

# When Love Comes to Town

by Kevin Turner

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*Kevin Turner shares his experiences and insights on the importance of humility, dependence on God, and the power of love and redemption in the face of challenges and dangers.*

**Duration:** 38:18

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 5:14

**Topics:** "Love in Action", "Faith and Service"

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## Description

Kevin Turner shares a powerful message about the transformative power of love, particularly the love of Christ, which compels believers to live for others rather than themselves. He recounts his experiences in war zones and disaster areas, emphasizing that true faith is demonstrated through action and sacrifice for those in need. Turner challenges the congregation to reflect on their faith and its impact on their lives and the world, urging them to be conduits of God's love and grace. He highlights that when love comes to town, it brings hope, healing, and a call to serve, reminding everyone that they are called to be agents of change in a broken world.

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## Transcript

Praise God, we're glad you're here this morning. Strategic World Impact is what you just saw this video on, and we had the pleasure just at the end of last year to meet Kevin Turner through a, just one of our parishioners, one of our friends, Gary Greaves, who, I think he's here today. Gary, there he is.

Gary's here today. And he introduced us and says, you know, you gotta meet this guy. He's really not only impacted my life, but is impacting people around the world through Strategic World Impact.

So we brought him in on a Wednesday evening, and I wanna tell you something. He brought a message of hope and truth to our church, and said, you know what, when you get a chance, you've gotta come back here again and minister to our entire body. So we've invited him here.

He's here today, just fresh from Pakistan. He and his family are here. Would you welcome Kevin Turner as he comes? Well, thank you, Pastor, for having me back again.

And we've already had a good service this morning, so I trust that we'll continue in that vein. Well, my name is Kevin Turner. I'm the president of an organization that works in three areas of the world.

We work in war zones, we work in disaster areas, and we work in areas of Christian persecution. I literally, just the other night, I flew back from Pakistan, got in at about 10, 10.30 at night. Of course, my flight was late.

And pulled the dirty clothes out, put some other clothes in, buttoned it back up, set it by the bed, and in the morning, we got up and headed for the airport. And so that brought me here. So I am getting over my jet lag, but it is fresh.

Gary actually got me set up at a really beautiful hotel just a little bit south of here. So I was in culture shock, because I came from like a \$2 a night hotel where I sleep on these like little woven mats they call charpies. And the next thing, I'm in like the comfort select bed or something.

I'm like, wow, how do I work all this out? It's rough, I'm serious. I know you think I'm joking, and in a way I am, but it is really hard to go from such extremes. But I can tell you one thing, it's a lot easier going up than down.

To the odds like that right now. See, now the bummer is I have to leave that place, and then I go back to the charpie. So at any rate, thank you for having me, Pastor.

It is an incredible opportunity, and just in case you had any retention from the first service, as I had told you, when I came here last fall, it was the first time that I had been back in the pulpit. First or second time in eight months. And I've been doing this work internationally.

In March it will be 19 years, but before that I was actually doing street preaching, street work, inner city Detroit and various things. So I've been actually preaching the gospel for over 20 years. In that time, I have never been out for eight months.

And it was quite a time. I had come back from a trip, and this has been the story of my life. There's either an insurrection when I'm going into a country, or there's an insurrection when I leave.

I moved to Oklahoma, and they blew up the federal building. I mean, that's how my life is, okay? I mean, no matter where I go, something happens. I guarantee you people are watching me.

It's just too uncanny. So I'm in Pakistan, of course, there's massive insurrection. I didn't know if I was gonna be able to get out and be able to come here to speak.

I called my wife and I said, look, honey, you know what? We got the tickets. No matter what happens, get on a plane, get the kids and just go. I will try and meet you somewhere.

And because they were literally, and this is so typical of my life, they're literally setting up 40 foot shipping containers, blocking the roads off to get into Islamabad. I'm like, oh my goodness, we have got to run that gauntlet. Well, the last time I was here speaking, of course, I had just come out of Kenya.

I'd come out of Kenya and what was happening? Well, there was political insurrection. The elections there had been rigged. There was massive turmoil with them.

And it started really a tribal warfare taking place in Kenya. Now I flew in to Kenya to use it as a safe place to do humanitarian relief in Sudan, where I'd worked for over 10 years. And we were gonna load up planes and fly into Darfur with refugee kits and all the various things and go work up there.

So in the meantime, things flip out where we're at. They're literally hacking people to pieces in the street. And I said, God, there's no way.

First of all, it was impossible because there was no fuel because all the roads were shut down. So we didn't have fuel to get up to where our planes, we chartered these cargo planes. We didn't have any fuel to fly them.

