

Paul the Apostle

by Will Graham

The sermon highlights the heart of Paul the Apostle, who was wholly yielded up to Jesus Christ and had a heart that was fully committed to serving Him.

Duration: 51:41

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 26:18, Romans 1:15, Romans 1:17, 2 Corinthians 3:17

Topics: "Paul The Apostle"

Description

In this sermon, Reverend Coilard emphasizes the importance of being fully yielded to Jesus Christ and having a heart for preaching the gospel. He shares the story of a man named El Mude who was transformed by the message of a preacher and went on to passionately preach the word of God. Reverend Coilard highlights the four evidences of the anointing: victory over sin, par in service, the fruit of the Spirit, and a burden for souls. He encourages believers to live a life of love and to be willing to fully yield themselves to God, believing that there is still a generation of men and women who will rise up to preach the gospel in the midst of a dark world.

Transcript

What a joy to be in the courts of the Lord. Better is one day, than his courts in thousands elsewhere. Here there's joy, here there's peace that surpasses all understanding.

Here the saints are gathered together and congregated in his name, that magnify, glorify and exalt the name of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Thank you again, Pastor, for this invitation to preach the Gospel.

Thank you very much as well for coming here tonight. I believe God would really desire to speak again to our hearts and edify us by the preaching of the Word of God. Our text this night then, we're going to continue on with the same theme that we touched this morning, born slaves of Jesus Christ.

This morning we touched on a man of God called John the Baptist, a man who burned with holy zeal, a powerful witness under the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And tonight we're going to talk about a man by the name of the Apostle Paul. Paul the Apostle.

Our text this night is going to be found in the book of Romans. We're going to just share one verse this night. And of course we believe that book was written about 60 AD, during Paul's third missionary journey

there in Corinth.

So, this book is an absolute theological masterpiece that shows us the great doctrinal truths of our Christian faith. This is a book that has changed history time and time again. You know, it was Romans 1 verse 17, the just shall live by faith.

That changed the whole context and history of Europe. Martin Luther got a hold of that verse, and the rest of world history completely changed. Luther himself says of the book of Romans, this epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and the very purest Gospel.

It's worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word by heart, but occupy himself with it every day as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read too much, can never be pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes. It was reading Luther's prologue to the epistle of the Romans, that John Wesley, that great Methodist in the 18th century, felt his heart strangely warmed.

He was born again by the Spirit of God, and the mighty Methodist revival came on its heels. This book of Romans expounds the great themes of our Christian faith. The property of man, salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

It deals with truths of lives in the Spirit, of the cross of Jesus Christ, of God's dealing with the people of Israel, and with the Gentiles, and has many practical applications. So what we're going to do tonight is not so much fix on the doctrinal aspect, of course these things are going to come out, but what I want to see tonight is the heart behind this man. We saw John the Baptist this morning, I want to look at Paul this evening.

So we're just going to open our Bibles, Romans chapter 1, and we're going to read verse 15. Romans 1 verse 15, and if you want to go ahead and read that in loud voice, you just go ahead. Romans 1 verse 15, I believe this verse is going to give us an insight, that will form the base of our preaching tonight.

Romans 1 verse 15. Praise God, As much as is in me, I am now ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. As much as is in me.

The title of this message is, As much as is in me. As much as is in me, that leaves room for nothing else. This is a man wholly yielded up to Jesus Christ.

This is a man obliged for the gospel. And so what I propose in this evening is three things. Number one, we're going to look at the heart of such a man.

In second place, we're going to look at the life of such a man. And in third place, the reward of such a man. The heart, the life, and the reward.

I pray God is going to use this word to stir our hearts. To challenge us. To edify us as his church.

That we too may speak and walk in the fullness of the spirit of God. Shining with the glory of Christ no matter where we go. Talking about our wonderful God and Saviour.

So I do open our hearts in prayer. And let's seek God that he would speak to us in this night. That we too may say with Paul, As much as is in me.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Lord we magnify your precious name. We thank you God that we've been called by your grace.

You are God above in heaven oh God. Creator of heaven and earth. We thank you God that you're not just creator.

That you are redeemer oh God. We thank you that you took us out of the married clay. You give us life oh God.

When we were dead in transgressions and sins. We thank you for your great grace. How can we repay such a debt.

How can we give you thanks oh God. For your wonderful workings toward the children of man. Oh God we know you're the same God yesterday.

Today and forever. And we do pray oh God. That you would speak in this night oh God.

Directly to our hearts oh God. Break all the nonsense God. That you want to be broken in us oh God.

Shake us oh God. And fill us with your spirit oh God. Let us rise up in your name oh God.

To say with the apostle Paul. As much as is in me. As much as is in me.

May we worship you. In spirit and truth. We give you honor.

We give you praise. We give you glory. In Jesus name.

And for Jesus sake. Amen. Glory to God.

As much as is in me. As much as is in me. Paul's heart was sold out to God.

As much as is in me. Is the heartbeat of any true child of God. True Christianity is nothing else than an all out commitment.

To serve in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul paid the price to serve Jesus. In an ungodly and wicked generation.

He knew no compromise. He was a champion of the faith. Christ was his all in all.

