

(Manitoba 2001) God Seeks for Faithful People

by Zac Poonen

God seeks for faithful people to stand up for Him and follow His call, even in the face of difficulty and opposition.

Duration: 1:23:27

Scripture: Ezekiel 22:23

Topics: "Blessing Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the issue of preachers and organizations in India who use big crusades and gatherings to attract crowds and collect money. He emphasizes that these actions often do not lead to any real impact or change. The speaker also highlights how many young people who were called to be prophets have been led astray by the devil through wrong marriages, pursuit of wealth, and joining organizations for personal gain. The sermon concludes with a reminder that we cannot take anything with us when we leave this world, so our focus should be on living a life that honors God and seeks His kingdom.

Transcript

There is a verse in Ezekiel, which I'm sure many of you know, but I want to take a little expression from there to begin what I want to share this morning. It's in Ezekiel, in chapter twenty-two. In Ezekiel twenty-two, I want you to listen to this passage that begins in verse twenty-three and try and see how it applies to our situation in many parts of the world, actually, in Christian organizations, in Christian churches, in many groups today.

The word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, say to this church, or whatever it is, you're a land or a people that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her preachers in her midst, her prophets, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives, they have taken treasure and precious things.

They have made many widows in the midst of her. Her preachers and priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the profane.

They have not taught people the difference between the unclean and the clean. They hide their eyes from my sabbaths and I'm profaned among them. The sabbath pictures the life of rest that God brings us to, the life of assurance of salvation, the life of freedom from tension, depression, condemnation,

discouragement.

And the preachers today have hidden God's people from that wonderful life of rest that Jesus came to give. Her rulers are like wolves, tearing the prey by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get this honest gain. And that gain can be money, it can be power, it can be influence, it can be a comfortable lifestyle, it can be anything at the cost of God's people.

And her preachers and prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions. This is a day when it's popular to talk about visions, about people who say they have seen angels and heard all types of things, and a lot of them are false. And divining lies for saying, thus says the Lord.

That's another popular expression in certain groups today. They raise their hands, shut their eyes, and in a squeaky voice say, thus says the Lord, and say something, and there are a lot of dumb believers who swallow that, thinking God Almighty is speaking. When the Lord has not spoken, and there's hardly anybody to challenge them.

The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery. They have wronged the poor and needy and oppressed the stranger without any justice. And now listen to this.

And the Lord says, in the midst of all this, I searched for a man. Could be a woman. If God doesn't find a man, He will find a woman.

We read in the book of Judges, that when God could not find any man to judge Israel, He chose Deborah. God's not going to allow His people to suffer just because all the men are lazy, all the men are without a backbone. He found a woman with a backbone, Deborah.

And if you want to know the condition of the men in those days, when Deborah went to, when God said this, the army of the enemy has got to be defeated, you got to go and fight with them. Deborah went to the bravest man in Israel, Barak, and said to him, go and lead God's people. And you know what he said? Sister, please come with me, then I'll go, I'm scared.

That was the bravest man in Israel. No wonder God chose Deborah. And I see so many people, Christians today, men, who don't have any backbone, who don't stand up for the truth, who don't confront the false preachers and the prophets, because they are seeking their own.

May God raise up women to put these men to shame. More Deborahs. That's the way to put these men to shame, who don't have any backbone, who know the truth, but won't stand up to those who are leading God's people astray.

God doesn't need many people, He needs one man, one woman. It says, I searched for a man among them, who should stand in the gap for me, for the land, that I shouldn't destroy it. But I found no one.

Someone who will stand between God and man and say, thus says the Lord, this is what the Lord says, not all these false prophecies, not all these preaching that exploits people, that takes advantage of people. God is always, from the beginning, look for a man. Yesterday I was saying, last night, that my own conviction is the book of Job is the very first portion of inspired scripture.

And I say that because I believe from every evidence there is that Job lived before Moses and Moses wrote Genesis. And there's so many details in the book of Job, of conversations, that it is impossible that

anybody could ever have written it many years after Job died. It could not have been written centuries later.

It was written in Job's lifetime, or soon after he died. Because all that intimate discussion is there in so many chapters. And if that is the first book of inspired scripture, when God decided to write scripture for man, the first words he writes are, there was a man, Job 1-1.

There was a man named Job. And so that you don't confuse him with any other Job, he says, this is the one who lived in the land of Uz, blameless, upright, that means he had a backbone, fearing God and turning away from evil. God has always, always begun his work with a man.

Always. He's always looked for a man, like we read in that verse, I searched for a man among them who would be blameless, upright, free from the love of money, free from the love of honor, free from the fear of men, free from the fear of demons and the devil, and who will stand for me, and lead my wandering people back to me. I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, you could be that person.

Why not? There is no partiality with God. When he searched for a man, he could have found anyone among them. I've often thought about the time when God went to Ur of the Chaldees, and supposing, yeah, well this is how it was, it says they were all worshipping idols, including Abraham.

So the Bible says, and God found Abraham, he was 75 years old, he had retired and he had settled down and built his house and living comfortably there with his family. And God said to Abraham, leave this place. And Abraham said, where am I supposed to go? I'm not going to tell you.

You trust me and follow me, your walk is going to be a walk of faith. Day by day, I'll take you to another land, if you follow me, I will bless you and your descendants after you, the whole world will be blessed through you. But you've got to trust me.

I'm not going to show you where you're going to go. When the children of Israel left Egypt, God didn't give them a road map through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. They didn't know.

They had to follow the cloud day by day. That's how God always leads His people. I never knew the way God was going to lead me all these 42 years that I've been a believer.

It's been day by day, I don't know where I'm going to go next week. Well, what will happen next week? We make our plans, but God can change those plans. We can make plans a year ahead, but God can change all of them.

We're to be led day by day as God leads us. And if God had told Abraham that, and Abraham had thought about it and said, well, Lord, you know, I'm living a comfortable life here, and I don't want to rock, change my lifestyle. It's easy here.

I know there's a little bit of wrong things. I know a few things are wrong here in this system, but it's comfortable. I don't want to go into this life of uncertainty.

God would have said, okay, Abraham, goodbye. And he'd have looked for somebody else. He's always searching for a man.

And you and I would never have heard of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Somebody else would have been the father of the nation of Israel. Not Abraham.

He would have missed it. Or it could have been another scenario where Abraham said, well, Lord, okay, I'm willing to trust you, but let me consult my wife and see what she thinks about it. And if Sarah had been a strong woman and said, Abraham, you're going to do nothing of the sort.

Don't get any crazy ideas. You're just getting too old and senile. That's why you think you're hearing voices and all that.

Rubbish. Just stay right here. I'm not going to change my lifestyle.

