

# The Ox Face of the Cherubim

by Keith Malcomson

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*This sermon focuses on the characteristics of the ox as a symbol of ministry and service in the Gospel of Mark. It emphasizes the importance of immediate action, strength, and sacrificial service in the life of a believer. The sermon highlights the need for believers to serve with dedication, obedience, and readiness to lay down their lives for the gospel.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 14:4, Isaiah 1:3, Matthew 11:28, Mark 16:15, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Leviticus 19:32, 2 Corinthians 4:3, Luke 9:23, Matthew 20:26

**Topics:** "Service", "Sacrifice"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want you to turn in your Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 1 again. Ezekiel chapter 1, we're going to part 5 of our series, The Four Seasons of Life. The Four Seasons of Life and I want to come and bring you to part 5 here as we look at Ezekiel chapter 1. I want to read one simple verse as we come to this message here this morning.

And just especially for those online who may watch this later, I'll be in London next weekend so hopefully if this is up in time you'll know about that and you'll be able to join us in London, email us for the details if you need that. But my message here this morning, the ox face of the cherubim. We've already looked at the human face of the cherubim.

Then last week we looked at the lion face of the cherubim. And in a couple of weeks time we'll look at the eagle face of the cherubim. But here this morning, part 5, the ox face of the cherubim.

If you're visiting with us and you go, what sort of message is this? Don't you worry, we'll explain as we go along. Ezekiel chapter 1. You know, my sister-in-law, before she got saved, tried to come online, listen to me as an unregenerate person. She said to Candace, what's all these gates all about? She thought she was coming in to hear about God and she hears about this gate and that gate and all the 10 gates of Jerusalem.

Well, she's now regenerate and understands a bit more. And but that did confuse her. So I'm never surprised if someone gets confused over some of these things.

But reading from Ezekiel chapter 1 and verse 10, as for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side. And they four had the face of an ox on the left side. They four also had the face of an eagle.

Let's pray together. Father, we love your word and we're so grateful that in a day of apostasy and error and deception and compromise and utter confusion that your Holy Spirit leads us to the person of Christ. He brings us to the word of God and here in this book, in this Bible, in these passages, in these verses, he always makes us to gaze upon the face of our Lord Jesus Christ who died.

Now Calvary, we remember his death this morning. We remember the precious blood of the lamb. Where would I be this morning? Lord God, I'd be a hell deserving sinner.

And I'd be fast on my way to hell. Oh God, I'd be the chief of sinners. Now Lord God, yet in your grace and your love and your mercy, you looked upon me and made me a Christian.

Oh God, you made me one. Lord God, that walks in the reality of these four faces. Now Lord God, we are a work in progress where you're sanctifying us and dealing with our hearts and dealing with issues.

Oh God, to make us like these cherubims. Oh God, with a heavenly life filled with eyes. Oh God, filled with the Holy Spirit of God walking in a straight way.

Now Lord God, I pray for that conviction of your Holy Spirit that would grip us. Oh God, will you give us clarity of mind? Give me clarity in the speech, oh God, to say that which is in your word. And Father, we're praying.

Will you open up a message, oh God? Lord God, will you make us like this ox, oh God, that would labour for you and serve you? And Lord God, to minister in the midst of the house of God, we praise you and bless you. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

My message, the ox face of the cherubim. It says in Psalm 55 and verse 19, because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. Listen that again.

Because we're dealing with four faces, four seasons of life. We're talking about us as Christians going through very different, diverse, opposite seasons in life. Very unusual things.

Almost contradictory. Sometimes summer, sometimes winter. And as a Christian, you've got to live the same Christian life.

Whether the leaves are falling off the trees or they're beginning to bud forth in their beauty. You're the same Christian living the same life in the same way. That's what a Christian is.

It doesn't matter if it's dark. I'm going to live as a Christian. It doesn't matter if everything's dark around me.

I'm a Christian. It doesn't matter if everyone is apostatizing off in the air. I'm a Christian and I hold fast to truth.

This verse in Psalm 55, it says, because they have no changes, therefore they have no fear of God. In other words, you prove that you have no fear of God. Because there's no changes in your life.

And you know what the word of God is showing us here? Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. There are some in the church, and they do not fear God. There's no real fear of God within them.

And you know what the fear of God is? It's to depart from sin or from iniquity. It is actually to pursue after God. That is the mark of the fear of God.

But there are some, there's no changes. There's no dramatic changes in the road. You know what? They live their life.

There's no intervention of God. There's no even winter time in their life. And I want to tell you, a Christian who doesn't experience winter time is a very poor Christian.

And a Christian who hasn't walked through the valley doesn't have much depth. And the Christian who hasn't faced Beelzebub and the devil and the fiery darts, there's not much of reality within them. When you find a Christian who really fears God, you know what you see in their life? There has been many changes along the way.

It's not business as normal. It's not boredom in the Christian life. There are high times and low times.

A church that doesn't know the diversity of the different seasons that God has ordained, good times and bad times, and still functions as a Christian church, that church is a shallow church that doesn't fear God. There's something about God ordaining changes in your life and ordaining turns, I mean dramatic turns on the road, bends in the road, crossroads in the road. There's something about that that brings you to be a person who really fears God.

I know someone who it is the normalcy of life. You walk through it, you're perpetually blessed. You've got your weekly pay or your monthly pay or whatever it is, and you go through life and you're happy and everything's okay and there's not much pressure.

That person is greatly lacking, usually. And we see that God, when he's dealing with someone or with the church or with the preacher who's being prepared, you see a Joseph that has grown up in the comfort of home and he's with his family and he's in that same environment and instantly God reaches in and grabs Joseph and dramatically changes everything. That wasn't circumstance.

That wasn't the devil. That was the hand of God. And now you're going to have such a radical change in the season of his life that to survive this, he's going to have to fear God.

He's going to have to walk with God. Do you realize when God is preparing you, there are going to be certain things happen along the way. It says in Psalm 73 in verse five, they are not in trouble as other men.

Speaking about a certain kind of person, they are not in trouble as other men like me. Neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore, notice the consequence, they don't have troubles, they don't have heartache, they don't have crisis to face.

They seem to be free of this and they have everything. You know, if God gives you everything, I would greatly worry about your heart. Listen to what it says about this type of person who seems to be free of troubles.

Therefore, pride compasses them about as a chain. Violence covers them as a garment. I'm talking about God working in a life to prepare a life.

