

# Romans 12:11-14

by Keith Price

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of serving the Lord with zeal, joy, and commitment, even amidst our imperfections.*

**Duration:** 55:15

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:11-14, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**Topics:** "Servanthood", "Spiritual Endurance"

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## Description

In this video, the speaker discusses his method of sermon preparation, which involves condensing the message into a single word or phrase. He emphasizes the importance of being able to communicate the main point of a sermon concisely and quickly. The speaker then mentions the specific topics he plans to cover in the sermon, including servanthood, endurance, generosity, and possibly kindness. He encourages the audience to take advantage of any available discretionary time to study and prepare for serving the Lord.

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## Transcript

Sometimes you see the words on the screen, we love and adore you, we bow down before you, Jesus we crown you with praise, and yet somehow you don't feel worthy to sing that, because sometimes we can blow it, can't we? And we're not sure whether we should sing it. You know, some years ago, John Wesley White, who was a Canadian evangelist, shared this story. Billy Graham was in Australia preaching, and of course the crowds had gathered, and thousands had come to one of the rallies, and of course the excitement was building.

They went through the earlier part of the service, and everything went well, you know, everybody was waiting for Billy to show up, and so on, pray, and speak. But then, just at the time when Billy was due to come, Cliff Barrows got up and said, well now, I'm terribly sorry to have to tell you that Billy Graham is not feeling very well at all, and we've flown Dr. John Wesley White across from North America, and he's arrived here, and he's going to be speaking instead of Billy Graham. Well, you could hear, you could sense the terrible, terrible disappointment all over the group.

And, well, John Wesley White got up, he looked at them, and he just kept quiet for about ten seconds, and then he said, if you feel bad, imagine what I feel like. I want you to think about that for a moment. If you feel bad, imagine what I feel like.

Well, to be quite honest with you, I didn't feel like preaching this morning, because this morning I spoke unkindly to somebody, and it grieved the spirit of God, I know, and it grieved my spirit, and although I went and asked forgiveness, somehow it takes a little while to get back on focus. And although I know that the Lord has forgiven me, and hopefully will teach me more lessons from that, it was hard to sing this, because I said, Lord, do I love and adore you when I say things like that? But you know, God is in the business of forgiveness, and he can put things right with us, and I would always find it extremely hard to sit in a congregation when I feel like that, because I wouldn't want to listen. But will you imagine what you feel like like that? But imagine what I feel like when I speak, and I've done that, right? Because we do blow it, and I do blow it, and anyway, I trust that the Lord will this morning give us grace, know that in our hearts we intend to do the right thing, but we're very human.

So would you pray again this morning? You've already done that, but let's pray. Pray quietly. You pray for me, and I'll pray for you, in case you're like that, okay? Lord, we're stunned that you use imperfect human beings.

You could have dispatched legions of angels to do this work, Lord, but maybe they wouldn't have related with us. We wouldn't have identified with them, because they were not among the fallen ones, but your chosen servants right now. But Lord, you've given us bodies of flesh.

You've given us a freedom of will, and Lord, we sometimes blow it, but we want to thank you that not only can you forgive, but you can still pick any one of us up now, and you can use us as we put things right with you. Thank you so much, Lord, for hearing us, and thank you for this wonderful song that Stan has led us in, and Lord, we do love and adore you. You know the depth of our hearts, and we do bow down before you, Lord.

We want to crown you with praise, Lord, not just the fruit of our lips, but the fruit of our lives, and I pray that you will just cause each one of us to think about the way that we sometimes grieve you. And the way that you so lovingly time and time and time again forgive. We love you.

We adore you. We crown you with praise. Amen.

Well, we're trying to make our way through Romans chapter 12. We're sort of not doing very well, are we? We're trying to get there, but we've been doing two or three verses at a time, and if you'll just turn there a moment, I'll show you where we're going to cover today, and I'm going to give you a sheet of paper in a moment in which this is not giving it to you expecting that I'm not going to get through it, so that's what I would have said. That's not the reason.

I believe we're going to get through this. It's just that the last section tomorrow is easier to cover a longer section because they're not such short, snappy statements, you see. There are some of them, but not all of them are like that.

But what we're going to do today is we've done the first two verses. Sunday we did three, four, and five on Monday on looking at ourselves as we really are. Then we saw on Tuesday six, seven, and eight, didn't we, on giftedness and how God gives us all different gifts and how we cultivate those.

Then we saw last night, because we didn't have a session yesterday morning, the first part of the next paragraph. We saw verses nine and ten on those qualities and expressions of love. Now we want to start from verse 11 today, and I'm going to take 11, 12, and 13.

If we have time, I may venture into 14, and then at least it will leave a little less for tomorrow. But if we don't, that's fine. We'll be able to work that out.

Now what I've done is I've just sort of written out each one of those little sections. The first section, Sunday, consecration, Monday, humility, Tuesday, giftedness, last night, love. Today is one verse for most of these next ones, so I'm going to have to cover a few every time.

So we've run that off, and I wonder if you two fellows would be willing to give half that. If you walk down that aisle with the top pile there, brother, and if you'd walk down the other aisle, Andy, then at least if you get one between two people, if you're together, if you can just share one, that would be good, because we've just got 75 and there isn't quite enough to go around there. All right, and then at least you can have that.

