

6 Words to Live By

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of thanksgiving, vision, and facing reality in our Christian lives, and encourages us to be soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 41:34

Scripture: Philippians 4:8, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of evangelism and the various ways it can be done. He shares the success of a recent evangelistic event in Germany where thousands of people came and hundreds professed faith in Jesus Christ. The speaker also highlights the need for discipline in the church, citing the example of Operation Mobilization and their emphasis on discipline as a key factor in their success. He concludes by emphasizing the motivating and exciting power of love in our Christian walk. Overall, the sermon encourages believers to renew their commitment to evangelism, embrace discipline, and operate in love.

Transcript

Let us turn together in the word of God to the book of Hebrews chapter 12. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about, with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily, so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and the set-down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you, as unto sons my son despised not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then ye are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have our fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening or discipline for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised by it. Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and by it many be defiled.

Let us pray. Lord, we just believe you have brought us here for celebration, but also for renewal of vision, also for commitment of our lives to you, and to what you want to do in these coming years. We're excited about what you're doing, and oh God, as the walls are going down in East Berlin tonight, so the walls, we believe, are going to go down in our own hearts, and in the hearts of your people, that there may come in a new tidal wave of blessing, and reality, and renewal, and a movement of your Holy Spirit that will change the course of history.

For we pray this now in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm sure all of us are aware of what is happening in Berlin.

Perhaps it's not as real to you as it is to some of us who have walked along that wall many times. Operation Mobilization has been committed for many years to the evangelization of Berlin. It was one of the largest targets of Love Europe this summer, and many came to Christ.

It's the base for our work among Turks, and our people who work among Turks live along the wall. When I go to visit them, I've taken my old converted coach and parked it next to the wall. And many times I'd go for my morning quiet time walking along that wall.

If you've never been there and never walked along it, you cannot grasp the awesomeness of it, the sadness of it. So many have lost their lives because of the wall and the policy connected with the wall. And these are great days of rejoicing.

Not in a naive way, because we know there will be new battles, there will be new struggles. We know that as they leave East Germany and go to West Germany and spend those West German marks and buy new trinkets, that they will not find reality. One of the most outstanding conversions in the history of Operation Mobilization is a woman named Christa.

My daughter, now 24, is named after her. Born in Lee, Lancashire. Christa escaped East Germany and came to West Germany looking for freedom more than 30 years ago.

She then went to London and looked for freedom there. She went to Paris and looked for freedom there. She learned two or three languages.

She went to Italy and then ended up in Madrid, Spain, where I was living when I first came to Europe. And it was through our ministry there in a book by Billy Graham that Christa found Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior and is one of those persons that from her conversion to this day, some 28 years later, she has been in Operation Mobilization. Most of that time serving Jesus Christ in the land of India.

She even chose to go through Bible college in India. Ended up marrying Ray Eicher, a young man born in India who is still one of the major leaders of the work there. As the wall goes down, new walls may go up.

Greater walls of materialism. Greater walls of immorality. As I believe West Germany is more immoral than East Germany.

Other walls will go up as they are shattered by the disappointment that often faces people when they go from a communist country and that brand of capitalism to a capitalistic country and our brand of capitalism. So I hope this is a day of rejoicing, but not in a naive way, so that that rejoicing will lead to prayer, so that rejoicing will lead to the greatest evangelistic thrust ever among the German people, so that that rejoicing will lead to us somehow releasing finance for more literature. My son told me on the phone just a few hours ago that he heard the Bulgarian leader has also stepped down, and Bulgaria is a more fanatic country than East Germany.

It does seem that we are in the midst of the greatest changes in Europe since the war. I hope we will take advantage of this as the body of Jesus Christ. We should never see a ministry, even on its hundredth anniversary, in isolation.

That's why it's so good that people have come from other fellowships. For this church is part of the church universal. All believers throughout the world, most of whom are involved in a local expression of the church.

