

December 23rd, yesterday an additional \$110 was sent to my house and \$1,236 came in the mail. December 28th, \$13,311 came in today. We paid everyone for the month of December and have \$6,000 in surplus.

You can trust God. You can trust God. Don't you hear me? You don't have to go into debt.

You can trust God. If God has called you to do something, why run to men? Why tell them? Why raise support from them? Why speak great things about yourself so that they might give? If God has called you, He will provide every one of your needs according to His riches in glory. And if, as we hear these evangelists on television, if you don't support our ministry, we're going down.

Then go down! If God's in it, He will hold you up. I want to speak for a moment about Matthew 7. It says, Ask, verse 7, ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find.

Knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds.

And to him who knocks, it will be opened. So many young people and so many older people come to me discouraged about this verse. It just doesn't work.

I pray and I ask and God doesn't answer. Surely, this can't mean what it says. And then all the theologians come and say, Well, of course, it means exactly what it says, but only in regard to God's will.

And of course, we know God doesn't will anything for anybody nowadays. This is a promise. And it is true.

You must understand the context, but it is true. This promise is not for those who seek to promote, advance or preserve self. This promise is not for those who seek to promote or advance or even preserve.

You understand what I mean by that? God, if you can get glory for yourself, that I'd be destroyed. It is not about self-preservation. It is not about the promotion of self.

This promise is for those who seek God's glory and God's will above all other things. This promise is for those who recognize their utter weakness to attain such a heavenly ambition. And this promise is those who, by faith, lay hold of the promises of God and persevere until God comes down.

The promises belong to those with the right passion. Let me give you a few verses. Matthew 6 9. Pray then in this way.

Our father who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Your kingdom come, your will be done. You see all these silly little things being said about prosperity today.

God wants to prosper you and he wants to give you a Mercedes and a nice home. God wants you to go out there and name it and claim it and blab it and grab it and get it all for yourself. Let me tell you how it really works.

Everything in our life as a Christian is within the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God's dear son. The mentality of those who pray correctly is this. God, if you can get glory for yourself and you can advance your kingdom through prospering me in any measure, in any way, then so be it.

But dear God, if your kingdom will advance and your name will be glorified through me being ground to powder, then so be it. This is not a prayer for you. It is a prayer for him.

It's asking about him and asking about the advancement of his kingdom. It's another passage that says. Matthew 6 21 through 24.

For where your treasure is, there is your heart will be also the eye is the lamp of the body. So then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light that is in you is darkness. How great is that darkness? No one can serve two masters for either. He will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and wealth. You cannot serve God and anything else. The problem is with the eye because the eye reveals the passion of the heart, the treasure of the heart.

I don't need to read your heart. I only need to look at your eye. To what is your eye gazing? What is the goal of your life? And I want you to know something that even the greatest goals of life can be nothing more than idolatry.

Nothing more than idolatry. Ministry is one of the greatest idols in Christianity. Becoming a success in ministry is a putrid, horrid, abominable idol.

To become a big person, an important person, one who speaks at a conference. The Charismatics, they have their heroes. They're guys who can shake out their coat and make people fall down.

Southern Baptists, they have their heroes. You're a success in the ministry. How? Because you've got the biggest number of people and the biggest budget and the most baptisms.

And then the reformed guys, they have their heroes. They all have really big heads with really big brains that know a lot of things. Everyone seems to be trying to be a hero or to get into the inner circle.

The eye is focused on one thing. I loved Whitfield. No movement began with Whitfield, because when he was dying, he said, let me die and let my name die with me.

Just Christ. What are you got to judge your motives? You've got to look at those motives and ask yourself, why are you doing this? Most men study the Bible to get a good sermon and get a good sermon so that they can get an open door. Study the Bible and know God.

You pray that God's kingdom might be advanced. Some of you young men, you've been praying, oh, God, use me. God, use me.

What you ought to be praying is, oh, God, use my roommate. Let me carry his bags all the days of my life. God will give anything to those who ask him.

If their heart is set on this view. Matthew six thirty three. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

Go on to first Corinthians. Whatever you do, whether the most menial task of eating and drinking, do it all for the glory of God. And the whole idea is this.

The full thrust of your life is to be only one thing, that God be glorified, that the kingdom of Christ advance once you step into that realm. If your heart is truly there to seek first only the kingdom, then anything you ask with that passion and that direction, he will give it to you. Anything that is necessary for the name of God to be glorified, anything that is necessary for the kingdom of God to advance is yours.

Absolutely everything and anything. The promise belongs to those with the right passion. And the promise belongs to the weak.

The promise belongs to the weak young men. You will heartily agree that you can do nothing of yourself. You don't know at all what that means.

It's going to take so many decades of all your strength being destroyed. You have no idea what it means. Even those of us who are older and even those who have been in the ministry longer than I've been alive.

It's a process of learning. What does God do? God does such a work of destruction in our lives. He says, I will cleanse you and Ezekiel in the new covenant.

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols. He will break apart all those cisterns that you make that can't hold water. He will smash them and smash them and smash them until you're left utterly destitute of everything.