Don't be staring at it all the time, but keep it so that you know at least what the themes are in every verse. I don't know about you, but I find if somebody will sum up a whole paragraph with one sentence, that tremendously helps. In fact, that's the way I prepare, particularly when I'm preaching through the Psalms.

I'll read through the Psalms and I'll get a paragraph and say, now what does this say in one sentence? And I finish up with four paragraphs, four sentences. Then I say, now can I put all these four sentences into one sentence? And so I'll squeeze them into one sentence with two or three semicolons, and so on, you know. And then what happens is I say, now that's too long a sentence.

Can I have no semicolons? And then I boil it down to one sentence. Then I say, it's still too long. Can I boil it down to a phrase? And I'll boil it down to a phrase and I say, oh, it's really hurting now because I'm giving up those words I love.

But I'll eventually boil it down to one word. That's the way I prepare. And frankly, as people tell you when you learn about preaching, and they say, well, if you can't say what you're going to say, when somebody rushes into the church and says, you're starting to preach, but the church is burning down, you've got five seconds to say it.

If you can't say it in five seconds, you're not going to say it in 45 minutes. So as a result, I try to boil it down. Those single words on the left are those simple little things just boiled down to one word.

And what I put on the right is just a way in which we need to apply it in our lives. All right? Now today, we're going to probably look at, probably going to look at, verse 11, servanthood. Verse 12, endurance.

Verse 13, generosity. And if we've got time to get on to verse 14, kindness. I would rather not deal with kindness today.

It'll be easier for me to deal with it tomorrow. But maybe it's good that I do deal with it today. You see, sometimes we have to do what is right.

And as I've told you before, and I know one or two of you have written down in your Bibles, because I say it often, don't ditch in the darkness what you learned in the light. So maybe that would be good anyway, but I know you'll be understanding and praying for me, as my spirit is not what perhaps I would have liked it to have been to get into this. But I know the word is still true.

When you don't feel like going to the Bible, my friends, a good time to go to it is right then. And that's the time that will uplift you, remind you of its truths, and cause you again to put whatever you need to put right with the Lord. So let's read from verse 11.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need.

Practice hospitality. Let me read the next verse. Bless those who persecute you.

Bless and do not curse. So let's look at the first one, which is servanthood. This theme in verse 11 is about servanthood.

And in fact, you'll notice that the word serving comes in the last phrase there, serving the Lord. Now you'll say, but we've already dealt with that. We've talked about giftedness in verse 6 and 7 and 8, and surely it's the gifts that God gives you that you serve with.

Interesting, that's true, but it's a different word for serving here, and the kind of servant that this speaks of is a different kind of a person. Maybe it's the same one with both these qualities. In verse 7, when we saw about the gifts, if your gift is serving, let that people, let them serve.

That word is the regular word for a servant. It's the word that's translated sometimes not only serving, but ministering, so that if someone's a minister of state, you think, well, you must look up to them or on a pedestal, but wait a minute, do you look up to a servant? Well, you should, because Jesus was the servant of servants, but all the word minister means is servant, and both of those words, minister or servant, whether you've got the King James or other versions, all are a translation of the word in the language of the New Testament from which we get our word deacon, and a deacon is one who serves, not necessarily always sweeping the floor, not necessarily always being in charge of all the accounts, but a whole range of serving, but a servant, it's a very broad word, and in fact, although, again, I wouldn't build a doctrine on it, you know, really, some people think that those two words that make up that word deaconess, really, conso, really, they come from two words that mean they are through, and the other word, the second word, comes from the word for the dust, that you go through the dust, but frankly, I'm not sure that's, you know, sometimes we have a nice little way of looking at a word, and some of the people that tell us the background of words love to tell these marvelous stories, and boy, I love to pick them up and say, wow, if that really were the case, I'd like to tell that, but somehow I wonder whether we've not picked the most exciting description of the background of a word. In any case, this word just means somebody who is willing to do anything and to serve, a general word for servant, but when it comes to our word, serving here in verse 11, serving the Lord, the word they're serving, the noun for that, that kind of a servant, is a doulos.

You've heard of a doulos, and a doulos means not just a servant, but a slave, and the difference between a servant New Testament-wise and a slave New Testament-wise isn't that the gentry and the aristocracy are on the upstairs of the house, and the servants are in the downstairs of the house, and the poor slaves are in the dungeon just waiting to be let out to do something for the servants. No, the difference between a servant and a slave is basically because a slave can be somebody who's in charge of an entire estate. That's quite a high position, but he can still be a slave, and the difference is that when it comes to a slave, the slave is absolutely committed to doing everything that his master may want, and whatever his master's will is, he will do it, and he will try to understand what his master's will is and do that, and he will never do anything else, whereas a servant can sometimes say, no, I think this is the best way to do this, but the

slave will say, I want to do what your will is.

No wonder it says you're serving, slaving for the Lord. So this first thing on servanthood, it says, never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. So three statements there.

In actual fact, what they say, literally translated, is this. In zeal, don't be slow or lagging or lacking. In spirit, seething, boiling, serving the Lord.

