

# O Church Arise!

by Tim Conway

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of serving the Lord with passion and fervor, being diligent in our service to Him, and living a life of obedience to Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:00:40

**Scripture:** Proverbs 10:4, Isaiah 58:8, Mark 16:20, Luke 16:1, Romans 12:11, Colossians 3:23, 2 Timothy 2:15

**Topics:** "Personal Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the urgency of working for the Lord while there is still time. He shares a personal experience of attending his class reunion and realizing how quickly time has passed. He uses the parable of the dishonest manager to illustrate the importance of being faithful and diligent in our service to God. The preacher encourages the congregation to do everything with all their might and to learn from the shrewdness of the people of this world in dealing with their own generation.

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## Transcript

Please turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12 verse 11. One of you brothers that reads from the NAS, would you read that for us? Not lagging behind in diligence.

That's what it says there. My ESV says, Do not be slothful and zeal. Be fervent in spirit.

Serve the Lord. Very similar. Not lagging behind in diligence.

Here's what I want to do. First, I just want to give a little bit of an introduction, introductory statement. Second, I want to seek to explain this verse.

And then third, I want to enforce it by about 13 persuasions. So we need to move quickly. And I need this.

You know, my family and I, we actually didn't come up from Texas to Kirksville. We came from Michigan, where we have been for the last week. It's about the first kind of vacation that I remember in a long, long time.

And my mom rented a house on a lake up there. And they had some kayaks. And one morning I was out on the lake with some of my children, and I was paddling.

And I was thinking about the thief on the cross. And you know, I don't know where you are at. You're all in a different place.

We've got a number of Christians here. We've got perhaps some lost folks here as well. No doubt in a group this size.

And I don't know where you're at right now. I don't know if you're up on the plateau, if your walk with Christ has been sweet these days, whether there's been some battles, whether there's been some trials. Sometimes I find myself in this Christian life, I don't know up from down at times.

And it seems like, at least down there in San Antonio, it seems like the more blessing of the Lord we see, sometimes the more I can't figure anything out. Here we've just spent this week up in Michigan with family, with friends, some I haven't seen for 25 years. Ruby and I trying to be witnesses in the midst of that.

I'm driving away from that. It's brought back so many memories of my lost life and my past. And just afresh in my mind, what is it that Christ has done to me? Where am I at right now? Just trying to size up my life.

Where has it come from? Where is it going to? One of those mornings I'm out there in one of those kayaks on that lake and I'm thinking, I've had a lot of thoughts like this lately. I want to depart and I want to be with the Lord. And it seems like onslaughts of the devil and different trials and people in the church that you would never think turn on you.

The least ones you ever thought in problems, in disciplinary situations. Sometimes I'll be honest, sometimes I want to run away. There I am out there in that kayak and I'm thinking, I'm looking across the lake and there's wind and there's waves.

And I see that house we're staying at. And I'm thinking about that like the Christian life. The fact is, I have to row and I have to row and I have to go against the wind and against the waves and I have to get back there.

But the truth is, that our Christian life is a lot like that. The fact is that God could just with one swift blow of the Spirit have us right there at that haven that we seek. We could be there in a moment.

I think about the thief on the cross. There's so many things we can learn from that man. I'll tell you one thing that it teaches us.

It is not absolutely essential to our Christian life to go through 30 years or 40 years or 50 years of sanctification. That's a reality. Doesn't it ever occur to you, you go through dry times, you go through cold times, you go through the onslaughts of the devil, you go through the trials and the tears and the disappointments in this life, and your own failings and your own weakness.

Doesn't it ever occur to you, Lord, why don't You just take me home? I could worship You perfectly there. I carry around the baggage of this flesh that I have to put off one day. And in it, sin still tries to reign.

And I feel it. Lord, wouldn't it be better if You just took me home where I could love You with all my heart and soul and mind and strength and just worship You perfectly? Why do You leave me here? Does that ever cross any of your minds? It definitely crosses mine. I mean, the fact is, right at this moment, with one word, the Lord could take us from this place where we get distracted.

Some of you sitting out there, a little child makes a noise. You get distracted. You get turned away.

You come in here. You're cold. Every child of God in here, if you've been saved for any amount of time, you know what it is when coldness creeps into the life.

You know what it is to be plagued by the devil. You know what it is to be discouraged. Any of you just live up there on the plateaus of glory all the time? That isn't the Christian life.