So it was impossible to take our supplies into Darfur anyway, because there was no fuel. So here we are sitting with thousands of what we call SACs, these strategic assistance kits. We've bought what's called Unimix.

It's so we do therapeutic feeding for children under five who are starving. So we have all these supplies, cooking pots, mosquito nets, blankets, tarps, everything necessary to respond to refugees and bam, Kenya's in flames. And so we literally gathered our team and said, Lord, for such a time as this, you brought us here.

We were literally right there on the cusp of this and able to respond instantly to this situation. We went out into a couple of towns, Nakuru and Molo, which were the epicenters of a lot of the ethnic cleansing. And literally we went in, we did an assessment.

That evening, we did an assessment. There were 4,500 refugees that had fled for their lives and were in this makeshift camp. They were actually out at like the fairgrounds.

So we went in there, we did the assessment, said it's small enough, we can handle it. We had our medical team, we had everything we needed. The next morning, when we arrived there, the camp had doubled in size.

There were 9,000 traumatized, shocked, bewildered people. We set up our medical clinics, people are coming through, they've been beaten and, you know, that's the ones that, of course, were alive. And we worked and worked.

We had a little camp there in Molo and things got really violent. Nine school children who were just happened to be the wrong tribe at the wrong time were violently hacked to pieces with machetes right outside of our gate. I don't mean killed, dismembered.

And the pastor that we were working with, the local Kenyan, came running. He said, you've got to evacuate your team now. You've got to get them out of here.

It is going crazy. We don't know what'll happen. So, of course, I have a team of men and women.

We throw the stuff in the vans and take off and we were scheduled to actually leave that area the next day and while we were leaving out of the little hotel we were staying in, there was a mob of people coming down the road with machetes and bow and arrows, walking down the street, marching. And right in front of them was a crowd of about 300 to 400 people running and screaming for their lives. And they were running into the lobby of our hotel as we were preparing to leave.

They started throwing stones and stuff at our vehicle. We actually were out on the edge of town. We got out on the edge of town.

It was a little game park there and the pastor called again. He said, where are you, where are you? I said, we're in Nakuru. He said, where in Nakuru? I said, we're right on the edge of town at the game park.

He said, you can't leave there. You can't leave. I said, what do you mean you can't leave? I have to get these people back.

They have international flights. I've got to get them out of here. He said, look, they've blocked off all the roads.

They've set cars on fire and they're standing there at the intersections with machetes, hacking people to pieces. You can't leave. I just, you know, without going into, this Bible that I have right here, this very Bible, survived a rocket attack.

The bag I was carrying it in was blown to pieces. All of my personal possessions were literally ripped to shreds and this Bible survived. My knee was ripped open.

I ended up running for my life for 10 days through a desert in Sudan, 125 plus degree water, digging in the bottom of old riverbeds to find some mushy sand that we could suck water out of it. One thing after another, not just one obscure event. But as I said, it seems that as the sparks fly upward, so this man was born for trouble.

And the scars, the scars in my body. In fact, it's interesting, I had a man via the internet who had been harassing me for quite some time over the craziest issues. And I've never done this in my life.

But this man was basically seeking recognition by the fact that I'd even respond to him or something, I don't know. But I finally emailed him back and I said, I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Henceforth, let no man trouble me.

And I said to him, I am known by my scars. Show me one of yours for the sake of the gospel. Show me one and I will continue this dialogue.

Now, I've never done that in my life. And I never, never would use it as an opportunity to boast in the flesh at all. But through my life, as we've went to these situations and places, I always find myself up, if you will, on the devil's doorstep.

And it's been amazing because we have the opportunity in the midst of that to be the voice of redemption. We're the voice that cries out in the valley of the shadow of death. And I've often told people I've spent the last 19 years of my life living with the dead people.

And it takes a toll. Well, back to the Kenya thing, I took a walk. I had a satellite phone in my hand.

I walked through the bush all by myself. Baboons are all around me. And I'm just like walking through the bush out in Kenya.

And I got my satellite phone and I'm walking. I said, God, what am I gonna do? They're hacking people to pieces. And I've got two van loads of people.

By the way, that day they were killing Kalenjin tribal members and Maasai tribal members. The one driver of my van was Kalenjin. The other driver of my van was Maasai.

There's no way we were gonna get through that. And I have been trapped. I was trapped in Bosnia on the side of a hill in 1992 up in Tuzla.