So let's think. First of all, you'll notice that they sort of rise up in spiritual intensity, and they gradually become more and more internalized, so on the outside, never be lacking in zeal. Well, you can do all kinds of things with your hands and your legs, and have all kinds of zeal, and incidentally, that word zeal is the identical word to diligent in verse eight.

If it's leadership, let him govern diligently. It's with diligence. It's the same word, zeal and diligence.

Well, you can do that on the outside and get all kinds of good work going and run around here and jump up there, but then you get to the next one. Keep your spiritual fervor, that's in spirit, with fervor or seething. That means now you're going down from the outside into the inside of the person in spirit.

And then the next one says, serving the Lord. So now you've really got, in a spiritual sense, you know who you're serving. So it's getting deeper and deeper and more intense spiritually.

But never be lacking in zeal. Isn't that easy to say? Easy to say. Never be lacking in zeal.

After what I just told you about what I said this morning, unkindly. I felt somewhat lacking in zeal after that. Because why should I, why should the Lord bother to use me, you know? In any case, you know, I've blown it, so do you ever feel like that when you blow it, you just, you're zeal, like the balloon's gone down.

You ever seen one of these helium balloons after 21 days? You know. I had one, I had this hip replacement. Oh, my grandchildren bought these helium balloons.

Oddly enough, they did, they stayed fairly plump for a couple of weeks. And then gradually they get the wrinkles of old age in them, you know. And they gradually, they stay there, but amazingly, they still kept up.

I couldn't believe it. But anyway, but gradually they're lacking. That's what it's like, isn't it? As we get older oftentimes, we lack in zeal.

Well, frankly, is zeal important? I mean, is it zeal? I mean, aren't we all made differently? I mean, you know, one thing I've been realizing in the several months prior to my hip replacement a few weeks ago was that I was beginning to try to fathom, and I never worked it out properly, so you're going to have to help me on this. I was beginning to try to work out what the difference was between tiredness and laziness. Now, think about that, will you? How would you differentiate between tiredness and laziness? Who's got a good answer here? You want to think about it? All right, I'll walk up this step.

By the time I get down the other aisle, you'll have thought of something. You never got tired, did you? Well, you know, you were never lazy, you were just tired. Any ideas that you ever get? You're never lazy, you're just... No? You're not.

You've got too many children to be lazy, all right? What about the difference? Who's got... Tiredness comes on from something that has happened to you, where laziness is self-inflicted. All right, how can I tell whether when I'm lacking in zeal, whether I'm really tired because I didn't have enough sleep last night, or because, frankly, I think I didn't have enough sleep and I'm persuading myself I didn't have enough sleep or in actual fact I did. How can I tell the difference? Well, I guess then you have to start examining yourself and see where this motivation comes from.

How would you do that? Well, the scripture can help you out in that case. And so that's what... Or look to the Lord and he'll give you the answer. Can you think of a good one? It's always hard when people put me on the spot like that I can't think of a good scripture.

Are you like that? Yes, I am. Okay, we'll move on to someone else. Got a good scripture? Mrs. Mercer, where are you? You had a... Shout out here.

So, tiredness you feel is a physical thing whereas laziness is more of an emotional, spiritual or unspiritual thing. Did you have something? Who had their hand up then? Would it be will? Will, the will. The difference between tiredness and laziness? Explain that.

Will who? What's his last name? Would you explain that a little more? Will to not be tired. Will to not be lazy. So, all right, so I've got to get up in the morning.

If I feel tired, if I don't feel like getting up. I say, I didn't feel like running this morning at 6, but my brother expected me to be there, so I willed myself up. Okay, you know, I can't help thinking of Sid Lowe Baxter on this.

Some of you heard me share about what Sid Lowe Baxter. In fact, I shared on this in Stonecroft I think it was. Oh, was it here? Was it Stonecroft I shared on it? I shared this.

You know of Sid Lowe Baxter, Dr. Sid Lowe Baxter, he has this wonderful way of describing things like this. He says, you know, we need to, we need to think in terms of the difference between our emotions and our will. And, let's for instance say, all right now, I'm going to get up now from here on, I'm going to get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, not to go this or that or something else, but I'm going to actually going to have a time with the Lord at 6 o'clock and be very spiritual.

So, you say, fine, I'll set the place and so on. So, you're in bed next morning and brrrr, oh no, it doesn't do that anymore, it goes beep beep, beep beep, whatever it is. Anyway, it goes off and you can't wonder who would phone you at that time of the morning.

What is this noise that's going on, you know? You don't understand it. Oh dear. And then, then you half come to and you say, oh my word, the curtain's open, I can't even see anything, it must still be dark.

I mean, oh my. And you see, in bed with you there are your emotions and your will. The three of you are all in bed.

And as soon as you wake up, emotion says, oh, you don't feel like getting up this morning, do you? You thought it was going to be okay, didn't you? But it's not, it's not, you don't feel like so, don't bother to get up. But the other side of you is your will. And your will says, but wait a minute, you said you were going to get up, so you'd better get up right now.

But wait a minute, emotion says, he didn't know it was going to be as dark as this, he didn't know it was going to be as tired as this. But will says, well, your will says, it doesn't matter how tired you are, you've willed to get up and you've got to get up. So, of course, you've got this committee of three and you're the chairman, so you've got the deciding vote.

