

(Deeper 2003 - 'Let It Go') Letting Go of... - Sep 26, 2003 Pm

by Stephen Fenton

Stephen Fenton's sermon emphasizes the importance of letting go of burdens and distractions to cultivate a genuine relationship with Jesus.

Duration: 49:36

Scripture: Matthew 19:16-22, Matthew 22:37-39, Mark 10:23, Luke 15:11-32, Luke 18:18-19, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Faith And Doubt", "Surrender To God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a holy man who holds a young surcher under water until he nearly drowns. The holy man asks the surcher what he was thinking about while under water, and the surcher says he was only thinking about the need to breathe. The speaker then reflects on the fear and uncertainty that many people experience in their faith, questioning if they have done enough to earn eternal life. The speaker encourages the audience to let go of control and understand the true essence of Christianity, which is recognizing our deep need for Jesus.

Transcript

Joel's got that great sort of radio voice, really big, deep, deep voice. A lot of us, you could turn me down just a little bit, it sounds like I'm really loud, Mike. A lot of us have been praying for quite a while about this event, and we're very excited.

I think also many of us this week are aware that the devil has done all he can do to distract and discourage some of us. Some of us are a little weary. I was kind of wondering what shape you got to camp in tonight.

I think some of us limped into the grounds this evening, metaphorically speaking. And I was wondering, you know, as I begin to speak, where your hearts are. And I'm sure that there's a struggle in your heart right now.

If for no other reason than that the enemy does not want you to hear this message. Although it doesn't matter what he wants, because he's already defeated. But I know who you are.

You know, there are very few retreats for this age group. You guys are sort of the 20-something age group, most of you. Some of you are a little younger than that.

Some of you might be a little older than that. But you know, you guys already are considered leaders in many of the contexts where you work and live, many of the churches you come from. You're the guys carrying the burdens.

Some of you have come already very busy in the fall of a new year of ministry. Some of you are at university and just overwhelmed with the challenges there. It was kind of cool to notice the sign language signs for doing.

It's like this. I wonder how many doers are here tonight. You just feel like that today.

You know, just like you've been running all week, all year, all your life. Because this age group, you're the doers. You're the people that your church will look to.

You're the people that your peers will look to. You're the people the younger ones look to. You're the people that a lot of burden falls on.

And as we prayed about what we should look at this week and asked the Lord, it just became so clear to us that we needed to speak to you about letting it go. And we're going to talk over the next few sessions about what it is that you need to let go. But I would imagine also that some of you have already been thinking about the title.

It was a weekend and God's already been doing some preparation. I talked to two or three other people already and God was already speaking to them about the title, about this theme, even before they got here. So I'm sure that for some of you, even though you may not even realize it yet, you'll click in somewhere in the next day or so and realize, that's what God's been saying to me over the last six weeks.

And He'll begin to really challenge you, as I hope He does right from the start. You know, it would be my great desire, this is always the way I feel when I come to a retreat, we're going to have an awesome time. There's some amazing things planned.

There's some wonderful events going to take place over the next 36 hours or so. But it would be my desire and my prayer that the Holy Spirit will come down upon us, even as He has in our worship, but He'll just really come down upon us this evening and we'll just spend the whole weekend in worship. That would be awesome.

Now I know you can't make that happen, that's got to be God, but that's what I pray for. That in the middle of the night you guys will be getting up to worship. That in the morning you'll be worshipping.

That through the day, whatever else we had planned, it'll just be laid aside and we just want to spend time glorifying God. And I know it may not happen that way. And whatever we do, it'll be excellent.

But my prayer is that God will come among us. Because God needs to touch this generation, the 20-something, 30-something generation. Because some of you have come out of spiritual lives that are just frantic.

And you feel it. That sense of doing is just so strong in your life. There is such a desire in our generation, your generation I should say, I always count myself among this number, I'm getting far older than that, to serve the Lord.

You've been trained that way. You've been conditioned that way. You've come into your adulthood with the words, serve.

Just imprinted upon your brain, out of your churches, serve. Holiness is equated in our Christian culture in North America with busyness. And if you can just serve the Lord, then you're more holy.

Now it's not true. Surprise, surprise. It's not true, but that's what we've equated it with.

