

Reason for His Passion

by Dennis Kinlaw

The sermon emphasizes the importance of radical discipleship, living in terms of the unseen world, and winning the prize of standing before Christ.

Duration: 44:57

Scripture: Romans 14:10

Topics: "Apostle Paul"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not holding on to things in life, but rather giving and becoming a conduit for the grace, love, power, and goodness of God. The speaker highlights how the experience of receiving and giving is far more fulfilling than holding on to things. The apostle Paul is used as an example of someone who understood this concept and lived with a two-world perspective, focusing on the unseen world and how his actions would play before the throne of God. The sermon concludes with a call to live with urgency and give everything today, as the time is short and there is no time to be a halfway Christian.

Transcript

As you live with the epistles of Paul, one of the things that you notice is that in his different epistles, he develops the same themes in different ways. In some of the epistles, he just simply refers casually to things that he's developed in more extent in other places. And in some places, he almost does again some of what he did to the others.

I thought this morning I would take a text, not in 1 Corinthians, but a verse that is in one of his other letters that I have found myself thinking about again and again and again as I've read and dealt with 1 Corinthians. When we think about the radical character of Paul's discipleship, his commitment and his way of life in following Christ, I find myself referring again and again mentally, it's always there, that line in the first chapter of Philippians where he speaks to the Philippians whom he loves so dearly and said, for me to live is Christ. He also says that to die is gain, and that fits with what he says in Corinthians 2. But there it is.

I suspect if anything sums up the life of Paul, it is that single text from Philippians. He is simply saying, I've come to the place where I live my life for him, I draw my life from him, I give it to him, and if he wins, I win, and if he loses, I lose. Everything about me has been brought under captivity to him.

Now, in the 1 Corinthians, we said there were some evidences, some remarkable examples of how radical Paul's discipleship was. One that we've mentioned, just mentioned casually, but there it is in the middle of the book, he speaks about one member of the body of Christ, one member of the Corinthian church going to law with another member of the Christian church there in Corinth. And he says, you don't have a right to do that.

And the fellow in Corinth says, yeah, but he cheated me. And Paul says, well, so what? He says, well, he's taken my property. And Paul says, well, so what? He says, you should not find yourself going to law against a brother.

I never read that, but I remember a story that I learned earlier in my life when I was preaching a revival in a little Methodist church up on the Ohio River out of Vanceburg, way up in the boonies there. And there was one man in the community who was one of the most prominent farmers in that part of the country, and he was a very committed Christian. He was in a business deal with a man.

The man came to him and said he had something he wanted to do, and he asked if he would lend him \$300. He knew him as a Christian brother, and the day came when the \$300 was to be paid, and the fellow who had borrowed the \$300 looked at Mr. Sam and said, I understand that you're, as a Christian, believe that one Christian shouldn't go to law with another Christian. And Mr. Sam said, yeah, that's right.

And the fellow said, well, you've seen your \$300 the last time. And Mr. Sam looked at him and said, fellow, I can live without it, but you can't live with it. And he turned and walked away.

One night on a Sunday night or a Monday morning about 2 o'clock in the morning, in a horrendous thunderstorm and rainstorm, just one of these horrendous rainstorms, he heard a knock at the door downstairs. So he went downstairs expecting it to be somebody who wanted refuge from the storm. And when he cracked the door open, a hand came through, and it had \$300 in it.

And the guy said to him, Mr. Sam, you were right. I heard Billy Sunday preach tonight in Portsmouth. Now what intrigues me about that is Mr. Sam's part in the man who had borrowed the \$300 from Billy Sunday's ministry.

Because if it hadn't been for Mr. Sam doing what he did, Billy Sunday wouldn't have had that fruit that night. Now I'd like to meditate on that. I'd just like to hold your feet to the fire a little on that, that I suspect the fruitfulness of 99% of any of our ministries is based on some other part of the body of Christ being faithful to Christ.

And there's no way that you can see what Paul is saying here if you don't understand that. And so Paul said, if you're going to lose, go ahead and lose. The body of Christ and its reputation is more important than your personal gain.

So Paul said, lose your money, but do not go to law one brother with another or one sister with another. Now a second one which he mentions and developed and which we referred to before is an incredible thing. Here's a man, very much a man who says, I don't have to marry.

