

In Chains, Yet Free

by Richard Wurmbbrand

The sermon emphasizes the importance of little men and the value of their contributions to the kingdom of God, even in difficult circumstances.

Duration: 46:15

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 26:6

Topics: "Prison"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story of visiting a Christian family who had experienced poverty and rejection. The children in the family had made a pact not to tell their mother when they were hungry because she had nothing to give them. The speaker emphasizes that even in times of poverty and rejection, one can still make beautiful melodies for the Lord. He encourages listeners to see their own smallness and lack as an opportunity to praise God and make a great impact. The sermon also includes a story of a wealthy man who prioritizes material possessions over giving time and resources to God.

Transcript

I wish to read from a text about which I am sure you have never heard a sermon yet. First Chronicles, chapter 26. First Chronicles, chapter 26.

Concerning the divisions of the porters. Now that is an old English expression. What is meant here are the doorkeepers or the janitors of the temple.

Concerning the divisions of the janitors of the Korhide was Meshelemiah, the son of Koreh, of the sons of Esau. And the sons of Meshelemiah were Zechariah the firstborn, Jedaiel the second, Zebediah the third, Japhniel the fourth, Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elohimel the seventh. Moreover, the sons of Obed-Edom were Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehoshabat the second, Joah the third, and Sekar the fourth, and Nathaniel the fifth, Amiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peuthai the eighth, for God blessed him.

Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born that ruled throughout the house of their father, for they were mighty men of valor. The Bible is the only book of history. I have studied much history.

American history, English history, Russian history, Turkish history. The Bible is the only book of history which tells us not only the names of kings, not only the names of generals, not only the names of high priests, but also the names of doorkeepers and janitors. You go to some churches, and in the pastor's

office there would be pictures or photographs of all the pastors who have ever served in this church, sometimes in all churches, all hundred years, you would see many pictures of so many pastors who have served.

And they ask, but who have been the janitors in this church? The pictures of the janitors are not kept. The Bible is the book of the little man. God loves the little man.

The proof is that he has made so many of them. He has made very few big men. He has made mostly common men, little men like me and you.

These are the men whom he loves and of whom he takes care. And there are so many persons in the Bible whose names are not even given, but they are mentioned by God. A little lad who brought bread and fish to Jesus has done a very little thing.

Servants are mentioned there who filled the jars with water at Cana. Nobody is forgotten before God. Jesus says that about the sparrows.

You sell them for nothing in America. Nobody would buy them, but they, in Palestine, ate sparrows. But every sparrow is known by God.

Men suffer very much because of feeling unimportant. Nobody cares about them. My husband has no time for me.

My children have forgotten about me. I remember I spoke with a lady. She has children and it was Mother's Day.

And the next day she told me nobody remembered that it was Mother's Day. Nobody said to me a good word. Nobody gave me a flower.

And so many of us feel neglected, forgotten. In the end, I'm only a janitor or not even this. And there is one who has a special love for janitors.

There is a special love for those forgotten, for the little men. I have been many times in Asia, in Japan, in Korea, in Hong Kong. Here there exists jamming of cars.

There are too many cars and they can't pass. You say jamming. No, the roads are jammed.

In Hong Kong they don't have cars. Men jam the streets. There are so many millions of them.

And they have no place to walk on these narrow streets. And they live seemingly such unimportant lives. They are born, they grow up, they work somewhere in a factory for nothing at all, or in a shop, and they die.

And they feel very much that they are something unimportant in this world. And there is one who knows every one of them and remembers them. And I wish to speak to you about a category of men, who not that they were unimportant, but out of love to Christ they became unimportant.

They reduced themselves, they humiliated themselves, they became the last of men, disconsidered by everybody just because they loved Christ. In prison everything has been taken away from us, even our names. We were put everyone alone in a cell, 30 feet beneath the earth.

During years we have never seen sun, moon, snow, flowers, stars, rain. I had forgotten that these existed. 14 years I've never seen a bible, nor any other book.

Never a bit of paper, never a pencil. 14 years I've never seen a lady. 14 years I've never seen a child.

14 years I've never seen a color. And when I say I, 14, Khrapov is 26, and Mershov is 43 years. Thousands were in this situation.

Not only that I did not see a lady, I did not see a child. We never saw a color. We always saw only the gray walls of the cell and our gray uniforms.

I had forgotten that blue and green and yellow and violet exist. My world was gray. We had only numbers.