And I just pray that God will speak to you as he's speaking to me. And show you how much he loves you. And give you a taste of real freedom so that he can actually achieve something.

There is such a need in this generation. You know it more than me. You're working, some of you, with young people.

You're already leaders in youth groups. You're involved in universities. Some of you have friends who are just on the edge of self-destruct.

Some of you come from backgrounds that are just shaken and falling apart. Some of you come from churches that are warring within. It's a terribly needy time.

Just this past week in the parking lot of one of our major high schools here in PEI, a young lady overdosed. And all of us sense the need. And sometimes that drives us even further into doing.

So that God can be heard and the message of hope can be proclaimed. And yet it seems that the only thing that really gets achieved is that we get tired and tired and tired. Some of you are just weary.

And I don't mean just tired because it's, holy smoke, 11 o'clock at night. But you're tired because spiritually you're tired. You're just really weary.

You're very uncertain. I mean, there's a part of you that loves God. There's a part of you that loves the music.

There's a part of you that wants to just run your whole life for Him. But inside there's a terrible uncertainty. We're going to talk about that this evening.

As we do, let's really ask God now to meet with us. To keep us awake. Actually, I'm not afraid of that tonight.

It'll be tomorrow night that we'll be struggling to keep you awake. Tonight should be fairly good. But let's pray.

Father, we're on the water with you, Lord. Speak to our hearts. Speak freedom and new creation within us.

New things. Even as believers. And I would imagine the vast majority of us here are Christians.

Lord, we need to hear your voice. Some of us are so tired, so confused, so frightened. Our culture frightens us.

The world scares us. The tide that seems to be rising against us frightens us. Our future frightens us.

We're so uncertain. We just ask that you be with us tonight. Speak to our hearts.

In Jesus' name. I had a visit this week with a good friend of mine. As I sat and listened to her speaking, I began to see and hear myself in her.

Has that ever happened to you? You listen to somebody else's story, and not five minutes in, you begin to think, Wow, that's just like me. And you see yourself. It's an eerie feeling, isn't it? Has that ever happened to you? No.

Only the three people over here. Nobody over here? And as my friend began to share her story, I began to hear more and more of myself. And the more that we spoke and shared and prayed together.

Another story impressed itself upon my mind. It's in Luke 15, and it's the story of the rich young ruler. You know that story well, and we're going to think about it tonight.

And right away, I just want to say, this guy gets a bad rap. A lot of us think of him as one who failed. We think of him as one who walked away.

It's like he just didn't get us. But listen, in Mark 10, verse 23, it says that Jesus looked at this young man and loved him. So I want you to keep that in mind.

Because many of us are in the same spiritual category, though we may not be in the same financial category. We're in the same spiritual category of this young man. Because here was a young man who was genuine.

Who had known of God and known God, he claims, of himself since his childhood. And had become a doer with all of his heart. Seeking to please God.

And the young lady I was talking to is very much the same. In fact, she's become one of our leading lights in the church. Just so active, so busy, so well organized, so amazingly skilled, so terrifying for someone like me who doesn't know how to put anything together.

She's just awesome. And as I listened to her, I heard, not so much in her organizational skill or her abilities, which are far beyond mine, but in the driven attitude that she had. And she's just driven to do.

Driven to serve, driven to reach. She said, you know, I'm just overwhelmed. There's so much need around me.

I just don't know where to start. It's like, it just gets so overwhelming, so powerful that in the end I just get, I can't do anything. Have you ever felt like that? And you know, as we talked even further, it became clear that she was a lot like this young man.

And in Luke chapter 18, and if you have your Bible, you can look it up. If you don't, I'll read it to you. It says that a certain ruler came to the Lord Jesus and said, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? He was a good boy.

And he had heard of a good teacher. A good man. And you know, as Jesus spoke to this young man, as he responded to him, he cut to the quick right away.

He cut past all of the niceties. He cut past the compliment. And he said immediately to this young fellow, hold on.

Think about what you're saying. Nobody's good. No man anyway.

There's no man who is good. Only God is good. But anyway, what do you want? First of all, think about what you said.

