

# Absalom

by Jacob Prasch

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*Mission begins at home, and we should start by witnessing to our families and those around us before going out to other countries.*

**Duration:** 51:49

**Scripture:** Psalm 19:7, Isaiah 52:7, Matthew 7:22, Matthew 12:46-50, Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:8, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 1:6-9, Revelation 21:4

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of sharing the full gospel message, including the need for repentance and the reality of trials, not just the blessings and feel-good aspects. It highlights the mission field starting with our families and neighbors, urging believers to pray for and witness to their unsaved loved ones. The speaker addresses the emotional struggle of having unsaved family members and the urgency to see them saved before Jesus returns, emphasizing the eternal family we have in Christ.

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## Transcript

Thank you, dear friends. Good evening and greetings in Jesus. Wonderful to be with you all.

Heavenly Father, we ask that you give us now us more. As always, Lord God, we ask by your Spirit you speak to us through your Word. And we ask, Lord God, that your Word not simply increase our knowledge for the sake of increasing our knowledge, but to increase our knowledge to make us more like your Son, more effective in serving him and serving others.

In his wonderful name, the one who saved us, Jesus. Amen. You know, the pastor spoke of two things just now.

Pastor Emmanuel spoke of the last days and of mission. And there's quite a relationship between the last days and the return of Jesus. And mission as we see over there, making Jesus, last of all, our first priority.

I was speaking to some Christians on the other side of the bell the other night. And I pointed out that in Matthew 24, we're told directly that we will not know when Jesus comes. We're told in verse 36, but on that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of God nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Maybe Jesus knows now, in eternity, but when he was on earth, he didn't know. And in verse 44, for this reason, be ready, the Son of Man is coming at an hour we do not think he will. Whenever the Bible speaks

of the return of Jesus, it says the Son of God, always the Son of Man.

Always the Son of Man. We don't know when he's coming. Jesus didn't even know when he's coming.

Why is that? It's because although the time is fixed in eternity, although the Father knows, relative to us, it's a variable. It's not a fixed date, set in time, as we know time. In 2 Peter 3, verse 12, Peter says, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.

We can actually cause Jesus to come back faster by counting out the Great Commission, by doing what's on that banner. It's a variable. We're not simply waiting for Jesus to come back.

It says in Luke's Gospel, when the prophet permits, he sends the Lord of the house. We're not waiting for Jesus, he's waiting for us. In the Song of Solomon, the bride doesn't know when the bridegroom is coming.

But the bridegroom says, do not await the mighty lover until she pleases. We're not waiting for Jesus to come for his bride. He's waiting for the bride to get dressed and be ready.

That's the way it is. We can hasten his coming. We can make him come back more.

Making Jesus' last command our first priority. You know, I go to places like Africa and to Asia, and I see things in the developing world that I couldn't even explain to somebody in a country like Australia or Britain or America. I saw such subhuman poverty in Africa, I couldn't even explain it.

But what was shocking to me, as bad as those conditions were, you could say, thank God my kids don't have to grow up in this. There were actually people in other countries like Angola and Mozambique trying to get them down from living in that poverty, because it was even worse than other countries. We take so much for granted.

We don't know how many Christians are poor. Neither do we know how many Christians are getting persecuted. Not far from here, just on Indonesia, is Brunei, a country where, right today, Christians will be arrested for being persecuted.

Nobody says much about it. Mission. Making Jesus' last command our first authority.

You know, I'm very concerned for people in the developing world. Certainly, every day I try to pray for missions and evangelism. Every day I try to pray for the persecuted church.

Our ministry raises money for missions in the Middle East, for evangelism in the Middle East. That's where we operate as a mission field the most. I'm concerned with those things.

But there's something that I carry with me every day. My family, our family is a mixture of Catholic and Jewish. Several weeks ago in America, I visited my mother, she's getting older.

My mother trusted a statue of Mary for her salvation instead of Jesus Christ. Her Jewish family. Her Jewish parents were the Holocaust.

To them, Christianity was Jews being persecuted in the name of Jesus. Every day, we pray for our families. Every day, you think about your own, say, family too, don't you? Notice when Jesus gave the final command in Acts chapter 1, he said, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and Eden to the ends of the earth.

In the book of Acts, we see so much of the emphasis was on families being saved. Like Cornelius in Acts chapter 10. Families, the Lord is in the business of saving families.