We were not allowed to tell even our guards what our name is. The communists feared that at a glass of wine with a friend, the guard might betray the big secret who is in prison. So we were given numbers.

In these solitary cells we never heard a whisper. The cells were soundproof. We never heard a voice.

I never heard a word during here. There I learned the sense of what our Lord Jesus Christ said to John the evangelist, I am the alpha and the omega. The alpha and the omega are the first and the last letters of the of the Greek alphabet.

Now Jesus is Jewish. John the evangelist was Jewish too. By the way, I am Jewish too.

And I can't imagine that Jesus will have spoken with John in Greek. He must have spoken in Hebrew with him. And in Hebrew he could not have said, I am the alpha and the omega.

That is a translation. He will have said the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. He will have said, I am the aleph.

And now look well to my lips and you will see how the aleph, the first letter of the alphabet, is pronounced in Hebrew. You open your mouth and then you think it over. Silence is better.

And you close your lips without having said a thing. That is the aleph. That is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

And the Hebrews have another letter in the alphabet, the I. Now you open your lips really big. And in the last second, silence is still better. And you close again the lips without having said a word.

That is the I. And Jesus will have said to John, I am the silence and the even bigger silence. It's so good to be silent, to have silence around you. If people would practice silence, there would be no divorces.

How in the world can you divorce? There would be no quarrels in a church. Friends would not get up one against the other. Children would never produce sadness to their parents if silence would be practiced.

And we had this silence in prison. The first years we were in solitary confinement. Then they put us in common cells with criminals, with robbers, with thieves, and so on.

Now we became something very unimportant. Nobody cared about us. If the guards wished to have a sport, they opened forcibly your mouth, they spat in your mouth, they urinated in your mouth.

We were terribly hungry. When I said in America about the hunger in communist prisons, some Americans replied, I can't relate to this. I don't know what hunger is.

What do you mean by hunger? I said fast three days and you will know what hunger is. We were terribly hungry. And it is good for you to know.

You have come from a breakfast, you go to lunch, then you will have a snack, then you will have a dinner. You have thousands of brethren now in communist prisons who don't eat. A slug from the trees was eaten in prison.

It was a dainty to be able to kill a dog or a cat or some crows and to cook them. But if you were discovered that you have killed a dog of the guards, a prison dog, you were shot for this. But people were so terribly hungry that they had to eat this.

My wife has been in prison too at the same time as I was in prison, but in another jail. I have not seen her 14 years. She worked as a slave laborer.

They were taken to the place where they worked. And on their way, they saw the corpse of a dog. And a woman smashed the head of the dog with a stone.

And the other women jumped to lick the brain of that dog. So big was the hunger after protein. Your brethren hunger, your sisters hunger.

And what is even more dramatic, the children of Christian martyrs hunger. There are at this moment thousands of Christians in prison in Vietnam, in China, in Russia, in Romania, in the African communist countries, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, in Cuba. In Cuba, Brother Valladares and Brother Gomez and Brother Nobel are in jail already since 20 years.

And their children hunger terribly. You try to make them to laugh. Sometimes brethren would come and would keep and would roll on the floor for them to make them laugh a little bit.

But these are children who have forgotten laughing. There exists the hunger of the children of martyrs. And the hunger of martyrs in prison nights, you saw them how during their dreams they would chew, even during their dreams.

As often as I see an American chewing chewing gum, sometimes they chew it even in church. And I remember those there who chew, they chew because they are hungry. There exists this deep suffering.

There exists worse than that. At a certain moment in Romanian prisons, you were not obliged anymore to hunger. They compelled you even to eat, to eat plenty, to eat your own faces, your own excrements, your dirt, and to drink urine.

But they would not allow you simply to eat your dirt and to drink urine. They forced a Catholic priest, a friend of mine, who was half mad because of torture, he did not know anymore what he does. They gave him on a Sunday morning a plate with dirt, human dirt, in one hand, and a chalice taken from a church in the other hand full with urine.

And they put him to say the words of the mass over these. And he said the holy words of institution of Jesus, take and eat, take and drink, he said them upon these. Now, there was this deep suffering.

We had become the last of men. We are all here little men. And sometimes we feel badly.

We see the glamorous men on television and all those who count before the world. And I'm just such a little fellow, a little lady, nobody really cares about me. We were lesser than the smallest men.