The absence of God, the season in your spiritual life could mean you don't have the fear of God and pride arises as the scripture says. I want to bring you to the next face of the cherubim. We've looked at the human face.

Last week we looked at the lamb face. Now I want to bring you to this third face, which is the face of an ox. It says in Ezekiel chapter one in verse ten, and they four had the face of an ox on the left side.

As you looked at the cherubim, immediately looking at you was a man's face. To the right side was the face of a lion. To the left side was the face of an ox.

And it's this third face that I want to deal with here this morning. As you look at the cherubim, that one cherubim has four faces representing four different seasons of life, or characteristics of the Christian life. And do you know what? That cherubim perpetually has the four faces.

No matter which one is dominant or what you're walking through, they are always there. There's not an absence of the other three. They're still there.

Even when the eagle is looking back the way, it is still there. And so like us with Christian, there is a certain season that predominates, but it doesn't mean the absence of the other faces. And so when you look at this cherubim, its third face, when you look at it, is like, it is similar to, or it has the likeness of an ox.

That's the best description. It doesn't mean it is an ox. It has the likeness of an ox.

The word ox here is the Hebrew word for bull. You know what a bull is, a male dominant. If you've never encountered a barney bull, you have not lived and you haven't lived in the countryside.

A barney bull is utterly unique. They grow differently. Also the word can mean cow, or it can mean bullock, or a young male cow.

And so you have this diversity in the word that we're looking at here, because it is the symbol of what a Christian is in a certain phase of their life. Over in Revelation chapter 4 in verse 7, it talks about one of these cherubims being like a calf. The Greek word there means a young bull, or a young calf.

And so with these two pictures, we're looking whether it's a mature bull, or it's a young calf. We are seeing that one of the seasons of life is like unto a ox, a bull, or a young calf that would labor on a farm. And when you come to look at the cherubim, notice this, it's on the left side.

See right, left, back, front, it all represents something. And believe me, there's more in all of this than I can possibly preach even in a series, but it's all symbolic. And so the left side is the west side.

Remember how I said about the camp of Israel in the Old Testament? You had the tabernacle, the place of God's presence. And the three tribes that camped at the front, their standard, their banner was the face of a man. And the face of a man doesn't only represent your humanity and weakness, it represents

intelligence.

Remember how we looked at this in Luke's gospel, how that Luke noticed many attention details of men of humanity. Remember all through the gospel, he had noticed things about people that nobody else would notice. He picked up on the small details.

There is care about the humanity element. There is a means of intelligence that is very real. And what Luke represented was the man.

But Matthew that we dealt with last week represented the kingship or the lion face. Now we come to this third face, and it's this face of an ox. Face on you is the face of a man.

To the right is the face of a lion. Remember that was the tribe of Judah. Their standard had the symbol of a lion on it.

But you know as well when you come to Israel, when you look to the west, to the left side, it is the tribe of Ephraim along with Manasseh and Benjamin and their standard had the symbol of an ox head upon it. And so Ephraim in the tribe of Israel represents the ox and all that means unto us. Who was Ephraim? Ephraim and Manasseh were the sons of Joseph that were actually brought in to be two of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In other words, Joseph's father, the grandfather adopted these two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to be of the twelve. He possessed them as his own children. He said, Joseph in you there's two tribes that I'm bringing in.

And the predominant one was Ephraim. Remember when Joseph brought his two sons in for old Jacob to bless and he crossed his hands because you've got to bless the older son first. Well old Jacob led of the Spirit of God.

He turned it back to front and Ephraim who is the younger son got the best blessing, a double blessing. And that's what the name Ephraim means. It actually means a double blessing from God.

He is doubly blessed and yet his symbol is that of an ox. Do you realize you can't be doubly blessed without walking out something of this character of an ox? I would dare say if you sit in this church and you do not embody the manifestation of being like an ox Christian, that you don't walk through the season of the Christian life, you are definitely not doubly blessed. I guarantee you that those in the house of God who knew the double blessing of God, we're all blessed.

If you're saved, you're blessed. But I mean the double abundant blessing of God are always those who are marked by an ox nature. And that nature is of laboring and service and of ministry unto God.

It is so, so very real. Listen to what it was said about Ephraim in Genesis 41 and 52. And the name of the second is called Ephraim.

For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. Joseph has named Ephraim double blessing. He has a double blessing.

His symbol is that of the ox. Joseph is saying in the land of my affliction, I was thrown in a prison. I was deserted.

I was sold. I was lied on. I was betrayed.

Even God forgot me in my prison cell. I walked through this land of affliction. Yet in the midst of that, he births Ephraim.

He marries, has his two children, and Ephraim is called double blessing by God himself. It is a wonderful name. Many years later when Ephraim becomes a whole people and tribe, we read in Deuteronomy 33 that Moses blessed Ephraim.

Listen to what he speaks about the multitude of Ephraim. He says, he is the glory and is like the firstling of the bullock or the cow. That's a strange blessing to talk about, the multiplying of an entire people.

He says this doubly blessed people, actually the symbol for them is that of a bullock or the firstlings or giving birth to bullocks. You're actually multiplying a number. You're giving birth to young bullocks.

You know why? Because you're doubly blessed of God. So a bullock does give birth. This was the symbol of Ephraim again.

And so when Israel began to march, one of their four banners was that of an ox. Israel was so aware when we march, when we camp, we camp under the banner of the ox. The ox was the symbol that God's people were demarked by.

Not only a lion, not only a man, not only an eagle, but this ox banner was to symbolize something. It was to encourage them, to stir them, and to motivate them. When we come to the New Testament, which gospel lines up with the ox? We're going to look at it here this morning for a few moments.

When we turn to the gospel of Mark in the New Testament, we see that revealed in that gospel is Christ, the servant, the worker, the one who came to minister unto others. And the symbol of Mark's gospel is the ox. So when we come to the New Testament, to Mark's gospel, we see Christ revealed in it.

In Matthew's gospel, Christ is revealed as the coming king or with his lion nature. And when we go into Matthew's gospel, we actually see this element that Christians ought to have this season in life of being like a courageous lion. As well with Luke's gospel, we see that in Luke, we see Christ as the perfect man.

Luke's gospel is marked by humanity or what man is or who Christ was in his human element. But also for you and I, we see that there's a time and season within the gospel when what we are is men. We operate as men.