So Sarah, an handpicked husband that Abraham is, says, okay, darling, we'll stay here. And he goes back to God and says, well, God, I think I'm going to stay here. You'd never have heard of Abraham.

Now, I believe that, thank God, Abraham made the right choice. I don't know what discussion he had with Sarah. I can imagine he's going to Sarah and said, Sarah, we're packing up, we're going.

And he says, where are we? And she asked him, where are we going? He said, I don't know. And you know, it says, Sarah obeyed Abraham. Calling him Lord.

It's amazing. It says, it points her out as an example to wives. When God calls, follow.

And it says that he obeyed, not knowing where he was going. Only trusting God. Hoping for something in a city that has foundations.

And he never regretted it. No one who has ever followed that call of God and walked in faith has ever regretted it. In their whole life.

Never. That's not just been true of Abraham. He's called the father of faith.

And it says in Galatians 3, we are the children of Abraham. The spiritual Abraham. If we walk in the same faith that he had.

And that is when God searched for a man all across the earth. At one time he found Job. And he could pick up Job and point him out to Satan.

And said, you see that man? Perfect, upright man. There was a witness for God in the world at that time. One who was pure.

One who cared for the widows and the orphans. One who cared for the strangers. One who was upright.

One who made a covenant with his eyes that he would never lust with his eyes. In those days, long before Matthew chapter 5 was written. A man who was upright and who feared God and wouldn't do what was wrong.

One who says, I did not make gold, my God. Way back before Jesus ever came to earth. Without a Bible, without tapes, without meetings.

That man knew God. And did what God told him to do. And I believe people like Job will rise up against this generation.

That has got books and tapes and teachings and preachings. And still don't do one-tenth of what Job did. One who don't have one-tenth of the fear of God that Job had.

But God's always looked for a man or a woman. Who he can point out to Satan. Satan roams around the world and God says, have you seen that man? God looked for a man like Abraham.

With Job it was just all alone. God didn't do anything more than just have one man. I don't know whether his children followed in his example.

But then he found Abraham and through Abraham he produced a nation. And now in the church age, here and there in every nation, God has wanted men like that. Even today, his eyes are searching to and fro across the earth.

Looking for those whose hearts are upright and perfect and blameless. Who fear God and turn away from evil. It doesn't matter if you don't have abilities.

God can give them to you. The question is not whether you're able, but whether you're available. Are you available to God? Are you willing to forsake all your preconceived ideas? Willing to pay the price? There is a price of following Jesus.

Every man whom God has picked up has had to suffer. And certainly in the history of the church, those who have stood up for the Lord have had to suffer. But in the midst of their suffering, they've had God with them.

When you turn towards the end of Genesis, you read of another young man. I believe God usually picks up people when they are young. Seventeen, eighteen, twenty.

Twenty. That's usually I have found through the years. There are the occasional people in today, nowadays, also whom God picks up at much later age.

But it seems to me, as I've read church history and I've read different biographies of godly men and missionaries, it seems as if God has spoken to them in their teenage years, when they're twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, and God's spoken to them and said like He said to Abraham, will you forsake all and follow me? And you say, where Lord? I'm not going to tell you. You've got to trust me and walk day by day. You've got to give up your ambitions.

And it looks as if you're going to get nothing in return for all that you forsake. But years later, that's how God called me. I was nineteen and God told me to give up everything.

I had tremendous ambitions in the world. And God spoke to me and I didn't know where I was going. Now, when I look back, oh, what I would have missed if I had not responded.

I think of many of you young people. I've seen so many young people in India. I remember once I asked the Lord this question.

I said, Lord, there are one thousand million people in India. Why are there hardly any prophets for one thousand million people? Have you forgotten about this land? We're almost the most populous nation in the world. And this is what the Lord spoke to my heart, that he had raised up many, many young people to be prophets.

But most of them fell by the wayside, trapped by the devil into a wrong marriage, into unfaithfulness with money, into the pursuit of some honor on this earth, some wealth, some gain for themselves. They joined up with some Christian organization so that they could have a comfortable lifestyle. And they missed it.

It's very easy. The devil, whenever the devil sees some wholehearted, zealous young brother or sister who's going to be a threat to his kingdom, he's got his eyes on that person. He says, now how can I lead that person astray? How can I make him cool off? How can I destroy his effectiveness for God? And he's got six thousand years of experience.

He's got all types of tactics up his sleeve to trap people. And he succeeds very often. Fear.

Fear is one of the greatest weapons of the devil. Oh, what will happen? What will happen? I'm sure he told Abraham that. No, don't do that.

What will happen? Think of the consequences. What are the consequences of obeying God? Tell me. What are the consequences of obeying God? You'll be blessed.

Those are the consequences. Of course, you'll suffer a little from human beings. So what? If God's on your side, what does it matter? Through the years, I've discovered in various situations, the opposition has got thicker and thicker and thicker as I've gone on with the Lord.

It hasn't got easier, I'll tell you. And God has encouraged me so much in the different situations that I feel I've come to the place where I can say, God, if you're on my side, I can tackle all six billion people in the world turning against me. All six billion.

And coupled with all the demons of hell also. I just want God with me. If God be for me, who can be against me? God wants young people who will say that.

If God is with me, who in the world can stand against me? What are these few people in my little group or organization? Let all six billion turn against me and all the millions of demons stand against me. I only want God on my side. I want Jesus with me.

I can conquer all of them. My enemies will not triumph over me. You know that song, that Psalm of David, which we sing in the chorus in Psalm 25, it says, let me not be ashamed.

Do not let my enemies triumph over me. We sing it a little differently in India. And we sing it, I will not be ashamed and my enemies will not triumph over me.

We don't say, oh God, don't let me be ashamed. Don't let my enemies triumph over me. We say, I will not be ashamed.

My enemies will not triumph over me. How can they ever triumph over me if God is on my side? And all that I have to do to have God on my side is have a clear conscience and humble myself. Shall I make it extremely simple? Keep your conscience clear and humble yourself.

Go down. Don't ever seek the high places. Those are the people who get shot down by the devil.

Go down. Take the low place. Be a sermon.

Don't seek honor. Don't seek position. Don't seek to have money in your hands.

Those are the Judas's who get destroyed. I've seen it. I've seen people destroyed by money because they got so much in their hands like Judas Iscariot.

God's money. And I've seen the way they waste it. And I've seen them destroyed.

That's one of the tactics of the devil. And it's pretty high up on his list. It's tactic number one or two.

Women, money, pride, honor. And he destroys them so that they can't be useful to God. Judas Iscariot was not a traitor when the Lord called him.

Jesus went around, like it says in Ezekiel 22, 30, I searched for a man. He went around looking, looking, looking. He gathered people.

Many people came to hear him. And then there were a number of disciples, number, who appeared to be interested. And he preached to them and he preached to them and he preached to them.

