

Berufen Aus Gnade (Eng - German)

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the transformative power of grace in personal lives and global missions, urging believers to embrace love and humility in their ministry efforts.

Duration: 48:46

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

Topics: "German"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of attending a mission conference and feeling out of place. He talks about wearing a global jacket and feeling awkward among the crowd. He then reflects on his journey of finding purpose and acceptance through the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of proclaiming the message of God's love and justification by faith in a dynamic way, as opposed to falling back into legalistic tendencies. He also mentions the impact of a sermon series on the book of Galatians, which helped him understand and accept himself despite his struggles with self-image.

Transcript

Whenever I come to Germany, there are some technical problems. But you know how to solve them. We were just quoting from the word of God.

Go into all the world. Preach the gospel to everybody. 2,000 years have passed.

Isn't that an amazing billion people? Through great missionary work, the last 100 years especially, has been the greatest harvest of people to Christ the world has ever known. What has happened in Africa is beyond comprehension. What's happened in Latin America, not millions of new believers, tens of millions.

Just in the lifetime of Anita and me, I don't know who's oldest here, even places like China, where it looked so dark when communism took over. Now there are some 70 million believers. And a whole new missionary movement called Back to Jerusalem has been born in China in the past few years.

They're wanting to send 100,000 missionaries in this whole Silk Road area all the way to Jerusalem. There's so much to thank God for and what he has done. And yet because of population explosion, because of nations, especially Muslim nations, that have great restricted access, because we're dealing with thousands of languages and many other problems, still tonight about 20% of the people in the world

have never even heard the gospel.

Now we know hearing the gospel once is not enough. Hudson Taylor said this, I'll never forget it. If hearing the gospel once is not enough, what do we say of never hearing the gospel at all? I thank God for this missions conference.

In a day when churches in some places no longer have any missions conference, and have decided not to send out any missionaries, I praise God that you've maintained this great vision here at this college all these years. And it's a great privilege to be back here again. And for the first time I actually sailed to Europe on our own ship.

I live in London, and I joined the ship Dulles that many of you pray for in Southampton and sailed to the Netherlands. Dulles, the ship Dulles. And then I came, of course, by train to America.

Thank you for the privilege of being back with you. I've also been in Europe about the same length of time as this great school. Forty-four years.

My wife and I haven't got that first furlough yet. We're thinking about that. We first lived in Spain, and then we lived in a lot of different countries, and then in India and Nepal, and we lived on the ships, partly due to children's education and me not wanting to learn another language, partly because of children's education, and me not wanting to learn another language.

We settled in London, England. And I really do want to thank you for your prayers for OM. The ship Dulles will be coming to Bremen in August.

I'll be coming back at that time. We'll be celebrating the 90th birthday of this amazing ship. For many, many, many... We are just amazed what God has done.

Twenty-seven years we've had the Dulles. It was the 700th port when we arrived. I think this port in the Netherlands.

400 different ports around the whole world. But I'm not here to talk about these things. I've chosen to especially want to speak to you from the Word of God about God's grace.

That has been a reality in my own life every single day for 49 years. And I want to talk about what Charles Swindoll in his book calls the grace awakening. We've had about 120,000 people actually work on OM, about 120,000.

Thousands of them are in mission agencies and in churches all over the world. They don't stay on OM. As we look back over these years we realize we made many mistakes.

And yet God has been so merciful. He's been so patient with us. I don't know if you can relate to that in your own spiritual life.

The mercy of God. The patience of God. When we have a wrong attitude when we sin in any way the sins of commission and the sins of omission.

It's easier to recognize sins of commission. We do something wrong. The Spirit of God convicts us.

But the Holy Spirit has regularly convicted me of my sins of omission. Things I should have done that I didn't do. And Charles Swindoll, one of the most influential writers in my Christian life, very much emphasizes the importance of attitude.

A.W. Tozer, another man that influenced me, talks about the disposition and dispositional sins. And to me this is so radical. It's so revolutionary.

It took me years to understand. And as I was learning, God was so patient and so merciful. My scripture reading for this first evening is from 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

And we'll just read the scripture in this great chapter in German. And allow the Holy Spirit to minister to our hearts from His Holy Word. I really believe the Bible is God's Word.

And when God's Word is read, God speaks. And though this passage is very familiar to most of us, and I have been regularly studying it for 49 years, I still find it a great inspiration. You see, it's my conviction that global missions must spring from a grace awakening.

Grace awakening in the church, grace awakening in our own hearts, so that our motivation for doing mission is God-given motivation. Grace awakening for me is simply the reality of 1 Corinthians 13 actually happening in our lives. Let us just pray again.