We were abandoned by everybody. We were abandoned, by the way, I must say it, please don't feel offended, we were abandoned by American Christians too. When we were in communist prisons, we had 50 pound chains at our feet every night.

But every night we prayed for America, for its president, we did not know who the president was, we had no newspapers, no radio. We prayed every night for America's churches, for America's pastors, and for America's children. For some of you, I prayed when you were very small children.

When I came to America, I was very sure that in every church on every Sunday, I would hear a prayer for those with 50 pound chains at their feet in communist prisons. You know yourselves that these prayers don't exist. If I would ask you now, lift your hands, all those who know the name of Muhammad Ali, I imagine that you would all lift your hands, everybody knows Muhammad Ali.

If I would have asked you, please lift your hands, all those who have known before today the name of Mikhail Shov, Mikhail Shov we see, a very, very little man who gives since 43 years his life for Christ in prison. We don't even pray for them, we don't know about them. We were the forgotten man, but I have a word today for the little man, for the little woman.

You can make out of your littleness, of your being small, you can make a very great thing, and that will be the subject of my sermon. I sat in America with a man who told me I make \$200,000 a year. He was a doctor, and he said, Mr. Berman, please understand, I can't give time.

Look here, I have four houses, I have to pay mortgage on four houses. I have a car, my wife has a car, every child has a car, I have to pay for all these cars. I have this and that, and he made me the account on a bit of paper, and really it so came out.

He could not give \$20,000 out of \$200,000. It was really so, and he asked, what can I do? I said, well, there is a simple solution to this, earn less, and it will be possible for you to give time. We were in prison.

We had a time when we got one slice of bread a week. Every Tuesday morning, we would get a slice of bread. Otherwise, we had soup of dirty potato peels and cabbage with unwashed intestines.

Our children, our children, because you stand in line in order to get potatoes or meat you don't find, you stand in line hours, and you bring a few potatoes, and every child gets one potato. And when our children are told that in America, a child can have two potatoes, they don't believe it. They say, does it exist really a country in which a child can get two potatoes? And we had a time when we had one slice of bread a week.

In that time, I did not know one single Christian who did not give time. Every 10th week, Christians would renounce to the slice of bread and give it to somebody who was older or weaker or was sick. But to tell the truth, I don't remember even one who should have given only time.

Usually they would renounce to this piece of bread, not every 10th week, but every 5th week, every 3rd week, every 2nd week, they would renounce. And lives of weak and old Christians were saved in this manner. When I was in prison, I was, I bring you into another world, a world of another kind of Christianity,

where Christianity means very great renunciation.

You have come to church, healthy and happy, and are sure you will leave this church healthy and happy and will drive home. In my country, in Russia, you know, you go to the underground church to a service. If you come home, you don't know anymore, because the police might break up the meeting, might give you a good beating, might put you in prison, and you might die in prison.

You bring your children to Sunday school, but in North Korea, which is communistic, children who were found in a secret Sunday school had their eardrums destroyed with chopsticks and remained dead for life. Would we bring children to Sunday school if we would know that there exists such a risk? And now, when we were in prison, I fell very sick. I had backbone tuberculosis, tuberculosis of both lungs, diabetes, heart failure, jaundice, all kinds of sicknesses all together, and I was in a room for dying ones.

They had a cell, a prison cell, for those who were near to death. I was the only one who went away from that cell on my feet. The others died around me, and a sympathetic guard smuggled in two pieces of sugar.

Now, we have not seen sugar since years. Americans know that sugar is sweet. How do you know that sugar is sweet? Because when you see sugar, you swallow it.

We, when we see sugar, first of all, we admire it. It is beautiful. It is white.

It is glittering. The two pieces of sugar were there, and we all enjoyed looking to the sugar, and we deserve these two pieces of sugar. If somebody fell very, very badly, now he was near to death, we gave him these two pieces of sugar that he should strengthen himself a little bit, but he did not take them because he thought my brother might feel worse tomorrow, and that one did not take them, thinking my other brother might feel worse tomorrow, and during two years, these two pieces of sugar circled around in this cell, and nobody took them.

Then, after two years, I was moved from that cell. I don't know what has happened further with these two pieces of sugar. I believe that in the end, they will have brought into that cell a very, very good Christian who will have made the sacrifice to eat them.

Every story has to finish one, so I hope one good Christian will have eaten them, otherwise they would have circled around endlessly. Of being little, of being despised, of being poor, of being forsaken, we must not be despaired. Out of this, we can create beauty, the beauty of renunciation, the beauty of bearing a heavy cross for Christ with love, with gladness.

