

Yosemite Bible Conference 1991-12 Possessing Your Possessions

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of claiming and living out the spiritual possessions God has given us through faith and surrender.

Duration: 31:41

Scripture: Ruth 2:2, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 16:24, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:17, Philippians 4:19

Topics: "Possessions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares the story of a man named Dave and his family who went through a series of trials and hardships. Despite their difficulties, the speaker emphasizes that the purpose of these trials is to make us more like Jesus. The speaker also shares the story of another family with a young girl who had leukemia, and how they trusted in God throughout their struggles. The sermon concludes with the message that God can be trusted and that we should find freedom from dissatisfaction in life by accepting things from the hands of God.

Transcript

...submit questions. It's a very splendid gospel booklet. He has a supply of them here, which he will give away freely to you.

They should be given out carefully and prayerfully, not just to everyone you meet along the road, but people that you can engage in conversation with. Don is sitting back here with the red... No, stand up, Don. I can't see you from there.

And so, if you'd like even a supply of these afterwards, no cost, please see Don Robertson. We'd like to continue this morning with our thoughts on possessing your possessions. And just for the sake of those who were not here yesterday morning, I'd like to review the ground that we covered.

We started off with Abram back in the Old Testament and how God told him, look, I'm giving you the whole land, Abraham. Now you walk throughout that land. It was his, yet he had to walk throughout it.

And we had that same thing with Joshua. The whole land was given to Joshua, but the rule of possession was everywhere that the sole of your foot treads will be yours. And then we read in Joshua chapter 13, verse 1, there remains very much land to be possessed.

And we pointed out that God has given us a wonderful possession in this book. And there are all kinds of treasures to claim, but we have to go in and make them our own. Just as Ruth beat out what she had gleaned, we have to beat out what we glean in the word of God.

It's just not enough to believe that this verse is the inspired word of God. I have to make it my own. And we talked yesterday about salvation, good place to begin, and how you go to the word of God and you accept it as the word of God.

You know that God is speaking to you through it, and you trust the sinner's savior that you're safe. God has a wonderful possession for us in assurance of salvation. God wants his people to know that they're safe.

You can't enjoy your salvation if you don't know you have it. And so, in his marvelous infinite wisdom, he based salvation, first and foremost, assurance of salvation, on the unchanging word of God. Not on feelings, not on circumstances, but on the word of God which never fails.

And then we talked yesterday about claiming your possession with regard to the eternal security of the believer. You go to the word of God, you find that no sheep of Christ will ever perish. You make that your own.

And we also talked about the wonders of our position in Christ, accepted in the beloved. Well, I can read it and I can believe it just as a fact of scripture, but I have to really possess that and enjoy it in my Christian life, complete in Christ. I need nothing to make me fit for heaven because I have Christ, and Christ is my fitness for heaven.

And claiming that verse, that we are made the righteousness of God in him. What a wonderful thing. Seated with Christ in heavenly places.

We talked about that, and how, if we really appropriate that truth, we're far, far above the world looking down upon it. I think of it in connection with an airplane ride. You know, you get up in the plane, it goes up, and the further up you go, the more the things of earth recede from view.

Isn't it true? God wants us to have an exalted position so that the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. We came to that verse in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 14, where it says that we're perfected forever. What a wonderful thing.

A perfect standing before God. I want to appropriate that and believe it. Now, we go on from there today to the great possession as far as consecration is concerned.

And that's what I want to talk to you about first today. Consecration to Christ. Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. It's very possible for a person to be saved and made fit for heaven through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet for that person to go through life and miss God's best in his life.

It's possible for you or me to bow the knee and accept the Lord Jesus as my Savior. And yet never in my life get down on my knees and say, Lord Jesus, here is my life. All I want is to do with this life what you want me to do.

Now, here is an amazing wonder that it is possible for a person to exercise faith in receiving Christ the Savior and to trust Christ for the eternal welfare of his soul, and yet not be able to trust Christ to manage his life down here. Now, that's amazing, isn't it? That we can trust the Lord Jesus to run our lives, to save us from hell, and yet we can't trust him. And we're afraid of turning our lives over to him to do with them what he wants to do.