And then one night, Jesus went along to a mountain. You read about it in Luke 6, 12. And he prayed.

It's the only place in the Gospels where it says he prayed the whole night. He didn't even pray the whole night in Gethsemane. But this is the one place in the Bible where it says Jesus prayed the whole night.

He never slept that night. And he wasn't going through an endurance test or he wasn't just praying all night to be able to testify later in a meeting that I prayed all night. No, he was praying all night because it was serious business with God he was doing that night.

What was he doing? And whenever you want to know what Jesus was doing in prayer, you just read the next verse and you understand what he was praying about. Because Jesus always got his answers immediately. It says when he was baptized, he was praying and the next verse says, Heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit came upon him.

What was Jesus praying about? He was praying that the Holy Spirit would come upon him. Even Jesus needed to pray to receive the Holy Spirit upon him. Who are we to think that we'll get it without prayer? And here we read Jesus prayed all night.

And what's the next verse say? And then he called his disciples in the morning and he picked out 12. He got those names from God. That night he'd been praying, Father, I've got these 60, 70 people who seem to be all very interested.

Now, don't let me make a mistake here. Remember, he lived as a man. I mean, if he lived here with the powers of God, then of course there was no need for him to pray at all.

He could have just slept. God doesn't need to pray. But he was God, but he kept aside those powers in order to be an example for us.

He was like a multi-millionaire who would not use his credit card in heaven because he wanted to live at our level. At \$20 a month, like many people in India live, to teach us how to live. Oh yeah, he was a millionaire.

He was God. He had a credit card, but he never used it because he couldn't be an example for this poor man who doesn't have a credit card. And he prayed, because we got to pray.

And he limited himself. He prayed and he prayed. And he said, I want to be sure.

And God put in his mind those 12 names. And in the morning, there were so many of these disciples. Can you imagine these 60, 70 sitting around and Jesus calling them and saying, OK, Simon, you, Andrew,

James, your brother John, Philip.

And everybody's hoping they're going to be called. They don't even know how many he's calling, whether it's 30 or 40. And finally he's picked the last one.

And you also, Judas Iscariot, do you think Jesus was playing games? Do you think he called a man who was a crook just to fulfill scripture? You don't understand Jesus. He wasn't acting. It says very clearly here that Judas Iscariot became Luke 6, 16, a traitor.

That was later. He wasn't a traitor when he was born. When you see a baby become a man.

He wasn't a man when he was born. What does it mean when it says a baby became a man? He was a baby and he became a man. What does it mean when it says Judas Iscariot became a traitor? He wasn't a traitor before.

He was as wholehearted and zealous as all the other eleven. Jesus had prayed all night. And God didn't make a mistake.

Jesus didn't make a mistake. God does not deal with us as we are going to be in the future. He deals with us as we are today.

Because his name is not I will be or I was. His name is I am. He lives in the present.

God lives in that eternal present tense. There is no I will be or I was with God. I am that I am.

He deals with us. He deals with you as you are right now. And if you are a wholehearted, zealous brother or sister, God will mightily bless you.

Even if he knows that five years from now, you're going to be a first-rate backslider. He won't deal with you. Even though he knows you're going to be a backslider.

Even though he knows you're going to betray him. He will not deal with you as a backslider. He'll deal with you as a wholehearted believer.

Because that's what you are today. And if you're a backslider today, even though you God knows that two years from now, you're going to be a zealous man on fire for God. He's not going to treat you like a zealous man on fire for God.

He's going to treat you like a backslider, because that's what you are today. God deals with us as we are today. And Judas Iscariot was a wholehearted, zealous young man, and God dealt with him as he was right then.

And said, come, Jesus, come be my disciple. And I believe that Judas Iscariot was the most intelligent, and the sharpest, and the cleverest, and the shrewdest among all twelve. Jesus didn't send these twelve to a Bible seminary, but if he had, I think most of them would have failed.

Perhaps Judas would have got a degree. The others would have dropped out. They were sincere, but they were not sharp and shrewd and clever and smart like Judas.

Why do I say Judas Iscariot was sharp and shrewd and clever and smart? Because he lived three and a half years with these twelve people, day and night, and they still didn't discover he was a crook. Don't you

have to be smart to be that? To move around with somebody for three and a half years, to talk the right language and say the right thing, and cheat on the funds and all that, and nobody ever discovers you're a crook. To such an extent, that even when Jesus dicked, even when Jesus sat around the table and said, that one of you is going to betray me, they didn't all look at Judas Iscariot.

That's one... You know, they had a lot of weaknesses, those disciples, but I'll tell you one good thing they had. That when God said, when Jesus said, one of you is all going to betray me, they each said, Lord, is it going to be me? We don't say that. We think, yeah, I know who that's going to be.

It's that one. I've had an eye on him for quite a while. Those disciples were better than us.

They judged themselves. They said, Lord, I feel weak. It may be me who's going to betray you.

And they never looked at Judas Iscariot. He was so sharp. And it says, even though Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas and said, this is the one who's going to betray me, they still didn't believe that when Jesus said, that which thou doest, go and do quickly, they thought he was going to give some money to the poor.

Can you imagine that they couldn't believe, even after Jesus pointed it out, he was so sharp. They said, it cannot be him. It cannot be him.

He had covered his tracks so beautifully. He was clever. But the Bible says, God catches the clever in their own craftiness.

He catches the wise in their own craftiness. What was it that destroyed Judas Iscariot? It wasn't women. He wasn't fooling around with women.

It wasn't pride and honor. It was unfaithfulness with money. He had access to all the funds of the organization.

And he could spend it as he liked. Nobody would question him. There are Christian organizations like that today, where people have access to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

And nobody is to question how they spend it. They say, we're not cheating. It's been entrusted to us.

We do it as we like. And they spend it on themselves. They spend it on their families.

And the poor in those organizations suffer. They don't have a heart for them. They are lovers of themselves.

Judas Iscariot has got many followers today in many, many organizations. They don't always get exposed in three and a half years. Some of them are exposed after 35 years.

But they'll never escape. That's for sure. They'll destroy themselves, and their fate will be that of Judas Iscariot.

But think that God had picked Judas Iscariot to be one of His servants. He searched for a man, and He found him. But he went astray.

The devil had said, this fellow I'm going to destroy. You know, I've often thought that if Judas had been faithful with all that money at his disposal, if he'd been so faithful, the story might have been entirely

different. He may have written the episodes of Paul in the Scripture.

But because he missed that opportunity, God picked up another clever man called Paul who humbled himself and was so faithful with money, he wouldn't touch money that other people had given. He worked himself, and earned his own money, and served the Lord. And that's the man God picked up to say, you write my episodes.