I want to challenge you this evening, because you know what, this kid thought he was one of the good guys. And I realized as I listened to my friend, that's how she thought of herself, and I know that's how I thought of myself. When I got to be 21, 22, 23 years of age, I was one of the good guys.

Never did dope. Never drank beer. Never went to parties that were wild.

Well, maybe one or two, but not many. Never got myself in trouble with the law. Never killed anybody.

And where I grew up, that was happening all the time. Never hit someone to the point where I beat them with a stick, which is also happening in my country all the time. I was one of the good guys.

Remember when I first went into ministry, I was 23 years old when I started in my first church. Actually, I was a little younger when I started in one of my student churches. But anyway, at that age group, you know, you're just ready to go.

And I remember thinking distinctly, and it was a thought that came through my mind all the time. Yeah, you know, it probably makes sense that I'm in the ministry because, you know, some of the people I meet, man, they're so masked up, but I had a good background. Some of the people I meet, man, their households and their homes are just so masked up they don't even know which way is up.

It makes sense, really, I'm in the ministry. I had good, faithful parents. I had a good teacher.

My dad loved the Lord. I just, I grew up in a good home. I came to Christ when I was young.

You know, I didn't get into anything that really has masked my mind up or destroyed my body. It just, it makes sense that I'm in the ministry. You know, I'm one of the good guys.

Now, it wasn't, in my mind, a particularly arrogant position to take. It just seemed to make sense to me. And you know what? There are some of you who think the same way.

It's not that you have anything against the people that you meet that are really masked up, but you know that, you know, you're just not one of those people. You know, you're just not there. And you're serving the Lord, and you're so glad, in so many ways, that that's where you're at.

And if you were in this context, you might be doing exactly the same. You'd find this good teacher, because he had a reputation of just being absolutely flawless. And you think, well, he's another good guy.

I've got a question, because really, even though it's true, even though it's true, I'm so glad to be where I'm going, in the direction I'm going in, and I'm one of the good guys, I still have some fear. And Jesus immediately challenged him with this. There are no good people.

And I want you to think about that, because it's vitally important for you to realize how true it is. You will never understand your need of Jesus until you understand who you really are. You good guys.

You kids that grew up in the church. You kids that went to Bible school. You kids that have, you know, done the counselor training.

I bet you, if I asked you how many were counselors at camp here, almost every hand would go up. You're the good guys. You're the guys that have led like 1,500 kids to the Lord.

You are, aren't you? I can just see it. You're the guys that have had the prayer lists for years. You are, aren't you? You're the guys that have gone to the prayer meetings around the flag in your high school.

There you are. You're the guys. You're the guys who write to your missionaries.

Yeah, yep, there you are. I hear you. You're just the good guys.

But you know what? There's nobody any good. And it's a bit devastating to realize, but you must come to this. See, let me ask you this question.

And you're going to give me the sort of spiritual answer. You're going to give me the Christian answer. But let me ask you, how necessary? I mean, really.

You don't have to answer me. You really need to think about this yourself. But how necessary is Jesus to you? Ooh.

Ooh, he's everything. He's my all in all. Okay.

But how necessary? I heard a great story recently which I've shared a couple of times in our church. A young man wants to find God. So he goes where the Beatles went.

Went to India to find God. And he went to a wise man. He said, how do I find God? And the guy said, let's go for a swim.

Okay. So they went for a swim. And while they were swimming, the holy man grabbed the scruff of the neck of this young searcher and stuck him under the water and held him there.

This kid's getting frantic. Starting to shake and kick. But the guy holds him there.

Holds him there. Holds him there. Until he nearly drowns.

And he pulls him up by the water. Yes, he says. Now, when you were under the water, what were you thinking about? And the young guy said, well, that's the only thing I could think about while I was under that pond.

And I had to breathe. That was the only thing in the world. I just had to breathe.

Mom, what are you doing? You nearly killed me. I had to breathe. I just, I had to breathe.

And the old man said, when you need God that much, you'll find him. Now, let me ask you good guys. The sheriffs, personally speaking.

The people who march around tombstone and clear up the dirt from the streets. Wyatt Earp and the crowd. How, I ask you now, how necessary is Jesus Christ to you? See, the way we've been trained, we get to think we're necessary to him.