Sometimes we come in and it's up there and then all of a sudden we find out reality after a little bit of time goes by. The question... I mean, I feel it now. I want to depart and be with the Lord.

I long for that. Why does He leave us in this wasteland when He might suddenly, like the thief on the cross, this day you'll be with Me in Paradise. That's proof positive.

You don't have to stay here. It is not absolutely essential for what we are becoming to stay here. Because we see an example of one who was taken right out just like that.

But I'll tell you this, we are here. And the certainty is this, God knows exactly what He's doing. We have a text before us.

We are called to serve the Lord. Brethren, you are here to serve the Lord. And the fact is, if you are still here, it's because your service to the Lord here.

This is true. You think about this. Let this sink in.

If you are here, it's because your service here glorifies the Lord more than if you could perfectly worship Him there. That's a truth. We're not here in vain, brethren.

We're here to serve the Lord in a way that it would not be possible if we were this day in glory basking in the perfect brightness of His beauty. Listen, we are here as the church of the living God. We are the pillar, the ground, the buttress of truth.

And the truth is this, that God has called upon us to be the light and to be the salt in a decaying world that we could not be if we were there. How beautiful are the feet of them! Folks, I'll tell you this, you're not going to find the truth on the nightly news. You're not going to find it on the radio.

You're not going to find it in the newspaper. We are here to be those truth bearers. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

How are they going to call upon Him in whom they've never heard? How are they going to hear, folks, unless there's a preacher that's been sent to them? How in the world? We're those people! There are things that we simply could not do if we were in glory right now. We're the ones appointed to be here, to sow this seed. We're the ones appointed to be salt and light in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation.

Brethren, our time is now. We're called to be here for a season. Some of us may be called home rather quickly.

Some of you may be here for decades serving the Lord, but I guarantee you, the Lord finds glory in this. He leaves us here for a purpose. We're the ones that know the terror of the Lord.

We persuade people inside the church, outside the church. We're the ones that are called to do that. The greatest possible glory you and I can bring to the Lord right now is to faithfully serve the Lord here and now.

If that were not the case, be certain, we would not be here. But we are here. Paul says that while we're here, this is what we're to do.

Not be slothful in zeal, but fervent in spirit serving the Lord. So, here we go. Let's look at that text a little bit.

The first thing I want to say, and I'll develop this more in a little bit, is we serve Christ. Now, it says we serve the Lord, but let me just tell you, you can flip to this if you want to. Romans 14.18 What I want you to see here by looking at this text is that when Paul's thinking about serving the Lord, we know that sometimes God the Father is called Lord, sometimes the Spirit is even called Lord.

I just think of 2 Corinthians 3.18 right off. But, Paul specifically has in mind Christ. You can see that in the Roman letter.

Romans 14.18 Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. Right over in Romans 16.18 Go part way through that verse there. Romans 16.18 Such persons do not serve our Lord Christ.

You see, when Paul's speaking about serving in the Roman letter, he's got this idea of the Lord Christ. Serving Christ. That's the first thing that I want to show to you.

The second thing that I would point out is the term serve. Some of you may be aware that right now, John MacArthur has been preaching numbers of messages. He came to San Antonio.

We heard him preach there. And he actually preached a message on this. On the noun *doulos*.

Any of you know what that means? Slave. Well, let me tell you something. The term serve used here in Romans 12 is the verb form of that noun.

Basically, what Paul is saying, when he used the term serve, he means to perform the duty of a slave. Paul is exhorting us to be a slave to the Lord Jesus Christ. And what's true about a slave? Here's what's true about a slave.

A slave is a person whose sole objective is to carry out the will of another. That's what a slave does. Now look, a lot of times we have a negative connotation in our minds about slavery.

We think about the slave who serves the harsh master and really the slave is bending to the will of the master, although the slave's will himself is opposed to the will of the master. That's not what we're talking about with Christ. But nevertheless, the idea, what Paul is calling us to in Christianity, definitely, we have a delight very often in doing the things that our Lord would have us to do.

His commandments are not grievous to us. We hunger and thirst after these things. So that's different than a lot of the slavery that might go along in our minds.

But folks, nevertheless, when we talk slavery, we are talking about our will basically bending to His will. We're talking about our sole objective being there to carry out the will of another. Now brethren, do you

hear what I'm saying? I think it's important that we stop just for a second and really emphasize this.