We feel like men, but we use our full intelligence. We're not so super spiritual that we don't live here. We are men walking in this life.

But here this morning, as we come to Mark's gospel, we see this banner standard of the ox. And when we catch a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ in Mark's gospel, we see him coming as a servant. And I want you to see this, that Christ the servant is the emblem of the ox.

And there is a season in the Christian life where we're going to walk into that season of being like an ox or having the attributes of the ox, or we march under the banner of the ox. We're stirred up to say, we have a calling, not only to walk as a man, not only to serve as a lion, but actually to walk under God's banner like an ox. And what is that embodied in? It is as a servant in ministry, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are all called to that in a very distinctive way. When we turn to Mark's gospel, and I'm going to give you six points from it here this morning, what we see within it is Christ as a servant. And you're going to see this very clearly.

You see Christ as a worker for God, on behalf of God, in the vineyard, in the harvest fields. And so we begin to see that Christ is like this ox, servant. He didn't only come to reign.

He didn't only come as a human man. He actually came to serve, to labor, and to agonize in his ministry. When you begin to turn to Mark's gospel, you read the word beginning.

And immediately, as soon as you turn to Mark, we are thrown immediately without any hesitation into Christ's ministry and sacrifice. In fact, Mark's gospel can be broken into these two things, ministry and sacrifice, right down the line. That's what embodies, or that's what marks Mark's gospel.

You see the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he even has things that other gospels don't have. He took the children up in his arms, in his hands, and he begins to bless them.

The other gospel writers do not mention that. Mark's gospel is the shortest of the four gospels, only 16 chapters long. Matthew is 28 chapters long.

And so you look at them together. Mark is the shortest. All the other three are longer, especially Matthew with its 28 chapters.

But let me just say, remove all the sermons, like the sermon on the mount. Remove all the sermons from all four gospels. And Mark is no longer the shortest.

It actually becomes the longest of all of them. It has more information. If you remove the actual sermons, and all you're left with is the action, the activity, the deeds of the Lord Jesus Christ, it suddenly becomes the longest gospel of all of them.

It only has 55 unique verses that the other gospels do not have. You can find all the teachings elsewhere, many of the stories elsewhere, but it has 55 unique verses that aren't mentioned in any other of the gospels. But Mark's gospel has an emphasis.

It has a dominant theme. And what is that dominant theme? It's not the words or the teaching of the gospel, but it is the doing or the action of the gospel. And so this standard of the ox, or this person of the Lord Jesus Christ as servant, when you come to this gospel, you're no longer hearing the preaching about the gospel.

You are now seeing it carried out, implemented, and put into operation. When you read Mark, he is marked by brevity, clarity, and simplicity. He speaks up, then he sits down.

He is clear, he's distinct, and he also goes into details that the others do not. Do you notice how the New Testament preachers from John the Baptist to Paul the Apostle, they're all unique, they're all different, they all have different styles, they all have different ways to preach? That's why you can't mold yourself just on one person or say one style is actually correct. What you have is a great diversity, and you have it in the four gospels.

Each of the four gospels has a clear message, and the clear message of Mark's gospel is that of the ox or the oxen within it, as we're going to see. The main verse within Mark's gospel is Mark chapter 10 verse 45,

and I want you to listen to this verse very carefully. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

Let me say that again, for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto. This is the Messiah, this is the Savior, this is God's precious Son, this is God manifest in the flesh, and yet it says when he came he didn't come to be ministered unto. Notice that word minister.

That's a word for minister or to act as a servant or to serve others, and we're told Christ did not come to be ministered unto. You'd think he comes as king of kings. You are the servants to serve him, but the Bible is very clear in Mark's gospel that when Christ came, he actually came to minister, not for you to minister unto him.

That was not the priority when he came. He didn't come demanding that you all need to minister unto me. He actually came showing you the embodiment of this ox ministry, which is others, not yourself.

You know when you begin to manifest this third face of the cherubim, you're not demanding that others minister unto you. Through spiritual age, you may be at a certain place where you need that ministry, you need that input, and that's right. You know all the younger kids here, you mummies better not stop looking after them.

It would be wrong. If you sit down a three-year-old and say, well, you're old enough to feed yourself and dress yourself, we're going to have some very strange looking children walking in here. We actually babysat some time back for a family, and their three-year-old, when the parents were out, the parents didn't look after the kids, and that three-year-old would pull out a seat and climb up and get in and just begin to eat the ham out of the fridge.

This was normal. Candace also bought them a toilet seat because the little kid was scared to go to the toilet. She kept falling in it.

There was no toilet seat. And so you had a kid that was being made to act like an adult and think like an adult and fend for itself and defend itself. That should never have been.

You know, in the house of God, you need to be ministered unto. You need to receive. You need to grow.

You need a protected time, like with these children, where it's safe and it's protected and you grow, and you're not taking on the burdens, and you're not responsible for the income in the house. You're actually there benefiting from all of these. But there does come a season and a time where Mark's gospel comes with power, where there's growing up in the maturity.

We're in the house of God. It's not, give me, give me, give me, feed me, feed me. You actually become, to a place, a season and a time.

And you can't force that. You grow into this. It is natural.

But a time comes when you start going, I want to give back to the church of God. I'm not here in this church merely to be ministered unto. Keith, isn't it, provide a message for me every Sunday, every Wednesday.

Make sure others pray for me. Make sure that you look after me. Make sure I have something to eat on a Sunday afternoon.

A time comes where you go, I want to minister to others. I'm not just called for others to minister unto me, but I want to begin to minister unto others. And Christ goes further.

And he gave his life a ransom for many. Mark's entire gospel can be summarized in these two truths. He came to minister unto others.

And he also came to give his life. These two things are the mark of an ox, ministry unto others and sacrifice in its life, ultimate laying down its life and death. And I believe these two marks mark what an ox is.

It marks what Jesus was in Mark's gospel. And also we're going to see it even with Mark, the author of it himself in a very real way. But when we begin to walk through the season of the ox and manifest the character, the God given character of an ox, we begin to turn everything around to serve the people of God.

Who was the author of Mark's gospel? Because I believe what I'm just about to tell you will help you understand this truth. Mark embodied the message that he began to preach as Matthew did and as Luke did and as John did. All four men embodied this message.