But that's so difficult. It's more difficult to witness the people who knew you before you were saved than it is anyone else. You can witness to your children, but when you witness to your unsaved husband, who knew you before you were a Christian, or to your unsaved wife who knew you before you were a Christian, or to your unsaved parents, or even to your grown-up children, that you were saved later in life, your siblings, your brothers, your sisters, friends you've known your whole life, it's usually easier to pray that God will send another witness to them, to witness to them than this for you to do it.

They just have a lot of ammunition they can hold and use. And that's what happens. And that's not to discourage witnessing to our loved ones, but so often, it's so difficult.

You have a missions conference, it's good for you people to come to that conference. It's important that you pray for it, that you pray for missions, and that you support it financially. That's not an option the Lord gives us.

It's a command. That's a command. It's not an option to support missions and evangelism.

But it's Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth. It begins at home. You can't all go be a missionary in Brunei, or in the Middle East, or in Africa, or the Philippines, or in South America.

You know, in some of these impoverished countries, particularly in Latin America and the Philippines, the churches are growing so quickly. I thank God for a church like this that is growing. But compared to what's happening in the Catholic countries of the third world, this is nothing.

When you see the way God is moving in so many places, in Brazil, in the Philippines, it's absolutely amazing. I know one case where they planted a church, within 18 months, that church had planted five other churches. With at least 200 people in each of the Lord's churches.

And that's not untypical of what happens when God's spirit moves. I believe the time is going to come when people in the poor countries will begin sending evangelists and missionaries back to the Protestant world, because they have, but we're losing it. Right now, the only thing keeping our missions going is the fact that we have the money that they don't have.

But we forget that the reason God blessed countries like Australia is because there was so much Christian influence in it. Now that that influence is going, God's going to bless them, those who preach the gospel faithfully. Already one of the most difficult mission fields in the world is the developed world.

In poor countries, people are more spiritually aware, they're impoverished, they don't have much to hope in, trust in, or look for. They're open to the gospel in poor countries. Here, people don't think they need God, they don't think they need Jesus, they don't think they need salvation.

I go to poor countries. And I grieve over the poverty of those people, and I think every day of the persecuted church. But the most difficult mission field in seeing people get saved is countries like Australia, or Britain, or America.

And the most difficult people that you will normally ever witness to are your unsaved family. Turn with me, please, with these things in view. To 2 Samuel, 2 Samuel, chapter 18.

You know, the two things I get the most mail about are unsaved and backslidden children, and unsaved husbands. If the wife is saved, there's no easy way to see the husband saved, usually. In most cases, where a husband and wife both get saved, it's usually the wife who gets saved first.

If the husband gets saved first, most of the time, the wife will get saved. But when the boots are on the other feet, it can be more difficult. But the grieving I've seen over Christian parents, children who are unsaved, who are backslidden, or people who were saved when their kids were already grown up, this causes people a lot of grief.

Let's look at 2 Samuel, chapter 18, verse 9. Now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David, for Absalom was riding on his mule, and his mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head fell fast in the oak. He was left hiding between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going. And when a certain man saw him, he told Joab and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hiding in the oak.

Then Joab said to the man who had told him, Now behold, you saw him. Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten pieces of silver out of those. And the man said to Joab, Even if I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, I would not put out my hand against the king's son, for in our hearing, the king charged you and Abishai and Ekei, saying, Protect for me the young man Absalom.

Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his wife, and there is nothing hidden from the king, then you yourself would have stood aloof. Then Joab said, I will not waste my day with you. So he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

And ten men, ten young men, who carried Joab's armor, gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him. Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people. And they took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest, and he wrecked and opened him a very great heap of stones.

And all Israel fled each to his tent. Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's valley. And he said, I have no son to preserve my name.

So he named the pillar after his own name, and it's called Absalom's Monument to this day. Then Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, the king's righteous, said, Please let me run and bring the king news that the Lord has freed him from the hands of his enemies. But Joab said to him, You are not the man to carry news this day, but you shall carry news another day.

However, you shall carry no news today, because the king's son is dead. Then Joab said to the Cushites. Now a Cushite in the Old Testament in Hebrew is a black person, a black man.