And so you say, well, I'm sorry, emotions, but my will is right. So I'll pull the covers over you, you stay in bed, but will and I are going over here. We're going to have a little time with the Lord.

So will and you come over here and you have a little time with the Lord. Now, you don't enjoy it. I mean, how can you enjoy it when your emotions are in bed? But you do it because it is right not because it feels right.

So then what happens is the next morning comes along, same thing happens again, beep, beep, beep, in a way it goes, oh, oh, I'm really tired this morning after all. I mean, we went for that long drive down the coast yesterday and we all went in to buy our shoes from the factory outlets and oh, it was time wandering around and oh, oh, you don't want to get up this morning. No, you're right, you're right, emotions, emotions, that's, I'm glad you said, oh, but wait a minute, Will said, wait a minute, this is the same as yesterday.

Don't listen to that fellow. You said you were going to get up and have a time with the Lord. Well, you know what's going to happen.

In the end, you tuck him in again, pull the blankets over him, come over here, you and Will have another time with the Lord, but you still don't enjoy it for the simple reason that your feelings are in bed. So this is getting ridiculous. So the third morning when the beep, beep, goes off, you immediately put your left hand out and slap it across Emotion's mouth and he's not going to say anything.

And then when you've got it across his mouth, you put your other arm over and grab the lobe of his ear and you pull Emotions out of bed, drag him out and Will's running behind you and you pull him all the way over here and you sit him down on a chair and you sit Will down on a chair and you sit down on a chair for the three of you to have a quiet time. Emotions immediately turns his chair around and faces outwards. You have your quiet time, you're not too sure whether you enjoyed it or not, but you go back to bed.

Next morning, wake up. Emotion! Hey! Will! Where's Emotions gone? Emotions is gone! A little voice over here. Fellows, like the three little pigs, I came an hour earlier this morning because yesterday, although I pretended not to listen to you, I really was enjoying what you did.

And frankly, you go over there and you have a fabulous time. You've done what is right because it is right and it ultimately, therefore, feels right. But if you'd acted only on your emotions, then you wouldn't have gone there in the first place.

So what did you do? Thanks for giving me the opportunity to tell that Sid Lowe Baxter story. But what you did was you decided this morning, I'm going to get up because I told my brother I'd get up. Yes.

Your Will was in charge. So is he right that the difference between tiredness and laziness is only Will? I mean, when I'm absolutely tired and God knows I need more sleep, should I then put my Will into practice and say, too bad you're tired, my buddy, you're going to have to work hard today and that's tough luck? Is that, is that, is that always the case? Is it always Will? Oh, listen, we've got somebody, Steve, who disagrees over here. He should be right because he's only been married, oh, sorry, I forgot.

I'm not going to tell you anything. He's got to be right, he's a radio announcer and I shouldn't be holding this. Well, no, I'd say that there are times when your Will should be put on the back seat because there was times when I would be fervently in prayer and I'd stay up until three o'clock in the morning just praying and worshiping Jesus and having a great time, but I had to be at work early in the morning and I would not have the strength to go on the air, the physical strength and I think the Lord wants us to make wise choices, too, and so that's, that's why I think that sometimes Will and I has to take a back seat.

So you made a wise choice the last few days, did you? I hope you did. It's last Saturday. All right.

Now, I wouldn't tell you anybody this. Well, anyway, well, thank you. Now, let me ask you then, how can we, what would you do now? Some practical thing that you will do now if you want to make sure you don't gradually deteriorate into a person that thinks he's always tired when really it's deteriorated into laziness.

What will you do? Is there somebody that can do something for you or what is it? You mentioned about the text of Scripture can help you. You mentioned about put your will in charge and you've mentioned about, you know, be sensible about the decisions you make beforehand. Yes.

He's normally the talkative one, is he? I think you should look back at what you've done. If you, the feeling of tired or the feeling of laziness can be the same, but if you look back and you've done nothing, then you're lazy. If you look back and you've done a lot, then you're probably tired.

So if I look back at six in the morning and I look back to the last four hours and find that I've done nothing except sleep, I'm lazy. Twenty-four hours. Oh, twenty-four hours.

Okay. All right. Now, all I want to do is to just throw this out to see if I can get people.

I mean, we've got to think of this. We've only got one life to live. Only what's done for Christ will last.

And boy, I want to use that life to the full. But my good brother here from the Marines wants to say something. Now, and the Marines are talking, so listen.

Well, in laziness, you make excuses. You always make excuses for everything. You have to have a want to do something.

If you don't have that want, you'll always make excuses. So it's, again, the word for want is the will. Want or will.

So you have to have a will to do something. So really, we're coming back to what he said. Now, two of you against the other.

If two agree, I mean, that's the end of the story, isn't it? So at least you've got some. I just want you to think about that for a moment anyway. But boy, goodness me, we're really going to reach 21 today.

We're going to be So here we have it then. This is something about not be lacking in zeal. But secondly, keep your spiritual fervor.

That means, in spirit, seething. That's exactly what it says. There are three words in the text.