Now I've never bumped into many people who went that far. Now I've bumped into a few that became priests and were celibate. And I must admit that many times I felt that that was a natural way for them.

There was no great sacrifice in it. I remember reading Jim Elliott's story and you will remember his courtship with Elizabeth. If you've ever heard Elizabeth talk about it, Elizabeth, he kept her hanging on a string for a while of a long time.

Finally sat down with her and said, I believe God wants me to forfeit that for the sake of his kingdom. And then ultimately came back and said, no, he has said it is all right. And so they came together and married and Jim Elliott was a martyr for Christ.

But that's a radical kind of discipleship, isn't it? If anybody has a right to anything, a person has a right to marriage, the fulfillment of personal existence in marriage, because that's the way God made us and constructed us. But here is Paul saying, Peter leads a wife around. Don't I have a right to lead a wife around? And he says, yes, I have a right, but I don't have any rights that I am not willing to forfeit for Christ.

And that brings me back for to me to live is Christ. What Christ wants is more important than any right that I have. The more our society becomes interested in rights, the more radical our discipleship to Christ ought to be and the more evident the radical character of our discipleship ought to be.

Now, the third one which he uses and we've referred to is when he says there are people who have conflicts over food and the Jews want to eat with the Gentiles and he said, if that's what it takes to reach a Jew, I'll be kosher. But the Gentiles, if it means that as a Jew I give up my kosher feelings, I'll be a Gentile. When I deal with that I remember a man who was on the faculty here, who before he came here was on the faculty of a branch of the University of Wisconsin and he had, Gilbert James, he had a close personal friend who was a Jewish scholar.

And oftentimes they would eat lunch together. And the Jewish scholar was a man who had come from an Orthodox Jewish background, but he had gotten away from it, but kept some of the cultural Jewishness in his life. So one day Gilbert told me, he said, I was sitting there eating a hamburger and drinking a glass of milk and he said it suddenly dawned on me that that wasn't kosher.

You know, you're not supposed to boil a kid in his mother's milk and so you're not supposed to mix meat and milk. And so here he is eating a hamburger and a glass of milk and there sits a Jew. And he said to him, let me ask you something.

We talk freely about a lot of other things. You live by kosher laws? Well, he said, fairly well. I said, how do you feel when you sit down with me and I'm sitting here eating a hamburger and drinking a glass of milk? Well, he said, it's all right for you, it just nauseates me to see you do it.

Now, you know, you and I don't understand how deep those things went. But that guy sat there with his, having trouble keeping on his stomach. What was there while Gilbert, now, Paul says, I can become a Gentile.

I can eat what is highly offensive to me if that's what it takes to be one of the group and win people for Christ. Everything in my life is subordinated to one end and that is reaching people for Christ. If the body of Christ ever took that seriously, what would happen in the world? Now, the fourth thing is where he says, I don't have to be paid for my ministry.

In fact, he said, I'd be willing to pay for my ministry and that's what I've done most places. I've made tents so I could preach the gospel. Now, he said, the soldier lives by a salary that he gets.

The ox has a right to get his return as he plows the field and I have a right, too. But I don't want anybody thinking the way Kirk Seberg thinks about preachers. I don't want anybody thinking I'm a paid professional.

So he said, I'll pay my own way for the privilege of preaching the gospel. Now, that would be interesting, wouldn't it? It would be interesting how many of us would stay in the ministry if we had to be bivocational. Smucker over here knows more about that probably and has observed more of that than any of the rest of us in the crowd.

But I hate to think what would happen to the Methodist Church if every Methodist preacher had to be bivocational. But Paul said, I'll pay my way for the chance. I'll do anything for the chance to preach the gospel of Christ.

And what makes a guy get that radical? What is it that motivates him to be like that? Now, there's some interesting things in the book of 1 Corinthians that I think help me understand why he not only felt that way, but he lived that way. And his conscience matched his performance as far as his conscience was concerned matched his thinking. Now, sometimes our performance doesn't match our thinking.

Our conscience lets us know. But Paul's performance matched his thinking on this. One of them is that for Paul, the other world was very real.