Joab said to the Cushite, Go tell the king what you have seen. So the Cushite, or the African, bowed to Joab and ran. Now Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said, Once more to God, for whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite.

And Joab said, Why would you run, my son, since you will have no reward for going? For whatever happens, he said, I will run. So he said to his run, he insisted, that Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and passed up the Cushite. Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall and raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man running by himself.

And the watchman called and called the king, and the king said, If he is by himself, there is good news in his mouth, and he came nearer and nearer. The Hebrew word, or term for good news, is besor, besorah. It is also the Hebrew term for gospel.

In Greek, it would be evangelio, but in Hebrew, besor, besorah, is the word for gospel. Same exact word. Isaiah 52, How lovely are the mountains, of the feet of Israel, besorah, the gospel, good news.

We recall the Gospel of John, for instance, in Hebrew, ha-besorah, the good news from the lips of John, according to the lips of John. Let's look. He came nearer and nearer.

The watchman called and said, If he is by himself, there is good news in his mouth, and he came nearer and nearer. Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, Behold, another man running by himself. And the king said, This one also is bringing besorah, good news.

And the watchman said, I think the running of the first one is like the running of Agimah, the son of Zadok. And the king said, This is a good man, and he comes with good news. He comes with gospel.

He comes with besorah. And Agimah is called out and said to the king, All is well. And he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground.

And he said, Blessed is the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my Lord. This guy, Agimah, outruns the advocate. And he must have had a really good plan of training to outrun his old brother, taking over the old members of the Olympics.

Is it well of the young man Absalom in verse 29? And Agimah answered, When Joab sent the king's servant and your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I didn't know what it was. Notice he knew very well what it was, but he didn't want to tell King David the bad news. He only wanted to tell him the good news.

So he begins to fudge the issue. Doesn't want to tell the bad news, only the good news. Then the king said, Turn aside and stand here.

So he turned aside and stood still. And behold, the Cushite arrived, and the Cushite said, Let my lord the king receive Besorah, good news, for the Lord has freed you this day from the hand of all those who rose up against you. Then the king said to the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, Let the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil, he is that young man.

And the king was deeply moved, and he went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. Thus he said as he walked, O my son Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom, I wish that I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son. The Hebrew text is very emotive.

V'nifedi Absalom, Absalom, v'nifedi oy Absalom. Let's continue. I wish that I had died instead of you.

We have to understand in typology, the Old Testament symbolism pointing to Christ. David is a figure of Jesus. Jesus is called the son of David.

Ben David Yeshua. David was only able to wish that he could have died on the cross, hung on a tree on behalf of someone he loved. He wished he could have hung on behalf of the one he loved and been pierced instead of the son.

But the law can't save it. While David could only have wished it was possible for him to hang on a tree and be pierced instead of the one he loved, Jesus, the son of David actually did. You understand? It shows that the law can't save it.

Now to a Jewish person who is averse to the Torah person is everyone who hangs on a tree. It was not only a debt, but it was a kind of debt that represented a terrible disgrace. It was the most humiliating way to die and it would have been a great source of embarrassment and disgrace to the surviving family.

Verse 19, almost finished now. It was told to Joab, chapter 19, it was told to Joab, Behold the king is weeping and he mourns for Absalom. And the victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people.

For the people heard him and they said that day, the king is free for his son. So the people went by stealth into the city that day as people who were humiliated steal away when they flee and run. And the king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, Oh my son, Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son.

He just couldn't stop. Then Joab came into the house of the king and said, Today you are covered with disgrace, the face of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, the lives of your concubines, by loving those who hate you and by hating those who love you. For you've shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you.

For I know this day that if Absalom were allied all of us with day, the day, then we'd be pleased. Now therefore arise, go and speak kindly to your servants. For I swear by the Lord that you do not go out.

Surely I know that a man will pass tonight with you and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now. So the king arose, he sat in the gates. They told all the people saying, Behold the king is sitting in the gate.

All the people came before the king. Absalom, Absalom, Absalom, Absalom, my no good son, my worthless, criminal son, my backstabbing son, my unsaved son, my murdering son, my conniving son, my absolutely terrible, bad son, but still my son. Remember, there's a kind of love in Greek called slog, that even unsaved people have, the way you love your own children God created to teach how he loves us even unsaved people can relate to slog a lot.