And this is exciting. As I thought of what I should share on, I wrote down six words. And if you can write down these six words, it would encourage me, because I believe that often we go to meetings, we hear messages, and two weeks later we don't remember anything what we heard.

Whereas the book of Timothy says that when we receive something, we should then give it on to others, who will give it to others. And to make it simple to remember this anniversary celebration, instead of giving you a long outline, I'm just going to give you six words. Now, I'd like to give you ten words, one for each decade that this ministry has been going on, but that might get a little bit long.

I want especially those from Elmwood to get good sleep, so you can be back this morning, and I'm sure that's true of other ministries as well. I want to keep in mind this passage of Scripture, that we're running a race. We're looking on to Jesus, and the key of everything in our Christian life is keeping our eyes on Jesus.

Walking in the Spirit, not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. One of the most heartbreaking things so often among God's people today, is the number who are discouraged. I'm not talking about being tempted to be discouraged, I have that almost every day.

I'm talking about living in discouragement. That's not God's plan, that's never God's plan. Even if you have to have a fist fight with discouragement, twenty times in one day, it's not God's plan for you to surrender, and to begin to live in that cul-de-sac of discouragement.

And I find myself often ministering from Hebrews 12, on the subject of discouragement. But that will have to be for another time. Six words I want to leave with you, for this great anniversary celebration.

The first one I'm sure you can guess. Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, this is a time of Thanksgiving.

The Book of Psalms emphasizes Thanksgiving. The New Testament emphasizes Thanksgiving. There's a verse in Thessalonians, which I've been studying a lot lately, and started a series with my own team, Friday morning, from that great book.

It says, And all things give thanks, for this is the will of God. Now probably 98% of us know that this church has been going through some difficult and painful periods. You don't need to hide this, we don't play little games, little religious games.

And yet, if we follow God's way, we must give thanksgiving, and give thanks, even in the midst of this crisis. Which is not over, because we weep with those that weep, we rejoice with those that are rejoicing. If there's someone still weeping because of this crisis, whoever, wherever, then there's part of us that's still weeping.

I live in a perpetual series of crises. I have to weep with that woman, and one of my workers, who probably was murdered last week. We hope not.

We may have another Terry wait, and end up waiting many years, never knowing whether he is dead or he is alive. Billy Graham, my own spiritual father, said, If you have not yet learned how to handle raw, ugly, hard, vicious sadness in your life, then you are a baby Christian. You're not yet grown up.

In fact, I would say you have not yet entered the real world. Just look at the last war. Just look at the war before that.

The war to end all wars. Just look at the Falklands. Just look at Iran and Iraq.

Just look at what's happening right now in Campuchia. Just look at what's happening right now in Beirut, in Israel. In 100 other places we have raw, ugly, sad, terrible, hellish things happening in this world.

When are we as God's people going to come out of our fantasy land of little clichés, and face the world as it really is, and be soldiers of Jesus Christ? Until we do that, we will be spiritual wimps. Do you know that term? You watch way too much American television in this country, I can assure you. Some of it should be banned.

Maybe I can lead a new organization for the banning of American television. It would be good since I'm a Yank by birth. Maybe you don't know what a wimp is.

But sometimes we are, as God's people, so quick to start murmuring, so quick to collapse in the race, so quick to feel overwhelmed, so quick to feel that God isn't really hearing our prayers, or my husband doesn't really love me as much as he used to, or the dog is not behaving right, or the roof leaks, or I can't get hot water from the tap. I remember one girl that came on OM just broke down weeping because she had never washed her hair in cold water her entire life. She forgot to read the section in the OM manual about enduring hardness as a good soldierette of Jesus Christ.

Oh my, oh my. How out of line, how out of line much of our present behavior in our churches is with what we find in the Word of God. What we find in men like the Apostle Paul, whose heart was broken a hundred times.

What we find in men like Hudson Taylor, who did such a phenomenal job in evangelizing China. And we think of the growth of the church through the death and destruction, the quote, unanswered prayer, and privation and death of the cultural revolution. Hudson Taylor once said, China is not to be won for Christ by self-seeking, ease-loving men and women.

