

For Heaven's Sake, Hurry Up and Die

by Carter Conlon

The sermon explores the Christian life in two stages, from the beginning of the walk to a deeper place of growth and transformation, where we face our deepest fears and insecurities and are led by God's strength to a new destiny.

Duration: 47:30

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:20

Topics: "Dying To Self", "Surrendered Living"

Description

This sermon titled 'For Heaven's Sake, Hurry Up and Die' based on Psalms 23 emphasizes the importance of surrendering our lives to God completely. It delves into the journey of faith, from acknowledging God as our shepherd to facing the challenges of the valley of the shadow of death and ultimately experiencing the joy of living for God's purpose. The message calls for a deep commitment to follow God's leading, even when it requires dying to self for the benefit of others.

Transcript

I want to share with you a message that I've entitled, For Heaven's Sake, Hurry Up and Die. Psalm 23. Father, I thank you, Lord, for your word, which is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

I thank you for the strength of the Holy Spirit, the caring of the heart of God. Thank you, Lord, that you love your people. Thank you for showing us a clear way into the future and showing us how our lives can make a difference.

I ask you to anoint me, overshadow my frailty, God, and speak through me. Lord, where you are, there's life, there's light, there's hope, there's help, there's freedom. And so, Lord, we invite you to come in the fullness of who you are and even take these feeble words and go way beyond them.

Father, I ask you, Lord Jesus Christ, to do the miraculous, heal sickened bodies here today. All people, just sit and listen to the word of God. Let darkened minds be given light.

Captivated places have to release their hold. Father, I thank you for all of this and I praise you for it, in Jesus' name. Psalm 23, For Heaven's Sake, Hurry Up and Die.

Beginning of verse one. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his namesake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. I want to take a unique look at Psalm 23. I want to examine it in the context of a life well lived in God.

Keep in mind, these psalms are songs. In every life that's here today, God is writing a song through you that's going to be sung for eternity. A song about your life, what your life looked like, what it amounted to.

Was it a complete life? Was it a well lived life in Christ? Did you take the full journey with God? Or did you stop somewhere that's just short of what God had for your life? Now, I believe it's my opinion that the Christian life at least has been our experience in this country is generally lived in two stages. Now, both these stages are ordained of God, both are supernaturally lived, and both are divinely appointed. There's a bridge though between those two stages of the Christian life, and that bridge in Psalm 23 is found in verse four, a place called the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

But I don't want to get ahead of ourselves this morning, so let's, you and I, start at the beginning. Here's David's Psalm began, his song began when he said the words, the Lord is my shepherd. That's the beginning of our song.

It's something that you can say and I can say when we've transferred the ownership and direction of our lives over to God. First Corinthians 6:20 says, you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Can you say today, the Lord is your shepherd? Have you truly transferred the ownership and direction of your life over to God? If I stood here today, for example, and I said, at the end of the service today, I'm going to give you my car.

Now, I'm not going to, but let's say I said I was going to do that, and I called you out by name, and you came forward, well, the transaction is not complete until the deed for that car, until I sign off on the deed of that car, and then you have to go down to the Department of Motor Vehicles, and it has to be registered in your name, and then you can rightfully, with the deed in your hand, say this belongs to me. Now, a lot of people want to call Jesus Christ their Lord and their savior and their shepherd, but they do not ever want to release the deed of their life to him. They come to the house of God and make an agreement with a set of facts, but I want to remind you today that an agreement with a set of facts is not necessarily salvation.

I may understand there's a heaven. I may understand there's a hell. I may know there's a cross that stands between the two.

I may know that Jesus died for my sins. I may also know that he requires me to open my heart and invite him in to be my Lord and savior. I may know all of that, but yet still may not be a Christian until I've come to the point where it's not just a mental agreement with a set of facts that I feel are going to keep me out of hell for eternity and grant me access to heaven, but there's a point where I have to sign the rights to my life over to the one who bought me with a price.

He paid with his own blood. And until that deed is signed to my life, I can't honestly say he's my shepherd. I can't until I've come to the point of saying, my life is yours now, Jesus, with all its flaws and all its frailties and all its struggles and all its trials and all its fears.

If you thought it was worth it to shed your blood for this life, being almighty God in the flesh, then I give you my life. I give you the rights to my future. That, my brother, my sister, I believe is the evidence of a genuine conversion in Christ.