Oh, God, yeah, I'm here. Standing right alongside. You know, okay, Jesus, you're Wyatt Earp.

I'm Doc Holliday. And I'm your best pal. And you're a good guy and I'm a good guy.

And we're going to blow the bad guys away. And spiritually, that's the way we get. That's the way I was.

I was a good guy. Didn't do drugs. I didn't get into violence.

I wasn't a terrorist. I was a good guy. Pastor's kid, missionary kid.

I was a good guy. It was good that Jesus had me. I was kind of useful.

I mean, it wasn't really arrogance. It's just I was glad that I was there. Glad that I was in that place.

I'd led kids to the Lord. Hey, man, I'm available, useful. Here's my itinerary and here's my, you know, resume.

Use me, Lord. You need me. How necessary is Jesus to you? Do you never truly, truly understand what Christianity is about until you understand how much you need him? This kid came along and said, Lord, you know, I've got a lot of things together.

It's just one or two little questions I need to clear up. But as he speaks, there's real, it's cool, there's a real suggestion, a real hint of fear in what he says. He says, what must I do in our eternal life? I just want to make sure of this.

You know, I know I'm one of the good guys. There are just times, you know, when I'm just slipping off into sleep. Just times I just wonder, have I done enough? There are just times when I wonder, have I served enough? Does God really, is it okay? Am I really okay? I mean, I know what the Bible says.

I've led kids to the Lord. I know the sinner's prayer. I've done all that.

There are some times, still in the heart, there's that little fear. My friend said to me last night, she said, you know, I've talked to people about this, and they say, you're okay. You're one of the good guys.

You're so busy. You're serving the Lord. You're so awesome.

Of course you're okay. What are you worried about? I remember going to a conference when I was 23, 24. I was with another pastor.

I was just starting in the ministry. I heard a guy called John MacArthur speak about the passage in Matthew 7 where Jesus says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will come into my kingdom. And he said, there'll be people who'll come and say, Lord, didn't we preach in your name? Didn't we do miracles in your name? Didn't we cast out demons in your name? And they'll look at them, and they'll say, depart from me, you workers of iniquity, because I just didn't know you.

I never knew you. We never actually connected. You did a lot of this, but you didn't know a lot of me.

I don't know you. By the time that message was over, I was shaking. Because all of my life, I was saved somewhere in the sort of Netherlands of my youth, somewhere back, way back, I can hardly remember.

And I had served the Lord through youth group. I was preaching when I was 13 years of age. I was a Sunday school teacher at 12.

I was a youth leader at 15. I was a head of the youth ministry when I was 18. I was in the Bible school at 19.

I was a pastor at 23. I mean, I'd done the thing. And part of my heart just burned to serve, but there was deep fear too.

Every week I struggled. Am I really... I mean, I know it's not about doing. I mean, I know it's not.

You start to pull your hair out. That's what happened up here. Am I really acceptable? Is it okay? So the time I got to the end of that sermon, man, I was terrified, because I just wasn't sure.

There was this deep fear. And it's in this young man. Okay, I'm one of the good guys.

I'm genuine. I'm trying. But am I okay? How do I make sure? How do I inherit eternal life? The sense of something missing.

My friend said last night, my friends will say to me, you're okay. But they don't know what goes on in my mind. They don't know about the things that I think about.

It's so true. And this is where I got freaky, because this is exactly the way I used to think too. They don't really know what it's like inside me.

This is a Christian speaking. I'm not speaking to people who don't know the Lord. If you're here and you don't know the Lord, I hope that God will draw you through love and grace and through the things we say.

But it's to you good guys, you guys that are serving, and I don't mean those of you who don't know the Lord are bad guys. You just don't know the Lord yet, okay? But those of you that do, and you think you're the good guys, you're out there working. How many of you struggle with the fear that maybe you're not saved? How many of you feel like you're just trying so hard to make God love you? I mean, you know in your head that's not the way it works.

You've done everything you're supposed to do. You maybe have done it twice, three times, you did one secretly so nobody else would know, but you made sure. You know, you got saved at camp, then you went home, you said it again at home, and then a couple of weeks later with the pastor.

Just to really make sure. But still, and now you're right there. But still, you fear.