God made them the message they were to preach to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Mark's gospel is about being a servant, ministering to others, then what sort of man was this Mark? Let me tell you about who this Mark, the author of it was, who God prepared to write this gospel that is in our Bibles. How did God prepare him? How did God work this truth in him to make him the vessel who could write about Christ, the servant, the one who came to lay down his life? When you go to the New Testament, you find out there's a young man called John Mark.

It is the author of this gospel. He was called John as a Jew. That was his first name, his Jewish name.

He's called John. It was a popular Jewish name. But the name Mark is a Gentile name or a Latin name that was given to him as a nickname.

You find when you see him appear in our New Testament, when he's amongst the Jews, they'll call him John. When he's amongst the Gentiles and in Paul's letters, he simply is called Marcus. And yet it's the very same person.

And we're told repeatedly that he's called John Mark. That's how you distinguish him. He's not John the Apostle.

He is John Mark. And the Bible says he was the nephew of Barnabas who came from Cyprus. You'll remember that Barnabas served alongside Paul the Apostle as an apostle, as a missionary going out from Antioch.

Listen to what it says when Paul and Barnabas at the church of Antioch, remember how they were sent out? They were fasting, praying, ministering unto God. Notice ministering as a church unto God. As a church, they began to learn how to minister unto God.

They're not looking for something. They're caught up in awe of God and they're ministering unto God. And as they minister, the Holy Spirit speaks in that church.

Do you know how important it is for a church to hear the voice of the Spirit of God through the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Do you realize it happened in Antioch in a normal meeting that the Holy Spirit spoke and said, separate me out Barnabas and Saul for the ministry. Notice that word ministry that I have called them to. This young guy, John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas was there in this gathering.

He saw all of this take place. How the Holy Spirit separated these two men onto a ministry that he talked to them about many years before. Do you know God can speak to you about a ministry, how you're going to serve them or serve the body of Christ.

And it may be years in the preparation. He speaks to you way back there. And then a Sunday morning comes and the Spirit of God says, now separate that person out from the entire church.

You know why? I'm going to send them somewhere. And they gained the ministry of an apostle. They became apostles.

They were separated and they had to be separated. Then they're in the church, they're separated, but they're not sent yet. Then the Holy Spirit spoke again and said, send them, send them not only separated onto the ministry, but they are sent out in this ministry.

We're told that just after this, we're not told that John Mark got separated or appointed or anything else, but suddenly we find he's on the trip as well. The nephew of Barnabas and it says in Acts chapter 13 and verse five, and they had also John to their minister. The word minister there means attendant or an under over or someone who is serving, helping with the basics, the normal things of life.

So these two apostles, they get sent out by the church, sent out by the Holy Spirit. They're being sent out to plant churches, to win souls to Christ, to preach the gospel. But here comes John Mark and what's he doing? He is serving them.

He's not serving preaching the gospel. He is not serving the church at Antioch. He comes along as a helper or an attendant.

Maybe he cooked the meals. Maybe he made their beds. Maybe he went ahead and got them accommodation.

I don't know. But here he is serving under Barnabas and Saul to help them on the first missionary trip. He traveled with them, went by boat over onto Cyprus, traveled around seeing souls saved and new churches gathered and wonderful miracles.

And he's there. He is serving them, but he's a part of this apostolic team, seeing God minister in a very unique way. Then we see something happen in Cyprus where Paul seemed to take the lead in the missionary trip.

He became more to the fore, more responsible for the work of God. And then they traveled over from the little island of Cyprus onto mainland Asia Minor and they began to travel. Listen what happened.

In verse 5 of chapter 13, it says they had John Mark as their attendant. Verse 5. By verse 13 on the one mission trip, listen to what it says. They came to Perga, that is in Asia Minor, and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

He deserted them. It's the first missionary trip right in the midst of the trip. He's now going into unknown territory, Asia Minor.

These are some of the most violent, dangerous roads. There are real dangers. He's got his widowed mother back in Jerusalem who had her house member, Mary, whose house where they had the prayer meeting praying for Peter when he was in prison.

That's his mommy's house where all the prayer meetings went on. And he's out in dangerous Asia and he's thinking, you know, I'm all my mommy has got here. And here's Uncle Barnabas.

And here's Saul, the apostle. And he departed. He's an attendant.

You know what? These two men are risking their lives. They are preaching their gospel. They are facing riots.

And they've got one young guy who said, I'll be there to serve. Look at this young. I'm talking about the author of Mark's gospel here.

He departed. He turned back. He went home.

He went back to mommy. He got scared. He got unnerved.

He is serving God and serving men, serving two of the greatest apostles as an attendant, a helper. Here, I'll carry your Bible. Praise God.

Thank you. Yeah, I'll be here. Anything you want.

Just you ask me. The very time Saul looked around and said, where is that young guy? He's walking back down the road because he's missing mommy. I want to tell you, God works with imperfect vessels.

And you know what? He has an awful lot of patience to get you to a place where you'll write the gospel of Mark. Here's a young guy that's going to write a gospel about Christ, the servant, the minister who will ultimately lay down his life. But when we first see him, he is turning his tail and running for his life.

I think he's scared. I think he hadn't counted the cost. I think he was in it for the excitement and the enjoyment and the experience.

But here you have a young man who in his ministry, when we first see him, he failed. You know what? Paul was not impressed with this young man at all. Paul said, I'll never take this young man on a trip with me.

Brother Clendenin said to me a few times as a few guys came on mission trips, he turned around and said, that guy will never come on a plane with me. While they're sitting up there, he comes up. He says, they didn't put me in first class.

I need a better seat. Brother Clendenin just stared the way he does. Never said a word.

Just said to me afterward, I'm telling that pastor, don't you ever bring him on any mission trip. You know why? These are real preachers who lie on the floor to minister to the lost. And you've got some young guy thinking this is what ministry is.

You don't know what ministry is. You better stay at home. You know what? You're endangering your life.

You're serving others. It's not about you or your ministry or what you build up. You know what ministry is? It's a life utterly laid down.

And so Saul wasn't impressed with them at all. We're told that when the great apostles came back and in Acts chapter 15, as they began to prepare to go out in ministry again and to go for another mission trip, Barnabas said, yes, let's take John Mark with us. And Paul said, not a chance in a million.

And you know what the Bible, if you read it in Acts chapter 15, there was a conflict between Paul and Barnabas. You know, Barnabas had a large heart. Remember how he looked out for Saul when no one else would? He was a remarkable man, but he's got a family connection.

Well, this young guy, I think we just need to give him another chance. Well, just encourage him. Let's just bring him.