Yeah, if you want to be faithful to God, if you want God to use you, one of the first things you've got to do is to be faithful with money. A man who's not faithful with money can never, never receive divine riches. Luke chapter 16.

It says here, Luke chapter 16 and verse 11, If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, listen to this. These are the words of Jesus. Unrighteous mammon refers to money and material things.

If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? You know what the true riches are? The word Jesus uses, true riches. What does that mean? How many of you know that dollars are false riches? I wish we would see that. If only we would see it, it would be our salvation.

Yeah, they are riches, but they are false riches. There's a pleasure in sin. The Bible says, Moses gave up the pleasures of sin, so it says there is pleasure in sin, but it's a false pleasure.

There is another pleasure, Psalm 16 speaks about. In thy presence there is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. That's another type of pleasure.

Those are the true pleasures. And one day when we get up to glory, I believe this with all my heart, that the sense of God's presence and fellowship with Him is going to exceed any type of sexual pleasure you ever had in the world. Any type of pleasure you get out of fishing or yachting or having a good house or having a good car, you name it.

Whatever your pleasure is, this will be a million times greater fellowship with God. And God gives us a foretaste of that on earth. And when we get a foretaste of that pleasure, these other pleasures, we see them as false.

They disappear. Yeah? False riches and true riches. When you see true riches, the false riches may be there, but they don't have any value anymore.

It's something like when the sun rises. Let's say the stars are a picture of false riches. And let's say the sun is a picture of true riches.

What happens when the sun rises? Do the stars get extinct? Are there stars in the sky right now? Sure. You can't see them. That's all.

They're there. Every star that ever existed is there right now. Why is it you can't see them? Because the sun has risen in all its glory.

And we're all born into the night. We're all born into the night in this world. And in the night we see these false pleasures of sex, money, food, comfort, grand house, grand car.

So many comforts and pleasures and gluttony and immorality all come out of being taken up with these false pleasures. And then when the sun rises, the sun of righteousness rises, if it's really risen, you find it all disappears. It's there.

It's there, but I can't see them. It's there, money is there, but it doesn't take up my heart anymore. If you are faithful with unrighteous men, you will get the true riches.

You know what the true riches are? The anointing of the Holy Spirit, not just once in a date in the past, I don't care for dates in the past, but right now, a continuous anointing of the Holy Spirit. That's the true riches. The divine nature, God's own nature that makes me hate sin and love righteousness.

You know it's easy to do righteousness when you love it? It's difficult to do righteousness when you don't love it. That's why a lot of Christians have a great struggle doing righteousness, because they don't love it. It's like being asked to marry a girl whom you don't love, and your father holds a shotgun to your head and says, marry her.

And that's how a lot of people are doing righteousness. They want to do it, because there's a shotgun to their head. They'll get punished if they don't do it.

But does anybody have to do that when you're asked to marry a girl whom you love with all your heart? No. When you love righteousness, you'll even go sneakily and go and marry her. You'll go sneakily and do righteousness, because you love righteousness.

You'll do it in the dark. Righteousness. And you will hate iniquity.

Then it's easy to avoid it. It's very difficult to avoid iniquity if you don't hate it. Try telling a pig not to eat garbage.

Very difficult. It loves it. This is the problem with a lot of people.

They get preachers telling them, give up righteousness. Give up sin. And they can't give up sin.

Give up the love of money. You can't give it up. Do righteousness.

They can't do it, because they've never been brought to the place where they love righteousness. And they hate iniquity. And you know what happened to Jesus when He loved righteousness and hated iniquity? Have you read that wonderful verse in Hebrews 1.9? Years ago, when I was seeking God, saying, Lord, what is the secret of rejoicing always? That was my great pursuit years ago.

I said, I read in the Word of God that I must rejoice in the Lord always. And I was not rejoicing in the Lord always. I was not rejoicing... In the beginning it was sometimes.

It went on to many times. But it was never always. And yet I had read in the Word of God, rejoice in the Lord always.

Now whenever you see the Word of God preach a standard like that in that area or any other area, and you find your level is down here, you'll find a tremendous temptation in your heart, brought by the devil, to twist that scripture and bring it down to your level, and say, I'm alright. What that verse means is what I'm doing. And if you do that, and that type of manipulation and dishonesty with scripture, I'll tell you what will happen.

You're doomed. You are doomed to live at that level forever. But if you leave scripture there and you're honest and say, well Lord, that's where I should be, but this is where I am.

And you get a little better and you say, Lord, it's still higher than where I am. You know what'll happen? One day you'll reach there. Because God sees you're honest.

He'll take you up there. But if He doesn't see you're honest, you're a manipulator and you're a twister of scripture, and you bring it down to your level, you're doomed to live there forever. Through riches, divine nature.

When I was seeking God, what is the secret, Lord, of rejoicing in the Lord always? The Lord pointed me to Hebrews 1.9. He loved, Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore, therefore, He was anointed with the oil of gladness above all His companions. I'm one of His companions.

You're one of His companions. How did Jesus get the oil of gladness more than all of us? Because He loved righteousness more than all of us? Not because He did it, but He loved it. And of course, naturally He did it.

And He hated iniquity more than all of us? That is the secret. And then I began to pray. I said, Lord, I don't want to just do righteousness.

They did that in the Old Testament. I just don't want to avoid evil. Job did that.

He avoided evil. What's the advantage I have over Job if I receive the Holy Spirit? Now, if I have not received the Holy Spirit, OK, then being as good as Job is good enough. Being as good as Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist is good enough.

But even that many Christians don't reach. But now that I have received the Holy Spirit, if I have really received the Holy Spirit, what should it produce in me? Something which these men didn't have. It's not just turning away from evil.

It is hating evil. It's not just doing righteousness, but loving righteousness. We'll go out of the way to do things if we love it.

We'll run away from things we hate. What do you do when you see a prairie fire coming through? You don't just stand around. You don't wait for somebody to tell you, hey, I think you should move from here, you know.

You run. You run for your life. Because you hate that.

You know what it will do to you. Why is it we see so many young people fooling around with sin, standing around when they see sin coming closer and closer and closer? They haven't seen its danger. They don't hate it.

We've got to get a generation in our time who have learned that righteousness is good for them. Holiness is like health. How many of us sitting here are scared of health? Health.

Perfect health. Are you scared of that word? Why are we scared of perfect holiness? Because the devil's told us health is good for us. Holiness is not.

Because the devil's told us health will make you happy. Holiness will make you miserable. You know why you think health will make you happy? Because you see healthy people so cheerful and happy.

And you see lots of people who preach holiness, long-faced and miserable. But that's because they've got a false holiness. They've got a holiness that's produced from rules and regulations that never came out of Divine nature.