Amazing, isn't it? And I dare say there are people here in the meeting today, and never in your life have you ever bowed that your Christians may sit for heaven in Christ Jesus, and you've never bowed your knee and said, Lord Jesus, I give up all my ambitions, all my desires, all my will in the matter, that I want you to work out your perfect will in my life. And that's a supreme tragedy in a way, because God has a plan for every life that is more wonderful than you or I in our wildest flights of imagination could ever conceive. You see, in our pride, we think that we know what is best for us, and we chart out our own lives, and we make the decision, this is what I'm going to do.

But the trouble is, we don't know all the options. God knows things far more wonderful than we could ever think of, and by failing to turn our lives over to him, we miss his best, and we're satisfied with his second best. I say it's a great tragedy.

And here on Tuesday morning in this church bowl, I would like to challenge especially you young Christian fellows and girls, before you leave this conference, to have this encounter with the Lord Jesus, and to get before him to say, Lord Jesus, that did it. You have bled and died for me, henceforth I will live for thee. Do you dare do it? I challenge you.

And mean it. Do it and mean it. And then wait patiently for the Lord to reveal to you what he wants you to do, that you may know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

There is a passage in which you can claim your possession. And it will be wonderful. It will be wonderful beyond description.

Just to know that the place where you are is the place where God wants you to be, and a place of rich, rich blessing. Verse to claim. God wants us to claim provision in this life.

Big problem, isn't it? Provision. What am I going to eat? What am I going to wear? Here's a verse. Many of you know it by memory.

Have I ever made it my own? Matthew 6, 33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. You know that verse.

You know it very well. But is it yours? That's the question. Has the sole of your foot ever trodden on that territory? Where you put Christ first in your life, and you leave the provision up to him.

I have never known God to fail anyone. Look, if God fails to keep that promise, he'd have to get off the throne. It's just like that.

He'd have to get off the throne. He never has failed. He never will fail.

I want to tell you something this morning. If you and I put Christ first, seek first kingdom of God and his righteousness, it delivers me from a great deal of anxiety as to the provision of the needs of life. It really does.

But it's a step of faith, isn't it? And you know, the flesh hates it. The flesh wants to see that balance in the bank book. It can trust a balance in the bank book more than it can trust the naked word of God.

It really can. But God is true to his word. My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Man was made for bigger business than to make money. We're put here so that our lives will count first and foremost for the lovely son of God. And he makes an agreement with us.

Just put me first. I'll take care of all the rest for you. Wonderful.

Have you possessed that possession? A possession with regard to protection in the Christian life. I go back to the book of Job, and I read how God has a hedge around that man, and God controls the hedge. And sometimes he lets it down a little to prove that Satan is a liar and that God can be trusted.

But it is a wonderful thing to know as children of God that nothing can come into our lives apart from God's permissive will. What peace, what poise that gives in the Christian life. How it saves us from needless fretting.

If we follow the reasonable rules of health and safety, we're in God's hands. And if something that seems to be untoward happens to us, we can say, this was the will of God for me this day. And God has some wonderful purpose to work out, and I just want his will to be done.

The hedge. The protection of God. And someday when we get to heaven, we're going to see the story untold, unrevealed.

And we'll see how God had his messages there, guarding us from accidents we never even knew about. From evils we never even knew about. The blessing of God's protection.

Claim it. It's there in the Word. And then all the marvelous promises in the Word of God concerning guidance.

Now, isn't it a marvelous thing? We live in a tremendous universe. Wish I could take you out in a spaceship. I can't go myself, so I can't take you, but just to explore the vast tracts of this universe.

And the billions of the stars, and the planets that are out there, and the galaxies. We wouldn't have time, of course. And then come back and just head that spaceship for a little speck of cosmic dust in the universe.

It's known as planet Earth. And then get out of the spaceship and see ourselves just as minute as we are in this tremendous universe. And yet to think that God cares for me, and God wants to guide me, and God can guide me.

As far as the size of the universe is concerned, I'm less than nothing. But as far as God is concerned, I'm very, very important. And God wants to guide me, and He has given promises that He will guide me.

A marvelous thing to me. And He's doing it to so many people, too. So many people that are going to the Word of God today, and they're going to read a verse of Scripture, and it's going to jump out at them from the Word of God.

It's going to be just the word that they needed for that day. And God is going to guide them through the marvelous converging of circumstances. They're going to hear His voice through the inner witness of the Spirit of God today.