In fact, I almost have a feeling that if you had to choose between which one was more real, I could make the case that the other world, the unseen world, was more real for Paul than the real world. Now, you notice my language. I slipped into that.

I didn't intend to say that. But that's the way we feel it, and this is the real world out there. You can hit it.

You can feel it. It can hit you. It's visible, obvious, demanding, tyrannizing.

But Paul had reached a point where he was delivered from the tyranny of the senses, the sensei, the visible, and he lived in terms of the unseen world. He had a two-world perspective and everything he looked at, he looked at in terms of those two worlds. You know, everything he looked at, it was not how will it play in Peoria, but how will it play before the throne? That would be a good way to live, wouldn't it? That would make a difference in the way we lived.

And do you know something? If we believed that, it would be a whale of a lot easier to do what we ought to do. If we really believed that, it would be a whale of a lot easier to do what we know we ought to do. We do it because, wait a minute, it's right.

If you know that the end of a pattern is wrong and going to be destructive, you heard about the fellow who jumped off the Empire State Building and somebody stuck his head out about the 33rd floor and asked how it was. He said, we're pretty good so far. But if you know that 5th Avenue is down there, you think differently about jumping out.

But if you're not sure 5th Avenue is down there, well... Now, for Paul, the other world was the real one. You get it very clearly in connection with his view of Christ's resurrection. There's no question about Christ being real.

Christ appeared to him, and Christ is more real to him than Peter, with whom he had his problems, or with these people in Corinth. He is alive. He's not a part of his past, just.

He's a part of his past, but he's more than that. He's a part of his present, and he is the most significant element in his future. The most significant element in his future.

Now, there's a second thing in 1 Corinthians on this, and that's his view of works. You remember the passage where he speaks about other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. You know, I think I was 50 before I really saw what it said, because I always read that and thought, now there are many foundations, but Jesus is the best.

You can build your life on a lot of things, but Christ is the best foundation to build on. But that's not what 1 Corinthians said. Paul says, if you build your life on anything else, it doesn't have a foundation.

That there is only one thing that is the foundation, and that's Christ. And he says, if that's the foundation, then I'm not going to spend my life working for anything else. If he is the alpha and the omega, I'm going to measure everything I do.

And he said, I want to do the kinds of things that will stand the ultimate test. You'll remember he said in that passage, everything is going to be tried by fire. And he said, some of you are producing works of wood, hay, and stubble, and it won't take but a flash, and the fire will consume all of that.

But he said, it's possible to spend your life in gold and silver and precious stones. I'd like to know if you're spending your life in gold and silver and precious stones. I notice that oftentimes, if you're going to get gold, you have to go where people don't want to live.

Is that a reason for being missionaries? Is that a reason for being downwardly mobile? If you're going to get gold and silver, you're normally going to get it in places where other people don't care about going. I remember when I was at Brandeis, Cyrus Gordon, under whom I worked, one of the most fascinating models I ever met, absolutely brilliant, brilliant, handled about 44 languages. But not only that, he knew the Middle East extremely well.

He'd been there from the days when you could take a half a bushel of apricots and get across any border, any national border in the Middle East with ease, go anywhere. Well, the most, the father of modern biblical archaeology was a British by the name of Sir Flinders Petrie. Some of you have heard me tell this story.

When you get old, you get certain privileges. When you get as old as Kirk thinks I am, you have special privileges. But anyway, he said, he went to see Sir Flinders once and he said Sir Flinders took him down in his basement and he said there was more gold than there was in Fort Knox, because in those days you could keep everything you dug.

Now today, of course, you don't keep anything that you dig. But in those days, you dug it, it was yours. So he had this basement loaded with gold.

Dr. Gordon said, I ogle that stuff and said, Sir Flinders, where did you ever find all this gold? Sir Flinders laughed and he said, you biblical archaeologists, you want to dig up in the hills in Judea where the prophets were. There's no gold up there. I dug the Philistine cities.

He knew where the world had it. Well, we need to be working for the gold and the gold that will stand. And you know, if you do that, you quit playing to the crowd, don't you? If we really believe that, being different wouldn't be a problem, would it? If you know what the other person doesn't know, you don't mind being

different.

We need to know that there is another world and it's infinitely more real than the one that's around us. It was here before this one came along and it'll be here after this one is gone. And you and I, our stay in this one isn't going to be too long.

