

# Of Him and Through Him and for Him

by Roy Hession

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*The sermon emphasizes the believer's identity as a branch in Christ, highlighting dependence on Him for all aspects of life and service.*

**Duration:** 47:48

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 11:36, Colossians 1:16

**Topics:** "Jesus Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the wisdom and knowledge of God and praises His unsearchable judgments and ways. The focus then shifts to the believer's relationship with Jesus, which is compared to branches connected to a vine. The speaker emphasizes the importance of repentance and righteousness, using the example of Nebuchadnezzar's pride and downfall. The sermon concludes with the reminder that all things are from, through, and for God, and that our testimonies should highlight the work of grace in our lives rather than our own accomplishments.

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## Transcript

I want you, if you will, to turn to the last few verses of Romans, chapter eleven, the epistle to the Romans, chapter eleven, verse thirty-three, it's a little exclamation which he somehow cannot resist exclaiming at this particular point in his argument. He's finished a little bit of a theme, but he's got to give a spontaneous and poetic expression of thanks to God about what he's been seeing and sharing. It's a doxology.

We sing doxologies, expressions of praise to God. It's interesting to note there are five doxologies to be found scattered through Paul's letters. And in the book of Revelation there are at least four.

And I guess there are others, of course, in the Old Testament too. Quite a nice study for your Bible study circle. The doxologies in Paul's letters, hunt them out, see if you can spot them, I've got them listed as five.

And there are four very wonderful progressive ones in the book of Revelation. And here is this little doxology from Paul, he can't resist expressing it, O the depth, both of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? In that verse he's quoting from Isaiah 40. Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompense unto him again? There he's quoting from Job 41.

For of him, and through him, and to him, I presume that means for him, are all things. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Paul in this chapter has been surveying the way in which God has been overruling human history.

He says that God's overruled the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, that that Gospel might be sent to the Gentiles. And then he tells us that their acceptance of the Gospel is going to be overruled ultimately for that Gospel to come back to the Jew, and so all Israel one day will be saved. And as he surveys the wonderful way in which God has been overruling history to the proclamation of the Gospel and the working out of his purposes, he breaks into praise, O the depth, both of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.

And then he adds at the close of that little section, verse 36, words which I want especially to underline for you this evening. For of him, and through him, and for him are all things. To whom be glory for ever and ever.

Now those words can be applied to a number of things, but they certainly can be applied to our relationship to the Lord Jesus. The believer's relationship to Jesus is given in the New Testament under a number of different figures, chief of which is that figure which Jesus himself presented in John 15. And there Jesus says that our relationship to him is to be that of branches to a vine.

He says, I am the vine, you, your branches, join to me. The believer is not seen as one who is merely following Christ, not merely as one who is imitating Christ, but one who is joined to Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one's spirit.

Joined to him as much as the branch is joined to the vine and is a part of it. As the lovely Gospel hymn says, just as the branch is to the vine, I am joined to Christ, I know he's mine. And joined to Christ, that branch shares and partakes of the sap of the vine in itself.

And it is the sap of the vine in the branch that is responsible for the production of grapes in their season. And as I am joined to Christ, I am made a partaker of the root and fatness of Jesus. I am made a partaker of his life.

And that sap of his spirit, his own life, is in me. And all of that for the one purpose that the branch should bear forth fruit. Not for itself, but for others.

Jesus is for others, others, others is his longing. But he can't produce fruit for them save on branches which are joined to him, which is ourselves. And so it is, inasmuch as the fruit that others receive, the blessing and help that others get through us, is the result of his sap in us.

We do not produce the fruit, we simply bear the fruit which the vine produces. And when you become a Christian, I want to tell you what your lifelong learning is going to be. Absolutely, this is it.

You are going to spend all your days learning to be only a branch in Christ. There's nothing else to it. You don't need to learn your new methods and new know-how techniques for the Christian life or Christian service.