Marvelous way. God is going to show His people just exactly the way He wants them to go. The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He show His way.

I will guide thee with my eye. I tell you, it's marvelous. I often have to say, always have to say with Jeremiah, O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in him.

It is not in man that walketh to direct his step. I do not know what is best for my life. I don't know which way to go.

But I have a guide, and He has promised to show me the way if I'm really cast upon Him. Dear friends, are we knowing the guidance of God in our lives? Have we risen above flesh and blood, and walking in fellowship with the living God? Are we still walking on an earthly plane, making our own decisions, and never even praying about them? Years ago, I put on my little prayer list, help me to make every decision a matter of prayer. And I recommend it, because God hears those prayers, and the great God with so many people to care for, and so many sparrows to feed, and so many ravens to attend to, is interested in showing me His way.

And then, have you ever claimed a verse like this, Romans 8, 28? God is working all things together for good to those who love Him, who are the called according to His purpose. We quote the verse glibly, but then when something untoward happens in life, something perplexing, we punctuate it with a question mark rather than a period, don't we? And we say, what good could come out of that? But it is a wonderful thing to possess the verse. Go in and say, I'm going to make this verse my own.

No matter what happens in life, God is working it together for good. I don't mean our own sins, I don't mean our own stupidity. The things beyond our control that come into life, God is working it all together for good to those who love Him.

And what is it good? That we might be conformed to the image of His Son. Goes on to say that, doesn't it? Explains right in the passage. And all the trials and testings of life, all the heartaches and all the sorrows are designed to make us more like Jesus.

That's God's purpose in it all. We can't understand it, the present time. A lot of puzzles in life that we can trust God.

A week ago, Sunday, I was at the home of Dave and Laura Westwood. They have a little girl who has leukemia, had leukemia. And this last year, for that dear family, has been an emotional roller coaster.

Crisis after crisis. Now her blood count is down. Take care of that.

Now her kidneys are failing. Take care of that. Then she had to go to Texas for a bone marrow transplant.

One thing after another. Last week ago, Sunday, Dave and Laura invited the friends over to their house for an open house. And in the backyard, he stood up and he rehearsed the Lord's dealings in their lives during this last year.

Complaint? No complaint. Seeing God in it all. He told how he would go to work and the friends would say, Dave, you know, what can we do to help you? The folks at work.

And Dave would say, what can you do to help me? Let's see, the Christians from the assembly came over and mowed the lawn. Some of the Christians came in and cleaned the house. They brought over meals for us to eat.

I don't think there's anything you can do to help us. But then what really touched my heart was at the end, after a recital of all that they went through, he said, what is the lesson in all of this? He said, we don't know what the future holds. In fact, I heard him tell some people privately that her blood count was down that day.

He said, we don't know what the future holds. What is the lesson in all of this? He said, God can be trusted. And I tell you, that was really glorifying to the Lord to hear a young man possessing his possessions, going through the fire and standing up there before all of those people and say, God can be trusted.

My eyes bubbled. Wonderful, wonderful thing. God is working all things together for good to those who love him, who are the called according to his purpose.

God wants us to have freedom from dissatisfaction in life. I find so many people who are, you know, they wish it were otherwise with them. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, 10, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

I like it. I like it. Paul accepted things from the hands of God.

This is the way it is. And there are some things in life that aren't going to be changed, aren't there? And there's peace in accepting what cannot be changed. But I think it's a wonderful thing when you and I reach the stage of spiritual maturity where we can say, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

And whatever I am, whatever talents, whatever physical ability, I'm going to lay them all adoringly at the feet of the Lord Jesus and let him use it. Wonderful. You see, if you were God, if you had God's wisdom and love and power, you would plan your life, if you're a believer, you would plan your life exactly the way God's planning it.

Do you believe that? God, it's true. If you had God's wisdom and love and power, you would plan your life exactly the way God is planning it now. So the thing is, take that life and live it to the hilt for God.

And rejoice in your calling and rejoice in your destiny. God has other things that he wants us to claim. He wants us to claim his power.

Philippians 4, 13, I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. Have you ever claimed that? Is that part of your possession today? Have you possessed it? Well, you say, I have difficulty with that, brother, because I can't do all things. But it didn't say you can do all things.