True riches. True riches are the Divine nature. True riches are the anointing of God's Holy Spirit upon us so that every word you speak to somebody even in an ordinary conversation at home will go like an arrow to their heart.

Do you want them? I wanted Divine nature. I wanted the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I remember as a young man reading this verse in 1 Samuel.

That's an amazing verse. In 1 Samuel, in chapter 3, and verse 19. 1 Samuel, chapter 3, verse 19.

It says, Thus Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground. And I read that as a young man as I began to preach when I was 22 years old. And I said, Lord, will you do that for me? What you did for Samuel.

Can you do that for me? What you did for Samuel. That all my life, not a word that I speak in the name of Jesus will fall to the ground. Empty.

Every word will go like an arrow to people's hearts. Whether I'm sitting talking to people at a table or in my living room or whether I'm standing in a pulpit. It doesn't make a difference.

Many of you may never stand in a pulpit. But we do sit around a table talking. We do sit in our living rooms talking to our neighbors and visitors and relatives.

Think that if God can do this for you. That the words you speak go like arrows. They may hate you for it.

Most of the prophets were hated because their words went like arrows. But God can be with you. The Lord was with Samuel.

These are the true riches. The true riches are not houses and lands and property and wealth and good food and a good car. These are not true riches.

Those are all false riches. They disappear like the stars when the sun rises. It's the divine nature.

It's the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is revelation on the Word of God. On the secrets of God which are hidden in His Word.

That's another thing I wanted. Basically, I would say there are three things I wanted in my life. Right from my youth.

One was God's nature. I wanted to be like Jesus in my behavior, in my thought patterns, in my speech, in my attitude to money, in my attitude to women, in my attitude to everything. The way Jesus was.

In other words, I wanted the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon my life with supernatural abilities to share His Word because I was a timid, shy, reserved little young fellow afraid to stand in front of people. And I said, I can never serve you Lord if you don't baptize me in the Holy Spirit and fire. And the third thing I wanted

was revelation on God's Word.

I wanted to understand the mysteries of God. I wanted to understand God's secrets. Not just those things He says openly.

You know, we've got, all of us have got our secrets and the things we share openly. All of us have got certain things we won't tell anyone. And do you know that God's got certain things He doesn't tell everyone.

He is with those who fear Him. And to them He will reveal His covenant. I wanted to understand the new covenant.

The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him and to them He will reveal His covenant. That, those are the true riches. And it says here in Luke 16, I think we need to get back to that verse which you were talking about.

Luke 16 and verse 11. Luke 16, 11 it says, If you want those true riches, this is what the Lord spoke to me years ago, be faithful in the use of money. Don't use God's money careless.

As I began to seek God about what does it mean to be faithful with money. Because I wanted these true riches. I wanted divine nature.

I wanted the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I wanted revelation on the word of God. God began to show me.

You know, I've discovered one thing that God will never show you anything unless you are really serious about it. If you are really desperate and say, Lord I won't let you go unless you bless me like Jacob said. I won't let you go unless you answer that prayer.

God loves that. God loves people who do that. Encourage that type of behavior.

He said that story about the widow who went to the judge and just wouldn't let go. The judge said, get away. I don't want any time for you.

He said, no. Next morning, there she was at his door waking him up at 5 o'clock in the morning. Who's that at the door? Same old widow.

I want justice. He sent her away. She'd be back again at 9 o'clock.

He sent her away. Be back again disturbing him at lunch time. He sent her away.

Be back again disturbing his afternoon nap. The poor judge never got any rest. There was always this widow at the door.

Finally he said, OK. You read that in Luke 18. And Jesus said, Men ought always to pray like that.

You know, that's how that chapter begins. That story begins with this one sentence. Men ought always to pray and not give up.

Like this. And you know why many of your prayers have not been answered? Because you've not prayed like that widow. You pray a casual prayer, Oh God, I'd like to have this.

If it's convenient. But if I don't get it, that's fine. I've got a lot of other things to do in life in any case.

You'll never get anything. You won't get revelation. You won't get anointing.

You won't get divine nature. You won't get anything. Maybe you'll get forgiveness of sins and that's about it.

But if you pray like this, Lord, I want it. You'll get it. And if you're eager to get through riches, the Lord will show you what it means to be faithful with money.

And to be faithful with money means first of all being righteous with money. That's the lower level. That's the bare minimum.

You can't be faithful with money before you're righteous with money. It's like you can't build the superstructure of a building before you lay the foundation. And the foundation is righteousness with money which means that you clear your debts, you pay back all the money that you took wrongfully from other people in your past life.

All the people you cheated, like Zacchaeus, you give money back to them. You set your past accounts right. You go and ask forgiveness from those you've wronged.

And be righteous. And I remember the days when my wife and I were poor. And we decided we'd never get into debt.

If we lived in one little room, we'd live in one little room but we'd never get into debt. We're not going to borrow. And then God expanded our financial circle so that we could have more.

But He tested us for a long time with very, very little. And when God gives you little money, be thankful. Learn to live within that.

And if you're faithful there, God will one day expand your circle. But it's more difficult to be faithful when you have more. It's very easy to be faithful when you have less.

It's very dangerous when you have more. Because you have to account for more. Do you know that money is something which is just something that passes through our hands? It's only a loan.

Many people think that their money is theirs. No money is ours. All money is a loan from God.

And I'll prove that to you. It says that in the Bible. And if you understand this, I believe it will solve many problems.

We've got to get our thinking corrected by the Word of God. Let's turn to 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy 6. Have you read this verse carefully? If I were to ask you, do you know this verse? You'll say, yes, I know it. But I doubt whether we've read it carefully.

1 Timothy 6 and verse 7. What do you understand from this verse? We have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. You know what is the most important word in that sentence? So. Therefore.

That's how it is in this translation. Why is it you can't take anything out of this world? Because you never brought anything into it. Supposing I have a little boy, three years old, and I go visiting with him in

somebody's house.

And. And the folks in that house are kind enough to let this little boy of mine play with that little toy cars and many other things like that. And like little boys are, he puts some of those little toy cars into his pocket.

And as I leave the house, I have to check his pockets. And I take those toy cars out of his pocket and say, Son, we never brought any toy cars when we came to this house. So, when we go, we cannot take anything out either.

And so, if you look into the pockets of a dead man who is buried in a coffin, you won't find any money there. Why? Because when he came into the world, he never brought any money. He's got to leave behind those toy cars and those little bits of money that God allowed him to use when he was on earth.

Why does God take it all away? Supposing you've earned a million dollars. And God doesn't allow you to take one cent of that out of this world. Can we call God a thief? That he took away your hard-earned money? I mean, if a thief took it away from you, you'd have to call him a thief.