The fact is, and I don't know how it is here in Kirksville, but I know the background that I've come from and a lot of what I've been exposed to. And I have ran in some circles and been exposed many times to people that just basically have this idea about a defeated Christianity. I can remember one time in our own church as I was dealing with Romans 7 and having a guy in the back row saying, well, my marriage is bad.

It's always been bad. And that's the way it's going to be. I said, what? That is not biblical Christianity.

That is not the approach we're supposed to have. Do you see what Paul is calling us to do? He is calling us to serve Christ. And he's not expecting that we're going to come away and read this and just say, well, that's just pie-in-the-sky theology.

That's out of our grasp. I mean, we're just really basically a bunch of defeated people. Let me tell you this.

What Paul is expecting us to do, and you remember how this chapter started. Paul is calling us to be living sacrifices to God. Look, Paul is not assuming that it's impossible for the Christian to consistently and as a pattern of life, bend to the will of Jesus Christ.

I mean, what we really need to get is the fact is, Christian, it is not impossible. It is not inconceivable for you to think that you can live the next 24 hours without willfully violating the will of Christ. Now look, I'm not talking about this sinless perfection where we can perfectly love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Even any moment. That's not what I'm saying. But Paul definitely had the idea that it was possible.

And he's exhorting the Christian, look, with some passion in your life, serve Christ. Bend to His will. Your life should be a pattern of one where you are habitually serving Him.

Paul would say in another place, to live is Christ. What's that all about? That means that everything you do with your life, everything you plan, everything that you're putting yourself to as you're thinking, as you're scheduling your life, and planning your life, and going forth in life, and getting up every morning, and facing this world, and going out among in your workplace, raising your children, going to school, wherever it is. You're just purposed.

I am going to serve Christ. For me to live is Christ. We can do that in the power of the Spirit.

We can do that. It is very important. Peter says it.

Be diligent to be found in Him without spot or blemish and at peace. Be diligent. That means something you are giving yourself to.

Be diligent to be found without spot. That means, folks, that we can live not willfully acting contrary to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. I mean, if we do sin... You know, John had that same idea.

He says, little children, I write to you that you don't sin. Now, if you do, but I'm writing to you that you don't. I mean, I'm encouraging you.

I'm exhorting you. Brethren, we can live this way in the power of God. Well, you look there at the verse again.

Be fervent in spirit. I mean, actually, we have it in the negative. We're not to be slothful or as many of your NAS's says, there's supposed to be a diligence there.

And then you have it in the positive. Be fervent in the spirit. The word fervent, do you see that? It literally means to boil.

Paul says, boil in your spirit serving Christ. Brethren, this is a verse of obvious intensity. We're to be earnest.

We're to be alive. We're to be vigorous. Whatever you do for Christ, throw your whole soul in it.

That's basically it. Paul is saying I don't want any loafers in the ranks of the redeemed. Don't be idle.

Don't be slothful in your service to the Lord. Over and over and over. If you haven't seen it, see it here.

You can see it in these words. Boil in your spirit. What we find in the Scriptures is over and over and over and over, the Bible says intensity matters.

Zeal matters. It matters to God. Look, living the Christian life at a low burn, with little passion, that's not pleasing to the Lord.

Over and over we find wholeheartedness matters. Too many lazy Christians, or at least lazy professing Christians, but we can make no mistake about it, the Lord Christ is calling you to put away idleness, put away slothfulness, laziness, half-heartedness, serve Him as a slave with a boiling spirit of passion. That's basically the idea.

We look at it here. Who are we to serve? Serve the Lord. It seems Paul has in mind serving the Lord Christ.

Specifically has in mind serving. Giving ourselves as a slave to Christ. Doing it with fervency.

Fervency in spirit. Boiling in spirit. No idleness.

No sluggardliness. That's basically the meaning. It's not complex.

It's very simple. So, okay. I'm going to shoot at you 13 enforcements or persuasions of this.

Because I think about it. Okay, I look at this and I think, as I was preparing the message, I was thinking, okay, we can know that, but how do I stir up God's people to actually do it? And I think, well, I don't have the ability. Really, when it comes to passion, the Spirit of God creates passion.

So how do I lay hold on the Spirit? How can I move upon the Spirit to move upon you? And I realize the way that the biblical writers seem to approach this type of thing was with truth. It seems to me that truth is the kindling that the Spirit of God tends to light. So, I want to see some fires lit in the hearts of God's people.