Oh God, use Your Word to increase our... Use Your Word to inspire us to... Use Your Word to increase our prayer ministry. Oh God, break down those barriers. So many barriers between Christians.

So many wrong attitudes. So much judgmentalism. Draining us of spiritual energy.

Causing confusion and chaos even on the mission field. And causing people to be hurt rather than to be healed. Pray, oh God, for nothing less than a revolution of love in our own lives.

For the Scripture is so clear. If we don't have anything. I think in this first message I should share a little of my own story very quickly.

I was not from a Christian home. My grandfather, my father were born only a few hundred miles from here. At a place called Stadtskanal in the Netherlands.

My grandfather was an atheist. And he moved to the New York City area. My father was very young.

My father was not a Christian. And he married a woman who had a little bit of Methodist religion. She had a few basic rules and regulations.

She in many ways was a wonderful woman. She didn't know Jesus. She didn't know his word.

She didn't know anything about healing. Her father had Irish, Scottish, English blood. And that is toxic.

He was an alcoholic. And my grandmother divorced him. I didn't have very much of a spiritual background.

I lived near New York City so life was very fast. When I was 16 I was on my 32nd girlfriend. That's before I knew you.

I owned three small businesses. Tremendous passion to make money. And then I got caught up in the world of sports.

Sports is generally a good thing. But these things became like gods in my life. And I got also started to move into the world of pornography.

Sorry to say that. A lady near my high school where I was about to become the leader of the student movement was a woman of prayer. And I know some of you are women of prayer.

And I honor you tonight in the name of Jesus. I know some of you are men of prayer. There are not as many of those.

We think we can do it on our own. But I honor you in your prayer ministry. This lady heard about me and put my name on her Holy Ghost hit list.

Some people in the church they call it a prayer list. She then sent me a Gospel of John through the post. I had a New Testament.

I had read a little bit of the Bible. I started to go to a very sort of community kind of liberal church. But I was like a hypocrite.

I'd be in a nightclub in New York City on Saturday night and I'd be in church on Sunday morning. This lady really prayed for me. She not only prayed that I would become a Christian and experience the grace of God because she was a woman of grace.

But she prayed that I would become a missionary. She didn't even talk to me about this. I mean, I'd like to know what's going to happen with my life.

And she sent me this Gospel and as I read the Word of God it broke into my heart. It is not time to explain all the things that God was doing to draw me to himself. Even though I was so caught up in so many things and very much enjoying life.

Then a very unusual man came to New York City. A man named Billy Graham. How many have ever heard of him? I love to speak among educated people.

Among my friends this man did not have a good reputation. This was considered the Bible-thumping religious fanaticism. And somebody said he's probably a hypnotist.

A hypnotist. But I decided because a business person gave me a free seat on a bus I decided to go hear Billy Graham. That was to completely change my life.

There were 20,000 people in the meeting. A big fight arena. One night.

Only one night in Madison Square Garden. A fight arena. To see if he was a hypnotist I actually brought my binoculars.

And I sat as far away as I could. But I didn't see a lot of emotionalism. I heard the gospel.

I heard for God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son. Whosoever believes in him should never perish but have everlasting life. There may be someone here tonight with a friend.

This kind of mission conference you may feel, this isn't my world. I feel a little awkward here with all these people. And I know when I arrive with my global jacket and my big globe some people feel really awkward.

I wear this global jacket all over the world. It doesn't look very good on me. No.

It looks a lot better on global people. But I have found it very helpful. I was actually on a British Airways jumbo jet.

The true story. I was flying from San Pablo over my stomach to Buenos Aires. And I went up to the cockpit of the jumbo jet to talk to the pilot.

And the co-pilot was saying I think we're flying over Ecuador. Well, Ecuador is way up here. And in the cockpit of a jumbo jet they used my jacket to see where they were.

They were flying over a small country similar to Ecuador but it's called Uruguay. So if you're going to do a lot of traveling some of you in the future and you're forgetful type so if you brought a map you might forget it. But if you wear your own map you will not forget it.

Some people think I wear this to bed. But I have global underwear for bed. It's the truth.

By God's grace he saved me that night March 4th, 1955. March 4th, 1955. You weren't born yet.

And it's been a felt grace awakened reality ever since. And here's the amazing thing. I went back to this high school near this woman of prayer near her home.

I had never met her but now I met her. I found out she had been praying 20 years for this school. So we started some prayer meetings on the campus.

And her 20 years of prayer suddenly we saw the breakthrough. Different students started to come to Christ. And we had some meetings.