If a man took it away, he'd definitely be a thief if he took away the million dollars which you worked so hard to earn. Why doesn't God allow you to take one cent of it? Because the whole thing was a loan. You never realized it.

It was a loan. You came into the world with nothing. God allowed you to play with these little toys called money for a little while just to test your faithfulness.

Just to test what you'd do with it. Just to find out whether he could give you divine nature. Just to find out whether he could give you the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Just to find out whether he could give you the revelation on his word. And then when you died, the test was over. And he took away those things because they were his all along.

And if you ever thought they were yours, you were just fooling yourself. The devil deceived you. They were never yours.

They were kept with you to test you. So righteousness is to clear our debts, to make restitution. I remember when I had to make restitution forty years ago, I had to pay back four months of my salary.

And I didn't have that. I worked and worked and worked and worked and saved and emptied out my bank account and paid back restitution and my heart was full of the joy of the Lord. I got a foundation, otherwise I'd have been dragging a chain with me for forty years.

I cleared that. And then after that, on that foundation of absolute righteousness where I never cheat, where I never do anything wrong, where I don't cheat on taxes or my income tax or anything. Absolutely straightforward.

And I render to Caesar what is Caesar's. And then only I can give to God what is God's. I've often asked people this question.

To whom do you have to give money first? To Caesar or to God? Most people say God. I say that's not what Jesus said. Jesus said, first render to Caesar what is Caesar's.

And then give to God what is God's. If I've cheated money from you, I can't give that to God. I have to give it back to you first.

If I've cheated the government on taxes, that's Caesar's. God says, go and give that. I don't want somebody else's money.

It's faith. It's righteousness God wants. A lot of people are not righteous in money matters.

They are cutting corners here and there and doing wrong things. And they are wondering, oh God, why am I not anointed? Stop cutting those corners in money matters. You'll be anointed pretty soon.

You'll get divine nature. You'll overcome those wretched sins that are enslaving you. You'll get revelation when you read the Word of God.

It'll light up. What was so boring will become interesting. If you are righteous.

And once we are righteous, we've got to go on to faithfulness. To be faithful. Here it's speaking about being faithful.

He who is faithful with unrighteous mammon will be given the true riches. Faithfulness means that even when I have much, I'm careful in the use of it. See, a lot of people are very careful when they have little.

But when they get much, they become careless. Well, they may be righteous. They may say, well, this is not anybody else's money.

This is my own hard-earned money and I can live as I like. Maybe you can, but you won't get the true riches. You won't get judged for unrighteousness because you are not unrighteous.

But you'll miss God's best because of unfaithfulness. To be faithful means, and this is how every godly man has been. I remember the story of William Carey.

I don't know whether you've heard of him. Over 200 years ago, more than 200 years ago, he got up as a young man in his twenties. He got up in that Baptist church he was in England.

He was a cobbler repairing shoes. And he used to have a map of the world in his cobbler shop and he would pray for the different countries in the world that people would be saved. And he had a burden for India, which was on that map.

And the British ruled India. So he knew about India. So he got up in that Baptist church one day as a young man at a prayer meeting and said, I've got a burden to convert, to go and bring the gospel to the heathen people in India.

And there was an old Baptist elder there who got up and said, sit down young man. When God wants to convert them, He'll do it without any help from you. Thank God, William Carey didn't listen to him, even though he was a Baptist.

He got up and said, well that's fine. If these fellows won't support me, I'll go on my own. And he went.

And he came to India and he translated the Bible into so many languages. Today there are Bibles, 200 years later, in different languages in India that have saved thousands of people because one man decided to go and learn the language through many years of pain. He buried two of his children in India with

sicknesses because there was no proper medical facility.

His wife got insane. So many sufferings he went through. But boy, what a reward he's going to have in heaven.

And do you know what he told his son? One of his sons grew up to be his co-worker. His name was Felix Carey. So William Carey told his son Felix, he said, Felix, remember one thing.

The money that comes from England, from our supporters, is God's money. And God's money is the most sacred of all the money on the face of the earth. Be extremely careful how you spend it.

If you recognize your money as God's money and not yours, that's what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. You will learn self-denial. I've seen very few Christians who've learned self-denial in the area of money.

And I'm not surprised. They're still defeated with their temper. There's no anointing in their ministry.

There's no revelation on God's word. They've got a lot of bright ideas, but God's not using them to build a church. I search for a man, God says, I search for a man who will be faithful, who will be righteous and faithful.

You can't do anything about the past, but you can do something about the coming days. Be faithful. Be faithful with what God gives you.

And say, Lord, this is a loan. I want to use this before I die in the best way I can for your glory. I never want to exploit your people.

I never want to do anything unrighteous. I want to be faithful. Now, we are not to judge one another.

This is another very important area. You can be faithful with money and then destroy everything by going and judging other people, trying to find out whether they are faithful. That's none of your business.

Leave it to God to judge them, and He doesn't need your help. You just judge yourself. That's enough.

You know, I just mentioned that in passing, because I've seen so many good brothers who are so upright and so self-denying, and they mess up the whole thing by demanding that other people deny themselves just like they are denying themselves. If I don't have this, you can't have this. Who said that? That's crazy.

If you decide to deny yourself, that's just for you. Mind your own business. And let that other person have whatever he wants.

Don't judge him for his house, or his car, or his property, or anything, or his lifestyle, or anything. I am not here to judge a single person in the world. Not even my wife.

I'm here to judge myself. Period. Full stop.

That's it. Otherwise, you can live a wonderful life, you can be righteous, you can be faithful, and God's just about to pour out His Spirit upon you, and you go and judge somebody else, and the whole thing is spoiled. It's like making a beautiful dish of some wonderful, what we would call in India, curry.

A lovely tasty curry, that's fit for a king to eat, and then you go and drop one lizard inside it. Oh dear. Spoils the whole thing by judging somebody else.

So don't be faithful in money and then go judging somebody else to find out whether he's faithful. That's none of your business. Be very careful here.

We can only know ourselves. Be faithful with money matters, and God will give you true riches. Otherwise, we end up like Judas Iscariot, who had so much of money in his hands, and he was not faithful.

And that is why I believe that any system of Christianity that does not allow you to have your own money prevents you from having true spiritual riches. And there are systems in Christianity today, there are good people, but they don't allow you to earn your own money. You don't handle your own.

You can never learn generosity, you can never learn righteousness, you never learn faithfulness, because none of it is your money. You know the devil is an angel of light. At times, he uses things which sound so nice to prevent people from being anointed, endowed with power, and gradually you find the whole system becoming corrupt, and you find a few Judas Iscariots handling all the money, living in luxury, doing what they want, and some poor sincere people struggling.

Boy, what a judgment of God is going to come upon that. Such systems one day, when God brings everything into the light. He's going to do it, and He'll do it soon.