He creates that kind of love to teach how he loves us. He made me no good, but he's still my son. She made me a bad person.

She made me living with her boyfriend and on drugs, but still my daughter. Maybe he abused me, but he's still my father. Maybe she abandoned me, but she's still my mother.

Blood is thicker than water, isn't it? The emotional time, the pain of unsaved, of lost loved ones, the most difficult thing you or I will ever face as a born again believer, this side of eternity, is the death of an unsaved loved one. The only God only knows what transpires that fleeting millisecond between life and death, between here and eternity, only God knows. But you know there's only one deathbed conversion in the entire Bible.

People who tend to get saved on the deathbed are people who would have gotten saved had they had the opportunity sooner by and large. Only one deathbed conversion in the entire Bible, only briefly, that's it. Revelation, it says, the Lord will take away every tear.

Somehow, some marvelous way, in eternity, I will no longer think of my father who, as far as I know, is in hell forever. But I sure think about it now. You see your parents, who are getting older, they're not saved.

Perhaps they don't believe anything. You put this to them, you pray to them, but it just comes down to arguments and going back and forth, so frustrated. They knew you since you were a baby and you can't talk to them.

This is the most difficult thing. You dread the day, you dread the night when the telephone is going to ring or the knock will come from the door. We're sorry to inform you.

The phone call from the hospital. We're sorry to inform you. You never got along, but it's still my mother, still my father, still my son, still my daughter, no matter what they did.

There is nothing you or I will ever face as a Christian that will be more difficult than that. Mission begins at home. From Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

No friends, it's important that we all pray for missions, that we financially support missions, that we send missionaries to other countries. I go to other countries, I see missionaries, but every one of us is a missionary to the people around us, beginning with our families. I bet you even in a place like this, much of the growth in this congregation has taken place in the last several years since I first visited it, has taken place in families and with neighbors and with people we know.

That's not to say we shouldn't do the other, but just like in the book of Acts, Cornelius' family, or the woman at the well in John 4, you go to the people you know. Now look, Absalom met this rebellion he bats with, he died outside of God's grace, and there were two messengers, two messengers, they both wanted to tell King David the good news. The good news that the rebellion had been put down.

They both wanted to tell the truth. Only the African, the black man, was willing to tell the whole truth. Your son is dead.

Ahima'ah was only one of the people who had the truth. Again, this is what I, Evangelion, what is the good news that we send missionaries to preach? What is the good news that you and I need to tell our families, our neighbors, our friends, the people we work with? A lot of us today are like Ahima'ahs. Not a lot of us are like the Cushites.

Grace is free, but it is not cheap. It cost God everything when he gave his son. I couldn't imagine giving my son to be a need to die for the sins of people who hated him.

But that's what God did. Oh, it's free, free God, but it sure isn't cheap. What is this this law? St. Paul tells us something very interesting in Galatians.

Look what he says in chapter 1. Verse 7, which is really not another, only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. In verse 6, by the grace of Christ, we're a different gospel. Now it's not really a different one in verse 7, it just distorts the same one.

But even though we, in verse 8, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. Anathema in Greek. Somebody with a different gospel.

There are a lot of different gospels today. In a church like this, where most people of Roman Catholic backgrounds, or even if you are one of your parents, where you know about the Roman gospel. You know what that is.

You know about purgatory, and about adulteries, and mass torture. You know what that is. You know that's a different gospel.

Shockingly today, so many evangelicals don't, and they're going down the ecumenical road into union with the same king that you and your parents would say that of. In a church like this, with so many people, say that of Catholicism. It needs to know that.

We know that the Jehovah's Witnesses have a different gospel, the Mormons have a different gospel, and in fact, even have a different Jesus. Even though they come by the same name. That's all true.

But what Paul is warning about here, is a gospel that is not totally different like that one. But in verse 7, it distorts the same one you and I believe. It's those who only want to tell the good news.

It goes something like this. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. He wants to bless you.

Give your heart to Jesus. That's good news, and it's true. But it's only the good news.

It's Ahimadas. Anyway, you'll be happy to tell you that. Don't tell me what happens if I reject it.

Don't tell me that it will split my family. Don't tell me I'll have to break off my engagement with my outstanding girlfriend unless she comes to faith. Or it goes something like this.

Every eye closed, every head bowed, just accept Jesus in your heart. Put your hand up. Thank you, brother.