He was like the vast multitude of believers. We have in the 21st century church. Clowns.

Comedians. And comedians. In first place he wasn't a clown.

When I was a little kid. My mum told me I laughed at clowns. If a clown tells you something.

You don't take him seriously. Paul never wore a mask. You see a clown wears a mask.

A clown is a man that says one thing on a Sunday. And then there's something else on a Monday. That's a clown.

Someone that pretends to be something. That he's not. Paul said in Galatians 1.15 and 16.

He said it pleased God to reveal His Son in me. That I might preach Him among the heathen. First Christ is revealed.

Then I have authority to preach Him. It's not preach then have the Son revealed. No, no.

First the Son is revealed in me. Then I have authority to preach. Paul was no clown.

When you're going through hard times and trials. You don't ask a clown for his advice. You don't take a clown seriously.

Paul was no comedian. No funny jokes up his sleeve. He never tried to win men's approval.

He went to the ends of the world. No jokes. No guitar.

No praise band. No little man there giving him a round of applause. Tell him how wonderful he was.

Absolutely nothing. But the power of the Holy Spirit. And it proved to be more than sufficient to meet the need.

Paul had the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had Paul. Proved to be more than sufficient.

He was no clown. Was no comedian. And he was no chameleon.

A chameleon changes colors. A comedian just likes to fit in wherever he goes. Blue one day.

Green the next. I've seen men preach in the public who live like devils in secret. Keep your gospel to yourself.

Doesn't interest me. We need people that are going to preach what they believe. And believe what they preach.

And more so live the message they give in the pulpit. Paul talked for Christ in public. And talked with Christ in secret.

Christ was all that interested and motivated him. Never in two minds. Christ was his all in all.

Paul was driven on by the mind of Christ. Redeemed the time. Preaching the gospel in season and out of season.

With steel in his bones. And a mighty fire in his belly. Paul had the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit had Paul. They took me around last summer to the church where Evan Roberts was in 1904. When that revival came.

Church in Wales absolutely dead. 17 people in that meeting. They brought me in and the historian said to me.

He said, Evan Roberts, he said, didn't have the Holy Spirit. I said, God, what did that man just say? He says, Evan Roberts didn't have the Holy Spirit. He said, the Holy Spirit had Evan Roberts.

Oh, glory to God. Made a whole lot of sense when he cleared that up. Holy Spirit had Paul.

Holy Spirit had Evan Roberts. I'm yet to find a place in the scriptures where Paul ever asked God. If it was okay for him to go back to the world.

If it was okay for him to smoke a few joints. Sleep about with a few women. Get a little tattoo.

Flirt about with the world. Never. The moment Paul was born again of the Spirit of God.

It was Christ all the way. Christ all his life. Christ unto death.

It was as if the Holy Spirit had put a shield over his eyes. That he lost interest in everything else outside of Jesus Christ. This man was so full of Christ.

That the Governor Festus thought that Paul was a madman. You know, Paul was a lost man. Paul was lost.

But he was lost to this world. Lost to its seductions. Lost all its lusts and temptations.

Paul was a man that marched on as a soldier of Jesus Christ. In faithfulness to God. A man, little lad, was travelling there with Paul.

It was a man called Demas. He loved the world. Dreamed with the world.

Slept with the world. He just loved that whole worldly system. That's why he ends up back to that.

You see, everything is true to its nature. The pig is going to return to its mud. The dog is going to return to its vomit.

Demas just loved the world. He just went back. But not Paul.

Paul was born of the Spirit of God. You saw the fruit in his life. There was sanctification.

He pressed on. Demas did not believe in full separation under God. Demas did not believe in allegiance to Christ.

Demas did not believe in separation from a carnal. So he thought, just like his father, the devil. Paul, anything outside of Christ had no appeal to him.

The world was his mortal enemy. And he stood like a mighty rock in the midst of a gushing stream against the oncoming flow. Our present state of Christianity shows a sad lack of true Holy Ghost power and conviction.

So-called servants of Christ flirting about with the world. Why do they do that? Because they love to do it. They long for it.

They long for the applause and popularity, pleasure and prosperity more than God. They've got one food in the church and another food in the world. Never works that way.

Elijah says, if Baal is God, off you go, serve Baal. But if the Lord be God, then serve him. There's no two ways in this kingdom.

You're either in God's army or in the army of the enemy. You're either a sheep or you're a goat. You're either wheat or you're chaff.

You're one or the other. You can't have two food in two different kingdoms. You're of the kingdom of light or you're a child of the devil.

In true revival, worldliness is cast away as a venomous viper. A true servant of God loves nothing but Jesus Christ and hates nothing but sin. Paul's heart was fire filled.

What else could we expect from a man filled by the Spirit of God? Hebrews 1-7 tells us that God wants his servants to be as flames of fire. Men that burn for the glory of God. Fire speaks of passion, of zeal, of fervor.

Fire is always hungry and thirsty. Fire never says enough. It always wants more.

Paul knew this fire that filled the bones of Jeremiah the prophet. He knew the fire that filled the bones of Ezekiel that gave them divine boldness to preach the valley of dead and dry bones and see them form a mighty army by the power and intervention of almighty God. He was governed by God.