I'm going to seek to do it with truth. And so my persuasions are just basically this. They're biblical persuasions.

I'm going to throw a flurry of them at you. Here we go. Now, brethren, think with me about this.

Jesus Christ wants you to serve Him with passion, with fervence, with boiling, with diligence. He doesn't want you to wear out. He doesn't want you to burn out.

He doesn't want you idle. He doesn't want you lacking in diligence. Now, maybe there's a whole lot of other motivations.

Maybe somebody else could think up a whole other list. Maybe these are just the ones that seem to encourage my own heart. I don't know.

But here's the first one. Have you ever read Luke 16? I know most of you have. Luke 16.

You know about it, right? There's a parable. In fact, it's a strange parable. It almost seems like the Lord might be encouraging something that doesn't even seem right to us.

Why don't you go there? Luke 16, verse 1. Bear with me here, and I'll read from my translation. He also said to the disciples, there was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. And he called him and said to him, what is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.

And the manager said to himself, what shall I do? Since my master is taking the management away from me, I am not strong enough to dig. I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.

So summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, how much do you owe my master? He said a hundred measures of oil. He said to him, take your bill, sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another, and how much do you owe? He said a hundred measures of wheat.

He said to him, take your bill and write eighty. The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. Isn't that a strange parable? It sounds like Jesus is almost encouraging unrighteous behavior.

But is that really what He's doing? Obviously not. We need to read the next words or we miss the whole meaning. For the sons of this world are more shrewd, wiser, they're more sensible in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

Have you ever read that before? Have you ever really thought about that before with that saying? Here I am, the last night. What was it? Saturday night. That I was up there in Michigan.

I'm with a bunch of guys that I spent a lot of my life with. Playing sports and hunting and being wild and living all that lost life with. That last night, I've got a group of these guys around and I'm telling them what Christ has done to me.

I'm listening to them talk for a while. I sat there quietly for maybe an hour as they talked about their work and they're saving up for their pension and the things that they're doing and their stuff. And I'm listening to people who are living for the world.

And then finally at one point, somebody said, so what's happening in your life? And that just opened the door. And I stood up and I began to speak to them about regeneration and what it is that Christ had done to me. And I'm talking to them about all this.

And one of these couples that I used to run around with when I was lost, they're talking about the fact that they don't use pesticides and they're these green people. And they're trying to preserve everything. And I said, Susie, it's all going to burn up! Peter says it's going to burn up! Because I began to talk to them about Trevor Johnson and what he's doing over there among these Korowai people.

And that he's gone over there and all about how the situation is. And I was trying to make a point to them. Here is a man, here is a woman, who are giving up everything in this life to go sit in 100 degree temperatures and 100% humidity and just drip sweat among a people who they have no appreciation for them to be there.

And as I began to talk about it here, my two green friends, they're like, well, you know, you bring capitalism in and it brings all these problems in. They begin to destroy the environment and everything. Maybe it's better that you just leave them alone.

I said, you're not getting it. I said, Peter says that this world is going to burn up. I said, those people sit over there in a Christless darkness.

They're without Christ. They're without hope. I'm listening to these people and they are seeking to accomplish their ends.

Seeking to preserve nature. Seeking to pile up for retirement. And I'm looking at that.

Think about it, brethren. You know what Jesus Christ is saying? Those old friends of mine are more diligent and more shrewd to save the greenery on this earth and to store up in their retirement funds than you and I are as children of light for the Kingdom of God. Now that is a motivator.

Because I'll tell you what, there are Christians who outrun the lost in this world. And brethren, a text like this ought to make us hang our heads if we're not serving Christ with passion. Are we going to let the world out-passion us in the service of the things that they go after than you and I? Brethren, they're eternal.

We're talking eternal matters. We're talking we serve Christ. They serve money.

They serve mammon. They serve their idols. They serve their lusts.

We serve Christ. Is that the summary statement when it's all said and done? They're more shrewd. They're more wise than we are.

Brethren, let it not be so. And just to continue, Luke 16.9. Jesus says, I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. You see what He's attaching to this? So much of how they outrun us has to do with what we do with our money.

Isn't it interesting that that's where Christ goes? Christ says, store up your treasure in heaven. Store up your treasure in heaven. You know what? It is an absolute shame if this economic downturn caused any of you to suffer major loss.