Man, I know what you're going through. I was 11 years in the ministry, 11 years in the Baptist ministry, 11 years in Evangelical Baptist ministry, 11 years in fundamental Evangelical Baptist ministry, and I struggled almost every week wondering if I was really acceptable. And I worked so hard.

Even though part of me was saying, Steve, this is, it's not about work. Even though I would tell the kids, it's not about work. Even though I'd preach to the people, it's not by works, it's by grace.

Still, I was running as hard as I could, hoping that I was doing enough to be acceptable. Making sure. You know, Jesus already knew this kid was in trouble.

He knew you're in trouble too. He knew I was in trouble. And you know, the guy had started, oh, a good teacher.

What must I do? There's nobody good, says Jesus. Hold the phone. Think about what you're saying.

The question, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus says, repent and get saved, you bum. That's not what he says. You'd think that's what he would say.

You'd think he'd say, what are you talking about? People are good. There's nobody good. What are you doing? What is wrong with you? Wake up.

He doesn't. He just casually says, you know the commandments. Jesus is leading him down the path of works.

My goodness. Death and mayhem. Shock and dismay.

Why would he say this? This is not the answer we were trained to give children. How do I get to heaven? Well, you know the commandments. What? He needs to go to an evangelism seminar and have it all sorted out.

Because you're not supposed to say that. You're supposed to tell people the Roman road. You know, no one is good.

You know, widgets and his death. You know, you've got to confess your sin. You've got to confess Christ.

I mean, what is wrong with him? You know the commandments. That's it. He even reminded the guy of a few.

Do not commit adultery. Do not commit murder. Do not steal.

Do not give false testimony. Honor your father and mother. The kid immediately comes back.

Wow, yeah. All these I've kept. Since I was a boy.

I'm one of the good guys. I've done all this stuff. Yeah, I have mixed it.

I know the commandments. I've done them all. So Jesus says, whatever.

Right on. You just lack one more thing. And then he nails us.

He says, sell everything. Now this guy was rich. Sell everything.

Sell everything you have. Yeah. This is the one thing.

Then say, the law. You failed the law. Don't you even know you failed the law? The law was given in order to show us that we couldn't keep the law.

The law was given as a schoolmaster to lead us to me. He didn't say any of that. He said, yeah, whatever.

Okay. You just lack one thing. Sell it all.

Everything. And then, put yourself in my hands. Let it all go.

Every possession you have. Now let me ask you something. What did this young man's financial state create for him? What does the kind of richness that is described in this, and that Jesus goes on to talk about, what kind of richness, what did it create for him? What kind of atmosphere did he live in? Tell me.

Comfort? Yeah. What else? There's the word. To the top of the class, my darling.

My friend. She's a cool kid. She's right on.

Of course it did. Of course. He could keep the law.

You shall not steal. He owned half the country. What did he need to steal? I mean, oh yeah, don't steal.

No problem. I've been doing that since I was a kid. Never once went without a meal.

Never once knew what it was to wonder whether he could pay his bills. Of course. Of course he could honor his father and mother.

They made him stinking rich. Wouldn't you honor your father and mother? Of course. I love mom and dad.

Of course I do. Not a problem. Tell a lie.

Hey mom, when you're rich, you can always tell the truth. You tell everybody everything you think about them. It doesn't matter.

You're rich. Not a problem. I've never had a problem with false witnessing.

Because I'm independently rich. I'm independently wealthy. I'm okay.

My teeth are white. I have a good pension plan. I have never hungered or thirsted.

Of course I've done all these things since I was a child. So Jesus says, whatever. It doesn't even go there.

He just nails them. So he says, so become dependent. So let go of your independence.

Sell it all. Some people have looked at this and said, does that mean that we've all got to follow this road of poverty? You missed the point. You missed the point.

What he was saying to this young man was, let go of your money, because your money gives you control. Let go of control and put yourself in my hands. Follow me.

Now this is where it hurts. For every single one. Oh yes, Lord.

I tell the truth. Oh yes, Lord. I serve.

Oh yes, Lord. I'm doing. Doing, doing, doing.

As much as I can. All the time. Serving you.

Every year. I'll go to camp forever. I'll be the oldest counselor ever.