Draw near to the saints of old, said Mr. Tozer, and you will feel their heat after God. When they come to town, the spiritual atmosphere rises. I learned very early on in my Christian walk to draw near to men and women that love God, that love to pray, that love the Word of God.

Why? Because if I spend my time with people that love to pray, that burn to study the Word of God, then that fire is going to catch me too. You see, fire is contagious. God sets you ablaze that you would set others ablaze too.

You're blessed to bless. And so if you spend your time flirting about with people that don't want to take God seriously, well then you wake up one day. Why have I no desire to see God? Why am I not pressing on to the things of God? Draw near to godly people.

Draw near to men and women that love to pray. Draw near to men and women that seek the Word, that preach the Word, that live the Word, and that fire will be contagious. Everything's true to its nature.

Draw near to men and women of God and refuse to surrender to the chill of your spiritual environment. You must be filled, filled overflowing, filled in every part. What Paul had in his heart, he spoke with his mouth.

That fire could not be hidden. And when he spoke, the multitude stood spellbound, rich and poor, wise and foolish, old and young, Jews and Gentiles. No one could ignore that divine flame that proceeded from his being.

The fire of God ate him up, just like the bush that Moses saw back in Exodus 3. A fire that was indeed ablaze, but was not consumed. What was it that made millions stand transfixed when Luther, when Wesley, when Whitefield, when Jonathan Edwards, when these great saints and preachers of old, what was it that made the multitude stand transfixed? It was the fire, the fire, the fire of the Holy Spirit that captured the attention of men and women. Nothing else but holy goes far.

Wesley once said, get on fire for God and the multitudes will come to watch it burn. Mr. John Calvin once said, he said, build a man a fire, it will keep him warm for a day. Set a man on fire and he will burn the rest of his life.

We've got to be on fire for the Gospel. If you follow Wesley and you're an Armenian, you've got to be on fire for God. If you follow Calvin and you're a Calvinist, you've got to be on fire for God.

Armenian Calvinists, blaze for God. Burn for God in Jesus' name. Blaze for this Gospel.

They may not understand everything you say, but they will feel everything you preach. They may not believe everything you say, but make sure the person that's listening to your preaching knows that you believe every single word of what you're saying. Doesn't matter if they believe everything, make sure you believe it.

Fire is what we need. They once asked that man of God, Augustine, they asked him, Augustine, tell me three things you would like to see before you died. The theologian of fifth century.

And Augustine said, he said the three things he would like to see before he died. Number one, I would like to see Jesus Christ in the flesh. You know, how was his face? How was his body? How tall was he? What did he look like? Number one, I would like to see Jesus.

He said, number two, I would like to see the city of Rome, of imperial Rome, at the zenith, at the peak of its glory. What was Rome like? And number three, he said, I would love to hear a sermon of the Apostle Paul. Praise God.

When Paul preached, no one fell asleep. I read in the book of Acts of one little lad called Eutychus. He made that mistake once.

Paul was preaching, Eutychus fell asleep. Wasn't five seconds later, Eutychus is lying dead in the ground. And if you read the book of Acts, no one ever made that mistake a second time.

When Paul came to town, you stood up, you paid attention. The man of God comes. It's time to listen.

What has God gone to say? The spiritual atmosphere rises when the man of God comes to town. Charles Finney said, it is evident that we must have more arising preaching to meet the character and wants of the age. The preachers must pour fire upon their hearers.

When Paul spoke, you couldn't fail but to take notice. The Holy Spirit gave him boldness. He'd been unduned with power from on high.

And he roared like a ferocious lion against all the works and wives of hell. A spirit-filled saint of God will know this far what I'm talking about. And the servant that is spirit-filled will automatically obey every other commandment that is written in this book.

Paul's heart was sold out. Paul's heart was fire-filled. And Paul's heart was love-constrained.

Love for Christ, love for his fellow man was the root of all that Paul did. He came to bless others. He came to minister to others.

You know, Christ himself tells us in Mark 10, 45. He says, The Son of Man hasn't come to be served but to serve. And to give his life as a ransom for many.

Paul himself tells us in the first chapter of Romans, he says, I've come unto you to impart unto you some spiritual gift. He came to bless. Unselfishness is the mark of the true believer in Jesus Christ.

It's easy to believe your brother or sister in the Lord when you realize that the God that saved you abides within them. But in spite of a thousand trials and torments, Paul never wallowed in self-pity or had a woe is me moment. The reason why is because Paul wasn't living for Paul.

Paul was living for the King of Kings. For the Lord of Lords. His was a higher calling.

A greater vocation. No longer I but Christ. He was a dead man walking.

And one thing you can't do with a corpse is kill it. He was dead. All this world had to offer.

Dead to those lusts of the flesh. He died at his conversion. Became a new creature.

And the life he lived in this flesh was just an opportunity to serve our great God and Saviour. He called himself a debtor to all men. If God has been so gracious in saving me from an eternity in the lake of fire and brimstone, then I am indebted every Jew to every Gentile to preach the Gospel.

Repent! Repent! The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. I must preach. I must share with others what God has shared with me.