And some more came to Christ. Then I had to go off to university. But when I came back at Christmas 600 students came to hear me speak.

I was only 18. But I gave the gospel. I asked people to believe on Jesus.

125 people stood up and came for prayer. Until 94 years of age. So that is the story of the beginning.

The beginning of my life and the beginning of what later in Europe when it exploded became Operation Mobilization. Whenever we talk about grace and in Swindoll's book on this subject the first four chapters are all about this. And this book is all about it.

We're talking about what God has done for us. We're talking about justification by faith. And I feel that message needs to be proclaimed in a more dynamic way.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer declared that in Germany way back in the 40s. He eventually gave his life because of it. But the natural tendency of human beings and even churches is to go back to the law.

You study the book of Galatians. It's a warning us not to go back to the law. As a young baby Christian I had the privilege of listening to a great Presbyterian named Donald Gray Barnhauser.

I listened to recordings, sermons on records about, from the book of Galatians. Grace exploded in my heart. I realized God's love for me.

I realized he accepted me. Ephesians 1, 6. And this helps me understand and helps me to accept myself. Because as a teenager I was having a struggle with myself.

I wanted to be big and strong and good looking. So the girls would just look at me and whack! But I was skinny and the mirror was not really a great experience for me. I was struggling with myself.

And then I saw this advertisement in a magazine. It had a picture of a very skinny fellow on the beach with a girl. And the skinny guy looked a bit like me.

And a big, strong, good looking guy came along. Like Doyle. And he knocked away the skinny guy and he took the girl.

Wow, that's what's going to happen to me all my life. I don't have a chance. And then on the bottom of the page it said it was an advertisement.

You can be a real man. And I wrote in. Charles Atlas Muscle Building Weight Gaining Program.

And I started eating extra food. Lifting weights. After six months I gained half a kilo.

Very discouraging. But when Jesus Christ took over my life. When the grace of God began to explode in my life.

And I understood God's love for me. That His Son Jesus Christ died for my sin. I'm sure many of you have seen this film, The Passion.

There may be one or two things that we may not like about that film. But overall, God is using it. And when I saw the film, I was deeply stirred what Jesus Christ suffered for me and it impacted my life.

Some of you know that our biggest work is in India and in the Muslim world. And that film is giving us the greatest opportunities we've ever had to share about Jesus in Muslim countries. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims are going to that film.

And we know some are going to come to Christ. Because we believe now is the hour for the Muslim world. There's not time to tell much more of my own story.

God led me to evangelize my own town in New York City. And He led me to Mexico. And I saw that God could use young people even in a short term ministry.

Because it wasn't all our cleverness and our theology and our ability. Those things are okay. But it was God's grace working through young people who wanted to be totally, totally yielded to Jesus Christ.

And we started these half-nights of prayer that spread all over the world. And God brought to us some of these great Christian books. Some of the great men and women of God of years ago.

And we fed on these spiritual books. Books like Calvary Road by Roy Hesham. The writings of Andrew Murray.

And God was doing something unusual. We didn't even know it. He was raising up a global missions movement that was destined to give the Word of God face to face to one billion people.

In India alone we've given the Gospel to 500 million Indians. The ship ministry has given the Word of God to another 100 million people. In our first two summers in Europe when things really began to grow in 62 and 63 and many Germans became involved.

We gave the Word of God to 25 million people in those two summers. We know when we get to heaven I've personally had the privilege of speaking over 20,000 times. I've seen over 150 to 200,000 people stand up or come forward to make some kind of commitment to Christ or to missions.

When I first came to Christ I tended at times to go extreme. And I made some real mistakes. Again and again the grace of God brought me back to the cross.

Back to repentance and brokenness and Jesus reigning and ruling in my heart and life. Especially had difficulties in the whole area of sexuality and women. I remember as a young Christian leading a girl to Christ but then spending the next hour or two kissing her.

I don't think that's in the follow-up book. And then I felt very condemned. Sometimes I would fall back into the pornography thing in a small way.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren. And Satan sort of got a hold in my ear and said you will never ever be anything for God. But somehow I was beginning to know the message of grace.

God loved me even when I failed. I decided no more dating, no more girls, no more kissing. And in many ways that was good.

I went to Mexico and God did a lot during those two years. I was in a non-Christian university so I didn't get involved with any of those girls. Then I made a big decision.

I'm gonna go to Bible school. Like Bracca. Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

A long journey. When I got there I was thinking these girls are all dynamic, dedicated Christians. Now I can break my fast.