I must say that I've heard more songs to Christ in communist prison cells than in houses of very well-to-do Americans. I remember when I came to America first, I was in the first church, and they sang, oh, I had a thousand tongues to sing of my Redeemer's praise. I liked the song, and then the choir director, hearing that I'm from prison and so on, he invited me to his home.

He gave me a very good dinner. After the dinner, I said, please take out your hymn books. Let us sing a couple of hymns with the children.

He said, I'm sorry, I have no hymns in my home. I said, then why did you lie this morning? He, what? Well, you lied this morning. You said that you wish to have a thousand tongues to sing of your Redeemer's praise.

If you sing only once a week, from eleven to twelve, one tongue is more than enough. You don't need a thousand tongues. We sang in communist prisons.

We had chains at our hands and at our feet. Now, chains must not be a motive of sadness. Chains must not be a motive of despair.

Look what I have arrived to be, like a robber, like a murderer in chains. Chains can be changed in musical instruments, and we sang, onward Christian soldiers, cling clang, cling clang, marching as to war, cling clang, cling clang. You are a little man, unimportant in the eyes of men, perhaps despised in your own family, disconsidered, put aside, rejected.

Out of this rejection, out of this not having, out of this being poor, out of this being downtrodden, you can make a new melody praising your Lord. And that is what I wish to tell you. I have not come to complain about what we suffered there, but to bring you a riches which we have discovered there, that out of poverty, out of being rejected, you can make beautiful melodies for your Lord.

I remember I was in the house of a Christian. I had been freed from prison, and this brother had remained in prison. I went to visit his home.

There was a wife with some five small children. And when I left, the older boy, perhaps 12, came with me and said, brother, I will tell you something, a secret. We have spoken with each other, all the children.

We should never tell mommy that we are hungry, because we have observed that if we tell her we are hungry, she begins to weep. She has nothing for us. So we have spoken with each other.

We have convened. We will never tell mother that we are hungry. When she asks us, are you hungry, we say, we are just all right.

We wish to play that mother should not weep. Our children make sometimes mother weep, not because they are hungry, but because they need, I don't know what fancy they could go also without. You can be a child, a poor child, and not have even a piece of bread, and be a hero of faith under these conditions.

You must not be a high priest in order to be written down in the Bible. You can be a janitor and be written down. If you are a good janitor, there is here a list of high priests you will see.

And about none of them it is written that he was a man of high valor. But here is the list of janitors, and then in the end they were mighty men of valor. They cleansed the floor of the temple well.

They rubbed the floor well. Everything, they opened the windows in time that it should be aired. Everything was all right.

And the Bible says the janitor was a man of mighty valor. And now, so don't despair if you are a little man. There is a great place for little men in the word of God, and in the temple of God.

Jesus was the only being, the only being who has lived on earth, who could choose where to be born, and what kind of life to lead. I did not choose to be born in a poor family, in a Jewish family in Romania. You did not choose to be born in America, perhaps in a rich family.

You happen to be born where you have been born. He was the only one who could choose. And he chose to be born in a stable, in an oppressed nation, to lead a whole life of poverty and of sorrow, and to show

what beauties you can produce, and how useful you can be even in the most, in the lowest class, even in the worst conditions.

Being himself poor, he enriched millions. Not having a place where to be born, not having where to lay his head, dying on a cross, he gave salvation to mankind. And let none of us feel that he is a little man of no value, no importance.

Nobody pays attention to him. There is one who pays attention. Our Lord, he loves even the sparrows, and he loves the janitors, and everyone is important in his eyes.

He has chosen a poor soul as his bride, and he takes you in his caresses, he gives you his kisses. Sometimes it was the adverse circumstances were so bad in these prison cells, but then at a certain moment, the walls of the cell began to shine like a diamond. There was light in the darkness.

There was such a warmth. The bridegroom was there. You felt the nearness of Christ.

You felt the nearness of his holy angels, and you received his embraces, his caresses, his kisses, and you would not have changed with an American millionaire, unless the American millionaire was also a child of God, then you could have a caress of Christ even in his nice home. There exists this beauty which Christ can give you in suffering and in difficult circumstances. There exists a story about Jesus when he was a child.