Because you know what that tells me? That tells me you were heavily invested in this world. Brethren, the world stores up for retirement. We're to be putting this money so that we'll be received into eternal dwellings.

Now, obviously, Jesus isn't saying put your money there and that's how you earn this thing. But He's definitely calling us to have a regard for the rewards that are there. When you go to Revelation 14, our deeds follow us through eternity.

We have such things to be gained in this life. The world, what they have to gain is trivial. It's cotton candy compared to the meat that we have.

And they outrun us in their pursuits. Brethren, may it not be. My second persuasion to you actually comes from the very same context here.

Luke 16.10 Let me just chop a little bit out of there. But my second point is this, faithful in little, faithful in much. You see it there.

Luke 16.10 One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much. Brethren, I call you to serve the Lord fervently in the little things. Be faithful.

There's a number of you young people here. Be faithful in the little things. Some of you have this idea, well, if I was over there with Trevor Johnson, then I'd really be able to do great things for God.

I mean, so often that's the idea that people have. Well, if I could be over there then. Or if I could just have my turn in the pulpit, then I'd really show.

But we need to be faithful in the small things. We need to be diligent. We need to be passionate.

Folks, I can imagine that if one of the pastors here stood up and said, okay, we want to do this. We're going to give various people opportunities to come up and fill the pulpit and do five minute exhortations and there's a sign-up sheet over here. And any of you young men that are interested in giving your go at that, you think you've got some giftedness there, come over and sign up.

Now let's say there's another piece of paper back on the back wall over there by the bathroom. Now there's a sign-up sheet back there when the day's all done and the little boys have been in the bathroom there and everything's not just nice and clean. And I say little boys because they have problems it seems.

There's the sign-up sheet for cleaning the bathroom. And I'll tell you what happens. Sometimes some of us can be too self-important to want to go sign up on that one.

And people will line up to sign on this because there's an idea. Very often, we have this idea about serving the Lord and the things that are honorable and the things that get the attention and the things that get the applause and the things that are very well seen and the things where you're up on the platform. But I'm telling you this, those who are faithful in little be faithful in much.

You be faithful in little, God will bring you more and more opportunity. He will open other doors for you. Brethren, I'll tell you what, it would have shamed us to have been with those disciples in that day.

John 13. I mean, can you imagine it? The same one who washed feet. Can you imagine? Well, which one of you guys want to go clean the latrine? Which one of you guys want to wash each other's feet? Would we be embarrassed? We think ourselves too important to do something if the Lord walked right past us and put Himself to it.

That causes a bit of embarrassment. He left us an example. Be faithful in the little.

Those who are faithful in the little will be faithful in much. Number three, whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. You know this text, maybe? Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. And I began to think about that verse. Do it with all your might! You know sometimes what we see in our church, and maybe you see it here as well, you get people that come in.

While everything's new, while everything's exciting, they give themselves to it. But as soon as the excitement wears off, as soon as the honeymoon period wears off, they're out for the next exciting thing. Brethren, we need people that are committed.

People that when they find something for their hand to do, they do it with all their might. You remember how it was when they rebuilt the wall there in Jerusalem. Every man, he built right by his own house.

He came out, he found something for his hand to do, it was right there before him, and they gave themselves to building that wall. And guess what? They gave themselves to building that wall until it was done. Jesus Christ came here to this earth, and what did He do? He gathered 12 men to Him.

11 of them were true. 11 of them were men of God. And He poured Himself into it.

And He did it all the way to the end. He didn't get halfway there and say, well, I'm out of here. I've grown tired of this.

I can't handle these guys anymore. They're starting to grade on me. Brethren, we've got too many people that come in, and as soon as the deal wears off, they can't stick with things.

They can't hang in there. So many people, they want to be where the action is. They want to be there when serving the Lord is exciting, when it's thrilling, the ministry's new, it's different.

But they're short-lived. Very quickly turning off to the next thing. Short-lived commitments are a curse.

Serve the Lord diligently. Even when the initial excitement may not be there. Number four, Christ hates half-hearted service.

And you well know the text. Revelation 3.15-16 I know your works. He's speaking to the Laodicean church.

You're neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot. So because you're lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

Brethren, of course, Jesus is not saying that being cold is a desirable thing. But what He is saying is He would rather have you clear cut. He'd rather have you in or out.

Get off the fence. Show yourself true or show yourself false. Don't hang in the middle.