Let's take him right out on another mission trip. I'm sure he'll be okay this time. Paul says, no way, not a chance.

I leaned on him once. He let us down. We can't afford to have him out there.

Let him stay here and grow up, get out of his nappies for a time. And then he can do something, but not on this mission trip. Do you know the conflict between Saul and Barnabas was so strong that they split us under and it created two different missions teams.

Paul then took Silas and he went out and uncle Barnabas took his nephew. And you never hear a Barnabas on this mission team. It's never recorded in the Bible.

You won't hear about them again. We go through a silent period of 11 to 12 years. You never hear of Mark again.

There is utter silence. And yet we know from the Bible, he was definitely in ministry. He was definitely in the church.

He was definitely serving God. But suddenly he appears again after 12 years out of the blue. And listen, Paul is in prison in Rome.

Paul's going to be in prison for two years, waiting trial before Caesar. And he actually writes in one of his letters in Colossians chapter four, listen to what it says. Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas.

In other words, it's John Mark, the same John Mark. Touching whom you receive commandments. In other words, I Paul commanded you, the church at Colossae about this young man.

This 12 years later. And he said, I've given you commandments. If he come unto you, you are to receive him.

What a dramatic change. Paul wouldn't even let him on a mission trip. 12 years later, now Paul is writing to one of the churches of the new Testament saying, now, if this young man comes to you, you receive him.

I've given you commandments about him. What you're to do. You know what I believe? Here's a young man that worked out the truth of the ox.

I don't believe in that first mission trip. He was an ox. He was like a lamb trying to go on a mission trip.

He wasn't a lamb. He wasn't an Eagle. Maybe he was a man, but he definitely wasn't an ox.

He knew nothing about this truth. I didn't know all that ministry involved. I didn't know this was about a servant whenever the going gets hard.

I didn't understand that. But he begins to arise as a young man in the church where Paul could say, I'll send them to the church at Colossae. He is a good servant of the most high God.

And listen, straight after that, Paul mentions four different people. Marcus is only one of them. And then he speaks about, these are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God.

Marcus is now called a fellow worker of Paul. That's why the ox is the symbol of working, servant, ministry, of ministering unto others. And when you see Paul write, these are my fellow workers.

And he said, they have been a comfort unto me. John Mark, you were a burden to me. John Mark, you broke my heart.

John Mark, you deserted us when we most needed you. John Mark, you walked away when we needed you to be there. But now he's writing saying, John Mark, you're my fellow labor.

He's not saying you're under me in authority. He says, we are now fellow workers. We are working together.

We are serving together. We are ministering together. And he says the same in Philippians, I'm sorry, in the little booklet of Philemon.

Then we have Paul's second imprisonment. And he was locked in a cell. He was chained.

It was under Nero. Listen to what he wrote in 2 Timothy 4-11. Take Mark, right into Timothy, take Mark and bring him with thee for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

The last time Paul ever writes about John Mark, the last time we ever read about John Mark, Paul is on a death sentence in prison, right into Timothy. Please bring John Mark with you. You know why? He is profitable for me.

He is useful to me. If there's one person I want you to bring, please bring this young man. Will you bring him to me? Why do you want him? Because he is very useful, very profitable for the ministry.

Paul's in a prison. And he says, see that young guy, I watched him over the years from turning tail and running and deserting us in the midst of a spiritual battle. He has grown.

He has matured. He has come to understand this truth of ministry, of service. He has become like an ox.

I believe Mark actually at this stage later in his life, he embodied this element of an ox. He could labor in such a way that Paul says, all Asia has left me. This one has left me.

That one has left me. I'm alone here in Rome. Bring John Mark.

Why? He is profitable. Imagine calling for this young guy to say, I need him here. I need him now.

I'm going to die in a few days and he needs to be here. I've got commissions for him. I want to instruct him.

You know why? I know that although my labors are at an end, I've run my course. I've fought my fight. My preaching days are over.

I'll never plant another church, never preach in another high street, never win another soul, at least in my physical body. I'll never see another miracle. I'm going home to my crown, to my reward.

But John Mark, I know he's going to continue serving. I know he's going to be useful in the church of God. I know he's going to keep preaching.

I know he'll go plant some church. I know he's going to reach some lost sinners on a high street somewhere. Can you imagine as Paul laid down his mantle, hung up his sword, got ready to hand over his shield of faith.

He knew that there were those that were going to labor on and be faithful. Right. That's my introduction.

Okay. Are you ready? Put your seatbelt on, your helmet on. You know, someone, a pastor in England once warned the people I was going there to preach.

He said, just make sure on Sunday morning, bring a soft cushion and a hard hat and get ready for the word of God. I've got six points here from Mark. Listen to me very carefully.

I'm going to be brief with this. The six things that I see in Mark concerning the ox. Number one, the message of the ox.

When you go to Mark's gospel, you see the message of the ox. Mark chapter one, verse one, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God. Do you know in Matthew that we looked about, about the lion and Luke, which is the man, both of those gospels have a genealogy as you come into it, his birth, his ancestry, his early years, but not Mark.

Mark immediately begins with the gospel, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We see Christ fully grown, fully mature, no genealogy. Do you know why there's no genealogy? He is appearing as a servant.

Nobody cares about a slave's genealogy. Someone coming to serve others, to wash their feet. They're not interested in your royal genealogy.

When you go to Matthew, you see kings in that genealogy. When you go to Luke, you see the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. But here you immediately embark in Mark chapter one, straight into the message of the ox.

And that's what we have. What is the message of the ox? It is the gospel. There's no wasting time here.

It's not looking back and looking at the ancestry. Immediately you embark upon ministry, serving others. How? By a message.

You know, the greatest way you could serve this generation is with the gospel. You know, the greatest ministry you can have is to share the gospel of what Christ done on the cross with friends and family and your children. Mothers, you better raise the children knowing the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing the gospel.

If you educate them, if you clothe them, if you feed them, and yet you don't see them saved, you're a failure. I want to tell you, you could put them in a nice house, you could provide money, and yet you've never led them to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the greatest ministries that you can have.

You could be an ox in your home, bringing the gospel. You could be an ox in your workplace. You could be an ox with your friends, reaching them with the simple message of the gospel.

And so we see that Mark's gospel embarks on this. There's no wise men. Do you know why there isn't in Mark chapter 1? No wise men coming.