He wanted all men to know about this great saving Lord. His passion, a longing for souls to come into the Kingdom was a sure mark that the Holy Spirit was moving in his life. Oswald Smith once said, There are four great results that follow the anointing.

Four evidences that can neither be disputed nor counterfeited. The first is victory over sin. The second, power in service.

The third, the fruit of the Spirit. And the fourth, a burden for souls. He prayed for the saints of God.

He wept until Christ was formed in them with pains, with labor pains. He never acted through legalism. He was love constrained.

I believe it is very important to define this word legalism above all in our evangelical circle now in 2009. The purest essence of a legalist, a legalist does something because he has to do it. Whereas a love constrained person does something because he desires to.

He longs to do it. The person who is a legalist will say something along these lines. I pray every day because I have to pray every day.

I read the Bible every day because I have to read the Bible every day. I go to church on Sundays because I have to go to church on Sundays. The love constrained believer says, I read the word every day because I love to read the word.

I pray every day because I love to pray. I go to church because I love to be in church. I love to hear the preaching of the word.

I love to be with God's people. I love the things of God. That's not legalism.

That's a believer that's walking in a love constrained faith. Paul was no legalist saint. Paul was love constrained from day one to the end of his life.

Constrained by love for God. Constrained by love for his people. A man whose heart is sold out, fire filled, and love constrained is going to have an exciting life.

I guarantee you there's not going to be much time for boredom. When a man rises up with fire in his bones for the glory of Jesus Christ, hell won't be too far around the corner in rising up against him. It won't be too long before Satan raises his ugly head.

Preaching the truth and living the truth is going to cost something. I've heard a lot of men say, Revival's going to cost an awful lot. No, no.

Revival's not going to cost an awful lot. Revival's going to cost absolutely everything. We've got to be a united people in prayer and in obedience to the Word of God.

Paul's life from the moment he was saved until the moment they martyred him was one of intense persecution and torment. The life of a man of God will always be marked by persecution. Of all of the fruits you can expect from ministry, persecution is number one on the list.

It was Paul himself that said to Timothy, All those that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. The witness of the Scriptures show that nothing is so attacked as a godly life sold out to Jesus. You would think that godly men and women would be applauded by their societies, appreciated by the people amongst whom they lived.

I mean, what harm did they ever do to anybody? They only wanted people to walk right before God, to be reconciliated with Him. Surely these fire-filled, love-constrained, sold-out saints should be applauded by the societies in which they live. But not so.

Hated, stoned and left for death. John the Baptist rises up in the wilderness with a, Thus saith the Lord. Six months later, his head's chopped off.

Get little Stephen filled with the Holy Ghost preaching to that lukewarm religious multitude. He's stoned to death. That's the way it is.

When you start to preach, when you start to live the true gospel, there's going to be persecution. The ageless truth is that if you are going to preach the truth, it's going to cost you everything. I suspect that the reason we are no longer attacked here in our Western world, in the 21st century, is, it's sad to say, but there's nothing left worth attacking.

There's nothing left in our churches to attack anymore. And that's why we don't face persecution. I gave a class in Preachers and Preaching back in May 2008 in the seminary.

They asked me to finish off with half an hour teaching the people that had come from a few local churches. I said to them, just to finish off, I said, Hated, stoned, martyred, spat upon, treated like dogs. This is the inheritance of the preachers of the gospel.

I welcome you to the ministry of preaching. You see, what we want today, in the 21st century, we want the applause of man. We want everybody to soothe their egos.

Tell us how wonderful we are. Oh, aren't you a dynamic preacher? Oh, aren't you wonderful and charismatic? Oh, don't you have a lovely suit when you preach? Not so saints in the New Testament and the Old. They shed their blood for the gospel.

They give everything to preach Christ and Christ crucified. Christ resurrected and Christ glorified. We want to win favour and feel good when we preach.

But if you are a man pleaser, you are not the servant of Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in Galatians 1 verse 10, If I were to please man, then I am no longer the servant of Jesus Christ. The ageless truth is, preach the truth, it's going to cost you everything.

If they hated Christ, they're going to hate you. If they obey Christ, they're going to obey you. But you see, it's not you they hate, it's Christ in you, the hope of glory.

If you're going to live this gospel, it's not going to be too long before you get into trouble. And I would like to say to you, if you're not being called a fanatic, if you're not being called extreme, if you're not being called a legalist, I would say to you, there's something wrong with your preaching. You're not preaching according to the Word of God.

Every time I see a man starting to say, Thus saith the Lord, persecution lurks around the corner. There was a reaction when Paul came to town. The people either bowed down and tried to worship him like he was one of the Greek gods from the Pantheon, or they tried to cut his throat and stone him to death.

You were for Paul, or you were against him. It was black or it was white. There was no middle line.

You're a man of God. You're a woman of God. There must be a reaction if you're going to walk in the fullness of the Spirit of God.

It's an easy thing to preach when everybody says, Yes, Amen, Hallelujah, and lift their hands in the air. Oh, what a wonderful sermon. It's not so easy to preach when you've got a multitude before you, and half the men in that multitude have just taken a vow that they're not going to eat anything, they're not going to drink anything until you're a goner, until you're a dead man.