It is the evidence of salvation. It's beyond just the knowledge of our sins and the knowledge of our savior. Now, a lot of people want to retain joint ownership.

They'll come to the altar and they'll sign over the deed, but they'll also say, well, I'll be a co-owner now with you of this vehicle that you've purchased with your blood. Well, I'm telling you something. Jesus will never be a passenger in any car.

He, you sign the rights to your life over. It's not a co-ownership. He owns it.

He owns you. He owns the right to your future. He owns the right to whatever he calls you to do and where he calls you to go and what he calls you to be.

It all belongs to him. And then there's a third stage, I think, of people who hear the word of God and they want to be the lien holder. Okay, I'll give you the rights to my vehicle.

I'll give you, I'll sign it over, but I'll be the lien holder. In other words, if you're not nice to me the way I think you should be nice to me, then I'm taking the car back. And a lot of people come to the altar and say, okay, I'm coming, but if you don't do for me what I think you should do, then I'm taking the rights to my life back.

No, I think when we come to Christ, we cast ourselves on the mercy of God. We jump into his arms and we make the choice. I'm not going back.

I'm not turning back. I'm going with him all the way. It's wonderful when you can say the Lord is my shepherd.

When you get up in the morning and you know that, yes, I have struggles and yes, I even argue with God, but he is the Lord of my life. He has the rights to my life. He has the right to lead me and to guide me and to use my life for his glory.

It's then we go to the second part of verse one where David says, I shall not want. You know, as a former shepherd, my wife and I actually had a sheep farm when we were younger for about seven or eight years or so. And I would come home at night after working all day and I would go into the barn and sometimes I would just sit for an hour, half hour.

I'd just sit among the sheep. We had about 68 females, about two males and a bunch of lambs, depending on the season that it was in, there could be as many lambs as there were sheep. And I would just sit there in the middle of the barn and everything that I was at that moment concerned them.

The needs that they had were my concerns. And I would sit there and I would listen. And I often, I thought of it this morning on this platform.

I thought, God Almighty, you knew I was gonna be here in New York City. You knew I'd be sitting on this platform. You knew how many sheep you were gonna bring into this barn.

But I could tell if there was trouble by just the way the tension in the air sometimes. You could pick up as a shepherd. I could tell the way they chewed.

If they were chewing too fast. Quite often it was because there was a sick lamb in their midst or there was a snake or a rat had gotten into the barn. And the sheep would begin to chew just a little too quickly.

And I could tell that there was something wrong and I'd have to get up and start looking around. And I would always find it. I could tell.

You see, it became easy for me to understand when I gave my life to Christ that his heart is for me. His heart is to meet every need. His heart is to calm my fears.

His heart is to feed me when I'm hungry. His heart is to reassure me just by his presence that all will be well and that I will be protected from that which I had once feared could destroy my life. Every need that I had was his deepest concern.

Peter says in 2 Peter 1, verses three and four, as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises. It's amazing. Verse two says, he makes me to lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still waters. Oh, thank God for my heart was as deeply troubled as anybody ever born into this world. I grew up in a house where I was taught to worry.

My mother used to worry if there was nothing to worry about, she would worry about it. Every sentence she ever said to me when I was growing up had and die at the end of it. Don't run with those scissors, you'll fall down, they'll pierce your eye and you'll die.

Don't eat your food too fast, you'll choke and die. Be careful crossing the street, you might get hit by a car and die. Everything had and die at the end of it.

No wonder I was a wreck by the time I was 13, I was an absolute wreck. Got to the point where I was afraid to go out of the house when I was 15 and die at the end of every sentence. But when I came to Christ and gave him my life and knew he was my shepherd and knew it was in his heart to meet my every need, he made me to lie down in green pastures.

The green pastures are the word of God. He opened this book to me and I began to understand the meanings of life. I began to understand why I was born.

I began to sense there was a divine purpose for my life and by his promises it would be achieved. I began to realize that there's no weapon formed against me that could prosper, that God had not given me a spirit of fear, but a power, love and a sound mind. And he led me to a place of stillness in my spirit, a place where all those clanging voices of doom and despair and hopelessness for the future and of everything that could possibly go wrong in life, all those voices, thank God, were silenced.

And I found myself in a still place. I found myself opening the word of God, reading its pages, tears coming down my cheeks quite often because everything I'd ever longed for, all the truth I'd ever wondered about was in the word of God. He makes me to lie down, he leads me beside the still waters.