In spirit, kind of space, although they didn't have punctuation on that. Boiling, seething, at boiling point, in flame. Now then, if that's in spirit, isn't that being unfair? Because not all of us are like that.



we know, like here it says in our versions, what does it say, but keep your spiritual fervor, or in spirit, seething, the word spirit in our translations would have a small s. But sometimes when it refers to the Holy Spirit, it will have a capital S, and you know that that's often the difference.

But that's purely an interpretive little thing. That's not in the text. For the simple reason they didn't know which was capitals, because every letter was capital.

It's like Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves, every house had a cross on it, you know? So here it is, all were capital letters. But not only that, they didn't put any space between the words. I taught myself a little of that language, I don't know a lot of it, but what I taught myself, I taught myself from an old, the oldest complete copy of the New Testament that we have in existence, what they call the Codex Sinaiticus, stated about 325 AD.

And frankly, it was all in capital letter Greek, and all the letters were joined together. As soon as you've got the end of a word still, next word carried on. You don't want to waste space when you've got that precious material that you're writing on.

Not only that, you don't want to waste space or time, but so what you do is you also cut out all the punctuation, so you don't get hyphens, you don't get commas, you don't get question marks, you don't get explanation marks. Then you say, now wait a minute, we're gonna cut out all the vowels. After all, if the Hebrews could cut out all their vowels and put in these little vowel points, so why can't we? So they started writing all this language with no vowels.

So what happened is you came across, obviously, a word that was meant to be on its own, and it said K-R-S, or the equivalent in English of K-R-S. And of course, most of the time that happened, then people knew that this was the word for Lord, kurios. But K-R-S was also the short form of kairos, which is one of the words for a special time of opportunity.

So when they had K-R-S, they say, is it the Lord or is it time? So here, that's why some of your versions have time or opportunity. I want you to know that. Don't feel that you've got to say, oh, it's not right or anything.

No, this is what we call textual. Trying to find the pure text, and we keep on going back and trying to find the best lines and the best ways in which it was copied, and so on. And so, you know, it's gonna take a little while.

As I say, it's very hard to get that into good English. Actually, we're not in doubt of more than 50 words of the New Testament. So Westcott and Hort said, not in doubt of more than 50 words, and not one of those words affects any major doctrine of Christianity.

So I want you to know that's good. But I want you to be awake to that, and to realize it can be serving, not serving time, as you could translate it, but it's not the regular word for time. It's not serving.

It means serving every opportunity, but I don't think that means it. I think it's what it says here. Serving the Lord.

But we must take every opportunity to serve the Lord, too. Taking every opportunity. Dr. Oswald Sanders, in his wonderful little book, A Spiritual Clinic, has, and he was a dear man of God, went to be with the Lord, I guess, seven or eight years ago.

I've had opportunities of ministering at conferences with him, just alongside as the Canadian token, the sidekick, you know, thrown in with the great Dr. Oswald Sanders, or the three Oswalds, you know, Oswald Smith, the People's Church, Oswald Chambers, and Oswald Sanders. And so, but he, in his wonderful little book, *A Spiritual Clinic*, which you should sell your shirt to buy, it's a great little book, he's got one chapter called *The Right Use or the Strategic Use of Time*. And in it, he says, every one of us has 168 hours.

No more, no less. Most of us spend 56 hours sleeping. Depends on your age.

Most of us spend 56 hours working or traveling to and from work. That's 112. Most of us spend about three hours a day on meals and devotions.

That's seven times three is 21. So 112 and the 21 is 132 plus 133. Okay? That's 133 hours.

Now, I know you've got to change diapers, and I don't have to change diapers. I mean, not on me, but you have to change other people's diapers. But I know you have to do things, but I have to do things, like spend time preparing, that you don't have to do.

We all have our individual custom-made things. But he says, frankly, those are the basic things. The time you spend sleeping, the time you spend working, traveling to and from work, eating, and having a time on your own.

Other than that, you take the 133 hours total of that from the total number of hours in a week of 168, and that leaves you with what? 35 hours. He says 35 hours in a week is 5 hours in a day. And Oswald Saunders, in his wisdom, said in his observation of people throughout his life, the difference, the major difference between one person and another was largely to do with the way they used that five hours a day.

Now then, what do you do with it? Sit in front of the soaps with your brain in neutral and your emotions in gear? Or do you just go and do everything? Be careful about too many things. We can do good things that we need and spend an inordinate amount of time on them. I used to, sure, I used to be involved in sport.

I used to spend an inordinate amount of time in it, writing it, teaching it, refereeing it. I mean, I used to be writing the *South China Morning Post*, believe it, on sport. I mean, I've lost 20 pounds, so that's not bad.

Imagine what it was then. Later, I mean, I mean, just a few weeks ago. But, you know, you can spend an inordinate amount of time on things.

Read St. John of the Cross on recreation and how much time we need to spend on the various things of life. How much time we need to spend on reading, just gentle reading to soothe our minds. And how much time we need to spend on small talk or just trying to portion the time and say, Lord, I've got this five hours a day.

You say, that's for you. You don't know me. I'm a single parent and I've got these 17 children to look after.

Well, that's true. I understand that and I'm not belittling that. But I am saying that somewhere in that 24-hour period, you will find there's some discretionary time that you can choose, even if it's only a few minutes.