All you need to be is rightly related to Jesus, and the relationship you are to sustain to him is that of being only a branch joined to Christ. And that's going to be your lifelong study, how it's to be, how it's to be worked up. I say only a branch because naturally we all find ourselves trying to be the vine.

I mean it's a big thing to be a Christian. And you've forgotten or still need to learn that he's the vine. He has the responsibility, you've got to learn to be not the vine, and to spot when you are trying to be, pushing everybody else around, taking the burden on yourself, getting all steamed up.

But only a branch, I'm not the vine, he's the vine, I'm not responsible, he is. Oh, I've got to learn how it works out to be only a vine, a branch in the vine. But I've got to learn to be nothing less than a branch.

I was looking today at that little incident in the life of Joseph when he was put in prison, and he found those two other prisoners there, and they had been dreaming. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, wherefore look ye so sad today? And they said unto him, we have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. Joseph said unto them, do not interpretations belong to God, he's the vine.

Tell me then, I pray you, for I'm the branch in that vine. Isn't that beautiful? He knew he wasn't the vine, but he did know he was a branch in that vine. Do not interpretations belong to God, he's the vine.

But I happen to be a branch in him, therefore tell me what's bothering you. And we've got to learn the many-sided things of this whole thing of being a branch in Christ. Only a branch, but not less than a branch.

This is the whole of the Christian life, and your Christian life begins by you, a wild branch being granted into Christ, and thereafter you've got to learn, I've got to learn, I am learning, what it means to be a branch in Christ. And this verse that I have quoted to you from Romans 11 has something to teach us. It shows us something more of what it means to be a branch in Christ from the point of view of the branch.

How does the branch see Jesus? Here it is. of him, for the branch, the vine, is to be the initiator of everything. Jesus, frankly, doesn't need you to counsel him or tell him what to do.

It says that in verse 34, Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? But you know you can play the part of the counsellor of deity. I somehow don't know what to make of my prayers. Sometimes they sound almost blasphemy.

For in praying for this, that and the other, I am so often telling God what he ought to do. Well, I say, Lord, I'm terribly sorry if I'm making that terrible mistake, it could well be, but all I'm going to say, Lord, is you've asked me to ask. Did you know he had? Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name, ask and I receive.

And if I'm putting it all wrong, I'm making it sound blasphemous, I'm sorry, but I'm going to do what you told me. I'm going to ask, because you've asked me to ask. But something of that other attitude can come in.

You're not really asking with empty hands, you're telling him what you want him to do. It's your scheme, it's your plan, you know perfectly well what you ought to be doing. And we're trying to be his counsellor of him.

And for the branch, the whole of his life, his affairs, his Christian service, it will be of him. He's to be the initiator, he's to take the first step. It's no part of the branch to dream up its bright ideas and tell God what it wants and ask God to implement what it has decided, either in the secular part of our lives or in the more specifically sacred part.

All is sacred in the case of the Christian, but you know what I mean. There is a sort of difference between sacred and secular, whichever it is. Everything that concerns us, we have branches in him and it's of him,

not of us.

Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? I'm sorry, I have sometimes. But I'm learning. Of him.

It's to be everything that's going to happen and be conceived in one's life and service if I'm to be in the right position of a branch in Christ. But not only that, it's not only of him, it's to be through him. It's not going to be by our life power or strength, it's going to be through him.

Not only of him, he's not going to be the only initiator. But having initiated the plan, he's going to carry them through. It's not going to be left to the striving or the strength of the branch.

Listen friend, your goodness, such as it may be, and your strong points, such as they are, aren't going to be any help at all. And your failures, your weaknesses, needn't be any hindrance at all, if they're honestly acknowledged. What's going to be done in our lives is not going to be helped by our goodness, nor hindered by our badness.

It's going to be by someone else altogether. This is the whole business of being a branch in Christ. Some of the most fruitful branches are the smallest and the most niled.

Indeed, you know, the one thing that can stop a branch being fruitful is getting too big. And each year they have to be cut back and pruned, until there seems the precious little of them left. That's the only way in which something's going to happen.