Luke 12, 32, Jesus said, do not fear little flock, it's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. In verse three, David says, he restores my soul, all the pain, all the wounds of the past, you've got yours and I had mine. All the things that you did or were done to you, the people who were there, the people who weren't, and the people who said they would and left.

All of these things and all the wounds that came and all these things that threatened to dominate your thinking and dominate your life forever, when you come to Christ, you fully embrace him as your Lord and savior. You trust his promises to guide you and to lead you. He restores your soul.

He brings a healing that that can't come any other way. You could join a hundred thousand self-help groups and you'll never be healed the way Christ can heal you. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his namesake.

I remember in the early years of my walk with God, he led me to forgive those who had hurt me, led me to forgive. He leads us in paths of righteousness, in paths of right living, in paths of doing things the way God says they should be done. He leads me in paths of righteousness.

Many people today are not being led in paths of righteousness because they can't justifiably say the Lord is their shepherd. They're not willing to be led by God. Not willing to give up old lifestyles.

They're not willing to give up old hearts. They've become so comfortable with it. It's become part of their personality.

He leads us there for his namesake. Did you know he's interwoven the honor of his name in you? That's an amazing thought when you begin to think about it. God says to the angels in heaven, you wanna see what I look like? Look at that person.

I've interwoven the honor of my name in keeping that son or that daughter of mine and leading them and guiding them and changing them and transforming them into what they were destined to be before sin got ahold of their lives. I remember one morning I woke up and I was on my way to work and I looked out my kitchen window back on the days of the farm. About 20 or so of my sheep had gotten out through a hole in the fence.

And they were underneath my neighbor's deck next door. I didn't have time to gather a bunch of people to get them back. I didn't know what I was going to do.

I was already dressed for work. So, but they love oats. They absolutely love oats.

Oats are like the promises of God. And I put them in a can. I walked down the road a couple thousand feet.

I walked under the porch and I just shook the can. I said, here yours. They're not used by the way, they're yours.

That's how you pronounce that word. And I shook the can. I said, here yours, come on, follow me.

And even though there's 20 of them and there's only one little can of oats, they all feel like they're gonna get that can of oats. And they all followed me down the road. You see, I couldn't leave them there because they'd get a bad name in the community.

I couldn't leave them there because I'd get known as the guy who lets his sheep get out and lets them wander all over the place. For my namesake, I led them back to where they're supposed to be. That's exactly what God does.

If you are his, if you are his and you're where you shouldn't be, you walk out the door or wherever that place is and you'll find somebody there with a can of oats before you. And those oats are promises from God. You don't have to live here.

You don't have to do this. You don't have to be in this relationship. You don't have to keep going to this club.

You don't have to put that stuff in your veins. You don't have to snort that stuff on Friday night anymore to get a sense of wellbeing. You don't have to do this.

Follow me, follow me. I have something for your life. I've got a place of safety for you.

For the namesake of God, follow me. Walk away from what you need to leave behind and walk towards what I'm calling you to be. And where he's calling us is always safety.

It's always provision. I would never call my sheep home out of the field and leave them high and dry in the barn. I'd take, break a bag of oats open and just fill the troughs and everybody would have as much as they wanted.

I would never call them in and not feed them. Fear not little flock, it's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. It's his good pleasure to give you the heart you've always longed for, to give you the life that you thought God could give you.

It's his good pleasure to take away your fears and your struggles and your trials and give you courage and strength and a sense of purpose for the future. Now up to this point, verses one to three in Psalm 23, it's been all about me. I want you to notice that.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down, he leads me, he restores me. He leads me in passive righteousness.

It's been all about my comfort, my promises, my healing and my beginning to follow his leading. And all of these things are important. You don't make demands of a child when they're learning to walk and when they're learning to read and when they're going to school and they need that constant reassurance.

Everything's gonna be okay, I'll be there tomorrow. I'll make sure you get to school. Don't worry, you're gonna have lunch.

It'll be there when you open your lunchbox, your lunch will be there. It's all about me. But it brings us to the bridge.

And I called Greg Thomas last night and I said, in a song, or I texted him rather, I said, in this song, what is a bridge? What is the bridge in a song? And he said, the bridge is a climactic build to something bigger. And so from verses one to three in Psalm 23, it speaks to me about the beginnings of the Christian walk. How God says, I'll be with you, I'll comfort you, I'll provide for you.