I was in Bosnia during the fall of Srebrenica when they were killing thousands of Muslims. I stood on the road as literally the trail of tears of people walked by. So many times I've been up in Sudan and Turley where they killed thousands of people.

And I went in and the vultures were eating the bodies of the children. I mean, we're talking stuff that is almost so horrific it takes the life out of you. And that has been my diet for 19 years.

And in the midst of that, I remember walking through a field, watching these birds eating the carrion of the bodies of children. And I looked down and I see these birds, they're literally making a meal of children. And I remember I said this to God, I said, you gotta be kidding me.

These children were not created to be eaten by vultures. And I said to the Lord, I said, these people are utterly forsaken. And ever so gently the Lord whispered in my ear.

He said, no, they're not. I sent you. And I tell you, I had boxes of high energy biscuits on my shoulder.

It's like a graham cracker on steroids, if you will. It's packed with vitamins and all kinds of good things. And you can literally eat three of these crackers a day and sustain your life.

And I went through the swamps where these people had fled into and they're high papyrus reed swamps. And there's just little trails where you can walk and then you fall off into black muck. It's where the Nile River backs up for miles and miles.

And it's just a tepid wasteland. The one thing that's edible is the roots of some of these plants. You can pull them up and it's like a black charcoal thing.

And if you scrape it enough, you get down to the root and you can eat this. It's like cassava, but it's very bitter. I mean, just for you to put it in your mouth and chew on it is almost repulsive, but you can eat it.

Well, these people along with the children had fled for their lives into the swamps. And when we came, we came with relief and we had shelter and we had the things that they needed for life. We had to literally go into the swamps and with the locals, beg the children to come out because they were so traumatized.

And literally we came around this group of papyrus. I'll never forget it as long as I live. I came around this large stocks of papyrus and there were five children there.

They were all from the same family, I believe, but they were huddled there in the mud, hiding in the papyrus, five children. And they saw me and they screamed. And one of the Sudanese with us was trying to tell them, no, no, no.

And I immediately, I dropped down to my knees and I turned my head away from them and I reached up into that box and I was holding my hand out to show them, no, look, we have food. We're not here to hurt you. After some minutes of coaxing, finally this little girl came forward, crouched down like an animal that had been beaten too much.

And she crouched down and she comes forward and she slaps at my hand and screamed and grabbed what she could and took off running. It took me half an hour just to get enough trust from these little

children so that I could feed them something to save their lives. Human capacity for suffering becomes so taxed after a while.

You don't have any place to take it in anymore. And so here I am with a team in Kenya. Once again, it's death, killing, bloodshed.

And now it's my team. So I tell all the women, strip off any jewelry you have, take off any rings. We divide up the cars.

We set up a plan for travel. I have Kenya shilling stuck in my side pocket. If they drag us out of a vehicle, I can try and offer them money.

But more importantly, I went for a walk and I said, God, you better speak to me. You better tell me what I'm supposed to do. You see, I've had people running for their lives with me on more than one occasion.

And I just said, hey, well, it's interesting because it was in April of last year that I finally learned how I was wrong in my approach to God. You see, outwardly, it looks like, hey, what's wrong with that request? You want God to lead you. The bottom line is I was tempting God.

I was wanting God to perform on my time, my standards, speak to me my way. Not saying, Lord, I'm your servant, I'm here. I'd really love to hear something right now.

There's a lot of people counting on me. But instead I said, look, I'm leading this team and I wanna know the way right now and you are gonna tell me. And it was sometime later that God finally revealed the arrogance in my heart and why I never heard a single word from God there.

And such a desperate, such a needed time. And by the way, I will say this, the grace of God was working exceedingly abundantly on my behalf. But He also worked in such a way so as it didn't destroy me.

Because you see the danger with the grace, the charismatos, the grace giftedness of God is this, is that when God gifts you with His grace, when He puts His call upon your life, when He honors you with the presence of His voice, the danger is that you prostitute the gifts that God has given you and you use them upon your own self, thereby prostituting the very thing that God has given you that's to be used for the others. Because when we are blessed, it is so we can be a blessing not to get blessed. When we are discomfited, in other words, when God takes us out of our comfort zone, it's not so that He can make us comfortable, but it's so that He can bring comfort to others through us.

And this is what the body of Corinthians, when Paul penned that letter, what he's talking about. And that the God of all comfort, He comforts us, why? So that we can comfort others. So that in the midst of turmoil and everything else, and that's why God couldn't say a word to me.

Because I had tied His hands. When you make a demand upon God, it's like this, you're standing on the pinnacle of temple and Satan is speaking to you. Is it not written? Cast yourself down.