Thank you. Where did Jesus or the apostles ever preach like that? The apostles said directly, save yourself from this perverse generation. Repent with kingdom in that hand, said John the Baptist.

There was no cheap grace. It's free. Unless you tell people the bad news, they will not know how good the good news is.

Today we have signs and wonders gospels. That becomes the end of this instead of repentance. People don't notice.

Jesus had healings, but he never had a healing crusade. He had miracles, but he never had a miracle crusade. These signs follow.

He had a repentance crusade. I'm not talking about the turn or burn stuff. That's witnessing at people.

That's not witnessing to them. What I am talking about, save yourself from this perverse generation. In the same epistle Paul tells us in chapter three, the purpose of the law of God, verse 24, it's our tundra, our pitiful grief to lead us to Christ, to show us we need to be saved, the law of condense.

Look with me please to Matthew chapter 11. It's the same message. In verse 12, from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and violent men take it by force, for all the prophets and law prophesied unto John.

John represents the law, the epitome of righteousness under the law. None born among women is greater than John. He was the best somebody could be under the law.

But he who is born again is greater than John because it's the righteousness of Jesus instead of religious righteousness. The law was preached until John, then the gospel, because the law shows us we're condemned. If you don't tell people the bad news, they won't know how good the good news is.

It says the kingdom suffers violence, and people are forced their way into it. You know what that means? If you were picking a ferry boat from Melbourne through Phillips Bay across to Tasmania, and a strong southerly came up, and the boat began to sink in a storm, and a lot of lifeboats, God forbid, for everybody on the vessel, although by law that has to be, people would be fighting over those life jackets. They'd be forcing their way into those boats.

Unless people know they're in trouble, they won't want to get saved. It's important for man once to die and after this to judge it. But today, it is only Ahimaha's running with the gospel.

He's only giving the good news. They don't want to tell people the bad news. I got a letter from a couple of lecturers at Pentecostal Bible College in Waltham some months ago.

He and his wife resigned. They were told that this particular denomination was not descendant of God. No longer believe in preaching repentance because that's a negative message.

We need a positive message. We believe in grace. Unless you understand law, you won't know what grace is.

You won't even know you need grace. Let me write. I'll get the good news.

Signs and wonders. We can do that. Blessing.

Prosperity. We can do that. God wants to bless you.

Accept Jesus into your heart. We can do that. Be saved from this perverse generation.

It's important that man wants to die after this judgment. Yes, but what about my unsaved family? I'm sorry. What about Absalom? Oh, I don't want to say that.

That's negative. We need a positive message. Something terrible has happened.

When you look at the preaching of the apostles or Jesus or the Jewish prophets, when you look at the preaching of the men of God who God has used to bring new revival, Charles Spurgeon or D. L. Moody or John Wesley or George Woodfield, they didn't preach that man-eating, empty stuff. They were not like Ahimamas. They were like the black man.

They told the whole truth. Unless you know the bad news, you won't know how good the good news is. Today, instead of the unadulterated gospel, so much of evangelism and mission is predicated or based on pop psychology, the feel-good factor.

And they have music and programs and stuff to get people swished up emotionally so they'll respond to an altar call with very little clear presentation of the need for repentance. Jesus never once said to make converts. Never.

He never said to make a convert. He said to make disciples. The discipleship comes with a price tag.

The first beautiful step of discipleship is baptism. You won't find that in an altar course. You'll find it in the Book of Romans.

You'll find it in God's course. But you won't find it in theirs. You won't find it in the pop gospel you have today.

That's a negative message. It divides. Baptism is supposed to divide.

It's a funeral. It cuts off the dead from the living and the living from the dead. We don't want that.

That's a negative message. I myself, from the day I was first saved by the mercy of God, have believed in the gifts of the Spirit. For me, the idea that the gift of the Spirit ends with the apostles is totally unbiblical and totally untenable.

The Word of God tells me different, and my own experience measured the mind of the Word of God tells me different. I believe in the gifts of the Spirit, but you know what? The charismatic movement, by and large, and even now much of Pentecostalism has people in it who are never saved. Many people who come forth at stadium rallies, I don't care how many come forth at a rally, in the Melbourne Christian rally, I want to know how many are committed to Christ and going to a church and witnessing the people a year, two years, five years later.