Judas Iscariot escaped for a long time, but he didn't escape forever. That's why I've always taught earn your own money, work hard, earn your own money, and learn to be faithful in it, and that is the way by which God is going to test whether He can give you all those true riches. I don't want to deprive anyone in my church of those true riches by keeping on giving them a handout, handout, handout, a gift, gift, gift, gift all the time every month, so that the fellow becomes lazy and never gets true riches.

No, I want him to be rich spiritually from God. I want him to earn his own living. I want him to earn money himself.

I want him to learn to be faithful. I want him to learn to struggle. I want him to learn to be generous.

I want him to learn to sacrifice. You know the great difference between Babylon and Jerusalem? The Bible speaks in the end of revelation of two systems. One is Babylon and the other is Jerusalem.

And I want to tell you something, Babylon is not a false religion. And I'll prove it to you right now. Babylon is not talking about all the false religions in the world.

It's talking about Christianity. And Jerusalem is also talking about Christianity. In Revelation chapter 17 and 18 talk about Babylon.

Revelation chapter 19 and 21 speak about the bride of Christ, Jerusalem. And Revelation chapter 17 and 18 calls Babylon the mother of harlots. Now how does a person become a harlot? What's the difference between a harlot and a bride? If I'm a young girl and I'm engaged, there's a picture of me engaged to Christ.

Christ is a bridegroom. Here is a young girl engaged to a man. Or let's say any young girl in the world engaged to a man who's gone out on a long journey and said, I'll come back, just wait for me.

I'm going to get married to you. And while she's waiting she fools around with some other man. Is she a faithful bride? No.

She's a harlot. But if she's not engaged to that man she can marry whom she likes. Then she's not a harlot.

You got that? That's very clear. If I say I'm engaged to that man and then I fool around with somebody I'm married to then I'm a harlot. But if you're not engaged you can marry anybody you like.

Okay. Now who is engaged to Christ in this world? Is it the heathen? No, they don't even take the name of Christ. It's the people who say I belong to Christ.

And they're fooling around with other things. The world, with money, with honor, with the praise of men. What are they? Harlots.

It's not the heathen. That's Babylon. They say they're engaged to Christ but they want to please this man.

They say they're engaged to that person up there but they want to please this man. They don't want to offend this man. They want to indulge in all the worldly things that any rotten sinner in the world lives in.

Maybe not evil sins but so many other things which doesn't look so evil. Babylon, you read in Revelation chapter 17 and 18 is a religious system. You see Revelation 17 this woman decked with purple and scarlet and precious stones and pearls and luxuries.

And you read all about those luxuries in the next chapter. This grand style she lives in says I'm a queen and I'm no widow. She lives like a queen.

The bride of Christ doesn't live like that. The bride of Christ is faithful. She lives like her savior lived.

Simply. Not like John the Baptist saying I'll eat holy locusts and wild honey. Jesus enjoyed a good meal and he lived ok but he was faithful.

He lived a life of sacrifice and his bride shares that spirit. Babylon, religious Babylon, Christianity is an economic system where money is the power. I come from India.

The land where William Carey came 200 years ago but a lot of missionaries who come to India in the last 100 years have not been like William Carey I'll tell you that. They've come with all their money. Different organizations who sent their missionaries.

And you know in India it's the easiest thing in the world to hire somebody to be your representative if you got enough money because there's so much unemployment there. What do you want them to preach? That everybody should keep the Sabbath? They'll do that. You want them to preach that Jesus is not God but only one of the gods? Because that's what your cult group preaches? Ok they'll preach that.

Just give them a salary they'll preach anything you want. You want them to preach this particular version of Christianity? Ok they'll preach that. You want them to preach this other version? They'll preach that.

They'll be Calvinists or Armenians according to who's paying them the money. It's got nothing to do with conviction. You know there's one area of India one whole area of India where everybody in that area was baptized as children.

And you go to the next state and everybody in that state is baptized as at the age of 12. You know why? It's got nothing to do with conviction. It's because the Presbyterians went here and the Baptists went there

that's all.

This is how it is. And we come with people come with money and they can get their appoint their representatives and literally think they're doing a great work in India. It's money.

And they can people come with great crusades and conduct big meetings and open fields where you can get 50-60 thousand people without any problem. And they've got these video cameras and photographs to take which they can publish back in their news reports at home to get more money from their flock. So they're happy because they get their big crowds and they get their money.

And those their agents in India are also happy because they get their commission. They get a living. And the devil is happy too because nothing happens through all these things.

The only one who is grieved is Jesus and the Holy Spirit. So much of dishonor in the Lord's name. It's become commercial.

The money changers are back in the temple. The sellers of doves and sheep are back in the temple. People making money with Jesus T-shirts and Jesus stickers and all types of things.

The money changers are back in the temple. Everything is money, money, money. People making money out of selling Christian books, Christian tapes, all types of things.

It's money, money, money all the way. It's happening today. Even among Evangelical fundamental Christians.

Babylon is not just some particular denomination. Lot of Evangelicals like to say, Oh, that denomination, that's Babylon. It isn't.

It's right here in the midst. It's a system that penetrates and infiltrates every branch of Christianity wherever people are interested in doing business in the name of Christ. Business in the name of God.

Coming to God and saying, OK, here's my type, reward me a hundredfold. You know, there are groups like that that say, if you give money to this ministry, God will bless you a hundredfold. Well, that's pretty good business.

If God returns a hundredfold, every covetous businessman in the world would like to do business with God. But Babylon, they're misquoted the words of Jesus. And there's nobody there to tell us.

Babylon is an economic, financial system that's destroying and ruining Christianity in the name of Jesus. I say that because that's what I've seen in my country. What about Jerusalem? If you ever walked to Jerusalem in the Old Testament, the most important part of Jerusalem was the temple.

Everything centered around the temple. And if you went into that temple through the gates, you know what you would see in front of you? Blood. The first thing you see is that altar splattered with blood, blood, blood on the ground, blood on the altar, blood, blood, blood, blood.

And you'll see another animal being killed. It's sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, day and night. Morning sacrifice, evening sacrifice.

Next morning, morning sacrifice, evening sacrifice. That's what Jerusalem was. The city of sacrifice.

Babylon is a city of business. And in Christianity, we can have two approaches. The approach of doing business with God.

Lord, I do this for you, you do this for me. Or you can approach Him with a spirit of sacrifice. And God is looking for people who will sacrifice.

If you want to build a true church of God, you must be a man who sacrifices. You may have to sacrifice your sleep at times. You may have to sacrifice your meals a number of times.

You'll have to sacrifice yourself, sacrifice your money, sacrifice your convenience, maybe sacrifice your vacation once in a while. Sacrifice this, that and the other. And if you are not motivated by that spirit, I say forget about trying to build the body of Christ.