Satan will always cause you to question God's goodness. Satan will always cause you to try to put God to the test. Well, listen folks, if you want a testimony, then you need to take the test.

Not put God to the test. If you want victory, guess what? Then there's a battle. Last time I checked, we were supposed to be the church triumphant.

Not the church inundated, overwhelmed, restless, despaired, bored, looking for the latest and greatest. I'm leery of somebody who comes and says, oh, we've got a new teaching. How about just the old one? Can't somebody just deliver me the old one? Christ, crucified, came to this world, born of a virgin, lived a spotless and sinless life, loved through every minute of it, gave Himself up as an offering for man, died, buried and resurrected and forever seated at the right hand of the majesty on high and that He ever liveth to make intercession for you.

Just give me that one. The beautiful thing about all of the religions of the world that I go and work in as compared to Christ is simply this. I have the message of an angel to a woman.

And what's so amazing about that, in all other cultures, women are so disregarded. And then I was just teaching in Pakistan to a bunch of women. I said, you wanna know how much Jesus values women? You wanna know how important you are? You're so important that an angel gave the first message of the resurrection to a woman and said, now go back and tell because there was the angel sitting on the rock and I love it.

And this is the triumphant creed of Christianity. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, He's risen, just as He said. That is the capstone, the manifestation of what Christianity is about.

That the sacrifice of Christ was acceptable and the resurrection proves it. And that's why we have a message to take to the nations no matter how broken, no matter what comes. As I said, you know, the sparks born fly upward.

So this man seemed to be born for trouble. But what I've seen time and time again is the redemption of God works. And here's the deal, He uses us.

He works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Now here's the truth that we have to capture, folks. When love comes to town, when love comes to town, what happens? Think about it.

You see, when Jesus comes and He corporately dwells in our midst, we talk about a baptism, right? A baptism of the Holy Spirit. So there's a baptism that we undergo in water and there's a baptism we undergo as a spirit of God comes into us and begins to sanctify us and set us apart. He begins to empower us and fill us with His power, with His glory.

Why? What happens? What's it all for? You see, for much of the church experience, it's stagnant. It doesn't produce anything. I'm sure you've heard the analogy before, but you know the Sea of Galilee, of course, in the Holy Land.

The Sea of Galilee, what flows out of it? The Jordan River, right? Do you know they still fish up there, you know, catching fish, pulling in tilapia, all that stuff. You can be baptized in the Jordan River, you know. But where does that flow to? Jordan River flows into Dead Sea.

What's really amazing is just the analogy that God has left us there. The Sea of Galilee actually has a larger outlet than an opening. And it's full of vibrant, fresh water, lots of fish.

The Jordan River runs down, it goes into the sea, the Dead Sea, and of course, the Dead Sea has no outlet. So how can it be that a sea can be constantly being filled up with this life-giving, fish-producing water, and yet you cannot even dive in the Red Sea because the salt and acidic levels are so deep, your body is buoyant. And it's dead, there's no living life in it.

And it's being fed with a stream of living water, but it's dead, there's just no outlet. Do you think that your life is any different? See, when love comes to town, it is to change you, to change the economy that you live in, to change the outlet of your life so that your dreams, your ambitions, your passions, everything about you changes. That's the new life.

And from that point, the outlet of what you are with your life, what you wanna be, what you wanna do, it becomes holy and sanctified because now the dreams and the passions and the visions are what the Lord has for you. If this is it, if just coming to this is the extent of your relationship with Christ, you don't have the abundant life. You have religion, not relationship.

You have a religion. I wanna tell you in 2 Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15, of course, the Apostle Paul talks about the love that constrains him. See, love had come to town for the Apostle Paul.

It knocked him off his high horse. It knocked the scales off of his eyes. And then he goes on to say, you know what? I'm constrained.

I am a constrained man. He said, I'm persuaded that one died, therefore all died. And he died for all that those who live.

Listen to this. If the church could just get this, that those who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who loved them and died for them. Therein is the outworking of Christianity, that you no longer live for yourself.

It's amazing. We see these movies, these love stories. We see the love stories for a nation or whatever it may be.

It's the William Wallace, you know, he dies screaming freedom for his country. We all flood the theaters to see that. We're enamored with people who have passion and that are willing to risk themselves for something greater.

There is nothing so beautiful, nothing so wonderful as to see somebody who is touched by the power of God and his Holy Spirit and to see their life transformed. And then to see that they will go and live without any regard to their own lives, to their safety, to their provisions, to anything. As Luther said, Martin Luther said, when it comes to the provision of the Lord, may the sparrow be your theologian.