Those not prepared for labor, denial, and many discouragements will be poor helpers in the work. In short, the men and women we need are those who will put Jesus, China, and soul first and foremost in everything. And at all times, life itself must be secondary.

Their price is far above rubies. Let us rejoice in the midst of the battle. Let us rejoice in the midst of the heartaches.

There's a beautiful word in Corinthians that says of a true disciple of Jesus Christ that he or she is sorrowful yet always rejoicing. One of the great messages I've heard from a British preacher was when I went to the funeral of one of my first Manchester friends, who was the chairman of our OM board for many years, Norman Alexander. And the great preacher at that funeral spoke about the validity of sorrow.

Somehow it ministered to me in a special way. When my mother died a year ago, that was Canon James Eyre who gave that message, when my mother died a year ago, those words were very, very real to me. A Christian knows the reality of paradox, that we can be sorrowful yet always rejoicing.

Because we rejoice at this anniversary doesn't mean we're happy about everything we have done. Doesn't mean that we are brushing lightly over sin or failure or problems or unbelief. But it means that ultimately at the end of the day as we battle through all the enemies trying to do, we come out God's praising people.

I have a great problem staying in operational mobilizations. It's way too big for me. I like things small and personal.

This is a good side, this church. Now I have 1,800 full-time workers. I don't even know who they are.

I don't even know where they are. And some of them when I pray with them, I like to punch them in the nose because they seem so dead some of them. And we open the opportunity for people to pray or we say we're going to have a time of thanksgiving.

The same brother gives thanks and did it the last time we had this kind of a meeting. And a few others give thanks. And then I give an exhortation and a few more give thanks.

I remember in a great revival in a great church in India that when they opened the door for the congregation to pray and give thanks, it was just, it was impossible to stop them. One after another, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, like popcorn. People were just jumping up and praising the Lord.

I remember Bhat Singh who led that particular meeting having to exhort the men to please be quiet for a while. It's always good for the men. And let the women lift their hearts in praise and thanksgiving.

And they did. And then the men couldn't get back in. Edgewise.

Thanksgiving is also such a cure. Tozer called it the great cure for cynicism. Are any of you my age? Any of you my age? This is the age of cynicism.

Anybody can guess my age without previous hints or knowledge. You can legitimately guess it. You can get a free book.

This will keep you awake to the end of the meeting at least. But really, cynicism so easily comes in, somebody like me. I was a bit cynical this morning, spending a couple of hours dumping endless letters on my secretary.

And they were making noise outside. My house is a place that changes tires, but they sounded like the whole place was exploding. And they were revving the engine, revving the engine, making all this noise.

And I said, he's a jerk. My secretary laughed because she knows that I rebuked her once for calling somebody a jerk or something similar to that. Forgive my slang.

Thanksgiving is a great cure. Great cure for a negative spirit. It's a great cure for cynicism.

It's a great cure often for discouragement. When I'm feeling discouraged, I often just start praising the Lord. I turn my eyes off the problem.

Turn my eyes off the headache. Some people who have gone through great traumatic experiences never come out of those experiences because they keep replaying the film. They keep replaying the film.

If you've had some horrendous, terrible thing in your life, why are you going to go to a cinema and keep watching that same film? We're supposed to, and I'm going to talk about this a little later, develop a disciplined mind so that we can choose. Excuse me, we can choose by God's power, by God's help, by God's grace, what we are going to think of. That's why Philippians 4.8 is such an important, beautiful scripture for every believer.

Let's just read it, lest I misquote it. Philippians chapter 2. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians. Chapter 4, verse 8. Finally, my brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things.

Isn't that beautiful? That's the cure for the negative spirit. The second word that's on my heart for this great celebration is the word vision. God wants to increase our vision this weekend.

To come to our hundredth year as a fellowship is not the end. God forbid. This is the beginning.