Persecution is the mark of the heart of the love-constrained, sold-out, fire-filled heart of the saint of God. Such a life may expect the fruit of persecution, but also spiritual fruit. You see, Paul preached the whole Gospel.

He didn't preach a little one-side, bless me, man-centered, prosperity Gospel to which we've become so accustomed in this lethargic and lukewarm generation. And so from his preaching, he saw true converts that lived alone for the glory of God. A man of God will produce men of God.

A prayer, a prayer-filled man will produce men of prayer. A prayerless man will produce men of prayer. Scripture tells us everything produces after its own kind.

Paul was sold out to Jesus Christ, and that example, and that fire brought forth multitudes into the kingdom who were willing to lay down their lives for Jesus Christ. Commitment, discipline, and faithfulness marked those first-century believers who turned the devil's world upside down. When Paul came to town, something was going to happen.

He lived by faith in communion with God on the edge, never conforming to the nonsense he saw around him. There was a rise, as I said before, in the spiritual atmosphere. Someone says, Paul's coming to preach.

Glory to God. I'm going to go down to the town center to hear him. Ah, but you can't go today.

Grandmother's coming around to the house on the Sabbath. You've got to be here to let her in. Well, tell grandmother she can do one of two things.

She comes with me to go listen to the man of God, or she stays back at her house. Tell grandmother to call round next week. Oh, I see that old preacher in the synagogue, full of himself, with his chest puffed out like a proud peacock, says, well, you know, I'm preaching this Sabbath.

You can't go listen to Paul preach. Well, sir, there's 52 weeks in a year, 51 of which I'm sat under your ministry. I've heard what you preach.

You've no life. You've no unction. You've nothing.

I think I'm entitled to one week off to go listen to hear what the man of God's got to say. When someone's walking with his spirit, when someone's eyes not set the Lord, there will be hunger. There will be thirst amongst the people of God.

God will speak to those that have ears to hear, heart to understand, and eyes to see. This is the way ministry should be, passionate, exciting, and powerful. A blind man cannot lead a blind man, but Paul was a free man, and that's why he could lead multitudes in to the kingdom of God and preach Christ.

He was a free man. He knew the freedom that came with the fullness of the Holy Ghost. Everywhere he went, the sick are raised, the dead are coming back to life, devils cast out, lepers are cleansed, did what Christ told him to do, reckoned it all to the grace of God.

He comes the demon-possessed man. He's living in communion with God. He's in prayer day and night.

He speaks to the devil. The devil goes, that's just the way it is. I know Jesus, and I know Paul.

Paul is in communion with the Most High God. Full stop. End of story.

No debates. The demon comes out. But we've led people to believe that they're saints, because by our lives, we've preached to them a gospel that doesn't upset hell, a candy floss, effervescent message that tickles ears and doesn't change anything.

When Paul preached, people knew if they were saved or if they were lost. If Paul or Peter came back to one of our average churches in Great Britain, I suspect they'd probably take a whip and clean all the nonsense right out of the place and call the people back to prayer, back to the Word of God. If we use carnal means to attract people to the church, we're going to have to use those same carnal means to keep them in the church.

The cross of Jesus Christ is the only attraction of the church. The cross of Jesus Christ is the only way in here. That's the only way.

And if you're not coming by the cross, there's no place for you in this kingdom. Mr. John MacArthur said a few years back, he said when the first century church came together, they came and they congregated to worship the Lord. They didn't come to entertain goats.

Paul had no time for gimmicks, just saturated and soaked in the presence of the Holy Spirit. He had heart religion. So true, pure, holy fruit was always the outcome wherever he went.

It's wonderful in the book of Ezekiel in chapter 47 that as Ezekiel goes advancing in that river, the waters were up his ankles, up his knees, and then up his hips there. But Ezekiel never saw fruit in Ezekiel 47. There's never so much a mention of fruit until he had been in those deep waters where he started to swim, where the Holy Spirit took control, where God was in charge of His servant.

And then when he came out of the river, after he'd been swimming in the depths, then he saw the fruit. What's the lesson there? If you want to see fruit from your ministry, all you've got to do is start swimming in the deep waters. Don't be satisfied with the water at your ankles.

Don't be satisfied with the water at your knees. Don't be satisfied with the water at your hips. Start to swim.

Be guided by the Holy Ghost. Be a man of prayer. A woman of intercession.

Live in obedience to the Word of God. And fruit will come. A tree doesn't have to be in pain to give birth to fruit.

It's natural. It's the consequence. Get in the river, saints.

Delve in. Swim in the river of God. Let the Holy Spirit fill you.

Be guided by Him in every moment. And the fruit will come. Such a life may experience persecution, yes.

But such a life will experience true spiritual fruit. True converts. Yes, persecution.

But also spiritual fruit. And as a result of that spiritual fruit, the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, the life of the man or the woman of God can expect true fellowship. True converts are going to walk with true converts.

A man that loves God, a woman that loves God, will love to talk to other saints that love God. There's such a wonderful communion. I love to talk with saints, with men and women that love Jesus Christ.

There's such a unison of spirit. There's such a beautiful harmony. I never knew anything about before I was born again.