I love it, Lord. I love serving you. It's so wonderful.

Okay. Whatever. I mean, whatever you good guys.

God bless you. See, it says just before Jesus said this, give up control. He said he looked at the guy and he loved him.

Mark 10, 23. And I want you to know this. God looks at you and he just so loves you.

Jesus looks at you and he just so loves you. He loves doers, you know. Church is full of doers.

That's why you know he loves them. He's always saving doers. You're right there.

You're just awesome. He loves you so much. But you know what? It says whatever you're doing, you're still a friend.

And some of you still struggle with your salvation experience. And some of you still wonder if you're really born again. Some of you know how to tell somebody else to get saved, how to make sure they know they're okay, but you're just not sure you're okay.

And a great deal of your struggle is about making God say, or somebody say, man, you're all right. But then when somebody says it, still you're not sure. Man, that was my story.

And the Lord Jesus began to show me my heart. He showed me I wasn't a good person. It was a terrible discovery.

I remember preaching, and I'm almost done, one Sunday morning, just in a period of brokenness, crying before my people and confessing some sin and asking their forgiveness. And the next day, one of my old ladies called up and said, Steve, some of our older people had a meeting yesterday. And I'm the spokesperson.

And we just want you to know you're not as bad as you think you are. We love you so much. Tears were streaming down my face in the air of the phone because I wanted to scream.

I didn't, of course, because she's one of my old ladies. I'd put her in an early grave. But I wanted to scream, you don't know me.

I have lived for years with fear. I have struggled so much. I've failed so deeply.

I still don't really know. And my heart rages sometimes with despair. But I said, thanks very much.

Some of you are there. Whatever it says to you. Here is the kiss in point.

Here is the crux of the matter. And here it is for you to, and for me, let go of control. Okay, so what you're saying is that I can't set the agendas anymore.

That's exactly right. What you're saying is that my plans to serve the Lord, my designs, my effort to prepare myself, my work to get there, that's not what He wants. That's exactly what He's saying.

You mean to say that I've got to really be in a situation where He has to actually make it real or it's not going to happen or I'll starve to death? Spiritually, metaphorically speaking, in this case, literally, in the scripture. Literally. Jesus said, okay, whatever.

Wonderful. You're a good guy. So sell your possessions.

And this kid, it says, was deeply saddened because he had much wretches. A man of great wealth. He walked away.

Continue doing. And some of you will leave this weekend and you'll go back to your schools and you'll go back to your universities, you'll go back to your youth groups. Doing, doing, doing.

Nobody will be able to tell that you're not where you should be or you're just not happy or you're just not sure or there's deep fear within because you came to this point and you've been here before because God has challenged you about it so many times. Whatever God says. Just, okay.

Give up control. My friend said to me last night as we visited. You see, this is what's hard for me because I'm a controlling person.

She's pointing at me now. I'm a controlling person. And she is.

And she uses that control to make sure that the ministries that she's involved in run well and she uses that control to make sure that everything is organized and she uses that sort of ability to control to make sure her life goes in every direction she wants it to and she makes sure that she makes all the simple choices and all the safe places and she makes sure that even though it's all about the Lord at one level it's all about making sure she's safe when it comes to control. She said, and this is the way I was. I was terrified.

And she is too. It was weird. She's so like me.

She said, I can't believe how much like me you are. She said, you know what I'm afraid of? If I give up control he'll send me to Africa. That's what she said.

And I went, wow! Because that's what I thought. And I did. I thought, if I give up control I'll disappear into the wilds of Timbuktu.

And I'll never be heard from again. What a waste. I'm much more useful than that.

I mean I couldn't go to Africa. I couldn't go to Africa. There are spiders as big as horses there.

I couldn't go. I couldn't go to Africa. People get sick and die there.

I couldn't go to Africa. Because my country needs me. I was just a Sam.

It was control. I'll serve you Lord, but I'll control my emotions. I mean, I'll raise my hands this far, but don't ask me to do this.

No. I'll sway, but don't ask me to dance. I can't do that.

Too embarrassing. I'll go to Canada, but Africa. Send somebody else.

Control. I'll do this job, but don't ask me to do that. I'll lead, but don't ask me to serve.