The history of this fellowship and church and mission seems to indicate that for some years it was either stuck in neutral, reverse, or drifting. We'll not analyze that tonight. But it's clear that this church now is in high gear for God.

It's a fast lane operation. It's based on the word of God. It's been proven and tested and is still going.

And I have a great spirit of expectation as to what God wants to do here. Vision. For every big vision we have, we don't lack big vision in Operation Mobilization, I can assure you.

We got too many of them. I don't know whether my leaders are staying up late drinking too much coffee or what, but we seem to have too many visions. For every big vision we have in Operation Mobilization, and I gave a message on this recently to our leaders, we need hundreds of people who have little vision.

Little visions that will help complete the big vision. That's so important. In fact, when too many people in a church have huge visions and they're all different, often the church splits because they can't handle it.

This man wants to start a great rescue operation for prostitutes. This one over here wants to reach the rich and the upper crust. This person feels the main thrust must be to the children.

This one comes along and says the main thrust must be reaching the rest of the world, we should all go overseas. Someone else comes along and feels that we must get into justice and righteousness and enter the political arena. Another character has a big vision for shaking the whole of Manchester for Jesus Christ and wants to launch hundreds of buses and banana carts down the streets of Manchester selling gospel literature.

The place will go crazy. That's why a movement like Operation Mobilization, they get one George Burwell, that's it. He alone is enough to drive them almost completely crazy.

Someone now thinks I'm going to get a submarine for evangelism in depth. Someone else thought I should get a gospel train. Someone else wondered when I was going to buy a jumbo jet for Jesus.

People have some idea that I'm this great man of faith. When I want another ship, I just wander down to the ocean, raise my hand in the name of Jesus, and another ship just pops up, pulls in, and we load on the crew and sail off to reach the world for Christ. Brothers and sisters, this book will indicate that it is not quite like that.

Praise God for His small people, His unnoticed people, His ordinary people, who may not be able to preach publicly, who may not sound like they're tearing the walls of satanic territory down when they pray, who may be even a little shy or a little quiet, but they've got a vision, a vision for prayer, a vision for serving others, a vision perhaps for new ways to find money for the work of God, a vision for networking and spreading information out about the work of God. One of the first new songs I ever learned when I came to Britain was in Birmingham. I was there two weeks ago at a great youth rally.

It's amazing, the wall between Birmingham and Manchester. It's incredible. Might as well be two separate nations.

But one of the songs I learned when I first came to Britain, I guess 27 years ago, was, There's a work for Jesus ready at your hand. That's an old one, isn't it? I bet they sang that one maybe a hundred years ago right here at the Mission. But it's so true.

There's a work for everybody. And maybe in God's providence, during this time when you don't have a main senior, as we say in America, ministering pastor, maybe this is a time when God's going to do a new thing, a special thing, and teach more about corporate ministry, more gifts from a wider range of people are going to come to the fore, because no church that accomplishes great things for God can ever be a one-man show. And too many people are putting their gifts under a bushel basket.

Too many people think someone else is supposed to have the vision. Someone else is supposed to do this. Like this fellow who got the missionary vision, so-called, and said, Lord, here I am, send my sister.

That's not how it works. Let's ask God for a renewed vision this weekend. Let's ask God for new ways that we can make an impact on a secular, humanistic society.

Some people believe the greatest opposition to the gospel is communism. They've got a lot of doubts right now. Others believe it's Islam, and there's a lot of strong points.

But I believe the greatest opposition to the gospel is still old-fashioned unbelief. Old-fashioned unbelief, and in many of its different forms. It may come in the form of a cult.

It may come in the form of humanism. It may come in the form of secularism. It may come as atheism.

We have plenty of atheists in Great Britain. And they're influencing television. They're influencing the media.

They're influencing the literature we read. We don't need Islam and communism to get us in big trouble in Britain. We're already in big trouble.

I believe we need new, contextualized, radical ways to make an impact for the gospel of Jesus Christ in this nation and that will influence the whole world. The third word, I'm sure you might also guess that it would come in somewhere, and that's the word action. Thanksgiving, vision.