Now, the third thing is, in the Corinthians, he talks about winning the prize. We don't have time this morning to go into that, but if you haven't looked at that, you ought to look at that, where he likens life to an athletic race. And he says, you can run if you want to, but when I run, I intend to run for the prize.

I intend to win. I want to stand before Christ and have won, run the race successfully. So that everything he did was measured in terms of that final day when he would stand before Christ.

You know, it's interesting, I come out of a service and I look at Elsie to see how I did. You may not do that. At least I look at her to see how she thinks I did.

For some strange reason, I desperately want her approval. We have a son, one son out of five kids, and when he was growing up on Sunday, there came the day when he would sidle up to Elsie at the end of every Sunday morning service and look up in desperation and say, mother, how did he do? Because his public reputation hinged on how I had performed. It's interesting how we look for the approval of people.

We look for the approval of our congregations or our friends or some of the others. Paul says, I've come to the place where I'm looking for his face and I want his approval. And if I've got that, I can take anything else.

So there was that otherworldly element. There's a second thing in Corinthians that I wish I knew how to adequately deal with, but let me mention it. Maybe you can take it and develop it more fully.

That's Paul's sense of history. You get it in expressions like when he speaks about the Lord's day, the day of the Lord. When we talk about his sense of the other world, he believed that this world was going to fade into that other one.

Maybe fade is not the right word, but that this life would go into that one and that there was purpose in all of that. It had a beginning and it had an end and the Lord God was the one who was sovereign over it all. You read in Thessalonians something of his eschatology.

I expect he preached what he wrote to the Thessalonians, to the Corinthians, in the 18 months he was there. I don't think there's any question but that he would have dealt thoroughly with the fact that time is going to come to an end and God has purposes in time and I'm a part of those purposes of God. And I can work with God in terms of what his purposes are, or I can work with God in terms of what my purposes are.

And if I work in terms of what my purposes are, it will be wood, hay, and stubble and it will be gone. But if it's in terms of what his purposes are, I can look back and be a part of the historical victory of God in human creation and in human history. Now, that put an eschatological note in Paul's heart and mind in preaching.

You know that the greatest explosion of Christian missionaries in the history of the world up to that time came through the influence of the student volunteer movement at the end of the last century. I'm on the

board of OMS International. There are a number of other people here that have ties with OMS International.

OMS International was founded about 1901. The basic people that made up its beginning were already there. But that's just simply typical of a whole stack of missionary organizations.

The Christian Missionary Alliance Church was founded, what, about 1880? Anybody date me on that? By 1890, A.B. Simpson was moving well in his missionary work. Ashbury College was founded in 1890. Moody Bible Institute was founded about 1882 or 1888, I've forgotten which it is.

But there was a whole explosion of missionary societies at that time. Do you know what I think was a major factor in that? They had begun to preach the Second Coming. And the imminent return of Christ had become a part of the thinking of the body of Christ.

Am I right on that, J.R.? The imminent return of Christ had become a part of the thinking of the body of Christ. And so the end result was that 250 university students came together and a hundred of them said, we'll give our lives to evangelize the world in our generation before we die. And, man, they didn't even have missionary societies to take care of them and support them.

That's one of the reasons all these missionary societies were organized, because here were these young people who said, we're going, we're going. Now, why were they going? Because there was an end that they felt was imminent and they were going to face Christ and they wanted to finish what he had given them to do before he returned. Now, we've lived out of that.

You can't stay at the fever pitch that those guys stayed at. The church can't. But I think we've moved to the other end of the spectrum.

I'd be interested, who in here has heard in a local church a sermon on the Second Coming in the last 10 years? In a local church. All right, let's count. John, where'd you hear one? Little Church in Ohio.

Little Church in Ohio. Who preached it in 10 years? Well, Christian Missionary Alliance Church in Nicholasville. Oh, you did.

You preached the Second Coming. He's another one of these radical guys. What? Yeah, yeah.

And you preached the Second Coming? Did you? Okay, my question is, did you get any imminence in it? Did you get any imminence in it? I think one of the greatest values of the Second Coming is it narrows the distance between that world and this one. Now, I don't think we ought to tell him, you know, we can't tell him when he's coming, but I think we ought to narrow the distance. Do you hear me? We ought to narrow the distance between this world and the next one, because let me tell you, whether he comes back or not, you may go meet him before you get home.