It says you can do all things through Christ which strengthens you. Be careful how you punctuate the word of God. And what that verse is saying is, if the Lord wants me to do something, he will give me the power

to do it.

I can't command El Capitan to be cast into the Merced River, can I? But I want to tell you something, dear friends. If El Capitan stood between me and accomplishing the will of God, I could do it. I could say to this mountain, be cast into the sea, and it would.

God doesn't give us these verses of scripture so that we go through life-performing stunts. He gives us these verses of scripture so that we'll have lives of power. The same power that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

I may have told this story last year, if I did, forgive me. Years ago, I was in LaGrange, Illinois, and after the meeting, we were standing out in front of the chapel there. And right by the chapel, the Burlington Railroad went by.

And as we were standing there, the California Zephyr went by. I think it had two or three diesel engines. And it went past us with a tremendous roar.

And of course, it just eclipsed all conversation. Fred and I, this was Jim's father, he couldn't say anything. And when quiet came again to LaGrange, he put his hand on my shoulder and he said, power, brother, but nothing like the power that raised him from the dead.

And I thought, there's a man who knows how to possess his possessions, you know. Power, brother, but nothing like the power that raised him from the dead. I can do all things through Christ.

I believe that. I claim that. God wants me to do it.

He'll give me the power to do it. Grace for every time of need. And that's a wonderful thing.

Freedom from fear. My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness.

God's grace is sufficient. You don't have to pray to God to make his grace sufficient. His grace is sufficient.

Claim it. Plant your foot on the truth and let it live in your soul. We mentioned that verse yesterday, be anxious for nothing.

We know that's Philippians chapter 4, verse 6. We know that. We know it's inspired. We know it's the word of God.

Have I made it my own? Be anxious for nothing. God wants our lives to be lives of peace and poise. Lives whose roots are deep in God.

Coming to him with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving. Letting our needs be made known and experiencing the peace of Christ that passes all understanding. Our lives don't have to be fretful.

They don't have to be frenzied. They don't have to be like the waves of the troubled sea. Our lives can be lives of peace and rest is the Lord Jesus Christ through the word of God.

Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you. That's wonderful, isn't it? Wonderful to be able to take all my cares and say Lord Jesus, it's too much for me. You take it and leave it there.

I like those lines, being perplexed, I say Lord make it right. Night is a day to thee, darkness is light. I am afraid to touch things that involve so much.

My hand can only shake, thine can make no mistake. That's it. That's it.

But you see, it's something I have to make real in my life. I can know this as an intellectual fact, but it's another thing to take that step of faith, appropriate the word of God, and make it real in my life. Peace in times of sickness.

It's wonderful really to know that we're immortal till our work is done, isn't it? Wonderful to know that. I don't have to go through life stewing about that whole thing, but even when sickness does come, commit it to the Lord and rest there. Interesting is the peace that is ours as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ when we think of the whole subject of death.

What should my attitude be toward that? Well, I tell you this, I feel like the old preacher who said, I don't mind the Lord taking down my tent, I do hope he takes it down gently. But it's really wonderful to know, absent from the body, at home with the Lord. Nothing could be greater than that, at home with the Lord.

We're going to be talking about that later. What does that mean to be at home with the Lord? I tell you, it changes all of life when we really do go in and possess our possessions. The Christian life can be a life of greatness.

I want to tell you a story, and I'm going to close with this story. It was during the Great War, and there was a servant of the Lord in Australia, and it was his duty to collect the telegrams and deliver to them homes where fellows had fallen in the service. One day, he received a telegram, and he had to go to this Christian lady.

She was a woman of godliness, a woman of piety. She was known for that. She had five sons in the same regiment in France, and the telegram came, and the servant of the Lord came to the front door with a telegram, and of course, she saw what was in his hand, and she knew what it was all about.

Her lip just stiffened a little, and she said, which one? And he had a hard time getting the words out. He said, all five of them. She hesitated for a moment, and she said, we had given them all to the Lord.

They belong to the Lord, and he has taken them home, and they got down, and they prayed together, and her witness and her testimony meant more in that part of Australia than all the sermons that were delivered from the platform. Dear friends, possess your possessions. Just think of the strength that gave that woman, because she knew how to appropriate the Word of God by faith.

May the Lord help us to do it in our lives for his glory.

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