Wise men from the east doing homage to the baby Jesus. Oh no, this isn't about homage. He's going to serve others.

This isn't them coming, worshipping him as the king. This is him immediately embarking on preaching the gospel. Mark chapter 1 is marked by the message of the gospel.

John prepares the way preaching repentance. Christ then comes preaching as well, following fast on his heels. And so the message is not to be separated from ministry.

If you minister to people and don't give them the gospel, you haven't ministered. You could serve them, give them a cup of water, smile at them, be nice, but you've never dealt with repentance. You've never dealt with sin.

You've never told them, if you die as you are, you're going to hell. You haven't ministered unto them. Oh, but I picked close up.

Maybe they'll see the love of Christ in it. The first mark here of the ox is the message of the gospel that we are to give. Paul writing in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and 3 says, if our gospel be hid, and you can have the gospel and it is hid, you can know the gospel, you can be saved through the gospel, and yet your gospel that you possess, it is hid.

Do you not evangelize? If you never share the gospel with someone, you may excuse it. You may say, oh, but I invited them to church. That's not the gospel.

Do you know you can have the gospel and it be hid? And how do you identify that you're hiding it? You're not witnessing to those around you week after week after week. You never confront them. You never endanger your friendship with them.

You believe in friendship evangelism. Never drive a truck over a bridge that can't carry the weight. Do you know why I'm saying that? Because people all through the years in churches I've been used as an example.

I've heard that a hundred times in different countries. Do you know what they mean by it? In other words, if it puts any pressure on the sinner, don't confront them. Don't stress them.

Don't challenge them. Be careful not to scare them away. Don't say anything.

Just go easy. And if the bridge begins to crack, pull back immediately. What a load of rubbish.

Do you know what you see in Mark's gospel? Is the penetration of the gospel message. Mark actually puts legs on the message of the gospel and the gospel is in Mark's gospel. Out of 661 verses, 277 of those verses possess the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His teaching, his words. But there's only one major message in the entire gospel, which goes for 37 verses. Mark uses less of the words of Christ, the teaching of Christ, than any of the four writers.

His gospel is a gospel of action. When you see or read Mark, it is not the mere teaching of Christ. It is the mere proclamation of it.

It isn't sufficient to know the teaching, to have the information, to sit on the knowledge of it, to know that you're saved. That isn't enough. When you come to Mark's gospel, if you're going to be a servant, a messenger, a worker, you know what? You're going to have to put feet to the gospel.

People who hide the gospel, their gospel is powerless. Their gospel is a dead gospel and you need to be very careful. Mark's message as the ox is not mere someone who talks a lot about the gospel, who debates, talks, learns, reads, teaches, sits on their sermons.

He actually puts feet out and says, go preach the gospel. You haven't even begun. You can sit here and discuss all you want, but you are hiding the gospel.

If you're saved more than five days, there's no reason you should be hiding the gospel. You need to be in a terrible state if you're hiding the gospel. And that's the first mark of Mark's gospel, the message of the ox.

There is a message, but it's a vital, it's an action message. The gospel is not merely a message. It's a message you proclaim.

It's a going message. The gospel is an action gospel. The second mark, the master of the ox.

In Mark chapter one, verse 11, and there came a voice from heaven saying, thou art my beloved son, speaking directly to Christ. The father, the master over the son is speaking and saying, thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Look at the master of this servant, of this minister.

Do you know Christ was sent to minister, but he's not your slave. He's not your servant. Do you know, we could think, well, Keith is a, do you know I'm to minister to you? I'm not to look primarily for ministry.

I minister to you. I'm not your servant. There's a big distinction.

I am a servant to you. I am a servant of this church. I serve it.

I'll lay down my life. I would give my life's breath for this church and for you, but I'm not your servant. You know why? You're not my master.

I minister onto you. And so it is with Christ. When you really see Christ, he is a servant, but he's not your servant.

Never think that you're the master of the servant. You're not. You're receiving of this ministry, but it is God, the father, who is the minister.

In other words, he holds power. Christ has always said, what do you want me to do? Go. What do you want me to say? Who is your master in the gospel? The mark of an ox is it has a master.

Listen to Isaiah chapter one, verse three. The ox knoweth his master. The great mark of an ox is it knows who owns it.

It's not a free soul doing whatever it wants. An ox is possessed, it's trained, it's owned, and it's used. That's how you know an ox has a master.

If you're your own Lord, then you're certainly not serving as an ox. You're not ministering. Lots of people are ministering in the church and yet they're not serving God.

That is very obvious. But what do you have with an ox? It knows its owner, but Israel does not know. My people does not consider.

God at a certain point had a look at the ox and say, look, every ox knows its master, but you, my people in this generation, you don't even know who your master is. You know why? You aren't coming under his authority. You're not coming under his rule.

You're doing your own thing. You're not serving. Oh, I'm going to go minister.

Not if you're not listening to me. Remember also in Mark 1, verse 12, it says, straight after the heavens opened and he spoke and said, I'm well pleased with you. And immediately the spirit drove him into the wilderness.

This is the ox being driven, being taken in a direction, not of his own volition, but the spirit of God driving him in a certain direction, not going there himself. Remember when Elijah called Elisha? We always think these prophets were rough, hard men. It's true with Elisha.

1 Kings chapter 19. And it says when Elijah found him, Elisha was plowing. He was down in the field.

He was laboring. That's where a prophet's ministry began. Very interesting in the word of God, where you find men.

Peter was fishing when God called him. Do you know where John the apostle was? Have a guess. He was fixing nets.

That's what he does in revelation. He's mending the nets. And when you look through the word of God, you begin to see certain people are in certain places.

Where was Paul? He was a tent maker. You know what? He's going to get raised up of God. Where do you find Elisha? He is plowing.

And listen, who was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen before him? On the day when the call of God came to him, when he is called to be a prophet, where is he? He is plowing. You know what? I believe he learned a lot behind the plow. He's got 12 yoke of oxen.

In other words, there's six sets of these and every two that are together, there was a wooden frame over two individual ox. It's called the yoke. That's what it's called.

12 yoke of oxen before him. All the oxen, these ox are yoked together, serving. He's behind them.

He's driving them. He's plowing the field. Oxes don't decide their own labor.

And you know why they're yoked together? Their strength is joined together. They're unified together. They serve together.

They actually carry a burden together. And this is what a master does. A master puts a yoke or a burden upon them.