You'll find it much smaller. He never said to make never said to make converts. He said to make disciples.

They always want to tell you about the good news, but not that you'll have tribulation in the world, not that your friends won't like you anymore, not maybe that your family will be divided over it, not that Satan will attack you, not that because you're God's child in a fallen world, this is not your home anymore, you're not always going to have it easy. That's negative. We don't want that.

If you play the music as loud as they like and sing the choruses as much as they want when you're facing trials as a Christian, that psychological manipulation is not going to get you through it because you are only told the good news. If you don't know the bad news, you won't know how good the good news is. You might be sitting in that white house waiting for the phone to go down on your way to Hobart.

It wouldn't matter to you how cold you were, how wet you were, as long as you were safe, you're not going to complain. But when people aren't told the whole truth, when they're only given the good news without the bad news, what's the good news worth? Look what Joab, he was a white man, told Ahimaus. Why do you want to go? Why do you want to do it? Verse 22, you'll have no reward.

Those who preach a cheap gospel, a watered-down gospel, a compromised gospel, a psychological gospel, a gospel that doesn't tell people the whole truth, that doesn't tell them the bad news, they'll have no reward. I don't care how many conformed their altar calls when stadium rallies were torn to movements. Matthew 7, 22, depart from me, I never agree with you.

Not that you're not sitting. A lot of you people were never saved. I never agree.

The charismatic movement is filled with people who have some kind of religious emotional experience, but their lives haven't changed significantly. And you know, speaking as a more conservative Pentecostalist priesthood, because I know of the old time Pentecostals for life. They lived and preached holiness, it was

power in the blood, they really believed a true gospel.

Now that gets diluted and diluted and diluted. Not in this church, but in a lot of Pentecostal churches, you'll find it's going the same way with all the hype, all the pop psychology, and the feel-good factor reigns supreme. There's people in the states, in the church here in Chicago, this is why they get purpose-driven, they say.

Do your market research. If the people want smoke machines and flashing lights to get the kids in, get that. If the people want a food court, get that.

If they want an alcoholic synonymous, get that. Get them whatever they want, find out what people want and give it to them. But the statistics of the church growth will themselves show that most of that growth is people leaving one church for another.

It's not a lot of people getting saved and repenting of their sin. They only want to give the good news. We don't want a negative message.

You'll have no reward if you're an optimist but that African, he had a reward. You know, the first non-Jew, total non-Jew, saved in the New Testament was a black man in Africa, mostly an Ethiopian. The word for Ethiopian and Pushkin is the same word, but the first non-Jew saved, take the gospel from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, now you're dealing with what could broadly be considered the Jewish world.

To the end of the earth, the first man saved who was outside of the Jewish world was a black man in Africa. That's important. Churches today in Africa are growing astronomically.

The good news. Let's understand this a bit further. I can understand why King David was grieved as he was.

God would grieve that you or I should have one of our children die prematurely, especially if they die unsaved, but that does happen in Christian families. How do we deal with this spiritually? How do we deal with this even emotionally? David wouldn't listen. If God forbid it happened to you or I, we wouldn't want to listen either.

We would say, my son, my son, my daughter, my daughter. No blood, but still mine. That's the way it is.

Look what Jesus said in Matthew 12. Verse 47. Verse 46, sorry.

Matthew 12. While he was still speaking to the multitude, behold, his brother and brother were standing outside, seeking to speak to him. And someone said to him, behold, your mother and your brothers were standing outside seeking to speak to you.

But he answered the one who was telling him, and he said, who is my brother? Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? And stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said, behold, my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father, he is my brother and sister and mother. If you're a Christian, you have to come to terms with the facts.

It is a wonderful, wonderful blessing when your biological relatives are saved. I thank God for my wife. I know that if the Lord doesn't come first, I die, I keep dying, that's not the end.

We'll meet together in Jesus someday. I thank God that my children believe. I thank God for my sister in Colorado who believes.

My mother, my brother, it's a problem. I may have never met you. I wouldn't even know you, perhaps, or you wouldn't know me if you fell over me on College Street next week.

But you know what? If you do the will of my Father, you're closer to me than my own mother. You're closer to me than my own brother, than my own unsaved sister, because a million years from now, our relationship will continue. Not the one with my unsaved loved ones.