I was in love with seven girls in the first week. And I didn't do anything. Then I went to rent a film, an evangelistic film, a moody science film because I wanted to reach the people in the YMCA where I was living.

Moody Bible Institute is a very tall building. I went to the 8th floor in the elevator. I turned to the right.

I saw this beautiful girl sitting at a desk. I broke my fast immediately. I moved into the Target.

Boy, I really was really mad. So I said to her you're probably not gonna be a missionary, are you? She's a real She's a real quiet country girl from Iowa. Very shy.

She had never met a loud mouth from New Jersey. She said, well, why do you ask that? Girls there seem to be hunting pastors, not missionaries. For her, it was not love at first sight.

I decided we'd better have a meeting. I decided we'd better have a meeting, she and I. The very first meeting. I thought I need to just really test whether she's committed.

So I said to her, probably nothing gonna happen between me and you. But let's get the cards on the table. I'm gonna be a missionary.

And if you marry me, you'll end up being eaten by cannibals in New Guinea. She was still not in love. Then in my extremism, my lack of grace, my lack of sensitivity, I gave her a bag of my dirty, dirty laundry.

I said, will you wash this as unto the Lord? I said, will you wash this as unto the Lord? To my utter amazement, she washed my clothes for the next two years. She eventually fell in love after I mobilized a lot of prayer. She believed I was a great man of God.

She believed I was a Bible teacher. I gave her the message from the word of God. My key verse was in Ephesians.

Submit to your husband as unto the Lord. She accepted that. She gave me all of her money.

She sold some of her possessions, gave the money to world missions. She more or less did whatever I said. She went to Mexico.

Went door to door selling Spanish books when she didn't even speak Spanish. We got married. No honeymoon.

No money spent. We wouldn't spend any money for any... The money was all for world evangelism. I was very extreme about money.

Amazing the grace of God through this woman, her patience toward me. Went to Mexico City. We even sold part of the wedding cake to buy a gasoline petrol.

We lived on the floor in the back of a bookshop that we just opened. Tremendous marriage. Wonderful marriage.

A few weeks. Then she read those other verses. Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church.

What a difficult verse. But, to be really honest, we discovered we were very, very different. We were headed for some pretty rough years in our marriage.

But the thing that saved us was 1 Corinthians 13. The message of grace. The reality of brokenness and humility and repentance.

Being willing to admit we were wrong. Especially me. Because the male ego finds it hard to admit that they're a jerk.

I don't know if you have a good word in Germany for jerk. It's a strong word. Give me another one.

Stupid. And as a married couple we read this book Calvary Row. Especially the chapter Revival in the Home.

And we prayed together. And when I hurt her I would repent and apologize. We experienced personal revival in our homes.

In Britain a lot of people are praying for revival. And other countries. In America Christian leaders have spent millions millions and millions promoting revival.

We want to have a big revival in America. I'm not totally against that. But I believe revival plan A revival is Jesus.

It's Jesus living in us. You don't have to pray for it. It's your inheritance in Jesus.

He lives in you by his Holy Spirit. And you can live day by day in revival. And when we do that and we pray sometimes there are these explosions spiritually and there are these other kinds of revivals.

So as we pray for bigger things to happen let's make sure we're living in God's grace. This love we just read about is actually functioning day by day moment by moment, hour by hour. In what we do, what we say.

In what we think. In our attitude, in our disposition. Read it again in the next day or two.

Listen to it on cassette as I often do, Bible cassette. Let this revolution of love and grace have a deeper, deeper impact upon your life. And I can assure you that if you come back to your Bible college as I was just back preaching at Moody 45 years later you'll be able to testify as I am able to testify this is real.

His grace is sufficient. His strength is made perfect in weakness, complicated marriage and living in all these different countries and difficult situations can know this grace every day as I have. Not in the absence of struggles and doubts and mistakes and sometimes sin but at the feet of Jesus for cleansing that's going to keep us motivated in this huge task that we still have in impossible situations like Iraq and Afghanistan and North Korea where hundreds, by the way, died in this huge explosion in the last 24 hours.

We're going to talk about some of these nations and some of these situations but I believe we can only respond in a way that will have a long-term impact when we know this grace in our own hearts. He's forgiven us. He cares for us.

And even when we fail and get into extremism and say stupid things God is sufficient. Oh God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this great Mount Everest chapter there in Corinthians.

And we pray, oh Lord, fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit during these days that we can be your men, that we can be your women. We'll go where you want us to go and do what you want us to do and we'll know this personal revival in our hearts, the rest of our lives and in our marriages and in our teamwork and in our churches that everyone in the world may soon hear of Jesus and that the church may be planted among all people.

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