It's not going to be the strength or weakness of the branch, it's not going to come either way, of him, through him, are all things. Look at the verse that precedes this. It's a tremendous verse, it's quoted from Job.

For who hath given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? Who has ever succeeded in putting God in our debt? And that's what works, always is trying to do. If I feel if I can pray more, as Chuck has been saying, or do more, or be more consecrated, that will cause more blessing to come. It means that I am hoping, by means of doing this and doing the other, to put God in my debt so that he owes me revival, he owes me the fullness of the Spirit, he owes me all sorts of things.

You are never going to succeed in putting God in your debt, no matter how good you may be. For of him and through him is going to be free favour, undeserved grace. And in learning to be a branch, you've got to learn to cease from your own works, to let him do what only he can do.

For of him and through him and for him are all things. The glory of what he has thought up and initiated, and by whose power this thing has taken place, is going to be his. All things we read in Colossians 1.16 were created through him and for him.

The whole of creation was simply a birthday present to Jesus, for him. Not for the glory of the branch, oh how it likes to be noticed. I catch myself out in it, I praise him for the law of the way in which he used a message in a certain place, oh he gets the glory I hope, but I hope they realise it was my message.

I want to be seen, be known, be heard, I'm being untrue to my position as a branch in Christ. For a branch sees it, not only of him, not only through him, but for him are all things. And so it is very often, his greatest things follow our greatest failures, because then we are under no illusion that we've done it, it's him alone.

Isn't there a story going round about a bird that was pecking at a tree, and suddenly there was a great flash of lightning and the tree was knocked down, he said, I didn't think I could do that, there's some story, I'm not telling it right, I guess Danny here he's got it up his sleeve, but you know, he gets the glory. Now, these things are best understood as ever by contrasting them with their opposites. And you know, I've got a most extraordinarily beautiful illustration of the opposite of Romans 11.36, and I quote it not merely that you might see it, but that you might understand Romans 11.36 better by its contrast, and the contrast is found in Daniel chapter 4, verse 30.

Oh, what a book this book of Daniel is. The historical parts are wonderful, as also the prophetic dreams. But at this point, Nebuchadnezzar has had that dream of a great tree under which all beasts of the earth took shelter, and in which he heard a watcher and a holy one come down from heaven and cry aloud saying, hew down the tree, cut off its branches, shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit, let the beasts get away from under it and the fowls from its branches.

And nobody could interpret this dream until Daniel came in, and he begins to interpret the dream, and he tells Nebuchadnezzar, you of the tree, none greater than you, oh Nebuchadnezzar, under your shelter, under your shadow, all nations have taken shelter. And inasmuch as you saw that tree cut down, it was a warning from God, that because of the pride of your heart, unless you humble yourself and repent, you too will be cut down. And he says in verse 7, wherefore, oh king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, break off thy sins by righteousness, get things straight, start putting things right.

And thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, his was an oppressive regime, and because of this dream, Daniel took the opportunity to warn him to get right with God, and do it now, that there may be a lengthening of thy tranquility. But somehow it never registered very much with Nebuchadnezzar. And it wasn't too long after this, in verse 28, all this came upon Nebuchadnezzar at the end of twelve months.

He walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? You got it? Is not this great Babylon that I have built of me? I thought it up, I instructed the architect, I looked over his shoulder when he was drawing up the plans, it's I built this great Babylon, just look at it, great Babylon that I have built of me. And how did he build it? By the might of my power, my resources.

This scintillating city, not only was it of me, said Babylon, but I like you to know, it was through me. And what else? It was done not only by the might of my power, but for the honour of my majesty. Of him, through him, and for him, was that building.

And that's the opposite. That's the way the unregenerate man is. Some of us might indeed be unregenerated, here still.

And that's the way in which even the one who has been regenerated may in varying degrees act of me, great Babylon that I have built, through me, by the might of my power. I was gifted, I really had something. Look how things are going in my Bible cloth, or in my church, or in my life, in my job.