But God, that is, of course, if you're God's man, if you're not God's man. He'll give you the desires of your heart. And that's the most terrifying thing you could ever imagine.

The Pharisees, they wanted to receive glory from men. Jesus said that God gave them their reward in full. And then they went to hell.

The most terrifying thing, young man, is that God will give you the desires of your heart. Desire big ministry, popularity among people, all men speak well of you. God will give it to you, but it won't be blessing.

It'll be judgment ending in condemnation. You must be weak. You must be weak.

The life of Peter is such an example of this. Lord, though all men betray you, though all men deny you, that all men turn their back on you. I will die with you.

It was so necessary for that cock to crow. It was so necessary for Peter to fail. If that had not occurred, I don't believe he could have ever been filled with the Holy Spirit.

He had to realize, I am a betrayer. I am nothing. Some men will say yes, but they'll still hold on to this.

They'll say, yes, I am weak and I can do nothing without him. But they still hold on to this idea. I have enough piety to be used of God.

You do not. It is even forsaking whatever known piety you think you have. And realize that God works because God has ordained to work.

And to take the weakest of men to do the greatest of things. Your problem is not that you don't know enough. Your problem is not that you're not gifted enough.

Your problem is you're too strong. You're just too strong. Also, the promise belongs to those who lay hold of the promises of God.

Lay hold of the promises of God. Grab a hold of them and do not let them go until God does exactly what he's promised. Matthew 11, 12.

From the days of John the Baptist until now. The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force. Listen to this.

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force. Now, in light of Luke 16, 16, it seems best to interpret this passage to mean this. The kingdom presses ahead relentlessly and only the relentless press their way into it.

The men that are used of God. If I could only have two words to describe them. The women that are used of God.

If I could only have two words to describe them. They are the passionate, weak. They are the violently desperate.

They're not the type of men who say, yes, with this John Wayne, I'll do it mentality. I'll press in there until I get in there. No, they are men that come to reality of such weakness and such desperation.

Like a starving man without food. They know they must do everything within their means to press into that. Because there's no other place for salvation.

There's no other place of hope. There's no other deliverance just there. And they're desperate because of their weakness.

They're violent because of their need. They have no other place to go. I want to read to you for some theologians in the past.

Some beautiful things that researched. First of all, John Calvin writes. The meaning, therefore, is a vast assembly of men is now collected as if men were rushing violently forward to seize the kingdom of God.

For aroused by the voice of one man, John the Baptist, they come together in crowds and receive not only with eagerness, but with fervent impulsiveness, the grace which is offered to them. Let us also learn from these words. What is the true nature in operation of faith? It leads men not only to give cold and indifferent assent when God speaks, but to cherish warm affection toward him and to rush forward as if it were with a violent struggle.

How many of you believe God? How many of you are desperate enough and believe God enough and want enough to enter in with a desperate struggle to grab a hold and wrestle with God as Jacob wrestled with God and came out limping and broken? The problem in the church today is not too much passion. Problem is, we don't have any, at least about the right things. John Gill writes that this text refers, first of all, to publicans and harlots and Gentile sinners who might be thought to be a sort of intruders into the kingdom.

I love that here you have this circle of people. They're total outcasts than they ought to be. They're total outcasts for them to even come close to anything that mentioned God.

People would look at them and say, you don't have part with this. You don't belong here. Look at who you are.

But in their desperation and their need, when one door of grace flies open, they run at it like wild men. And they don't care if everyone else says you don't belong here. Their desperate need of salvation causes them to run to God and hope and to grab a hold of him.

He goes on and he says, secondly, to persons powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of the gospel who were under violent apprehensions of wrath and vengeance for their lost and undone state and conditioned by nature. People had been who had been awakened to what they were before a holy God who were who were in fear of the wrath of God, full of apprehension and dread. And see again, one window of grace thrown open and they fight with all their might to make it through there.

He goes on and he says in three to those who were violently in love with Christ and eagerly desirous of salvation by him and communion with him and had their affection set upon the things of another world. These having the gospel preached to them greedily caught at it and embraced it. They were maddened, people emboldened and maddened with love.

Who realized that absolutely everything in this world is a sickening, stupid vanity, and the only thing that matters is the kingdom of Christ and doing the will of God and entering in. Matthew Henry writes, they who will have an interest in the great salvation are carried out toward it with strong desires, will have it upon any terms and not think them hard, nor quit their hold without a blessing. What an amazing statement.

They won't complain. They won't think it hard. They won't.

They won't be murmuring about the time they'll lay hold of a promise of God and they will not let go of it until it's fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven was never intended to indulge the ease of triflers, but to be the rest of them that labor. It is a blessed sight, oh, that we could see a greater number, not with angry contention, thrusting others out of the kingdom of heaven, but with a holy contention, thrusting themselves into it.

Finally, John Trapp says men are resolved to have it. Whatever pains or perils they pass through as God's Israel violently invaded and overran the promised land, so do his elect lay hold on the promised

inheritance. This true treasure hitherto hidden is now discovered and exposed to all that have a mind to it, though God would have his servants content with the least of his mercies, yet not satisfied with the greatest things in the world for their portion since they are born to better.