You see, it's hard to commune with lukewarm believers because their heart's not in the same direction. They're always looking down to the things of this world. But when you meet a saint that's just caught up with the glory of God, oh how the hours pass by.

You're there three hours and it feels like five minutes have gone by. It refreshes you. It restores you.

It's not worked up. You don't have to manufacture it. It's sent by the Holy Spirit.

It's that love and flow between saint and saint. Men of God, women of God love to be with men and women of God. And let me say, young people here, if you're not married, a man of God is to marry a woman of God.

And a woman of God is to marry a man of God. If you're flirting about with some girl or some guy that doesn't know anything about God, it's time to take out your mobile phone. Give him a little call.

Set's over with. We're finished. You don't want to go to heaven with me.

I don't want to go to hell with you. I'm going God's way. A man of God marries a woman of God.

And a woman of God marries a man of God. Aaron sharpens Aaron. Amos 3 verse 3 says, The two cannot walk together except they be agreed.

Paul never lost that blazing love for Christ. It increased day by day. He fellowshiped with men and women of God and ignited them with his holy zeal.

You see, unfortunately, I tend to see that many people, instead of pressing on for God, in depths of gratitude and godliness, people tend to stunt in their growth in God. I've just seen them become lukewarm and become apathetic in the things of God. They get caught up with all the things of this world.

A thousand things that don't mean anything. Their faith almost becomes stunted and they almost cease to grow. But those that are sold out for Christ continue to grow even in times of drought.

The Scripture tells us that our souls shall be satisfied by His goodness and His rivers of mercy even in the desert land, even in the dry ground. The true distinguishing mark of the disciple of Jesus Christ is hunger. Hunger is a sign of life.

If I took a corpse, I stuck him just there in the pulpit, and I put his favourite bar of chocolate in his nose, and I invited all of you just to leave the door, and we'll leave that corpse there with a bar of chocolate for the next 15 minutes, I can absolutely guarantee you that by the time we walk in here, that chocolate bar is still going to be sitting in his nose. How come? He's dead. Dead people aren't hungry.

Dead people don't want to eat. You see, someone tells me they're a convert of Jesus Christ. Someone tells me they've been born again.

I don't see hunger for God. I don't see a desire to pray. I don't see a desire to seek out of the Word of God.

I don't see a desire to be in fellowship. Hunger is a sign of life. And if there's no hunger, it's a pretty good sign that there's no life there.

There's been no new birth. There's no new nature. We can have fellowship, true fellowship with those that love Jesus Christ, with those that wait upon Him.

You know how it is when you meet these believers, brothers and sisters in the Lord, and the conversation is just a delight. It flows because Christ is the center, and you just don't want to leave. I've just spent the week here down in Southern Ireland here, and some of my best friends in the world have just, you know, let me spend this week in their houses, have been there visiting them.

And this week has just flown by like it were two minutes, talking about Jesus. Sharing the gospel with one another. Talking about the things of God.

It's so effortless. You don't have to conjure anything up when you're with saints of God. It's the most beautiful, harmonious thing.

This is God. You know, God says where there's that harmony, He sends blessing and everlasting life. Saints of God commune with other saints.

That's true communion. You can't have that with a lukewarm believer because the lukewarm man or woman is living in sin. They've got filthy hearts.

They don't have clean hands and a pure heart. And your fire, your passion for Christ exposes them for what they really are. They see you as a threat, you see.

They can't open up to you because they're hiding something here. So they can't come into the fullness of this conversation about Jesus. Mark my words, the lukewarm man or woman doesn't want to be found out.

If I've ever learned anything in my spiritual walk with God, it's that the first thing that sin does is cut your zeal for God. Sin tries to choke that spiritual life. It's the pure man that is free.

It's the pure man that's as bold as a lion. Purity and holiness. The man that's trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ is a free man to burn for the glory of God.

With such people, you can have true godly fellowship and you don't have to manufacture anything. Do you have people like that in your life? Do you have godly friends? Do you have brothers and sisters with whom you spend your time? Do you draw near to them? Do you pray with them? Do you share the Scriptures with them? You've got to look for men and women of God. Spend time with them.

Learn from them. Teach them. And comfort them.

We've seen the heart of such a man. We've seen the life of such a man. And I said we'd also talk about the reward of such a man.

The reward of the apostle Paul. Paul's life was one of a sold out, fire filled, love constrained nature. Persecution everywhere, but spiritual fruit and true fellowship.

Paul from his conversion was possessed by a vision of the glory of God. Nothing else could move him from a stability in Jesus Christ. He knew that Christ was coming soon.

And that hope moved him to move forth in obedience unto the Gospel. He forsook all that he may know the glory of God. He tells us in Philippians 3 verse 8, I count it all as loss.

As loss for the surpassing knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That word there, loss, comes from the world of the nautical world, of the sea and of ships. And the word loss there in Greek comes from a context when a ship was going over the sea.

And when a ship was sinking and just about to go underneath the water, what the people on board had to do was start to throw off all the goods and all the cargo and all the produce that was on that ship in an attempt to keep that boat afloat. And all those goods that were left upon the sea, they were called loss. They were called loss.

In other words, Paul's saying, everything that's not Christ is getting right out of my life. I can't afford to hold on to anything that's not Jesus Christ. I'm going on in this race.