This wooden frame. Listen to what Jesus said, Matthew 11. Come unto me ye that labor and that heavy laden.

Are you working? Are you serving and it's hard? You're trying to minister and you go, this is tough. Of course it's tough. This life is hard.

It's hard work, hard in the family. I'm laboring. I'm tired.

You know what Jesus said? If you're like that, come to me, I'll give you rest, but not free from the yoke. Listen, take my yoke upon you. Take my wooden yoke.

He's talking about an oxen and laboring together. You know what? Christ was one of those oxen. He was a servant.

He was a laborer. He was a preacher. He was a minister.

And you know what he's saying? He's saying, come. If you're laboring in ministry, this doesn't mean just tired, but if you're trying to serve God and you're tired and weary, why not get you together with Christ? He is the servant. He is the embodiment of Mark's gospel.

I believe that Mark himself found this yoke with the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe Mark actually began to minister. You know, at the beginning, he was trying to serve God himself in a very small way and he couldn't do that.

He couldn't even do small ministry, looking after two great apostles. Now, years later, Mark is going to be sent out into the battlefield when men are losing their lives. You know what? Mark is an ox and he was yoked together with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ said, get yoked with me. And you know what? Learn of me for I'm meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The third thing, the ministry of the ox. Chapters 1 to chapters 9 of Luke is ministry, pure ministry. Chapter 10 to 16 is sacrifice.

We'll come to that. But chapter 1 to 9, it's ministry, preaching, casting out demons, healing the sick. There's miracles there.

In fact, there's 18 miracles mentioned in these nine chapters. Two of them are not mentioned in any other gospel. And there's references to 10 other miracles, which we don't have the details.

He uses words like wonder and power and signs. Five of the miracles are connected to nature. Nine of them are connected directly with healing individuals.

Four of them are connected with casting demons out of individuals. You know what this was? This was the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it was remarkable.

When you come to Mark's gospel, you see what real ministry is. It's not selfish. It's not about you.

I came to minister unto others. You know, ministry in the church today, I believe there's very few really understand ministry. I believe there's very few preachers really understand ministry in this hour.

And I'd like us as a church to understand ministry of what it is. Yes, we preach. Yes, we serve.

But it is literally a giving out. It is you pouring yourself out on behalf of others that are sick, that are lost, that are demonized, lies that are destroyed. If you're going to minister to a lost and a dying world, you need to be something yourself.

You better make sure you have this gospel. How are you going to preach to the depressed when you don't have any power yourself over depression? How are you going to minister the joy of the Lord if you do not have the joy of the Lord? If you don't have the conviction that your sins are forgiven and I'm saved, always insecure. I've been going through years.

He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me.

He loves me not. One minute I'm saved. The next minute I'm not.

One time I'm condemned and revealed. The next time I want to pray down revival. Do you not realize how are you going to minister security to a lost and a dying world? When one minute you're in, the next minute you're out.

There is a real ministry of this ox. You know what an ox does? It gets in under the yoke and it begins to plow. You know, I always think Shiloh is a bit like an ox when we go for a walk.

I look at all the other dogs on the high street. None of them pull like her. I've got one arm longer than the other.

This arm is stronger than this one. I want to tell you, when she begins to walk, she goes, I always said to Candace, she'd be like one of those Alaskan husky dogs. If we got her hitched up at winter time, we could go sledging up and down this road.

She would just drive that thing. But do you know what oxes are in ministry? Their head is down, they're plowing, they're going forward, they're ministering. We need again the nature of the ox in this church, which is we've got a city on its way to hell.

We are called to a ministry to go and preach the gospel. There's some unusual traits about Mark's gospel. It mentions Christ's hands more than any other gospels.

It picks up on these little details. That's not accidental. The hands of ministry are very important in the gospel.

Also another area is the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and those who minister. Authority is important in ministry. Imagine being sent to ministry and you have no authority, no power, no rights from heaven, but yet this gospel gives us that.

You remember the great commission in Mark chapter 16 and all the new versions of the Bible tried to cut Mark down and remove scriptures. You'll read in the new versions of the Bible somewhere in the margin or maybe some note attached to it when you go to Mark chapter 16 and it'll say something like, these verses are not in the original or these verses aren't in the oldest texts. Let me just nail that for a second.

The last 12 verses of Mark, verse 9 to verse 20, they ought to be there. Anyone who says that shouldn't be in your Bible is either a deceiver or they're ignorant because they don't know their facts or they're playing religious games. Take your choice, but they have to be one of those because here's the evidence.

Out of 620 ancient manuscripts that have Mark chapter 16 in it, let me say it again, 620 only two do not have those verses in it. And what are those two documents? One of them's called the Sinaiticus, the other, the Vaticanus, and both of them are very corrupt. We reject them.

Those are false gospels. They are false manuscripts. I wouldn't touch them.

All of the rest of the ancient manuscripts have these verses within them. So don't let anyone talk you out. But do you know why this great commission is so important that Mark gives more specifically than anyone else? He doesn't only say go preach the gospel, but he begins to detail what you're to do.

He gives you the ministry of the gospel. Go cast out demons, go heal the sick. He tells you to go speak in tongues as well.

The only time that Christ mentions tongues in the New Testament and they want to remove it. And so we see the ministry of the ox, that there's a remarkable ministry. In Mark chapter 10, remember Jesus talking about to have positions in the church and leadership.

And he says, don't be like the world out there looking titles and positions and influence. He's going to teach his ministers a different way. It shall not be among you that way, but whosoever will be great amongst you shall be your minister or your servant.

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be the servant of all. Fourth, the might of the ox. It says in Proverbs 14.4, where no oxen are, the crib is clean, but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

And so we see that much increase, much fruit, a plowed field, a harvest comes by the strength of an ox. If an ox does not have strength, it won't be in the field. It cannot plow.

It cannot do the job. Can I tell you that if you don't have the strength to be in the harvest field, it's because you lack the strength of an ox. You're not allowing this to be outworked in you, where there is a strength that comes with being an ox.

Because as you labour, once you get the strength, the energy of an ox, you can then do the work of an ox. Don't send boys to do men's work. That's what I was always told.

Make sure you send a man to do a man's job. And you know what, if you want a job done, find someone who's too busy already, because they'll always find time to do it. The person who has all the time will never do that.

This is the way it works. But you know, with the ox, there is a might, a power, an ability to do the job of an ox. Don't call yourself an ox when you don't do the job of an ox, or you don't have the energy.