Of me! I dreamed it up, it has been my idea, I had some wonderful schemes, we did this, we did the other, and we implemented my schemes, by the might of my hand. And of course, what's of me? And what is through me, obviously is going to be for me, for my glory, for my gratification, that I shall be seen and known and heard. This is the principle of fallen man, and it never works.

It always leads to failure. Of course, in Nebuchadnezzar's case, of me, through me and for me seem to be successful. I want to tell you, there's only one thing worse than the failure of self, is the success of self.

Because my dear friend, he may hasten to say to us, cut it down! Why come with it to the ground? It's far better to prove the failure of self's initiations and efforts and glory, than to taste success that way. It seems to me that here you've got the three forms of the self-life. Of me, self-will, through me, self-effort, for me, self-glory.

I think I could almost group every other conceivable expression of the self-life, and remember the central letter of the little word sin is I. Under one or other of those three, self-will, what I want, my plan, or my pleasure, nobody's looking, nobody will know, why shouldn't I endow, even gross sin is self-will, as well as more respectable things. Self-effort, trying so hard, getting so steamed up because you haven't got what it takes. Oh, I'm in that situation all too often.

I'm striving. You know, that word means something amongst some of us. Sometimes after doing something together, someone says, brother, I think you are striving.

Let thy spirit work among us. Do not strive, but we do. Well, it's up to me.

I mean, it's of me. It's got to be through me. Has it? It doesn't work.

For the me that feels it's got to do it just hasn't got what it takes. In me there dwells no good thing. And then self-glory.

I do hope it's noticed. I do hope it goes well, because it's going to give me gratification. And this can really be our life, our Christian life.

Branch in Christ? We may be positionally, but in practice we aren't living it out, because it's of me, through me, and for me. How can it be otherwise? How can it be the other way around? I believe it's very simple. You've simply got to let God show you each expression of these things as they happen.

And they do happen, and if you don't know they've happened, you can tell it by other people's reactions. They argue with you, they're hurt by you, because you're not the only one who wants it to be of me. The other fellow wants it to be of you.

And two men on the push are bound to knock into one another. Let God show us where these things are and as they happen, and confess them to Jesus, your heavenly vine. And I want to tell you, as you confess the negative, you will be brought in to the positive.

Don't ask, oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord, oh, to be lost in Thee, rather, Lord, I haven't been saved from myself, I'm not lost in Thee, it's me rather than you. Don't pine, don't pray prayers of aspiration, I don't think prayers of aspiration get anywhere. When I hear prayers of aspiration prayed in a service or a prayer meeting, they never touch me, mine don't, and other people's don't either.

Ah, but when I hear a man, instead of praying a prayer of aspiration, praying a prayer of repentance, oh God, I've had a bad day, things haven't been happy in our home, Lord. Do you ever hear people pray like that in your prayer meeting? More the pity if you don't, it ought to be common experience. That we quit prayers of aspiration and start praying prayers of repentance.

And you know what happens? You pray, someone prays like that, you pick up your ears, you know that that man's on the way out of his difficulties, oh Lord, I've been absolutely selfish and irritable, I've been striving and so irritated when things haven't gone my way, hey, there's something happening there, that man's coming out, he's not going to stay like that, grace wouldn't be grace if he did, he's putting himself in the place where he's a candidate for grace. And that marvellous grace revealed in Jesus isn't going to fail when a man's in the place of the sinner. And listen, if it makes you prick up your ears when you hear somebody else praying like that, you can be quite sure God pricks up his ears and the angels do.