Use that wisely. I've always done that. Always carry a pencil or a pen or a piece of paper or things on me, so I can always jot down thoughts and write down observations, illustrations I can see around me.

Always try to use the time profitably. So, please, think about that. Serving the Lord, but also serving time in the good sense and using the right opportunity.

All right, look at the second one. That's servanthood. Then look at the next one, verse 12.

Now, you said it right. The way in which we show that we are not tired, we are not lazy, but maybe, well, whatever it was you said, but you said that the answer was to keep on going, was just to keep on going. Endurance.

Now, you remember last Saturday night? What's Saturday night, I think? I tried to explain the difference between the two words for patience in the New Testament. I don't know if you remember. That's a long time ago.

It's many months ago for some of you, but what I did was to say that there were two words, and one of them was related to the circumstances of life which we find pressing in upon us, and the other one was to do with awkward people. That's me, when other people have to deal with me. This morning, the person I mentioned has to have patience with me, and the person who did have patience with me, because thank you very much, you're here this morning.

But not only that, so I don't look around. It could be you. Maybe tomorrow it'll be you.

Oh, no, I hope not. But anyway, here it is. This patience is not patience with people.

This is patience with difficult times that we go through, sets of circumstances over which we've got very little control, and maybe we didn't get into because of sin, but they've just come about in the context in which we live. So this says, all right, what I want you to do is to be patient in affliction. And it gives us the two ways, one before it and one after it.

Being joyful in hope and being faithful in prayer. One is the outside one. Have an external stimulus.

Be joyful in hope. And the other, have internal strength. Be faithful in prayer.

And the patient in affliction comes in the middle, which may well, from Paul's thinking, have come out of verse 11, because he says, I've been telling you you need to have spiritual fervor serving the Lord. But look what you guys are going through in Rome. You're starting to get persecuted and trouble and so on.

So let me tell you, you need to be patient in affliction. This word affliction is not the word used for what a Christian goes through because of his identification with the Lord, though. There are two words there.

That word is a word that means what I suffer only because of my union with Christ or it's the word used for the sufferings that the Lord Jesus went through. That's a special word that relates only to Christians. The word used here and translated affliction is a normal word for all mankind.

Everybody goes through it. But when Christians go through ordinary circumstances of life that are troublesome and difficult, you can't get a job because you happen to be a Christian in Rome or something like this. Well, maybe you say that's to do with bathymetry or the other one.

No, it may be all kinds of things. You may just get a cold or be out of money and this, you know, all of those things. And the way to do that, he says, to be patient in those things.

Easy to talk about, not so easy to do. Be joyful in hope. Rejoice in hope.

Now we can talk about hope, everything that a Christian life in time and eternity from here on. We can talk about the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, which is the coming again of the Lord. That's also known as the blessed hope.

Or we can talk in the way this word, I believe, means is subjective hope. This word means taking the great promises of God and standing foursquare on them. So you take those great promises when you pass through the fire, when you pass through the waters, if you not overflow, you won't be burned and things like this.

And you start to claim these promises and stand on them. And you're not only stand on them and say, well, I guess I'm gonna put up with this situation. But actually to rejoice in that hope, to rejoice that God has given you that promise in spite of this terribly difficult situation.

And I know some of you today are in desperate situations. Right now, today, we're praying at the prayer meeting this morning and one of you's gone through a terrible situation the last couple of days. And you know, we're supposed to be joyful.

You say, how can you do that? It's all right to talk about it. You're a preacher, you stand up there, but are you like that when you're in it? Well, let me think about that. It's not so easy, is it? Rosemary can take disappointments much better than I can.

And I don't know, just seems to, she seems to be able to cope with those in a wonderful way. I think it's probably just spending time drawing from the Lord and being faithful in prayer. But rejoicing in hope and being faithful in prayer.

Some of us were talking at the prayer meeting this morning before it started on what it means to have faith when we pray. And I asked the question, does it mean that we believe God can sort this problem out in the way that I want, and remove this problem? Or does it mean that God is definitely going to sort this out? And if I have any doubt that he's going to, then a double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways, therefore God's not going to do it. So it's not just believing that God can do it, but he's going to do it.

But see, I have great difficulty that way. I'm a Welshman, I've got strong emotions, and wow, I can work myself up into a fever pitch knowing that God's gonna do it and say, yeah, you're gonna do it, you know. But I haven't trusted my feelings that way.

I found that they don't work too often. I found my emotional friends like me are the ones that get excited this way, and they don't seem to have any things, good things happen to them any more than the others, just because they get excited emotionally. But they can tell you all about it, oh yes, they really believe it's fervent, they've got the vibes down here.

Others don't have vibes, they just read books or something, or they read the words, not the music. But what is it? What does it mean to have faith when we pray? Got any ideas? Like the three men in the fiery furnace, my God is able. Like the three men in the fiery furnace, my God is able.

So, there's a good verse. Now, that's an interesting verse, in fact, in Daniel. Do you know what it says there? It says, listen to this, if we think it's whether he's able to do it or whether he will do it.

For our God is able to deliver us, in the next sentence, and he will deliver us, in the next sentence, but if not, we're not going to worship youth. So, he covered the whole waterfront there. And that's true, he's able, but they also say, and he's going to.