I'll give advice. Don't ask me to be broken. Box to kiss.

No way I'm going there. I'm a good guy. Broken people need me.

Whatever. Save whatever. Give up control, and then you'll never fear again.

I wonder what would have happened if this young guy had said, because you know effectively what holding on to control is? It's the first sin. Go right back to the Garden of Eden. You'll see it there.

Eve took control of her moral destiny. She didn't say to the Lord, serpent, speaking, deal with it, and God would have rapidly, finally, squishingly, he would have dealt with it. Instead she took hold of her moral destiny.

She was one of the good guys. Perfect. I can do this.

Biggest mistake humankind has ever made. Then Adam followed her wholesale down the pipe. And we have done it ever since.

We take control, and we will not, can not, must not let it go. And we cover it all over with Christianity and we try to get right with God. And we do, do, do.

And the church, God help us in this last century, has conditioned us to do it. Try harder. Serve, serve, serve.

The more important the church has become, the stronger the cry from the Pope has been. You've got to serve somebody. And who captures that burden? You guys.

Because the guys above you in the next generations are already burnt out. The ones younger still haven't a clue what's going on. So you're the guys on whom it falls.

And you're doing it. And you're terrified. And you're holding on to control.

It's like a juggling match. Your control, God's work. Your control, and you know people look at you and think, wow, she's so amazing.

He's so amazing. He's so involved. He's so good.

You're one of the good guys. But every night you're afraid. And you're still not certain.

You want to be certain. Are you tired of being afraid? Are you? Do you wish you could have Jesus in front of you just for 13 or 14 seconds and say, Lord, am I okay? Is it, am I okay? Well, let go of control. He walked away.

Lord Jesus looked at him with love in his heart and said, you know, it's so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. It's so hard for those who've got independence. It's so hard for the independently wealthy.

It's so hard for those who've got so much control to enter the kingdom of heaven. In fact, this is easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. It's crazy.

It's so sad. The disciples were stunned because the Jews believed that anybody who was rich was bound to get to heaven. They figured that if you were rich it was because God was blessing you.

They said, well, there's no hope for us then. If the rich aren't getting to heaven, there's no hope for us. How can it happen? Jesus looked right back at them and said, you know, and this is what gives me hope for this kid.

As he looked at them and walked away, he said, you know, what is impossible with man is possible with God. And I imagine that someday we'll find that young man in heaven. And the rest of his story will be fascinating to hear.

As love pursued and caught him. And it'll be fascinating to hear your story, you duos, as love pursues and finally get to the place where you can give up control. The hardest thing you'll ever do, but it's the one thing that you must do.

You can't do it. You're going to walk away like the rich kid. But Jesus looked at him and loved him.

And I know this, when God sets his love on somebody, he's going to get them. And I know God loves you. And he's going to get you.

No, it's not going to be easy. It's going to be heartbreaking. Are you kidding me? Sell everything? Imagine the absolute devastation of waking up the next morning, had he done this, and realizing there was no one to feed him breakfast.

There was no breakfast to feed him. There was no one to dress him. No one to do his fingernails.

It's the way this guy lived. No one to make sure the road was clear for him. No one to bring the camel around so he could ride it.

No camel to ride. There was only Jesus. It was all in Jesus' hands now.

Imagine how terrifying that would have been. It's not going to be easy. It's absolutely terrifying.

But you'll never ever again wonder if it's okay. You'll never ever again live in fear. So God, let go of control.

Just pray. Lord, we're just beginning, but we have something tonight, Lord, that is at the heart of all of our lives, who is in control. Some of us even boast about it.

Oh yeah, I'm a controlling person. I'm a control freak. That independence, that independent emotional wealth is killing us.

It's confusing us. Even though we're genuine, Lord, and we really are, we're so afraid. Oh God, oh God, Lord, bring even tonight, right away, right away, bring some people here in this room to the place where they can say, oh God, I'm terrified.

But I know I have to give up control because right now having control is just not good. It's just not good. I pray you'll bring them to that place, Lord.

The above them there. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let's have a bow and cover.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2630.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-fenton/deeper-2003-let-it-go-letting-go-of-sep-26-2003-pm/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net