I'm pressing on. I'm going to keep fighting the good fight. No time for anything in the flesh.

I must press on for Jesus Christ. Some have had their faith shipwrecked because they love the things of the world. But what was it that led Moses to forsake all the riches of Egypt to go and follow God? It was a

vision of the glory of God.

A vision of the glory of God. If you've been called to preach the gospel, never stoop down to be a president or a king or some lawyer or politician. You've got to be single-eyed, one purpose, governed by the Holy Spirit of the Most High God.

Paul out-preached. Paul out-prayed every believer of his generation and reckoned it all to the pure grace of God. Nothing else.

Ecclesiastes concludes by telling us that man's chief end in this life is to glorify God. Many people fail in this high and lofty calling. They don't share the same spirit as Moses, of Stephen, of Paul.

We're looking for a brand of men that are going to say, well, if they converted the preaching of the gospel, glory to God. If they're born again, glory to God. If they repent and are baptized, glory to God.

If there's awakening, glory to God. But God's also looking for people that not only are going to say this, but people that are going to say, well, if they stone me, glory to God. If they persecute me, glory to God.

If they try to cut my throat, glory to God. If they murder me, glory to God. In all things, in life and death, let Christ be glorified.

Let all men say, glory to God in the highest. Glory to God in the highest. I'm not important.

I don't need anything. I'm a new one. It must be Jesus Christ.

Let His glory be our preoccupation. Let Christ be all in all in our lives. Nothing else mattered to Paul.

He was moved by a vision of God's glory, pressing on for that wonderful reward. Such a man is granted into the glory of God and is approved by the smile of Jesus Christ. You don't want to say the smile of Christ.

I mean His approval. Stephen, that faithful martyr, stayed faithful to the end. And the Scripture says, Stephen looks up and sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of the Father.

Heresy, you say. Heresy. Hebrews tells us Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father.

Ah, but Jesus, it says here in Acts, stood up. You know what I believe? I believe that the Son says to the Father, Father, if it's alright with you, I think I'll stand in honour of my faithful martyr. Stephen, I see you, son.

I've seen your faithfulness. I've seen what you've gone through. I've seen your hell.

I've seen your tribulation. But you've been faithful, son. Up you come now, and you come to the kingdom.

I think I'll just stand in honour of my faithful martyr. Christ is watching your faithfulness. Christ sees your tears.

Christ knows what you're going through. Be faithful. Don't give in.

Don't throw in the towel. Keep pressing on for the love of God and the love of His Gospel, a proof of God. Paul knew the smile of Jesus Christ upon his life.

He that is holy and righteous delights in Him that is holy and righteous. Christ in us, Christ in us is a great delight to our Heavenly Father. The Father delights in the Son, and when that Son is manifest in us, it is a pleasure to God Almighty.

He loves those that keep themselves pure as He is pure. Christ refused to dwell in corruption, and Paul exactly the same. He had the hope of glory within, and so he pressed on.

Christ the Head. Christ the Master. Christ the reason for my waking up in the morning.

Christ the reason for my living. Christ the reason for my dying. I hear Him right from an old little prison cell.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. He is all in all. And if you don't have Christ, I'm not interested.

Where is Christ? I want to know Him. I want to press on in the knowledge of God. Paul knew that day was drawn near when he was going to hear those words, Well done, well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter thy in to the joy of the Lord. And as Paul was so giving up to Christ, it was Jesus Himself living through His faithful servant, carrying out His will through Him. The yielded vessel.

I would give everything to hear those words from the lips of Jesus. D. L. Moody once said, he said he was born again, he heard a man preaching in the streets, and the man said, the world has yet to see what God can do through one man fully yielded up to Him. Moody went from that new birth experience, growing in God, started to preach the Gospel, wherever he went preaching, preaching the Word of God, times he faced persecution too.

After all the years of ministry, after all the years of serving God, he comes to the end of his life, and he asks the great man of God in his deathbed, what would you like to be remembered as your final words? And he says, the world has still yet to see what God can do through one man fully yielded up to Him. He still believed there is a generation, there is a people, there are men and women that are going to rise up with fire of God Almighty to preach the Gospel in midst of a dark and perverse generation. A man that lives on these lines, a woman that has this spirit, is a man or a woman with whom Christ can do business.

Paul knew the smile of Jesus Christ upon his life. The reward for Paul's heart and Paul's life was the smile of Christ, was the glory of God, and as a last point, eternal peace and rest. Eternal peace and rest.

For over 30 years this man was treated like a diseased dog wherever he went. Every corner they wanted this man of God dead. He was the most wanted man on hell's hit list.

Over three decades of torment and trials, of affliction and trouble, but what does that all compare to eternity with Jesus Christ? 30 years suffering, 30 years in trouble, but now he's with Jesus. It's all been forgot about. Paul said if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together.

Yes, there's going to be a time of suffering. Yes, you're going to go through hard times. If I told you that you were going to have a life free of problems, I'd be a false prophet.

That's what a little prosperity man is going to tell you. If you've any problems, you're outside the will of God. If that's the truth, then none of the disciples were ever in the will of God.