But then they say, and if not. Boy, that's not a double-minded man, that's a triple-minded man. He's got all kinds, covering all the bases there.

That's quite a verse. But he is able, and the ability of God. And I think you're on the right track, because the primary thing is perhaps not what we're talking about, whether he's able to or will.

It's the answer that a couple of people gave in that prayer meeting this morning. If you were there, don't shout it out, but if you were not there, tell me what you think. This God's ability is something to do with God, but this is faith in God's character more.

And that's it, he's able to, he's omnipotent, he has all power, and he's sovereign, and none can say him nay. We saw the night before last, three nights, six nights, twelve nights ago, whatever it was. And so, this is believing in the character of God.

But also, it's interesting that somebody should preach on that someday. I'd like to hear somebody preaching that. Our God is able to deliver us? Wait a minute, he will deliver us, I know.

But if not, it's amazing, isn't it? But there it is, right there in Daniel, you look it up. But thank you, that's a great habit, it's the character of God that counts there, isn't it? All right, well, let's go on to the next one here, verse 13. So, we've seen verse 11 was to do with servanthood, verse 12 was to do with affliction.

Now, verse 13 is to do with generosity, particularly generosity in giving. Now, you'll see it on that sheet, I've just put the one word generosity there. And what did I say? What was the little sum-up statement? Somebody read that sum-up statement by generosity? Share what God has given you.

Okay, that's basically all it is. This says, share with God's people who are in need and practice hospitality. The word share, translated here, is a wonderful word, and you know that word, even though it's the language of the New Testament, you know the word koinonia, koinonuntes, share, share, have fellowship with, enter into a common lot with.

Oh, not to live in residential community, as Christians aren't told to do, and they only really did in Jerusalem. And unless you're with YWAM or OAM or some other, and you're living together like that, that isn't, that's a second adult commitment to a second kind of way of living with other Christians. Most of us meet with other Christians, but live on our own.

But this says, have everything in fellowship with. That's the word, isn't it? That's the word koinonia. We call it our fellowship groups, and probably many of your churches, you call them your koinonia groups.

And that's it, it's the fellowship. You know, 50 years ago, they used to use this word differently, and they used to use it generally to speak of money, much more than we do these days to speak of yakking about things, you know. But somebody would come up to you if you're in Christian work, which I wasn't 50 years ago, and they would come up to you and they'd shake hands at the door if you've been preaching or something, or they've been doing something, and they'd shake hands with you, and you'd feel something in their hand.

And you could feel it was a crinkly piece of paper, maybe it was a five-pound note or something, you know. And they'd keep their hand in it, and they'd look at you, and they'd say, just a bit of fellowship, brother. Well, fellowship meant, I want to share with you my material goods.

That's what that word really meant, much more primarily than the other. We use it in other ways today, but to have fellowship with people. This says, have fellowship with God's people who are in need.

Share with them, with God's people. We do good to all men, says Galatians 6, can't remember the verse, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. So here are God's people in deep need, and many of your churches have probably a poor fund to share.

Did you have an interesting translation in your Bible there you pointed out to your husband? I noticed it. And after that? Thank you. There we are, right on the verse, Galatians 6, 10.

Let us do good, as we have opportunity, Kairos again, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, but particularly, if you've only got a little to go around, you particularly need to think of God's people in need, because if they really get fed, boy, they can do all kinds of other good for others, too. Anyway, that's good. Thank you for sharing, Galatians 6, 10.

Well, share with God's people who are in need, and practice hospitality. Or yours, was that the King James, or the new King James? Is yours, say, given to hospitality, at the end of that verse? Sorry, not in Galatians. In Romans 12, it says given to hospitality, if I remember rightly.

It was one of those I learned, so I know it does. But anyway, given to hospitality. Now, that's very, very shallow translation of this rich word.

And what we've got here in the NIV is practice hospitality. Well, it's just as bland as anything. Do you know what that word is? First of all, do you know what hospitality is? Yeah? I told you, didn't I, last night? It's one of these philo words, that's a love of.

And I said it was a love of what? A love of strangers. That's what the word means. So here it is, not the love of the brothers, not the love of the family, as both have been mentioned, and not the love, the agape love, but this is the love of strangers.

Practice hospitality. But the word practice is the identical word to the next line, at least it's a cognate word, it's absolutely identical, at the end it's the same word anyway, and as the next line where it says, bless those who persecute you. This word, translated literally, this would say, persecute people with hospitality.

That's a new way of looking at persecution. Say, oh I like persecution, it's got it in the Bible. I love persecution.

Do you want to persecute me? As long as you do it in accordance with Romans chapter 12 verse 13. Yeah, you persecute me with hospitality. What that meant was, you see, we've got an English word pursue, which is P-U-R, and we've got our English word persecute, which is P-E-R.

That's irrelevant, it's trivia. It's the same basic root here, and what happens is, the Roman soldiers used to be persecuting by pursuing the Christians into the woods, and they would eventually get them down, pursuing them, and they would persecute them. Well now it says, what I want you to do is, you must take the initiative in this hospitality.

You must go out and look for people. The people are out in the woods, they've been running away, they're gonna be thrown to the lions. I want you to go out there into the woods, and I want you to find these, pursue them, chase them through.