Spiritually and theologically, I can cope with that. Intellectually, I can cope with it, but emotionally? That's still my mother. When that coffin goes into the ground, that was still my father.

That was still my close friend I grew up with. To cope with it emotionally is not so easy. So what does King David call by God again a wise man? He says this, I tell you, as bad as it is what happened to you, David, something worse will happen to you if you stay alone.

And nobody spends the night with you. If you stay by yourself and you face this grief alone, it's going to be worse than the death of Epsilon. There is something worse than the death of an unsaved loved one.

Not realizing you have an eternal family with the same problem. It's so much easier to face it together. There's nobody here who doesn't have loved ones.

They love and care about and think about every day. For yourself, you die, you go and be with Jesus. For ourselves, we wanted to come back.

But what about for the sake of the lost beginning with our families? We hope you have to give them more time to get saved. We want to hasten his coming. Lord, come quickly.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus. But, please may my mother and my father and my husband and my children be saved before you do. That's the way it is, you see.

There is something worse than losing family. Not joining a new family. Mission.

When the Lord called me to leave New York and my money and go to a different field in Israel for years, I didn't want to go. My money had a hold on me. What would I do with it? I would have been better off psychologically if I never had had money.

If I had what most people would consider a lot of money, I would have sold it by faith. Then again, I don't look like an Ethiopian, do I? Where the Lord guides, the Lord provides. I'm going to go.

I'm totally committed to the mission. I believe the Lord wants you people to come to this weekend conference, to pray for it, and to seek the Lord about giving you as generously as you can. To support those who take the good news to Asia, to Africa, to India.

But the most difficult mission field is the people who live under the same roof as you do. Who live next door and who live across the street. How do you cope with it? How do you deal with it? You have to give the real good news.

You know, we're told in the Psalms, the law of God is perfect in converting the soul. His law, when people know they're unrighteous before him, it causes them to repent. That's important.

But to share that with people who've known me a whole life, that's difficult. How do you deal with it? How can I come to terms with the fact that my mother might die without knowing Jesus? How can you come to terms with the fact that even your child might die without knowing Jesus? There's only one way. It's what Jehovah told King David, and it's what Jesus told his disciples.

Oh God, my son, Absalom, my son, my daughter. Oh God, it's my mother. Please don't put her to die without knowing me.

Oh, it's my brother, my sister. They don't like me. I don't like them.

But it's my mother. It's my sister. It's my brother.

What did I, Jehovah, tell David? What did Jesus say in Matthew chapter 12? There is only one way by the grace of God that you or I can live a life. I have to say only one thing. You are my mother.

You are my brother. You are my sister. This is my family.

Dear friends, what I'd like to do now is something I don't do too much. I would do more than silence before the Lord. I want you to think about the people that you love the most who don't know the Lord.

The mission field on your doorstep, the mission field under your roof, your unsafe husband, your unsafe wife, your unsafe parents, your unsafe children, your brother, your sister, your closest friends. Let's think about those people and let's really ask God to save our family before Jesus comes back. I want to hasten this coming.

If my family is not saved, as far as I'm concerned, He can come back tomorrow. Let's go to the word of God. Their mind may be as hard as their heart may be.

Our parents, our spouses, our children, our brothers and sisters. Your arm is still not so short that it cannot save. For you saved us all.

We beg you by the mercies of Jesus that you will even now convict the hearts of those who we know, we love, we care about. But they are only our mothers, our brothers, and our sisters after the flesh. Not yet after the spirit.

Lord, those who have fallen away have gone into the world. I think of what Paul did in Corinthians. Lord, he actually gave someone over to safety for the destruction of his flesh.

That his soul would not be lost. Lord, eternity is forever. Even if you must bring calamity upon those we love the most, if that's what it takes, don't let them be lost.

Rather an early death than an eternal separation from you and from us. Do whatever you need in their lives to cause them to repent, to come to a saving hour, but to the truth of your wonderful grace that you gave to us from your son's savings. We pray for our parents, Lord, for our loved ones, for our children.

But Lord, we also thank you. We thank you for saving us and we thank you for these among us. That no matter what happens to our biological families, we can still say to each other, you are my brother, you are

my mother, you are my son, you are my brother, you are my father, you are my sister.

In the wonderful name of Jesus, we pray and thank you. Amen.

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