You're every want, I'll be aware of it. And now we come to the bridge. A bridge that's gonna take us to a deeper place.

As sons and daughters of God. And in verse four it says, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me. The bridge to something deeper in God, from just that place of youthfulness and infancy, that place where we become sons and daughters of God, where we represent him in the earth.

It's not just about our own healing. It's a place where we face our deepest interferences. It's a place where we feel incapable of going and doing what Christ is asking of us.

Just like when Peter said to Christ, when he saw him walking on the water, Lord, if it's you, bid me to come. And he stepped out of the boat and he began to walk on the water until he saw the wind, until he saw the waves. It was technically a bridge in measure in his life to what God was going to call him to a place where he couldn't go.

You remember later on in his life, he told him, when you were young, you went where you wanted to go and you dressed yourself. In other words, it was all about you. But when you get older, you're going to be led to a place that you don't want to go.

And you're going to be led there by the strength of God. It's a place where we feel incapable of going. It's a place with shadows and voices of all that going forward might mean.

Though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, as Elijah followed Elijah, Elijah was going over the Jordan. And that always represents death. It always represents the death to an old way of living and the birth to a new destiny.

Elijah was already a young prophet in training, but he was being led by the older prophet to somewhere that only God could carry him. And out of the cities that he was passing by came these little gaggles of prophets. And all they could see was loss.

If you follow this, you're going to lose your master. It's going to be hard. It's going to be difficult.

All these voices are just shadows of all that might go wrong. It's a place where many turn back and others stand idle in indecision. For the scripture tells us that when Elijah crossed over the Jordan and Elijah was right behind him, that people stood who knew truth and watched it, but they wouldn't take the journey themselves.

It was the journey to power. It was the journey to life, but they wouldn't, because it meant dying to something they didn't want to die to. It meant giving up something they didn't want to give up.

It meant a lifestyle that they were not prepared to embrace. They didn't mind studying the scriptures. They didn't mind knowing the history.

They didn't mind singing the songs, but to be given for a failing fallen society is not something that was palatable to these people at this time. Paul said to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter three, verses one and two, he said, I, brethren, could not speak as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food, for until now you were not able to receive it, but even now you're still not able.

The Corinthians were meeting in the house of God around themselves. The self was still their focus. In America today, this has been the source of the weakness of the testimony of Christ.

Hear me on this, if you've never heard me your whole life, hear me on this. This is why the American church is so weak, because the theological focus is on ourselves. We've lived in verses one to three for the last 50 years in this country, and because of it, the whole country is headed to hell.

Now in a handbasket, society's turning against the testimony of Christ. I say it's time. I say it's time to go across the bridge in verse four.

I say it's time. That we move on to something bigger, something deeper for all of our lives, and many won't cross the bridge, because crossing over means the death to our own desires, the death to the pursuit of our own comforts, the death to the gratifying of our own needs, which means entering into the work of God as a mature son or daughter of God, which simply means just like Jesus did, we chose to live our lives for the benefit of others. That's a mature son and daughter of God.

It's not easy. It's not easy for any of us. We wanna live life the way we think it should be lived.

We wanna be happy. We want to have our needs met. We wanna live in the barn.

We wanna be comfortable all the days of our life, and suddenly we're being called into this verse four, this place called the valley of the shadow of death, this place where everything I thought that I should be, the hand of God comes out and says, I wanna take you deeper. I wanna take you farther. I wanna take you into something that is deeper than just living for yourself.

No one can do this unless we allow God to lead us through this fearfully and naturally undesirable place. I fight with it just like you do. Knowing that he's with us, David said, his rod and his staff, they comfort me, and he's working through us an honorable and eternal purpose.

Many people in our generation are not going to see heaven until this church age makes the decision to abandon constantly living in verses one to three and surrender to verses four to six. When we finally say, God, I'm taking the bridge. I'm gonna go through that valley of the shadow of death.

I'm gonna trust you, God, that what looks to me to be a disaster for my own life has an eternal purpose because now I know it's not about me. I am representing the one who went to a cross. It was not about him.

He did it for me. And now you're calling me to go across that bridge and to die to myself and to live for the benefit of others. If King David had not crossed through his first four experience, he would have finished powerless and in the wilderness.