Joseph loved him very much, and as often as he went into town, he usually brought him a candy, an apple, a toy, or something. And the child was so used to it that as often as Joseph went into town, he would sit at the window and wait for his return, and when he returned, he would run before him and ask, what did you bring me? And then he would get a little thing. One day, Joseph, a poor man, probably they've not paid him for his work, has had big trouble, he came home, and when Jesus asked him, what have you brought me? He let down his arms and said, this time I brought you nothing.

And the story goes that Jesus began to weep bitterly. Attracted by this weeping, Virgin Mary came out of the house and asked, what is happening here? So Joseph explained, I've come, I've brought nothing, and that's why he weeps. But I see tears in your eyes too, Mary said to Joseph.

He said, well, I weep too. Well, why do you weep? Well, he, a child, surely weeps, you have not brought a candy, why do you weep? And Joseph replied, his weeping, the weeping of the child, is of very great significance. It shows us what will happen in heaven.

Jesus will sit at the window of heaven, waiting for every beloved one who comes. And everyone he will ask, did you bring me something from earth? And if you will let down your arms and say, I have come, Jesus, but I brought you nothing, he will weep in eternity, as you see him weeping here. We should think every one of us will meet once with the beloved, we will meet with Jesus.

Let us not come empty-handed to him. And the most beautiful gift we can bring to him is a Christ-like character. That's the most beautiful gift.

He should multiply himself. There was a big Leonardo da Vinci, the renowned painter, he has painted the Last Supper, you remember. Now, who would have known about this Last Supper if there would not have been reproductions of this Last Supper, printing it? The Bible would have been of no use because the evangelists wrote it.

There have been others who transcribed it and translated it and printed it. That is how it arrived to us. And in order that Jesus should be influential upon other souls, he must be reproduced in the characters of real Christians, who should show the world how Jesus is.

And Jesus was a man of sorrows, Jesus was a child in a crib, in a stable, Jesus was a man oppressed, despised, he did not have where to lie down his head, Jesus died on a cross, and there his beauty shone. He went to that Gethsemane singing. On the cross he prayed for those who tortured him.

And if we will take our smallness, our being rejected, our being in an unhappy marriage, or in unhappy relations with children, or in bad neighborhood, or sick, or laid off without income, or I don't know what kind of things happen in this life, if we will take them in the spirit in which Jesus took it, then when we will come to heaven, we will bring to him the biggest gift of all, Christlikeness. When he will come, when he will appear, we will be like him. Now let us start already.

When I knew that I will come to America, I started to learn English, and I've arrived, as you see, to speak a perfect English. If I wish to arrive to heaven, then this should be my preparation already now. A Christlike life, he has chosen a life of bearing a heavy cross, of bearing suffering, and shining in the suffering.

And that is what we have to learn from these, our persecuted brethren in communist countries. The Bible bows its head before the little man, before the janitor. Once there was a big fire in a forest, and a little bird saw the fire.

Then she flew to a river far away, and took in her beak, two or three drops of water, flew to the fire, and dropped this water. Then she flew back again with the water, flew back again with the water, and then exhausted, she fell in the fire. She did not quench the fire, but she lighted a fire of love, an example that she gave her life in order to quench a fire.

We could not quench the fire of communism, but a flame of love burns from communist countries, and as our brethren have told you, they go very often to smuggle Bibles into communist countries. They are not honest men, they are smugglers. All these are smugglers, not one of them is an honest man.

And they go to these communist countries, and everyone who comes from there says the same story, we meant to encourage them, but we have come back encouraged by them. When I came to America, I heard for the first time in my life the word revival. I've never heard this word before.

We don't have this notion of revival, we don't have it. I have been born 72 years ago, I've never been revived, I just live. I've been born, and I live.

And I've been born again 45 years, I've never felt any need of revival, I just live. If I've been born again, I live. Here in America, I found the habit that Christians fall asleep, they snore, then at 23rd, Billy Graham comes! Then everybody gets a life, and everybody sings, and they win souls, and they do, and then poor Billy Graham has to go to so many places.

He leaves, and then everybody falls asleep again, until somebody else comes again. We don't have this notion of revival in our country. And I believe that you can learn from these, our brethren, a more constant type of Christianity.

When I came here, and I told the story of those who give away their piece of sugar, who give away their one slice of bread, and who give away their lives for Christ, so many have been killed, and so many

tortures have been endured, that sometimes after the service somebody comes and says, I feel really so ashamed, I'm a poor kind of a Christian, I'm a backslidden Christian, what should I do? I say, shout hallelujah! Well, how can you shout hallelujah about being a backslidden Christian? I said, you surely can shout hallelujah about being a backslidden Christian, because if you are a backslidden Christian, that is a very good proof that you are a Christian. Only a Christian can be backslidden. Only a Christian can be a poor Christian.