And we need to keep that in mind, the imminence of that other world, the proximity of it. And with that, Christ said, or Paul felt, Christ was sovereign. He was in control.

And he believed there was no question about what the outcome was going to be. As far as he was concerned, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Every dominion, every authority, every power, every force that is in creation is going to bend the knee to Christ, and Christ is going to reign, and he wants to be a part of that.

That's the future. Why should there be a no inside me when the future is a universal yes to him? If I'm to be a part of the future, I've got to get the no out of me, because the yes to him is the end of every life in human existence. Now, he believed that in that sovereignty of Christ, it was Christ that was going to do that, and the Spirit that was going to do that, not Paul.

It's interesting that all of this made him more passionate, but down in his soul, he knew that it wasn't his work that was going to do it. You remember in the 15th chapter when he's talking about, I deliver to you the gospel which was given to me and which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and then on the third day he was raised. And then he goes on talking about how Christ appeared to the different ones, and last of all, he appeared to him as one born out of due season, the least worthy of them all, because he had persecuted Christ.

But he says, nevertheless, I am what I am by the grace of God which works in me. And he tells what he's done, but then he says, yet not I, but the grace of God that works within me. He knew that when he could say, I've done more than any of these other guys, he had to back off and say, but it isn't I that did it, it's he that did it.

Now, it's interesting how while you're in the middle of it, you sort of stand outside of yourself and watch the operation and know that it's not you, it's he that's doing it if it's going to be done. There was this beautiful sensitivity to what God is doing in the world, and he's at work in the world. He may not be at work in you and me, but he's at work in the world.

You heard Mike Henderson talking last night about what's in Africa. There are many places in the world. He's at work, and Paul knew that that was going to culminate in every knee-bowing to Christ, and he was determined to be a part of it.

And in the seventh chapter, he says, the time is short. I don't know how you're going to handle that, but that's biblical text. It says the time is short, and you ought to live that way, and he says, I'm going to live that way.

I'm going to give everything I've got today, because I may not have tomorrow. The time is short, and so there's an urgency in me, and I don't have time to be a halfway Christian. It's got to be all on the line.

Now, the third thing is the thing we started with back at one point in connection with the Mr. Sam story. I think one of the things that motivated him and made him so passionate and so radical was his understanding of the unity of the church, the oneness of the church. Yesterday, I was talking with Mark Killam, and Mark pointed out to me that in the passage in chapter 3, where he says, don't you know that you are the body of Christ? The you is plural, and the body is singular.

Now, I think that explains his view about one guy going to law against another, because if I were to ask you, would you go to law against Jesus, the Christian who's going to law against the fellow Christian, you ask him, would you take Jesus to court? There's not a Christian in the world who'd say, yeah, I'll take Jesus to court to get my rights. But do you know when you take a fellow believer to court, according to Paul, you've taken Jesus to court. I have trouble thinking that.

I told you yesterday, my problem's thinking, Christian. I can verbalize it, but it's another thing to, after I've verbalized it, to think that way. Tim Philpott, a good lawyer, is back there smiling at me.

You can ask him about all of this afterwards. But I've got a son-in-law who's a lawyer, and my father was a lawyer, but it's interesting. Paul says, if one Christian goes to law against another, you've taken Christ to court.

Do you remember those lines in the Gospels where he said, if you get me, you get my father, and if you reject me, if you miss me, you miss my father. And then he says to them finally, after he said that a number of times, time passes and he looks at them and says, if they accept you, they get me, and when they get me, they get my father. And if they reject you, they miss me, and when they miss me, they miss my father.

Because you see, I and my father are one, and you and I and my father are one. And whatever touches you, touches me. And when you touch a fellow believer, you have touched me.

Now, because of that, Paul, that contributed, I think, to Paul's radical view of what it meant to be a disciple of Christ. As I was thinking about that, you know, it's a privilege to meet people who have Christian consciences, isn't it? You know, some of the people who've influenced me the most are not the people that I've lived most of my life in an academic world. But it's interesting, some of the people who've influenced me the most were people that didn't have a great deal of formal education.