It's cute, verses one to three are cute when it's a child doing this, but it's not cute when it's a son. I remember one time I went to a service and it was a bunch of men in this former organization and they'd all, they tried to live in their first year's experience and they're running around, they're grown men, they're businessmen, and they're going, Daddy, Daddy. That's cute.

We're gonna dedicate children to this. Mine's cute when you're a year and a half, two, three, four years old. It's not cute when you're 50.

It's not cute when you're 45. It looks stupid at a certain point. Daddy, Daddy.

Imagine you had a son like that. How embarrassed you'd be of him? Comes up to your apartment, Daddy, Daddy. He's 55 years old.

All the neighbors be looking at him saying, what's wrong with your son? Well, you see, my son has tried to live in his youth all of his life. My son was never willing to grow up. My son was never willing to understand that there might be something deeper, more profound for his life than just running around going, Daddy, Daddy.

And this is where many churches, they've gone off track. The practices have become foolish. They're being called to something and they won't go.

They're being called to cross a bridge. They're being called to die to themselves. Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone.

But if it die, it will live again. It will bear much fruit, there'll be much increase if it's willing, if you and I are willing to say, God, not the way I think my life should finish, but the way you call it to finish. What you call it to be.

You think if David hadn't crossed through his verse four experience, he would have finished powerless and in the wilderness. Just think of all the people who would never have known the victory that God was about to usher in through his life. Psalm 61 verse two, David said, "From the ends of the earth." In other words, when all my natural strength says I can't go on, I will cry to you.

And when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Lead me, God, when I can't go. Lead me, Lord, when I know in my heart I can't do what you're asking me to do. Lead me, oh God, when I don't want to do what you're asking me to do.

Lead me, Lord, when I'm hanging on to the certificate of my life and I do not want to hand it over. It was theoretically nice, as long as you didn't ask me to do something, but now you're calling me. David crossed over to where it was no longer about preserving himself.

And when he did, he found a bridge that led him to something. And this is the life that God holds out before you and before me. And trust me, my brother, my sister, you and I are going to need this life.

We're going to need to find this. He said, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over.

David found a table of divine strength in the midst of a hostile society, which he had not known before, but he didn't know it until he crossed over through verse four. He didn't know it until he walked through the valley of the shadow of death. He didn't know it until he had embraced a place of deeper trust in God, where he says, Lord, I'm trusting that you're leading me and you will protect me.

Your rod and your staff are giving me comfort now. It's not, I'm not in the comfort any longer of verses one to three. I'm in the comfort now of being surrounded by enemies, being led into a place of giving myself for even a hostile society all around me.

But in this place, you have prepared a table for me and I can sit down and I can eat with a rest deeper than I've ever known, a confidence which cannot be taken away from me. That's why Paul and Silas could sing when they were in the inner prison. They had crossed through verse four and they were now in this

place where God had prepared a table for them in the presence of their enemies.

And you know the story when they began to sing at midnight in worship, there was a great shaking came, everyone's chains fell off, the prison doors were open and even the jailer and his family came to Christ. Oh God, help us in this generation to lay hold of these truths and to find this table of strength in the presence of our enemies again. You anoint my head with oil.

In other words, David says, now I understand, I understand the purpose of my life. I understand why when Samuel anointed me what I was called to be, I thought I won the victory in the days of Goliath. I thought I won the victory in those hours where I sang my sweet songs and drove the devils away from Saul.

But then you led me through the valley of the shadow of death. And when I came out the other side, oh God, I understood that my life is called to be something greater than what I thought it was once. I understood, oh God, this is about your kingdom.

This is about your people. This is about your heart. This is about your divine purpose.

And you gave me a clear and a determined mind. I now know the reason for my life. And my cup runs over.

A gladness flowed out of his whole being that he'd never known before. There's no record of David dancing after slaying Goliath. No record of David dancing when he played his songs before Saul.

No record of him truly dancing at any other point, but after he had passed through the valley of the shadow of death, and God had used him to pick up the ark, the testimony of God's presence, and bring it back into the center of Jerusalem, the center of society, again, the center of God's people. And when David finally understood the purpose of his life, he danced unashamedly before a holy God and before all the people. There's a joy available in the Christian life that's so deep, it's so far beyond just singing songs in church and feeling good about ourselves.

There's a joy in God. It's a joy that God says, I'll share it with you. The angels in heaven rejoice every time a sinner turns from sin and turns to God.

I'll let you share in that joy. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Your joy will no longer be because there's oats in the barn. Your joy will no longer be because you feel comfortable and warm. Your joy will be so far beyond all those former things you learned in verses one to three.