Someone's repenting down there, what's that old song, someone's crying, Lord, kumbaya, and sometimes I say someone's repenting, Lord, and they listen, and God listens, and you're going to get his undivided attention. When instead of praying prayers, please turn the cassette over now, do not fast-wind it in either direction, his undivided attention, when instead of praying prayers, asking for the positive, you simply pray prayers repenting of the negative, and you needn't worry, without any asking, you're going to get the positive. God's grace is going to put into you what you confess isn't there, you're going to be forgiven, of course, more than that, you're going to be cleansed, and that by the blood of Jesus, you're going to stand before God on other ground altogether, the ground of the blood, where every deficiency has been anticipated and finished for you by Jesus, and you're going to be brought into the positive.

My own experience is that I found God showing me these things, of course, from day to day as they may happen, but in a more historic sense, I can remember when for the first time he began to deal with me after I was saved, with these various forms of the self-life, and he began with the last, self-glory. I was converted, I was in crusaders, I was going to camps, and I'd been a tent officer at camp, and we tent officers were meant to be caring for the boys in our tent and leading them to the Lord. We had great times in those early days, and I remember at one camp, I saw other tent officers being used by God to lead boys to Jesus in a way that I wasn't.

I didn't want to be jealous, but it happened. I think with regard to jealousy, if you say, oh Lord, may I not be jealous, Jesus has to say, you're too late, you're jealous already. There's one thing you can do, you can admit it, and that brings God on the scene.

But all this jealousy, not that it was all that raging, but it was there, I knew it. I tried to make it lie down, but it wouldn't lie down. And I remember that was the first thing he dealt with me, with regard to the self-life over jealousy.

I want to say, if you haven't begun to see jealousy, you've hardly begun. It's there. Someone says, you know, I'm never jealous, famous last words.

You wait. God will soon engineer a situation when you know you are. Thank God you do.

It was incipient there all the time. And you now have a chance, honestly, to confess it, the negative, and bring that negative to Jesus, where grace will give you the positive. And then at that time, very quickly, I transacted over Galatians 2.20, the I that was jealous had been judged and crucified with Christ, ended, not mended, I accepted that judgment on myself, of the cross.

But then he led me from there to see self-effort. My Christian service, and I was trying to be busy in the Lord's service, I ran a crusader class, used to do a little preaching, it was all me, all me trying. I didn't feel I had a right to call myself a Christian unless I'd won somebody else for the Lord.

I don't think that was right. You're a Christian by grace, whether or not you win anybody for the Lord, but that's how I seemed to reason. And how did I struggle to try and win somebody for the Lord? At the office.

And, of course, at our office, religion was a great subject to have an argument over. But it never went anywhere, and I had to say it was me, my effort, rather than letting the vine do it. I didn't know much about that.

But I did in those days begin to see Christ as the vine. I had to see that not only was my life to be Christ's, but that Christ was to be my life. And I saw him beginning to do things that I'd never seen done before.

The first ones that ever came to the Lord, in which I had any share, I was astonished how little I had to do. It was of him and through him. But I've had to see it again and again.

Roy is striving. My brothers have sometimes said that to me. And then he's gone on with self-will.

I'm astonished at the way in which God is so patient, allowing self to intrude into his holy things. Perhaps the most outstanding thing I can think of along this line, not so long ago, a few years ago, I was in touch with a revival movement in Canada. Great things were happening.

I knew some of the brothers, been in some of the meetings. Why can't we have the same thing over here in England? The spectacular things. Cities being moved.

Things happening so that, well, you had to change your schedule and drop everything to follow on the trail of revival. And a certain brother was coming to England, and I began to feel this, this was it. I helped organize meetings, I sent letters round, I organized some prayer meetings.

And I changed my diary, so that I had my diary entirely free. And I would go round with him to these various places, and my thought was, that when the empire fell, I thought it was going to, I was quite sure it was, I bet I'd ordered it. If he had to go on to the next place, I was available to follow on the trail.

Well of course it never happened. And I didn't see it till afterwards. What made you act like that? Well, revival was coming to England.

I mean, an awakening, not merely personal revival, an awakening. And what made you think it was going to be so? Do you know, I thought it would. It was my idea.