Oh, I started. Yeah. Where are you now? I'm going to do this.

One week later, where are you? Do you know there's people who constantly say, I'm going to do this. They're filled with good intentions. I'm going to do this.

I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. They'll be the first to tell me, I'll do that for you.

And it won't get done. Do you know what? There's a lack of the ox. But do you know where you get the strength of an ox? There can be a mess.

Do you see what it says in that proverb? Where there's an ox, the crib, sorry, where there is no ox, the crib is clean. If you do not have the labor of an ox, this place can be very tidy. Do you know when we get the ox ministry moving into this church, this is going to be one messy church, but I'll be happy about it.

I don't care if there's smelly people around. I don't care if some of our seats get broken. When you get the ministry of an ox, I want to show you this place might not be all smooth and tidy, but we're going to see the fire of God come down in this place.

We need the might of an ox again, because if we have the might of an ox, it won't be nice and tidy and respectable. There's nothing worse than a respectable church, but a dead church, a church that's got everything pristine in its place, but there's no ministry of the ox. Fifth of all, the method of the ox.

When you come to Luke's gospel, you read the word immediately or in the Greek, ethos. Ethos is the Greek word, immediately. Do you know you read that Greek word 41 times in this gospel, immediately? Sometimes it's translated straightway or anon, an old English word, or forthwith.

It uses all those, but it's the word immediately, straightaway. Do you know why this is used all through Mark's gospel? It is this mark of the method of the ox. Do you know an ox isn't going to wake? When you serve as an ox, it's immediate service.

It is instant obedience. It is prompt action. It's not dialoguing about what we're going to do.

There are dangers in talking about what we would like to do as a church, what we're going to do, and that never come into fruition. There are great dangers with that. Why talk about things when we're not going to put things into action? And so we see that Mark's gospel with the ox, we see the life of Jesus Christ, not from his birth, not of 33 years, but 33 years, sorry, three and a half years, and it dominates on one particular week in Jesus' life.

Let me finish with point six, the martyrdom of the ox, and I'm going to finish with this, the martyrdom of the ox. Chapter one to nine is ministry. Chapter 10 to 16 is sacrifice.

It's the last week of Christ's life, the last week. It's in Jerusalem, and you know this last part of this ministry in the life of Christ is on its way to the cross. You're on your way to death and you know it.

Do you know that oxen were born to die? Oxen don't only serve, they're going to get slaughtered. If you ask a farmer or a ploughman who labors with animals, one day it is ordained, that animal, that beast, we're going to slay it. We're going to have a feast.

We're going to roast it. We are going to enjoy it, and its lifetime of ministry is always joined to its final slaughter. That is the calling of an ox.

It's not to perpetually be here or to rest in glory. When you have served and done the will of God in your generation, then it'll be up to you to lay down your life in a final sacrifice, knowing that your reward is in heaven. It is not here, not in this hour and time.

It is death in submission. It's willingness to go its master's journey. What is the end of your labors? It's a time to die, a time to finish ministry, a time to serve unto the point of death, and we see that in Mark's gospel.

When we see the Lord Jesus in Mark's gospel, during that last week, having ministered all through these years to the sick, to the broken, to the lost, to the destitute, to the poor, to the despised, he ministered to all of them. He never wasted time. He redeemed the time.

He poured himself out, and having done that, he was reviled, rejected, betrayed by one of his own disciples. All his disciples but John fled from him, and yet what do we see him in that last hours of life? We see him like the ox laying down his life. He is serving his master.

Yes, he served you, but you're not his master. But in the last hours, I commit my spirit into your hands, and he goes right into the presence of the Lord. I believe in this gospel of Mark.

We see the servant. We see the worker. We see the labor.

It's the gospel. This is the gospel standard we're to have in this church. Let's raise the standard of the ox again.

Yes, at times we have the man's season. At other times, the lion's season, to have courage to face the enemy. But this laboring, serving, working in the field is not always glorious.

It is hard graft. It is commitment. Whatever you do in this church, do it with all of your might.

I don't care if it's cleaning the toilet, or sitting in the camera, or playing an instrument, or preaching, or doing the Lord's table. If you dare begin to think, ox sure, it's only. No one will notice.

I've worked hard all the other times. It doesn't matter. You're not serving as an ox, but give your best to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bear the ark. Do you know there's one scriptures in, I think it's Leviticus, or it's Ecclesiastes. It says, bear the yoke while you're young.

Why lose your 20s? Some of you are in your 20s. Why say, well I'll serve him when I get in my 30s. You may not have your 30s.

Some of you is in your 30s, you'll say, well I'll do that when I'm in my 40s. You may not get your 40s. There's some of you that are younger and kids.

Why not serve him from a child? Because you don't know when the Lord snatches you away, and time is no more. And what you could have done, you cannot any longer. Let's stand here this morning.

Lord Jesus, thank you my God. We praise you. We bless you.

We adore you Lord Jesus. Thank you our God. Thank you our God.

Just reach out to him as we close this gathering this morning. Just reach out to the Lord. Hallelujah.

Thank you our God. Raise up John Mark. So God, Father, thank you God for the reality of this gospel.

You don't present us with perfect men and women, but Lord God, those that even departed the field of labor, those that turned back, those that departed, and Lord God, you are gracious to work with them, to make them instruments and vessels that could be used in your hand. Lord God, we pray, oh God, in each one of our lives, raise up John Marks again. Lord God, in this church, oh God, even those online, Lord God, we pray right across this world, in this last hour, in this last generation, will you raise up John Marks, oh God, even though Paul the apostle made a part.

My God, I pray, raise up and quicken. Lord God, oxen like men and women. Lord God, who aren't going to worry about the sweat and the hardness of the hour, but they're going to minister onto you, our God.

Lord God, I pray, move mightily in every heart in this room. Lord God, I pray, quicken us and enliven us, oh God. Make us good ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Make us servants, oh God. Make us workers in the field again. Lord God, we pray that you raise up many labors in this church.

Lord God, raise up many vessels. Lord God, send them to places that I could never go. Lord God, I pray, use them in their homes and their families.

Lord God, use them on their streets and with their neighbors. My God, I pray for a breakthrough this morning. Lord God, bring in that ox-like nature, that character, oh God.

Lord God, give us a season where we're going to labor for the master. We need the power of your Holy Spirit this morning in Jesus.

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