Your joy now will be found in seeing the heart of God satisfied through your life and your generation. All your value system will change. No longer sit looking at things that are of no lasting value but in your heart you will rejoice every time one sinner finds Christ as Lord and Savior because you made the choice to go where you couldn't go and to do what you couldn't do in your own strength.

And then lastly, David said, surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Goodness and mercy would follow in his wake.

Would be to God that when we get to the end of our days, you and I, wherever that's going to be, it might be sooner than you think. Sound like my mother, don't I? I wonder how much of that got into me. But when we get to the end of our journey that we can look behind us and we just see goodness and mercy in

people's lives.

As we walk through this world, the scripture says we're to bring a savor of Christ everywhere we go and as we walk through, the world might consider us losers. I'm sure that Esau, a man driven by his own needs, his own agenda, his own desires, if a horse had a rear view mirror, he would have looked in it as he rode off with his 400 men to conquer some new thing and he looked at his brother who's limping and there's old people and kids with him and would have said, what a loser my brother is. Giving his life for all these old people and all these kids and all those who have hardly the strength to make it into this world.

He would have said, I have everything. But the one thing he didn't have, Jacob had. Jacob had Jesus.

Jacob had the heart of God. I just want goodness and mercy to follow me. All the days of my life, that means you.

If I go before you to the throne of God, I want you to follow me. I want to be able to look back and say, I didn't lose them Lord. You gave them to me and I didn't lose them.

I did everything I knew to feed them. I did everything I knew to fence them and keep them in the place where the green pastures are. I did everything I knew to keep them out of the wrong vineyard.

I did everything in my power to let them know that you loved them and you cared for them. I did everything I could do to get them to follow me across the bridge and to being given for the needs of this society. I taught them that there's a table, even in the presence of hateful places, where in the natural we'd rather not go.

As much as I knew how, I shared with them about how the anointing is for a divine purpose and that those who truly choose to walk with God, the story of Paul and Silas is just not a biblical story for them. It will become a life experience that they will be able to praise God, even in the midst of the deepest trial and still see hell shake and people set free. I didn't lose them Lord.

They followed me. They followed me right to your throne. Not one, and that's the cry of my heart this morning, that not one be lost, not one.

I'm not willing to settle for 99 and have one lost. I'm not willing to settle for it, not one. Not one in this house have settled for a false salvation that doesn't give the rights of its life to Christ.

Not one in this house chooses to live in an infancy stage in your walk with God that will not fare you well in the days ahead, that not one in this house made the choice to back away from what God was calling you to do. And instinctively in your heart, you already know what it is. He's calling you to something that you can't do in your own strength.

And so I'm back to my original title, for heaven's sake, let's hurry up and die and cross the bridge. Let's die to our fears and make a way for many others to come to Christ and be saved. A self-focused church will never touch this generation.

These days are over. A lot of the preachers on television, on the internet that are just telling the people what they wanna hear to make them feel good are gonna look like the world's biggest fools in the not too distant future when people start losing their jobs and society starts falling apart and violence increases even worse than it already is today. Their message is gonna be exposed for how hollow it really is.

Trying to get the people of God to live in infancy, to stay in verse one all the days of their life, somehow thinking they're going to arrive at the end of verse six with no verse four in the middle. No, it does require something. Look, I'm 62 years old.

I don't like living under the pressure I live under. I walk around with a baby grand piano strapped to my back. It's the only way I can explain it.

I live under pressure. I groan. Hell fights with everything it's got.

I wake up in a sweat some nights. Horrific, have some of the most powerful prayer meetings on Tuesday night where the glory of God comes down and I wake up in a sweat two, three o'clock in the morning with an ominous sense of opposition. You know, in my heart, I would love to finish my days by the ocean.

I'd love to be at all of my grandchildren's school events. I'd love to be there for my sons and my daughter more than I was in their youth. There's a whole lot of things I'd like to do, but I feel that God is calling me to cross that bridge, that it's not about me.

It's about his plan, his purpose. And maybe the pressure never will lessen. Maybe it will always be like this.

But you see, I'm not doing it for my sake anymore. I'm doing it for the sake of those who need to find Christ. I'm doing it for the sake of those who need to walk with God.

I just want you to know that you're not the only one that struggles with this. We're all in this together. We're in the same boat.