You can reverse the order if you want. Thirdly, action. The book of James says, let's not be hearers of the word only, but doers.

Isn't it wonderful to meet people of action? People that get things done for God. One of my favorite characters is Arthur Blessett. What an amazing person that God has so wonderfully used.

Another one of my favorite persons is Brother Andrew. Going against the time, starting and leading one of the most phenomenal, unusual missions of all times. I count it a privilege to be part of a fellowship where as far as I know, every man and woman in O.M. is a person of action.

If you're not a doer, you just can't come on Operation Mobilization. It's what it's all about. Yes, we pray, we study the word of God, and then we move.

This summer, 7,000 people came to Offenburg, Germany. 5,000 moved out in evangelism. Hundreds upon hundreds profess faith in Jesus Christ.

That same action is possible on the local basis. What a thrill to see people going out door to door in their own area or going into the streets or using the telephone or opening their own home to bring in visitors and guests. There's not one way to evangelize.

There are dozens of different ways. And I just believe one of the great areas where we need to renew our commitment tonight is the area of evangelism. It's hard, it's tough, it's disappointing.

Do not allow any disappointment in our church, any disappointment in our life. I have had many slow us down in our work for Jesus Christ. The fourth word that's on my heart is the most unpleasant of the six.

There has to be at least one unpleasant word among the six. The others are all relatively pleasant. Thanksgiving, vision, action.

But the fourth word is discipline. Discipline. Isn't this the problem so often? The emphasis on discipline in Operation Mobilization has been the greatest factor by God's grace and mercy and the work of the Holy Spirit to keep us moving forward now 33 years as a movement.

It's not very long compared to this fellowship. But in those 33 years we have given the gospel to 400 million people face to face. We have graduated 50,000 workers through our training program short or long out into the harvest field.

Discipline is often the missing link in the average church. Even many of the new churches born in the last 20 years in Great Britain are in serious trouble because they didn't realize the importance of discipline. They thought if we get this blessing and we get this particular doctrine and we get this particular emphasis we're just going to go and we're going to change the whole course of Great Britain.

People had so-called prophecies about that. 10, 15, 20 years ago! That God was giving him the keys to the British government, whatever that means. A lot of it comes and goes.

It's like hot air. Somebody said of an American politician when they were criticizing him that he had a lot of wind in the mouth but nothing in the sails. I thought it was a good expression, especially if you're a sailor.

Brothers and sisters, we are deceived. We are deceived. If we can only acknowledge that.

I've had to acknowledge deception in my own marriage, in the way I treated my wife, the way I worked with my family. Perhaps the greatest encouragement I've had in many months was such a beautiful and powerful letter from my own son who lives, at least temporarily, in the United States though he works for a big British accounting firm. And as I look back over my life I know there were areas where I was blind or I was a bit deceived.

This doesn't mean God wasn't using me. That was the problem. God seemed to be using me so much I didn't stop enough to really examine and try to improve in areas where I was a little weak.

I thank God eventually some people told me. One bold woman finally came to me. I remember it was 1977, the same year we got Dulos.

It was the same week we made the decision to buy Dulos, our second ship. She took me in a room aside and she really let go. How are you men taking it from the women? That's a real test of your spirituality.

We got a lot of secret chauvinism among God's people today. It's so thick that some men don't even know what it means. But the truth is that in the Church of Jesus Christ we need the women equally, absolutely equally as much as we need the men.

And if you can show me any other scripture I will give you 5,000 free books. I didn't say they were the same because that would be extremely unbiblical. Not only that, it would be downright weird.

May God cause us to understand we can be converted, we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, we can be blessed at Keswick, we can be kicked at Operation Mobilizations Love Europe, but if we don't return to our church, to our home, or to wherever we're going and put into practice a disciplined life in which we deny self each day, take up the cross and follow Christ each day, in which we buffet our body, as Paul said, he buffeted his body and brought it into subjection so that after preaching to others he would not be a castaway. And when we see some of the messes taking place among Christian workers across the world in 95% of the cases, it's because when they were young Christians they never understood the cross, they never understood the disciplined life, they never understood in depth how to say no to self and the self-life and all of its squirmy, ugly little ways and yes to the cross and its power to destroy the self-life. It doesn't mean perfection, it means reality.