My father-in-law traveled 800 miles and sat down across my parsonage table and looked at me when I was 29 and said, you don't have enough education. And I said, I've got seven more years than you've got. And he said, yes, I know, but you don't have enough education.

And I said, what do you mean? He said, if you'll go to Princeton, I'll help you take care of Elsie and the babies. I wouldn't be standing here. You and I would have never met if it hadn't been for my father-in-law who never went to college.

And I ended up as a seminary professor and PhD and a college president because of a guy who never had a day of college. But my father was sensitive, father-in-law. I remember the day came when his business partner, who was a witnessing Christian, cheated him out of 10,000 bucks.

I watched my father-in-law and Elsie watched her father go through that. He had his options, and he backed away from it. And he said, I can lose that, but I can't go through the cost that it would take to get back what rightfully belongs to me.

Now, I've always felt that one of the reasons that my family is as Christian as it is, and if I were a better Christian, it would be more Christian, but one of the reasons it is, is because of my father-in-law. Honest discipleship to Christ always pays great, great dividends. Now, the last thing, and we don't have time to develop it, but let me say it, and some of you have heard me beat this drum so many times, I hesitate to beat it, but I think it may be the most crucial thing of all.

All I will do is just give it in capsules. I think Paul's radical sense of what it meant to be a Christian and the radical character of it was because of what he believed was the nature of human personhood. And I think he had gotten this from Jesus, and the church, I don't think, understands that, and certainly the social sciences in our day do not understand it.

And that is, let me give it to you in formula the way I think it. To be a person is to be incomplete. And if you had a perfect person, he'd be incomplete.

If you had a divine person, he'd be incomplete, because we had one once who said, I can do nothing of myself. I can only do what my father does. My father has life in himself, and he's given to me to have life in myself.

I draw my existence out of him. I am the eternally forever being begotten son. My umbilical cord was never cut, so I'm perpetually drawing my life out of him.

And his will for me and my fulfillment is to give that life to you. Jesus' understanding of his personhood was that he was a conduit, and he wasn't supposed to block the passage, and that his fulfillment lay in giving away everything that God gave to him. Now, I'm convinced that that's what it really means, to be a person, and that Paul's radical discipleship shouldn't be abnormal.

He's the only normal one in the bunch, because the life you've got, nobody here chose to live. Everybody here drew his life from somebody else. Everybody that lives enjoys life as a gift from somebody else's decision.

Somebody else made the decision, and we live. Our life originates in somebody else's decision. Our life is sustained in somebody else's decision.

The God that gives us food and water and air. We exist by the gifts of those of others. And do you know where our fulfillment is? Our fulfillment is in giving, not receiving.

Because when you receive and hold, you stop the flow. And the greatest fulfillment that a person ever knows is not in getting, but it's in giving. I had lunch a couple of months ago with a man and his son and son-in-law.

That evening on the TV news, it was announced that he was the second richest man in his state. I don't get to eat lunch with guys like that extremely often. But his son was there, who's the president of his corporation, and his son-in-law is the chairman of the board of his corporation.

And the person who got me the privilege of eating and devout Christians, all three of them, the man, the second richest man in his state, teaches, I think it's a 13-year-old Sunday school class of boys, and has taught it for 45 years. I'd be interested in how many multimillionaires, and wait a minute, how many billionaires there are in the world who taught a class of 13-year-old boys for 45 years. So he is building a Christian center to help people.

And you know, as we talked, as I talked with my friend who made it possible, he said, you might be interested in this. And he named the billionaire, he said, when he put his kids on, began giving them, what's my word, I want it, an allowance. When he began giving them allowance, when they would get to the age where he gave them allowance, he gave them the allowance on condition, two conditions.

One was, they tithed it. And he was not a Baptist, interestingly enough. The second was, that every week, each one of those, if he was to receive his allowance, would have to give something to somebody without the person receiving it knowing where it came from.

Wouldn't that be interesting to have as the law of your life if you got it? You not only had to give some of it away to God and to somebody else, but you had to give it so the person who was receiving it didn't know where it was coming from, that you were giving it. You know, that cut off a whale of a lot of our giving if nobody knew that we gave it, wouldn't it? Because you see, we haven't come to the place where we

believe what Jesus believed. He said, my fulfillment is laying down my life for somebody else.