We're rowing in the same storm, trying to get to the same side, all of us. You know, a lot of folks, they look at us pastors and they think we wake up in a suit and our hair's all nicely combed and we don't have to do laundry. We don't have to buy groceries.

We're just magically fed as we pray in the morning. It's not like that. But for your sake, I'm going over the bridge.

And you have to go over it one time in your life. Let's go. Let's be everything that God's called us to be.

Let's believe him for the supernaturally outlandish that he would take us and do with us what we could never hope to do in ourselves. We would let God be God. We would find that table in the presence of our enemies.

Find that anointing. Let's go. Let's go.

For those this morning that need to sign the deed over it, that's a good place to start. If you've never done that, you need to do that because none of the rest of the psalm is yours until you sign that deed and say, here, my life. No cosigner, no liens, here's my life.

That's where it all begins. And then for those that are just, you come to church and it's all about you. And there is a season where that's allowed.

Don't misunderstand me, it is allowed. It's part of the Christian walk. But there's a point where you are healed and you are satisfied and you know God and you know his promises.

And the hand of God comes out and says, let me take you into something deeper. Let me take you away from living for yourself and learning to live for others. Let me make you an ambassador of the Christ who went to a cross for you.

Let me guide you. You don't have to figure it out, just let him guide you. If we will do this, in our time, I believe that many will come to Christ.

Many, more than we can count. And so that's my elder call this morning. It's that simple.

Help me to die to myself that others may live. We keep it simple. God, you will show me what that is, but help me, God.

Please, Jesus, help me. Don't let me blow it now after coming this far. Help me, Lord, to die to myself for the sake of others.

If that's what you want. You don't have to worry about how that's gonna be done. He'll do that, he'll lead you.

But that has to be in the heart. Your heart and my heart. If that's the cry of your heart today, we're gonna stand in just a moment.

And here in the main sanctuary and the annex and over in North Jersey, and people at home that are with us online. For those at home, you can just stand up in your living room. And join those that are already coming and just saying, God, help me, please.

Help me, Jesus. Help me to live, to die to myself and live for others. Let's stand.

We're gonna worship for a few moments. As we do, just come and join me at this altar, please. If you will, if that's the cry of your heart.

Just slip out of your seat in the balcony, go to either exit in the main sanctuary. Just slip out of where you are and just come, just come. As many as can get here, just get here.

And then we're gonna take a moment to pray together. I'd like you to do something this morning. I'd like you to pretend you have a document in your hands, which is your life.

I'd like you to take it and sign it. And sign the rights to it. We're gonna hold it up before God and give it to him.

The rights to your life, the rights to your future, the courage and commitment to follow no matter where he leads. Whether it's an easy place or a difficult place, would you hold it up before God? Lord, oh God, it seems almost absurd that we have to do this, but God, you know how frail we all are. And I thank you, Lord, that you're a God of mercy.

And we know that tomorrow might be a dark day, but God, we sign the rights to our lives to you. Lead us as you see fit. Do with us, God, according to your perfect will for each of us, wherever that is and whatever it means, Lord, we give it to you.

And we sign it away, Lord. We don't co-sign it and we don't hold a lien against it. We simply give you the rights to our lives.

Lead us to where we should be. Lead us away from where we shouldn't be. Help us, Lord, to be a people who make a difference in this world.

God, give us grace and strength. Father, we thank you, Lord. Help us not to shy away when we come to that valley of the shadow of death.

Guide us over that bridge, Lord. Father, we thank you. Praise you.

I pray for the pastors here this morning that are visiting that are losing heart. Don't know where the strength is gonna come from to face another day. I ask you for a fresh touch from heaven, a new envisioning, a new strength, God, that can only come from the Holy Spirit.

I lift up men and women who are here today who just don't know how they're gonna stand as a Christian witness in such a hostile time. Father, you will set before them a table in the presence of their enemies. You'll anoint their head with oil and their cup will overflow.

That's who you are. That's what you do. Make us into a people that will create a pathway for countless thousands to find you as Lord and Savior.

That's the cry of my heart. It's what I ask for this church, Lord, for each of us, God, who are here, for those listening online, for those in North Jersey. God Almighty, help us, Lord, to live to see countless thousands.

May we dance before the ark as David did. May our hearts be overflowed with joy of what you will do and you alone can do. We yield our bodies to you, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/KqBPQYjNck.mp4>

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