It involves our eating, it involves how we spend money, it involves the mind, as Lloyd-Jones so emphasized in his writing, it truly involves the tongue. It will mean that we will have to often go to people which is the toughest discipline of all and say, I am sorry, I have sinned against you and receive the grace

that sinners receive when they bend before the Lord Jesus Christ. And the fifth word is perhaps the most motivating, exciting word and that's the word love.

All the other things we can talk about, thanksgiving, vision, action, discipline, world evangelism, total commitment to Lordship of Christ, great messages that I'm regularly speaking about and one of the reasons I bring all these tapes is I just love to get more messages into the hands of God's people. Most of the time when I sell these tapes like to students at Moreland's Bible College a couple of days ago and sell books, I almost lose money every time they buy one. I just have such a desire to get the word out.

But this fifth word is the word love. 1 Corinthians 13 is one of the passages I read the most and I hope you do as well. It's love that has again and again kept me from ugly extremism though I've still had some failure.

When I've been very strong and moving in a particular direction and upset about something, somebody's walked on one of my favorite convictions, it's love that again and again brings me back into balance. It's love, the power of the Holy Spirit a major controlling factor in your life. I hope it is for all of us.

It's the only way. Love. Read that word in Galatians, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, thankfulness, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law. Every time I found a book on love when I was a young Christian, I read it. Eugenia Price's book, Make Love Your Aim, another brilliant message by a woman.

Henry Drummond's book, the greatest greatest book of all. I forget the title. Just a little book all about love.

Theodore F., the great founder of Back to the Bible Broadcast. Love is the answer. I made everybody come on OM read it.

I went through the whole of the New Testament. I marked every single verse on the subject of love. This was when I was in a secular university, sort of a little religious overtone.

Before I ever went to Bible college and theological college, I went through the whole New Testament. I marked every verse on the subject of love without a concordance. It revolutionized my life.

A character like me is still taking place. It's still my greatest area of failure. It may not happen so much.

It may be more difficult to measure because it's subtle. As we get my age, and we've been in the work of God a long time, our sins are more subtle. People don't even see them.

But when we get to the end of the day and we bow our head before God and we say, Lord, how did I do today? We see them. In fact, many a man of God has expressed that the closer he became to Jesus Christ, the more ugly he saw his self-life and his own life. Read the story of David Brainerd.

Read Murray Machen. Don't only read new books. Lay this little gospel diet book that somebody just written for the average evangelical.

Read some of these old writings by A.W. Tozer. Read Murray Machen. Read some of the great Puritans.

And you'll discover men that knew God. They weren't perfect. And when biographies were written back then, they put stuff under the carpet, and that's always very sad.

But they have something that we certainly need today. We may have something today that they could have used a little more of back then. That seems to be the way history is.

And my final word is the word forgiveness. I love it. Forgiveness.

I'm reading a new book right now on forgiveness. Well, I have to be truthful. I'm reading one book on forgiveness.

I've just got another book on forgiveness that I want to talk about for a moment. And the only thing I've read is the cover. But people have told me about it over the phone.

And so I ordered, by faith, I ordered a hundred copies. The whole book is about forgiving people that have hurt you, that you feel unable to forgive, even though you pronounce it with your lips, emotionally, you don't change. Since I was last with you, I have counseled and prayed with probably a couple hundred people.

My meetings in North America, over 1,000 stood, thanking for praying, to recommit their lives to Jesus Christ. Many of them came up afterward for prayer and counsel. The one I remember the most was a young woman who came to me and shared something she never told a living soul.

She said, My father has raped me and forced me to abort the child. And my mother doesn't know. And I have to go back to talk to my father this weekend.