You'll never build it in a hundred years. It's not a technique. It's not a question of just arranging meetings and having some song books and trying to get up a revival going and organize a church and I don't have the spirit of sacrifice in myself.

It is impossible. God will never put a spirit upon such a man. Because it's the spirit of His Son.

And His Son walked the way of the cross, the way of sacrifice all His life. Do you think, do you think Almighty God is going to give a worldly bride to that son of His who walked the way of sacrifice all His life? Impossible. Do you think God will give to Jesus a business minded, one who is trying to make economic prosperity in the name of Jesus to His son as a bride? Not in a million years.

What type of bride would any father select for his son? What type of bride would you select for your son? Do you think God isn't any wiser? He's going to select someone who's got the same spirit. That is the bride of Christ. And that's a small number.

There are not many. It's a remnant in the midst of this world called Christendom. It's those who share that spirit.

David said these words in 2 Samuel in chapter 24 and verse 24. He said, I will never offer to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing. That is sacrifice.

Remember that verse all your life. 2 Samuel 24, 24. I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing.

Some of you young people, I want to ask you. Are you suffering because you took a stand for the Lord? Oh boy! What an honor! What an honor that at this young age you've begun to suffer because you took a stand for the Lord. Say to the Lord, Lord I will never offer to you that which costs me nothing.

If I have to serve you it must cost me something. If I have to stand up for you it must cost me something. It must cost me insult, ridicule.

In many countries it costs them death. It's happening even in India in some parts. Christians are being killed.

They are offering to the Lord that which costs them something. They are not just sitting in meetings comfortably listening to words. Their Christianity is costing them their life.

In many cases Christianity costs them money. People are... I know people who are completely disinherited by their parents. They say, there is nothing more to do with you.

Get out of this house and don't ever come back again. Wives who have been thrown out of the house because they are converted and decide to follow Jesus. My husbands were heathens.

Children who suffer. This is the bride of Christ around the world. Those who offer to the Lord that which costs them something.

Those who use the money God gives them sacrificially, carefully, live simply because they want their life to come for God. They want to build the body of Christ. They are not out here to live in luxury and comfort like Babylon the harlot.

They are the bride of Christ. God says, I am searching for a man. He searched as we saw in Genesis all the way to Revelation.

Even... We are in the midst of those two books today. And I want to say to all of you young people, God can use you to be His witness, to stand up for Him in this needy hour in whichever place you are in. Make a decision today that whatever the cost I am going to follow.

You know there were some people who came to Jesus and said, Lord, let me first bury my father. And Jesus said, forget it. Let the dead bury their dead.

Someone else came and said, Lord, I follow you but let me go and say goodbye to those at home. Jesus said, forget it. If you put your hand to the plow don't ever look back.

It's radical discipleship where you say, Lord, I want to follow you and if I have to pay a price I'll pay that price. If I have to die, I die. Are you willing? That's what many people have said in many countries.

If I die, I die. I remember years ago when the gospel came to the country of Kenya in Africa. When it first came to a tribe called the Kikuyu tribe in Africa.

There was a man there who got converted. One of the Kikuyu tribe, he and his son got converted. Young 10 year old boy or 12 year old boy, I don't know how old he was.

They both got converted to Christ. And they were hauled up before the chief. And the chief said, is it true that you become a Christian? And that man said, yes.

I'm a follower of Jesus Christ. Well, he said, you can't be a Christian if you're a Kikuyu. You're a Kikuyu.

You're not a... You can't be a Christian here. He said, well, I'm a Christian. Well, if you stand up for that, you'll have to lose your head.

He said, I'm willing. I will not offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. He didn't say those words, but he had the same spirit.

And they chopped off his head, right there. Blood flowing all around. This is not a parable.

It's a true story. And then the chief called this little boy, maybe 10 years old. And said, you see what happened to your father? What are you? Are you a Christian? 10 years old.

And this little boy stood there and said, I'm a Christian. I'm a disciple of Jesus. He said, I'll do the same thing to you that I did to your father.

And this little boy, he took off his shirt. And he gave it to the chief. And he said, before you kill me, I want to give you this shirt before it gets dirtied with my blood.

Give it to your little son. So that you'll always remember that I love you. Even though what you're going to do to me.

And they chopped off his head. What are our petty sacrifices compared to what many others of our own brothers and sisters, whom we will see in heaven one day, have gone through for Jesus' sake. And you're not willing to take a little stand for the Lord somewhere.

We get a little mosquito bite and we say, Oh, we're suffering so much. Other people have been eaten by lions for Jesus' sake. I'm using that as a parable.

I'm not talking about little mosquitoes. I'm saying that our forefathers, our early Christians, the first century, were eaten by lions. What we call suffering is in comparison to that just a little mosquito bite.

Brothers and sisters, God's looking for men and women who will be bold, who will stand up for Him, like the men we read of in the scriptures. Let's pray. Every word of God demands a response from those who hear.

You cannot do anything about the past. You may have lived in sin. You may have been unrighteous.

You may have been unfaithful. I invite you to repent. I invite you to be honest before God as your head is bowed before Him.

Tell the truth. Don't cover up. Don't make excuses.

Don't justify yourself. Don't give God 101 reasons. Just say, Lord, I have sinned.

I have sought my own. I've lived for myself. I've been ashamed to acknowledge Your name.

I don't have the spirit of sacrifice in my life. I love pleasure and comfort and ease and I seek my own and I live for myself and I've just got a doctrine. Lord, I repent.

I'm sorry. I want to turn. I don't want to live like this the few more days that are left before You come back again in glory.

I want to be ready for Your coming. I want to live the rest of my days 100% for You. I want to be in the bride and not in the harlot.

Lord Jesus, here is my life. Whatever lies in the future, I want to walk with You. Whatever the price I have to pay, I want to walk with You.

I want to obey Your Word. I want to do Your will. Here Lord, fill me with Your Holy Spirit.

Give me strength in my life. Give me power in my life to live for the glory of God whatever the price I have to pay. Whoever asks will receive.

His ears are open to the cry of the righteous. He will hear you. And He will count you in His army to be one of those whom He can hold up before the devil as an example.

Whom He can use to be a light to others in the darkness. Heavenly Father, I pray in Jesus' name that this will not be just a decision and an emotional decision that's forgotten tomorrow, but a permanent decision of surrender, total surrender to Jesus Christ, total yieldedness, a total forsaking of everything, a total repentance from all the waywardness and unfaithfulness of the past. Lord, I pray that many here will not fight against their conscience justifying themselves.

I pray that You will produce an army here for You of those who are willing to give up everything in order to follow You. Hear us, our Father, and especially we pray that You'll raise up a number here to be lights in the darkness. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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