He wants passion. You know what? If I was over in Indonesia, or I was over in India, or over in China, and I was speaking to somebody that hardly knew the English language, I might have to explain to them how you would distinguish between hot and lukewarm. You know the language I speak.

You know the language of our Bibles. Brethren, hot is hot. And you know what hot means.

And Jesus Christ says He hates lukewarm. He spits it out of His mouth. Literally a term for vomit.

He does not appreciate lukewarmness. All you have to do, brother, sister, look in the mirror. I'm not speaking in a foreign language here.

Hot. I would that you were hot or cold. Have you been hot in your prayer life? Have you been hot in your attendance of the prayer meetings? Have you been hot in your passion after souls? Is there any heat in your life with regards to prayer and fasting? Could it be said that you're giving to missions? You're concerned for those kind of things? You're concerned for the outreach to the lost in this world? You're concerned to reach out and help people? You're concerned for one another? You're concerned for bearing one another's burdens? Look at your life, man, woman! Is it hot? We don't have to play with that term.

Don't redefine things. You know what that means. You know what it is to be hot.

Obviously, Christ is saying that's what He desires. He's got extreme disgust for that which is lukewarm. Number five, we are to be diligent.

Here's another reason. Did you ever read in 2 Thessalonians that Paul says we are actually to discipline those who are idle? 2 Thessalonians 3.6, We command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness. There you have it.

Keep away. Non-association. Break off your association.

Why? They're idle! Paul says we came among you. We were an example. We worked night and day.

You know what? When there is fervency, there is going to be a desire to serve Christ all the time. And I know that he's speaking about work. He's speaking about what we give our hands to.

He's speaking about our labor here. If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. Obviously, he's speaking about that form of labor whereby we make an earning, whereby we're able to buy our daily food.

But I'll tell you what, they go hand in hand. That's part of our service. And again, there is no appreciation in the Scriptures for idleness.

We need to work. This idea that you work 40 hours a week, or that you work 8 hours a day, or that you work until you're 55, or retire at 60. Those are not biblical concepts, by the way.

We need to be earnest. Listen, there are a myriad of ways to serve Christ. But I'll tell you, if one of the primary ways that you have been called to serve Him is to labor with your hands so that you have something to give to those that are in need, then God help you do it with diligence.

Don't do it with this mindset towards retirement. Don't do it with a mindset towards I've worked my 40 hours, now I'll sit back and just cruise. Brethren, our time is short.

We need to work while we have time to work. Number six, and just think about this one. What a motivator.

Do you think that just anybody and everybody gets to serve Christ? Have you never read that few there are that find it? Do you realize that as you drove here today and you saw people at gas stations or driving the other way down the road, towards whatever other folks, lost folks, which by the way is the majority of the people in this world, if you are serving Christ, you have a privilege that is unspeakably great. Not just

everybody has this. You have the opportunity to serve the Lord of Lords.

There's only a few who find that. What an honor has been bestowed upon us that we should even have the right and the privilege of serving the Lord Christ with a boiling spirit. These things are hidden from most men.

Listen to Jesus, I thank You Father, Lord of heaven and earth, You've hidden these things from the wise and understanding. What You have a privilege to do has been hidden from most men. Number seven, I'll tell you one thing about lazy people.

I'll tell you one thing about people that aren't fervent. Let me tell you this, the most fervent people I have found in serving Christ are people that are not people of excuses. Excuses hang off of lazy people.

Excuses are part of the idol. Excuses are a trademark of the lazy. The sluggard says there's a lion in the road.

There's a lion in the streets. You guys ever heard C.T. Studd? Based on that text out of Proverbs? Studd said, He said that the man of God, the man that's burning, the man with passion, he looks out in the street, he doesn't go out in the street because there is a lion out there. Because he says, I'm going to wait until there's two lions and a bear.

Then I'm going out there. Brethren, he who observes the wind will not sow, he who guides the clouds will not reap. Brethren, let us not be people of excuse.

We need to have plans. You know what? Better off with fervency, you try nine times and succeed the tenth. Than to be the guy with all the excuses as to why it hasn't worked nine times, trying to discourage.

You know one of the worst things? You've got somebody with zeal, and what is it? It's typically not the devil that rushes in from the outside that wants to throw the cold bucket of water on it. It's another Christian! You get somebody with fervency, somebody with passion, somebody that wants to do something, and then you've got the people full of the excuses. The people with the ten reasons why it can't work.