Can I forgive him? Can I forgive him? Only in the supernatural power of Christ that we represent here tonight would that young woman wanting to go into the ministry be able to go back to her father and say, I forgive you. And probably, it will be many, many, many years before emotionally she will be able to receive and enjoy the full impact of that forgiveness. In many ways, next to the name of Jesus Christ and the names of God, the greatest word in the Bible is forgiveness.

And yet so many of God's people harbor roots of bitterness against those who have hurt them. So many of God's people seem to carry little bits of dirt in their pocket to use when necessary against someone for some reason or other. I don't believe the challenge of forgiveness is some little black and white picture that you're going to cross over because you've heard a challenge about it tonight.

It's something that you will agonize about. It's something that you will have to read about. You will have to study about.

The brother who first recommended this new book to me is someone who has wrestled with unforgiveness and something similar in his heart for several years, several years. And now, only now, through counsel, discussion, and open sharing is that therapy taking place that is bringing that healing, that inner healing that often so many of us need, so many of us need. I know in my own life as a young Christian, and I think I had some advantages because I never had a supreme mega hurt in my childhood.

So don't compare me with yourself. We're all different. When I think of what some of the young people who come on OM today have gone through before they get to us, I can't believe it.

A girl came to me years ago. She said, I've been raped 20 times by my grandfather. This is an area where Christians are incredibly naive.

Statistics will show that incest, that sexual activity within the family, immorality within the family is on the increase and it is hitting Christians because Christians are often trying to live in purity. They may even have unrealistic views about impurity. And a lot of what they may think is victory, in fact, is repression.

And so they would never go with a prostitute. They would never get into pornography. They would never do this or do that.

And so they have a lot repressed. And in a weak moment of depression and confusion, it gets spilt out upon a family member. And the pain is awesome.

There is now a whole book just published about incest among God's people. What is the answer? Of course, discipline, victory, purity, the Lordship of Christ, everything the Bible stands for is part of God's provision to enable us to stand against all temptations that come. For Ephesians chapter 6 says we have a shield through the faith wherewith we can stop all the fiery darts.

But when sin does come in, when failure of whatever form does come in, there is forgiveness. And with forgiveness there is restoration. It may take time, but it's there as one of the greatest promises in the Word of God.

And so when we see a sister fall, a brother fall, or when we ourselves fall, we know, though there may be discipline, though things may have to change, though there has to be practical application, we know it's not the end of the road. I don't know what trouble, what difficulty you may be wrestling with, what failure may be lurking over your shoulder from 1989 as we go into 1990, but I know whatever it is, when it goes under the blood of Jesus Christ, it is gone. It is cleansed.

It is finished. It is as if it never happened as far as God is concerned. Though you may have to wrestle with the consequences of that sin to some degree, the rest of your life.

Forgiveness is the great word I want to close with on this special anniversary celebration. As He has forgiven us in Jesus Christ, so we forgive one another. Could it be that even churches hold things against other churches because of past experiences, because of miscommunications, because of past hurts, and where there could be greater unity in working together, it doesn't happen because something is there that has not been forgiven.

Something like the Berlin Wall is there between us and them. And it just doesn't come down that easy. May it come down at this 100th anniversary celebration for the glory of God, for the King of Kings, and for the extension of the Gospel throughout the world.

Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank You for this special event that we are able to have together. We thank You, Lord, again, for what You have done these 100 years through heartache and sorrow, through times of victory and times of defeat.

And Lord, we thank You for these six dynamic Biblical principles that are written through the pages of Your Word. And we pray, O God, with a spirit of thanksgiving, that our vision may increase, and that we may be the men and women of action so that in a disciplined and loving way we may take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. And, O God, when we fail and when we sin, we will receive Your forgiveness and Your cleansing through Calvary.

And when others sin and when others fail, we will extend to them that forgiveness and that love for Your glory and for Your kingdom. We thank You for this great reality. In Jesus' name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21513.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/6-words-to-live-by/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net