And I'm convinced that that's true. That's what it means, that's how big we are. That's how noble a human person is in God's design.

And when you get right down to it, the greatest joy you ever know is to have something cost you for somebody else's benefit. I think I can say that without fear of anybody who's intelligent and knowledgeable contesting with me. The greatest joy.

I sat down in a doctor's office. He told me to come at 8 o'clock and I thought, ah, I'm his friend and he'll see me and I can go on my way. So I didn't even take a book with me.

And at 930, I reached over for a magazine. And the only magazine I could find was a People magazine and it had Connie Chung on the front. And the article was on these successful women, career women who now are in their early 40s and the biological clock's running down.

And they're all millionaires and they're nationally known personages. Everywhere they go, people, you know, treat them as the famous of the earth. But they're suddenly aware they may live through the cycle when they can give birth to somebody, give life to somebody else.

And they don't know whether they want to miss that. And so you've got all these famous women at 40 that are having babies, never had one before. And I was interested in what Mary Alice Williams, you've seen her, you see her on TV, said.

She said, I never knew what joy was before. And she underlined the word joy. I never knew what peace was before.

And she underlined the word peace. I never knew what true fulfillment was until that baby was born. I don't know about anybody else, but you know, the biggest thrill in the world to me, I taught John Oswald.

Did you know that? I didn't have much to do with him getting there. I had a fellow say to me, you have good students. You produce good students at Asbury.

I said, we get good students. He said, well, you don't seem to corrupt them too much. It's interesting, when I left the seminary, he took my place.

When I left the college, he took my place. And when he came back to the seminary, I took his place. But do you know the most satisfying thing in life to me, outside of my relationship with Elsie and my children? It's in that round.

The happiest man, one of the happiest men I ever met was Andy Gallman, Mark. One of the most satisfied men. One of the men with the most integrity and independence.

Stand on his own feet anywhere. Do you know one of the reasons? How many men descend in the ministry, Mark? He prayed with me when I answered the call to preach. I bet you there are a hundred people in Christian work around the world, and there may be three hundred.

He sent more students to Asbury than anybody else that came down to Pine. And you know, it was interesting. I don't have language to describe his independence without it being obnoxious.

He knew he was doing what he ought to do, and he was totally fulfilled in it. And he'd give his life for a sixteen-year-old kid. I never saw him when he didn't have a kid with him.

Everywhere he ever went, he had a kid with him. He took me on trips. He had me preach for him when I didn't.

I wouldn't dare let the kind of person preach for me that he'd let, he'd push him right up front. I wouldn't dare. And he's got children everywhere.

Do you know that's what we're made for? That's what we're made for. Because do you know that's the way God lives? Do you know what the Father does? He lives giving his life to his Son. Do you know what his Son does? He lives giving it back to the Father.

Saying, my will is not to do my own will, my will is to do your will, Father. So the one gives to the other, and the other one gives back, and then the other one gives to all of us. And that's the reason Christianity has a God who can be defined as love.

Love is not something he does, it's what he is, and he's the only God in all of the religions of the world that is that. And we're to be in his image. That's the reason, and you'll forgive me for this, but I think that's the reason I've never been able to ditch my Wesleyan theology.

You know, I'm weary of it. I'm not interested in being a Wesleyan. I want to be a Christian.

But you know what Wesley said? He said, the end of human existence is perfect love, not justification by faith. He said, justification by faith is something that sinner experiences in the court, but he said, we're made for more than citizenship. We're made for sonship, and that's personhood.

We are made for perfect love. And what is perfect love? It's where everything you get, you give away. You receive and you give, and you become a conduit for the grace of God, and the love of God, and the power of God, and the goodness of God.

And as it goes through, it's interesting, it tastes better as it slides through, far better than when you hold it. And Paul knew that. So, if he knew that, how under the sun could he ever hold on to anything? To hold on is to pollute it, to corrupt it, to defile it, and to destroy it.

Well, that's what I wanted to say this morning. And I believe our world is looking for people out there who can illustrate this kind of thing in their lives. So, may God help us to do that.

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