Jesus himself wasn't even a single day in the will of God. There will be problems. There will be suffering, but there's coming a greater glory.

Paul says the glory that's coming, he says I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. I know I'm going through hell. I know I'm going through high water.

I know sometimes I don't know where to look. I don't know if I can even cry anymore, but there's coming a glory. There's coming a day.

Christ is going to speak. Christ will protect me. Christ will take me through to the end.

Yes, suffering. Yes, pain. But the glory's just around the corner.

Eternity's just ahead. The faithful for the love of God. The faithful for His Gospel.

In Jesus' name. The Puritan Jonathan Edwards said of Paul, he lived after his conversion not much more than 30 years. And in those 30 years, he did more than a thousand men do in an age.

Man of God T. Walker wrote a book. He said about Paul, he said, Paul followed the gleam of his grand vocation in spite of suspicious friends, scornful skeptics, sectarian bigots, superstitious pagans, self-seeking whirlings, well-intentioned though mistaken fellow Christians. But right on to the end, his was the glory of going on and yet to be.

Walker also tells us a story in those pages of his book about a man by the name of Reverend Coilard and his devoted wife who opened up a work amongst the Barutzi people in the Zambezi region. He says, they encountered untold obstacles. Their journey there to begin with was one of a long series of disasters.

Sickness among the followers, bullocks dying by the road, their goods stolen, and so on. And when they reached their final destination and commenced their work, trouble after trouble followed. One of their fellow missionaries proved unfaithful, crocodiles got their pigs and dogs, hyenas seized their goats, and when their long-expected stores arrived from Paris, box after box was found riddled with white ants.

With all the goods destroyed, thieves forced open the locks and stole their tents. But this man of God, Reverend Coilard, a servant of Jesus Christ, born slave of the Lord, could write with calm resoluteness behind us these waves, saying but small things, God will grant each of us not merely to hold on, but to go from strength to strength. And his wife could write at that same time, we have never been so happy in mission work as we are right now.

For how can this be? We live in a generation, you get a little believer, cracks his nail, or gets a bruise in his leg, he starts to cry and he wants to go to hospital. People, men and women that are giving their lives, saying God's with me, I can rejoice in the midst of the torment, I can rejoice in the midst of the trial, God will give me strength, God will lead me on. When again they had erected their new house with infinite pain and trouble, and to their dismay, it was seen on fire a few days later, Coilard looked around to see what he could get to save his house from the burning flames, and he said to his wife, we must save the harmonica, for we shall yet live to sing.

We will sing. We will rejoice. Yes, there's hell.

Yes, there's torment. Yes, there are problems, but we are going to keep singing. We are going from glory to glory, from strength to strength, in the power and in the might of Almighty God.

If God before me, then let all hail, let all the world, let all men be against me. One with God's majority sings. Let God before you, and all men, and all churches, and all religious organizations be against you.

Press on to God. Believe God, the faithful to the end. They held on to the end, and their bodies lie buried in Baruch Zealand under a great tree.

No, it wasn't easy. No one ever said it would be easy, but they gave their all. There with Jesus forevermore, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, fading not away, reserved for us in the heavens, moths not going to eat anything there, no thieves are going to steal anything there, not on your bottom dollar.

That's where our treasure is. Eternity is just around the corner. It's not too long, saints.

It's not too long. So do not grow weary. Keep pressing on.

Keep seeking Jesus Christ. Keep pressing on to the fullness of God. It will be worth it all.

It's going to be worth it all. There's a day of great recompense. There's a day when Christ will give the prize.

He will give that crown of life that loved the Lord, Jesus Christ. If we march on as they marched on, with their heart and their life, as we've seen with the Apostle Paul in this evening, we also shall know the reward. Paul encountered demons and enemies everywhere he went.

They lasted for a moment. Those demons, those enemies, they're down now suffering an eternity of hell. Paul's with Jesus Christ.

And I can tell you something, he'd be prepared to go through those 30 years of torment just to hear those words again. Well done, good and faithful servant. It's worth it all.

It's going to be worth it all. Keep pressing on. Are you willing to walk down that same path of self-suffering and sacrifice? Are you willing to press on with Christ? Are you willing to keep believing on in the trials? God is with me.

The recompense is just ahead. I don't know when we're going to see each other again, but remember these words. Be faithful to God.

Keep seeking Christ. Whatever you do, don't compromise the gospel. Preach the Word.

End season and out of season. Seek God. Seek God.

And glorify Jesus Christ above all things. Oh God, we praise you, Lord. You're worthy of all glory.

You're worthy of all praise. We magnify the love of God. Oh God, we render praise to you, God.

We bow down in worship to a great sovereign, almighty God. God, I pray for every heart in this place. Touch their lives.

Touch them, God. Raise up preachers. Raise up prophets.

Raise up evangelists. Raise up young men and women. Fill with the fire of the Holy Ghost.

Oh, let us be a people that seek you. Seek your faith. Oh God of Jacob, move in our midst.

Move in our midst. Holy Spirit, have your way. For Jesus' sake.

For Jesus' sake. We'll bless you, Lord. We'll bless you, Lord.

Blessed be your name. Blessed be your name. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Blessed be your precious name. Blessed be your precious name.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

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