Brethren, let's be done with that. We've got a world full of excuses. Young Christian, you've been converted.

Do you hear what Paul says? With fervency, serve the Lord Christ. Put away your excuses. I'll do that at another time.

I'll do that when I'm more mature. I'll do that at another season. Look, you have today.

You don't have tomorrow. Fervency, it boils excuses away. It can't tolerate such things.

Folks, the people who put off serving the Lord until tomorrow will never serve the Lord tomorrow. Be done with the excuses. Number 8. I can't even get my hands fully around this one, but I'll just throw it out as a reason why we ought to labor diligently.

We will do greater works than these. John 14.12 Truly, truly, this is Jesus Christ speaking. I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do.

Because I am going to the Father. Greater works than these? Look, he doesn't say that because we're greater than he. He says that because he's going to the Father.

And his going to the Father, he said, would be profitable for us because he would give us the Spirit of God. And he said that's a good thing. It is more profitable for you that I leave and I go to my Father and I dispatch the Holy Spirit.

And in that life, somehow we will do the same works he did and greater works. Now, look, you may be able to find all sorts of ways to explain that away. And you may be able to assert and realistically assert different ways that we would not be greater.

But I'm telling you, Jesus Christ said, greater than these. Now, do with that what you will. Try to get your hands around it.

But that is a reason, folks, for us to press forward with some measure of diligence. Number nine, I would say this, work to be missed. McShane said it this way, he said, live so as to be missed.

You remember Dorcas? Dorcas. I'll tell you what, she had a funny name. But she had a serious life.

When she died, they wept. Now, you just ask yourself, Christian, if tomorrow was your last day, and I mean aside from the emotional attachments that people have to you, if you died, would you be missed? And I don't just mean would you be missed because it was daddy or it was mama or it was our child or whatever and there's that family attachment. I mean, would you be missed because your life has had such an impact on people's lives that you would indeed be missed? You have brought so much to other people's lives and so much to this church and so much to this world that if you were all of a sudden withdrawn, there would be a vacuum that people would find very difficult to replace.

We should live so as to be missed, brethren. Not just trying to live in some little cloistered shelter somewhere where our impact on the world is minimal. Number 10, brothers and sisters, I know we believe this theologically.

Sometimes we have to be brought back to it. Just recently being around all my unconverted friends from high school and college, I just had a close friend die of cancer. One of the guys said to me, yes, he was dying of leukemia.

He said I called him four days before he died. Now this is a lost friend telling me this. He said, yeah, I tried to talk to him about God, but he didn't want to talk.

And he died. He went off into eternity. My friend was saying to me, well, I hope he found a good place in the end.

I said, Walt, I fear for Marty. What do they do when they pass out of this life without Christ? The Bible says they wail. That's what they do.

What do you hear? It says they hear teeth. They hear the gnashing of teeth. We say we believe in a literal hell.

Listen to a quote I came across by Spurgeon. O children of the living God, I beseech you by the fires of hell, by the agony that knows no abatement, by the thirst that is not to be mitigated by a drop of water, by the eternity which knows no end, I beseech you by the wrath to come. Be up and doing, earnestly striving

together to be the means in God's hand of awakening poor souls and bringing them to the mercy of Christ.

Be earnest. If you don't believe this Bible, I care not what you are, earnest or dull. But if you do believe it, act as if you believe.

If you think men are perishing, if the Lord's right hand is dashing in pieces His enemy, I beseech you to be strengthened, to endeavor to bring those enemies to Christ that they may be reconciled by the blood of the cross. Brethren, let the screams of the damned be fuel for your fervency. If you truly believe.

Number 11. I have a friend over in England. He's an old pastor, evangelist.

He sat at the feet of Martin Lloyd-Jones. He's in his mid-eighties now and he's nearing the end of his life. And just two or three weeks ago I called him.

And he began to tell me, as a young Christian, we got on the topic of resisting the power of sin in our lives. Now this is an eleventh encouragement to you to be diligent to serve Christ. So I was talking to him and he said, as a young Christian I expected to have more victory over sin than what I was finding to be a reality in my life.

He said until, and something revolutionary happened to him. He said until I was reading in Romans 6 and I came across, of course he was reading in the Old King James, he said it was the word, yield. Yield.