Only a Christian can be a bad Christian. And instead of saying, I'm sad because I'm a bad Christian, you can say, I'm because bad, but I'm a Christian. Backslidden, but I'm a Christian.

I saw once two dogs standing near each other. One was a Bernardine. Bernardine, you call them, these big dogs.

St. Bernard dogs, no? A big dog. And another one was a Cuddle, a Pekingese, such a little dog which you can put in your pocket. And the big dog said to the small dog, what, you also dare to say you are a dog? Now, Cuddle did not have much courage.

He said, well, I acknowledge I'm not a big dog like you, but neither can you say that I'm a cat. I'm still a dog, even if I'm a small dog. And a backslidden Christian is a Christian.

A poor Christian is a Christian. A Christian who has fallen in big sin is a Christian. He's also a Christian.

And there is a spark in you. Never feel I am the smallest. You look here, there are so many saints around me, and I am the smallest.

I am just forgotten. I am rejected. I might have been expelled even from the church for gross sins or so on.

And there remains something I wish to tell you. Just this is what happened in Romania. There is a province, Bessarabia, now the Soviets have stolen it from us.

And when the Soviet army came into that province, they took, in a village, they took out all the Christians, some 200, and ordered them to dig their graves to be shot for being Christians. Now, it takes a time to dig graves for 200 people. It takes quite a time.

So it lasted a few hours, they dug their graves. And when it was finished, the captain who led the execution said, now who renounces Christ can go home immediately. Who not, will be shot, you have 10 minutes time to think it over.

Some decided to remain on the side of Christ. Some renounced to save their life. They believed they saved it.

They lost it. Some went home. And while those went home, a man came running from the village who had been expelled from church for gross sins.

And he came running from far and shouted, shoot me too, shoot me too. I am a bad Christian, but a bad Christian is also a Christian. And a bad Christian has also the right to die for Christ.

You bad Christians, who could not keep pure sexuality. You bad Christians who have committed adultery. You bad Christians who have stolen.

You bad Christians who have lied. You bad Christians who drink. You bad Christians who quarrel.

You can also die for Christ. That is a right which every Christian has. And you can learn from these heroes of faith.

I have seen so many dying near us. They died. And their last words were, beloved Jesus, I don't know what sins they have committed during their Christian life.

They were men. They were human. And they might have committed sins.

But when it came to the last, to renounce Christ, they could have renounced. In Red China, Christian ladies are on the wrist. They have their hands tied behind their back.

They can't defend themselves. And the snakes are slipped into their underwear. They have snakes creeping upon their bodies, upon their thighs, upon their breasts.

Try just only to imagine what this means. And they could escape the snakes if they would say three words. I renounce Christ.

So much. It takes three words. And these are sisters.

What kind of sisters have they been? Backslidden sometimes. Weak Christians. They might have fallen into one sin or the other.

But they would not say these three words to destroy a soul. I deny Christ. And they die under tortures for Christ.

That is the privilege of every Christian. Of a weak Christian and of a strong Christian. Of a backslidden or of a forward going Christian.

And you have in the Church of God, there exists such Christians today, tens of thousands who suffer. The Christian should never be despaired, neither about other circumstances, nor about things which have happened inwardly. A Christian has a mighty bulwark, as we have sung.

We have a mighty Savior who can bring us out from any situation. And who can make our lives to be beautiful if chains have been changed in musical instruments. The fact that you are battered by your husband, betrayed by your spouse, forsaken by your children.

Everything can become a new occasion to praise the Lord. There exists the possibility to lead the Christian life on a heroic level. Jesus himself loved to the uttermost in Gethsemane on the cross.

He continued to love while crucified. There he prayed. And we can be Christ-like Christians.

It is ugly to be a lukewarm Christian, to be a shallow Christian. We have a big Savior. Let us learn from him to lead holy and pure lives.

I am sorry that I am not a great preacher myself. For 14 years I have never seen a Bible. Now what kind of preacher can somebody be who has never seen a Bible? When I came out from prison, I did not know about the Bible as much as my granddaughter knows.

I knew nothing anymore because they doped us with drugs which would destroy our minds. I had forgotten everything. I had forgotten our father in prison.