And I saw the whole thing was of me. A very humbling experience. The vine wasn't in it.

It was my idea. And when I get a mental image of what ought to happen, I find myself all the time trying to implement that mental idea. And sometimes, any day I can get it, I can get a mental image of what ought to happen in a meeting.

And from the very beginning, I'm trying to work it to the end that I have in mind. It's of me. Who are you? What right have you to decide these things? For of me, through me, and for me are all things.

Now, if I see it and I come to Jesus, and if I confess it, I'm forgiven. Those very things. And you need to be forgiven every bit, every time the self-life of self-will, self-effort or self-glory comes in.

And he brings you into the positive. Just a word or two on the positive, then, of him. In practical terms, how does it work out? I want to give you a verse that I've lived on.

Pam has heard me pray this prayer, I don't know how many times. The son, John 5, 19, can do nothing of himself, ek, in the Greek, out of himself. That son, that son of God, who could have initiated everything, chose not to do so.

Had he initiated things on earth, he would have been untrue to his position as the son. But the son, as the son, can do nothing of himself of what he sees the father do. And whatsoever he sees the father do, that he does likewise.

And, you know, Jesus didn't initiate a thing. He said, I can't, and still be, true to my position of a son. It's the father who does the initiating.

All I do, I see what the father's doing, and I go and do likewise. He said, that's a pattern for you. He was a branch, he who is the vine was himself a branch in his father as the vine, and we are to be a branch in him.

This son can do nothing out of himself, and still be true to his position as a branch. You are simply to do what you see the father doing, and tag on to his coattails, and do likewise. How do you see the father doing anything? You'll have to learn how to see it, how to recognize it.

I can't give you a cut-and-dried answer how, but you'll learn. A Christian worker will begin to learn where he sees the spirit going. There are a hundred people he could spend time on, but in one family something's happening.

Concentrate on that one. It's a rule of law. Don't reinforce the weak parts of your line, the battle line, but exploit where the breakthrough is, and where you see the father working.

Go there, and that will lead you to something else, and to something else, and you don't know where it will lead to. And so it is with every other part of our lives, of him. And you've got to learn how to know what the father's doing.

And you simply put your feet in his footsteps. You find yourself being led from this one to that one. Wonderful, bright schemes, oh dear, we get working on people where God is not specially preparing hearts.

We'll have to learn of him. And then through him. You know that great text, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord in Zechariah chapter 4? It's a great passage.

Let me read it to you. Zechariah chapter 4, Who art thou, O great mountain, before so rubbable, thou shalt become a plain, and that, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit. They've gone back to their ruined land to rebuild the temple at the command of Cyrus.

But no sooner had they started than they received opposition from surrounding nations, who with power and force came with armies and stopped them. So they had to. And they just concentrated in building their own houses.

But Haggai and Zechariah were sent of God to rebuke that people. Are you building your own houses and the Lord's house lies waste? Oh, we can't. We can't, we've been stopped.

We've been stopped by power and might. And the command was that you go ahead and you begin to build and you'll find that opposing mountain sunk into a plain before you. It'll vanish away as you dare to

go forward and that, not by power, not by might, but by my spirit.

It's going to be not only of me, it is of me that it should be built, it's going to be through me. You've got to move forward. In faith and in defiance of that mountain it'll become a plain.

It's interesting, not by the might of one man or the power of many. We're all the time waiting for one man, a one great preacher, oh, that God will raise up another Whitefield, we say. Or we're waiting for bigger numbers.

God says it's not going to be by one man or by bigger numbers. It's neither here nor there. It's going to be by my spirit.

And what's of him is going to be implemented through him. In every part of our lives, not only our service, in our affairs, with your family life, what's the step? What are you initiating? He'll show you if you've got an honest heart. And you'll find along the line in which he's initiated, he'll do things.

By something other than your own strength, you'll be worried and fearful, but take heart. But I haven't got might or power, you don't need it. For what's going to be done is going to be done through him, by his spirit.