And it's so beautiful when you see this just naked, empowered faith of somebody attempting the impossible and accomplishing it because it's divine. And you see those lives and you can't help, but almost have the breath sucked out of your lungs. What is this love? We had some video that we were trying to show you.

It's of an elderly lady. You would think, my goodness, her day of grace passed a hundred years ago. She's got like one tooth left in her head.

And I'm telling you what, with that one tooth, though, she is praising the Lord. We baptized her in a drainage ditch in Pakistan. She came up out of that water and it was so amazing.

It wasn't scripted. It wasn't choreographed. Nobody told her what to say.

She comes up out of that water and she throws her hands in the air. And in spontaneous outburst of praise, she begins to worship King Jesus. See what happens when love comes to town? It sets people

free.

But here's the deal, folks, for you, the mature, I'm speaking to you, the mature ones now, those who are being disciplined and the beloved, what difference does your faith make? See, that's the clarion call today. Oh my goodness, as you look at your watch, you see that time is relentlessly beating away. You see the collapsing of nations, of systems, of economies.

And you think, my goodness, is this where the Lord is gonna return? And yet I look around the world. Do you know where we work up in Northern Pakistan? There's nobody. I spent five and a half years in Northeastern Sudan where Osama bin Laden was for two and a half years riding through that desert and my camel stepped on a landmine.

I mean, unbelievable stuff. Nobody. 3.1 million Baija Muslims.

We're the only workers. Seven non-believers. The Rashida, 1.1 million people.

13 non-believers. Did God say, go and feed the front row 50 times? Or did He not say, go out and feed the 5,000? Listen to this. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the work of the devil.

You all are God's divine wrecking ball. Each one of you that knows Christ today, you here are God's divine wrecking ball. You have been commissioned to destroy the work of the devil.

And how do you do that? By proclaiming the truth of His word to nations. By speaking truth to power. What difference does your faith make? Who cares that you've come to Victory Christian Center this Sunday? And what difference does it make on Thursday? Revelations 2, verse 7, there's an interesting word God speaks once again through John.

And He's speaking to a church, maybe one like this one. The Ephesian church was a church, in fact, it goes on to say, they had basically spotless theology. They had dotted their I's and crossed their T's.

They had wonderful, impeccable theology. He said, hey, look, man, you stand up against the errors, the theological misconceptions that were coming, the Nicolaitans and all this, and you're standing against that. He said, that's so good of you.

You're standing up for the truth. I'm so happy. He said, however, I do have one thing against you.

You left your first love. Though I have the tongue of men and of angels and have not love. Do you know why? Because love is a constrictor.

Love is not measured. Love says everything, I give it all. Only love will do that.

Religion won't do that. Religion is limited and limiting. Religion is the counterfeit.

For love in Christ, for loving Christ. Religion is a counterfeit. The religious veneer and crush your heart and it makes you content with this only.

This is divine, provided it causes something else to happen. Because this right now is for the building up, the encouraging and the edifying of the saints. So what? So that you all could do what? Go out and do the work of ministry.

So here's how it doesn't work. It doesn't work like this. Oh, let's, Kevin comes into town.

He's gonna preach, he's gonna fire us up. He's gonna tell us. And then he's gonna run back out and he does it all by himself.

No! Do you know, I told Gary, we were talking about the service and I told Gary, I said, I don't care and I'm dead serious. I said, I don't care if I get \$1 for the work. I said, but if I get one person that says that's it, that's me.

God, I surrender myself. It's worth it. Just one person.

You see, live your life for something greater than yourself. That's the clarion call of Christianity that you don't live under yourself, but under him who loved you and died for you. Listen, folks, I have so much more that I would love to share with you.

But there are other people that are gonna be coming and hopefully they will have an ear to hear just like I've seen and sensed in you. I wanna thank you because as you speak over time, you begin to recognize when people are following what you're saying, whether they're, you know, knotted off and kind of out in left field or whether they're actually still carrying along with you. And I mean, I can see almost like unanimously, I can see heads, you know, like this and then like this.

And then I just saw somebody going like this. So that tells me it's time to end. Now, I don't know if any of you guys do go diving, scuba diving, but by the way, when you do this and that, this does not mean you're doing good.

This means I am dying and I gotta get to the surface. So we might have that right now. People say, we are dying and you need to let us go.

So at any rate, thank you very much for the time. And thank you for listening with open heart. And I'd like to turn the meeting over to pastor.

Thank you.

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