What does he mean? If you are a child of God, you have been given a new nature, you have been recreated in the image of God and true righteousness and holiness. Nothing that this world could ever throw at you ought to be able to take away your joy. And nothing this world could ever promise you ought to be able to give you joy.

Why you are of a higher nature. You were created for the heavenlies, for the things of God. Nothing on this earth will ever please you.

And what should that cause you to do? It should cause you to rush forward like a madman. Young men, listen to me. I have seen so many young men and they are so pretty and so proper.

They dot every I and cross every T and they speak well and they they're not a never a bull in a china shop. They never make a mistake. They're quaint and clean and pretty and easy and not dangerous at all.

And then I see a young man come along. He's like a bull in a china shop. He's raving madman, a lunatic.

Someone ought to lock him in jail for three years so he doesn't hurt anybody. But there's a passion there. There's a fire there.

Not content. I don't want morality. I don't want to just look nice.

I don't want to be churchy. I don't want to be religious. And most of all, I never want to be civilized.

I want God and I'll have him or I'll die. Show me your glory. Moses wasn't a dumb man.

He knew what that meant. It's almost as though Moses was saying, I know it will kill me. Just give me one glimpse and let me die.

We say, just give me one glimpse and let me alone. It's pressing in. And I want to finish by saying one other thing that is so extremely important.

Do you have any idea how many promises are in the Bible for you? I would dare say. Now you do understand, don't you? That if it is a promise in the Bible, it is the will of God. Hope you understand that.

Do you have any idea how many promises for godliness there are? Do you have any idea how many promises where God says, I will let you see me? I will let you know me if you seek me. I would not a wagering man, but I'd bet everything I have that there are more promises. There are more promises in the Bible with regard to you growing in grace and overcoming sin and being used of God and trampling on serpents and every other sort of thing.

There are enough promises there that if a man were to pray only over those promises, 24 hours a day, he would have to live 10,000 lifetimes to win them, to avail himself of them. Do you understand what I'm saying? Take all the promises of God, all of them that you find. Old Testament, New Testament, write them down.

The ones that talk about godliness and God being with you and God helping you and God strengthening the weak and God showing himself to men and God doing mighty things. And you get down and you wrestle with them all the days of your life. And if you ask about those promises, you will receive.

If you seek those promises, you will find. And if you knock on the door of those promises, it'll be open to you. But the problem is we want other things than the promises.

We want a comfortable life. We want to be able to minister. We want all sorts of things.

God has other plans, higher plans, greater plans to make you conform to the image of his son. And then to use you as a treasure, as a focal point, as an illustration of just how good he is. To take you throughout all of eternity and lavish upon you greater and greater demonstrations of his goodness.

He has such plans for you. You have such meager, pitiful plans for yourself. Young men, find those promises.

Get down on your knees until you've availed yourself of them. Take them one at a time. Wrestle with them.

Cry out to God. God, you said if I seek you, I'll find you. You said that.

I seek you. I seek you. And persevere, wrestle with a holy boldness.

Such timid men. Such timid men. And how easy we forget, those of us who know.

About three weeks ago, I'd been wrestling with something for many, many years. Just not seeming to make much progress in that area of my life. Then one night, about one in the morning, woke up.

And you know what? Older men, listen to me. You really don't need to learn anything else. What you need to do is remember what you've forgotten.

And it was like, get up. And go out. And struggle.

And scream. And cry out to the Lord until he gives you victory over this thing. Next morning, a young man that I wanted to help, he said, Brother Paul, you're looking kind of bad this morning.

You didn't get much sleep last night. And I said, in the words of Keith Green, One sleepless night of anguished prayer, I triumphed over sin. One battle in God's holy war, he promised me to win.

There's so many things that pick at you. Like those Canaanites in the land. Drive them out.

Take God's promises and drive them out. Brother Paul, I have this one sin I can't overcome. Then fast and pray.

And drive it out. Grab a hold of grace. Avail yourself of promises.

Be sick of the thing. The problem is, at first you're sick of the thing. And then you begin to be able to live with the thing.

And then the thing becomes a part of your life. Young men, warriors and radical Christians aren't those who listen to contemporary music and wear t-shirts with verses on the back. And it's not necessarily those who hit the streets going door to door.

You give me one man who'll take the promises of God and fight through them on his knees in the darkness when no one else is around. And everything else will fall in place. There is nothing, there is absolutely nothing in your life that cannot be overcome through wrestling in prayer and believing and availing yourself of the promises of God.

Let's pray. Father, I come before you and ask you, Lord, you are a good God. You are a very good God.

And you have given us mighty promises. And you've given us your spirit. Oh, Lord, help us to take possession of the land.

To drive out those Canaanite sins and idols. Take possession of the land. To fight the good fight of faith.

To lay hold of that for which we have been laid hold of. To be conformed to the image of Christ. And never be content but with a holy ambition to pursue your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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