Not a preacher, but I had forgotten our father. So imagine I preach with very many handicaps. My English is also poor and so on.

I am not a big preacher, but I tell you about men who, being small and rejected, have shown greatness, have shown how you can be superb. Rejected and a man of nothing, you can become superb. Because if you add to the zero the one, if you put before the zero the one, then the zero becomes bigger than six, seven, eight, nine.

You become a ten because before the zero there is a one. And communists have reduced us to be zeros. Sometimes Americans are reduced to be zeros, but put the one before the zero and you will be able to shine the kingdom of God.

Now these are the big words which I could tell you. Now you reason yourself. I don't like it to make emotional appeals.

Reason yourself. Would it not be right to lead your Christian life like this on a heroic level? To return if you have been backslidden. If you have been only formally a Christian, you might have been somewhere, a member in a church, but the heart did not burn for Christ as his heart burns for us.

Think it over. And if you feel that a change must be made in your life, if you feel that such a change must be made in your life, I know what you expect now. Usually at the end of the sermons, American preachers say, now every head bowed, every eye closed, nobody looking around.

If you lift your hands or come forward if you decide for Christ. And I asked the American preachers, why must every head be bowed and why must eyes be closed and nobody look around? And she told me they would not come forward if somebody would look at them. Whether they don't wish to come forward, let them remain seated.

If they are not ready, if they are not ready to endure so much that somebody should look at them, how will they endure that snakes should creep upon their bellies and upon their backs? How will they endure to be fed with feces and with urine? How will they endure 43 years of prison for Christ? There exists such a Christianity of wholehearted surrender to him. If somebody does not wish to come to heaven, then let him just quietly go to hell. It's his business.

So I would ask you, please keep your eyes wide open. Nobody should bow his head and please everybody look around. And I will not bargain with you, I will not ask you twice.

If in these conditions anyone says, well my Christianity has been very very poor. It has not been wholehearted passionate love towards the brethren. I regret it.

And today I wish to become a real Christian. That this one word should be fulfilled from Stephania 317. God will rejoice about you singing.

You know there exists such a verse. Can you imagine God sits on his throne and at a certain moment he begins to clap his hands and he's so happy. A man can make God to sing.

We should not make God to groan and to be sad about the manner of Christianity which we have. And if somebody loves God wholeheartedly and decides today to change, but really to change, then it is good for you to underline this by showing this decision of yours and encouraging somebody else to take such a decision. And therefore I ask you all those who take this decision today, I will give you a time to think it over.

Don't do it rationally. It can mean a cross in America too. If you wish to be a cross bearer, a joy for Christ, then lift your hands.

Take your time. Our heavenly father we thank thee for the love which thou has shed upon earth. We thank thee that we could worship thee in a free country, having what to eat, having where to live, being surrounded by our families.

We thank thee for the salvation which thou has given us and which can be preached freely in this country and from here it can be spread all over the world. We thank thee that thou has given us Jesus without whom we would have been blind and lost. Help us now to be real followers of his, following him in words but also in deeds and in a passionate love.

Thou Jesus art the bridegroom of our souls and we cling to thee and we love thee as a bride loves her bridegroom. Our heart goes out to thee. Come Lord Jesus and we remember before thee the souls of brides who pass through suffering, the many thousands who are in prisons, in psychiatric asylums, beaten, tortured today, the many who are deprived of their beloved ones, the many who are hungry, the many who pass through great sorrows.

Thou Jesus has been himself a man of sorrows acquainted with grief and not one is forgotten before thee, not even a sparrow, the less so the saints of God, strength in every one of them. Speed the day when they will be freed and give to us who are in freedom a spirit of solidarity with them. We should feel their bonds as if they would be ours and if they can't work in the church now, let us replace them and make the word to be spread in Russia, in China, Romania and the other communist countries.

Help us to care that these nations might know about thee and that families of Christian martyrs should not hunger. Help us our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Voice of the Martyrs is a non-profit Christian missionary organization committed to serving the persecuted church around the world. A monthly newsletter is freely distributed to all those who desire to learn more of the sufferings of our brothers and sisters and what we can do to help. To receive The Voice of the Martyrs publication, a complete list of books and tapes, or additional information on the worldwide activities of our mission, please write to The Voice of the Martyrs at Post Office Box 443 Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74005.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9062.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-wurmbrand/in-chains-yet-free/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net