Now that comes out of verse 13. You know what old Leslie Smith told me? He said I found that when I yielded my members to the service of God, I overcame. Now if you know about the context there, Paul says, yield or present your members, quickly followed by verse 14 that says, sin will not have dominion over you.

And I really began to mull that over. How much of a reality is there between our service and the power? How much of a connection? And you know, I'm quite persuaded of this. Christ gives the power to overcome and the power to serve Him as you serve Him.

Which is so typical of the Christian life. Think about it. The priests had to put their foot in the water before the waters of the Jordan receded.

And I'm convinced that that is a reality that if we will lay hold of in the Christian life, there is a power through Him. We're able to do all things. Without Me, He said, you can do nothing.

There is a power that we draw on. I'm quite convinced. I saw it right there in the song you guys sang.

This morning out of the Spiral Round Book 10a. There's power as we take the stride. As we run, we find that we're empowered.

I could pull from Isaiah 58. Loose the bonds of wickedness. Undo the straps of the yoke.

Let the oppressed go free. Break every yoke. Share your bread with the hungry.

Bring the homeless poor into your house. We have a picture here of serving Christ. When you see the naked, cover Him.

Don't hide yourself from your own flesh. Then listen to this. Then, it's conditional, then shall your light break forth like the dawn and your healing shall spring up speedily.

Your righteousness shall go before you. You talk about light like the dawn, healing that springs up speedily, righteousness that shall go before you, and it's attached. There seems to be a connection in Scripture.

I'm convinced oftentimes, it's not more study we need. It's not more sermons we need. We need to do what we've been called to do.

Brethren, let me tell you something. In Mark 16, you know what we find? We find that those early believers went forth, preached everywhere. Mark 16 says the Lord worked with them.

He confirmed His Word. There was power. What you find in Mark 16 is that very thing.

Listen, this has struck me over and over. It has come back to me. Those early Christians came down from the upper room.

They came down, brethren. They didn't sit there and stay there perpetually. They came down.

And they went out into this world. Listen, nobody turns the world upside down who stays in the upper room. They came down.

And it was as they came down and they went everywhere, that the power of God was there. Christ was there. And He was working with them.

Brethren, I believe that this is a reality. As we work, He works with us. The power is released as long as we do something to demand it.

It's released into the church, that power of Christ, when there is a demand for it. Brethren, I believe this. We become powerless.

We become worldly. We become impotent when we try to become safe. Tozer said it, the power of God has always hovered over our frontiers.

Miracles have accompanied our advances, have ceased when and where we allowed ourselves to become satisfied, and ceased to advance. Belief in a doctrine of power cannot save us from barrenness. There must also be the work of power.

Number 12. I just have two more very quickly. And I just ask you this, is it so hard to serve the One who loves you? As I was putting this together, I was just thinking of Christ in the garden.

Think of Him. He was being wrung out. I'm in the furnace of that fire that He had to go to.

He was feeling the heat of it already in that garden. There was such a ringing. There was such immense... Father, if it's possible.

He went to the cross and He drank damnation. He put that cup to His lips and He took it down to the last drop. Brethren, there is such an expression of love in that for you.

Is it so hard to serve Him? We're not like one of the old black slaves in this country who had to serve a wicked master. Our Master is good. Our Master is kind.

I mean, see Him, brethren. A bunch of unholy, wicked mouths. They spit on His face.

They pull His beard out. Imagine His back being raped by that scourge. Brethren, that was a work of love.

Is it so hard to serve Him? Brethren, we're not just to serve Him. We're to love Him. And it brings me to the thirteenth point.

We're to work while it is day. Our time is running out. I went to my class reunion up there so I could preach Christ to my friends.

We graduated 26 years ago. I said to many of them that last night, you guys need to come to grips with reality. We were 18 yesterday.

We're in our mid-forties now. Tomorrow we'll be 60. Seven is a small class.

140 some. Seven are dead already. Brethren, our time is short.

Very short. You're left in this world for a certain purpose to serve the Lord. You know what? That purpose is soon to be ended.

Whether the end comes and your service is accomplished or left undone, you're never going to have a second opportunity. Never. We must work the works of Him who sent Christ while it is day.

Night is coming when no one can work. William Burns, some of you may know that name, old Scotch evangelist, filled the pulpit at St. Peter's in Dundee for McShane when revival came there. He was known to say these four words.

He'd lay his hand on a brother and say, Brother, we must hurry. Brethren, we must hurry. May God help us.

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