They may think you're soldiers, but you chase them through, and you grab a hold of them, and you drag them home to your lair, and then you persecute them with hospitality. That's the idea. Now isn't that something? Do you think this is gradually becoming a lost art, or are we becoming more selfish? I remember when when we were small, I lived in a road called Coyde-Syson Crescent.

That means Englishman's Wood. Terrible word for Welsh. Anyway, Englishman's Wood.

Coyde-Syson Crescent. And I remember we had 38 houses in the road, and only three houses that I knew had cars, and probably no more than two, maybe three, had a telephone. Now you can tell that was a long time ago, when King Solomon was crowned king, and it was quite a while back.

But you know, what happened is, if people wanted to visit you, somebody from far away or something, they wouldn't phone up and say, oh listen, we're down that way, could we pop in this afternoon? Or no, they didn't have a car, so they'd have to come on the bus or something, and they'd come, and they'd drop in. And the way they would ask if they could visit you was by coming to visit you. Now we lost that in England.

Now I noticed that hospitality is a little less, because now people pick up the phone, is it convenient? It's no longer a surprise. I used to be thrilled when our three, when my three cousins came, except when I had my favourite four ounces, or two ounces in the war, the ration of licorice of all sorts, and my favourite ones were those coconut covered ones, and usually about three in that two ounces, and I would keep the best wine till last, you know. And I'd keep those three coconut ones, and I remember once my three cousins showing up from Pontardawe, and I had my three left, and my mother said, now be a good boy, give them a sweet.

I had to give them my candy! I mean, but this is, it's one, it's terrible to have to do that, but really, we've lost, somehow we've lost something when we, we, we, we don't know people, when we know people are coming, you know. I don't know, anyway, what do you think about hospitality? Where do you feel hospitality is needed most? Now we have, like in many churches, official greeters, and I'm so glad we have them in our church, but it's sort of like saying, here's, here's a note of encouragement, a plain sheet, and it says, note of encouragement, please write a note of encouragement to the preacher. Well, you know, preachers, it's okay, but, but somehow, you know, they were put on the spot, and they had to do that, and sometimes you've got a nice official greeter, and sometimes they don't feel good, they blew it by saying an unkind word to someone this morning, or something, and, you know, they don't feel like greeting anyone, so they show their teeth there, and nice collinous smile, and they're somehow or other, they, they, you know, you wonder whether you're really being welcomed and greeted, but greeters sometimes can come across for the most genuine, you can see they really mean it, you can see they've got that gift, and the people have appointed them to a job that they knew they had a gift for, but sometimes, when it's kind of official, and then somebody's always on the list, well, if any strangers come to church this morning, well, these three people have to take them home for midday meal.

Well, I mean, that's good, I'm glad that we don't overlook those people, but is there something about spontaneity that we've lost? What do you think about that? Anybody who's done anything about that, what do you, how can we handle this? I love spontaneity, I love, I love not, not knowing what's going to happen,

I love it in service, you don't know what's going to happen, kindly you're giving us all that sheet, but I like not knowing, you don't know, and you have to suddenly be on the spot, and I love that kind of a challenge, you know, but not all of us would feel comfortable that way, and you see, it's cheating, really, because it means I don't want to prepare, I just want to be spontaneous, you see, so, but anybody that's worth their salt, boy, will want to know what's happening, and you better not get two spontaneous people together, be spontaneous combustion or something, but who had their hand up here, somebody had their hand up, oh yes, sorry, what did you say about hostility?

When you're at church, after church, you can say, do you have plans today, would you like to come on home and have dinner with us? So what would you do, you know beforehand you were going to look for somebody, would you, and what would you have done? Sometimes it's a total surprise, and there's no plotting done, but we come up with something real fast, and people don't mind you improvising, it's the love and the fellowship that's important. Thank you so much, is that a British accent I can detect?

Yes, a little bit, you're a war bride, were you? No, you weren't, you're too young, yes, but you know, you know, it's, do you hear what's, what was said then? It was, it's the fellowship, and people to talk to, and feeling someone cares, I honestly don't care whether I have half a sardine on toast, as long as it's not half a cockroach, you know, somebody, you know, anyway, half a sardine, I don't really care what I eat, and my wife knows, I mean, I can eat a meal, and I think it's fish, and it was chicken or something, because I wasn't looking, because I was talking with somebody, but there are people who love, they just want to be with you, they don't care whether you've got it or not, have a glass of water and two straws and a piece of dry toast, that's all right, it's just being in your home, but some people on the other hand, I've got someone in our family who's extremely good, professional hostess, and everything is done right, I often used to kid her that every meal she ever made, she never, she never repeated a meal, it was, she's extremely good at making, but everything has to be right, so it's normally very hard then to show up at the last minute, but you know, there are people both ways, and we need both kinds, don't we?

We need starters and stickers, we need this one, it's half past eleven, I can't carry on like this, listen, it's time to finish, we'll have to leave the bless those who persecute you, so you be persecuted today, and we'll talk about why you were tomorrow, maybe. Anyway, thank you so much, this has been good to have a little interaction here, and Stan, do you have a good hymn and a thing for us?

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