And it's going to be for him. Before Sir Robert Bull thou shalt become a plain, and thou shalt bring forth the topstone of the temple with shoutings of grace, grace unto it. Jesus did it all, all to him I owe.

And my dear friends, let's be careful when we give a testimony, that a little bit of a halo doesn't grow round our heads. Be sure when you give a testimony as to what grace has done, you share some of the battles and the despairs you had before, and some of the failures that nearly made you quit. And then you can extol Jesus, because we'll know it wasn't by might or power on your part, you just told us.

And you'll find everybody praising, not you, but the Lord. And so my dear friends, I'll close with this thought, again I mention it, don't ask for the positive, more this, more the other, more love, more power, confess the negative. The trouble is some of us are going to God's wrong door, you're going to the front door.

When you pray a prayer of aspiration in a sort of the usual sort of way, it's virtually going to the front door, Lord, give me more love, more faith, more confidence. God says, what are you doing at my front door? You know, when you go to a friend to borrow something, you go to his front door, he's a friend. He says, you're a beggar.

Do beggars go to front doors? They go to back doors. You better go to God's back door, you'll get an answer there which you'll never get at the front door. Prayers of aspiration, front door prayer.

I never get very far, but oh, when I beg God and go to the back door, as a beggar, and instead of asking for the positive, I confess the negative, instead of asking for love, I confess I'm really hating that man, because what isn't love is hate. Instead of asking for faith, I confess, Lord, I'm worrying myself stiff, utter sin. When you're on the throne and the devil's on the run, here am I worrying, and you take time at the back door, just telling him what you haven't got.

That's how beggars act. When I went to India years ago, little children, some of them hired by others, came round begging, and they slapped their tummies and said, me no mother, me no father, me no

dinner. They just told me what they hadn't got.

It didn't work too well with my case. I was told not to take it too seriously, but God takes it seriously. Tell him what you haven't got.

Lord, I'm in bad shape. I want to tell you something, Lord. I'm going to speak at this meeting in a few minutes, I want to tell you something plain.

I am not filled with the Spirit. I said that on platforms. I said, I want to tell you, this meeting's nothing to me.

The hymns don't mean anything to me. My Bible is as if it's upside down. Just fine.

What else? Well, I haven't got any love for anybody. Yes. What else? No faith in heaven.

Just come on. They'd all come out. And I'm there at the back door.

And there at the back door is the old rugged cross. There at the back door is the fountain filled with blood. There is Jesus, and he never fails to meet those who come to the back door, not asking for what they haven't got, but repenting and sharing what's, sharing their utter need and wrong, confessing the negative.

And you're brought right in to the banqueting house, to the feast by the power of the blood. At the front door, the blood isn't necessary. You're not wrong.

You just need a little more love, a little more power. But at the back door, this is all your hope and peace. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

If there isn't peace there, there isn't any at all. This is all your righteousness. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

I want to ask you, let's get to that dear, dear back door, maybe well-worn, to the back door, where Jesus is waiting, where beggars come, and beggars get what they have. And you find that where it was, of me, through me and for me, as I come to him with all those things, without any more tremendous teaching or tremendous acts of faith, as I start judging that other thing, it becomes of him, and through him, and for him. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, we want to thank you, you dear, lovely, wonderful vine. What a privilege to be planted into you, and we want to learn how to be branches. How it's to be actually so of thee, through thee and for thee.

Help us to see where it's been of us, and to confess it. And all the trouble it's caused, because self's been at the centre. Help us to see where it's been through us, and we've been struggling so hard with no result.

Oh, help us to confess that to thee. And help us to confess those dark motives, when all the time it was to be for us. And we thank you there's power in thy precious blood to cleanse sin, to wash it away, and bring us into the very opposite.

So shall we find ourselves really and truly branches in thee, who are the one responsible. How we praise thee for this. Interpret these things to us, we pray thee, in thy dear name.

Amen. Turn to chorus number 12.

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