

Things that Sadden a Servant of God

Selected Scriptures

1268

1979

My heart is full of many things that I just experienced in having been cross at least one ocean, and so as we have been thinking about the music this morning, my mind has been kind of spinning around about what's on my heart to share with you.

We sang, as a congregation, "O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling, to tell the world that God is Light," and so forth, and bringing them the message of salvation. I don't know whether Jack...I'm sure he did it on purpose...but knew what I was gonna share. Well, I know he didn't know what I was gonna talk about this morning. But picking all of these hymns that emphasize missions and evangelism and sharing Christ and being available. The choir even sung, "The Savior is waiting to enter your heart. Why don't you let him come in," emphasizing the need for people to open up and invite the Lord Jesus Christ into their life.

And I think this is of the Lord. I had spent about five hours during the middle of the night Friday preparing a message. I was flying between Rio de Janeiro and Lima, Peru, in the dark of the airplane. There was only one light on, and it was mine, which I'm sure didn't thrill, at least, the guy next to me. But by then, we'd become good friends. And so I studied and prepared to speak to you on Ephesians chapter 3 because that was where we were in our study. And I finished that just before we landed in Lima for fuel and then continued the journey and endeavored to sleep.

But ever since I returned home, there were so many other things in my mind that I never could really focus on what I was supposed to say out of Ephesians. I am preoccupied with all kinds of things, some of them related to the experience in Brazil, some of them related to some experiences in my own life before that and even some thoughts since I've been back. And last night, as I was sitting down for just a moment to try to catch my breath, preparing my mind as I often do, I turned on the television set, and there was a particular preacher on, and he made a statement that just triggered in my mind the final decision about what I'd say to you. This was his statement: "Whatever makes you sad is from the Devil. Whatever makes you happy is always from Jesus because all Jesus ever wants is for you to be happy."

Well, that was all I could take, and I turned it off. And my heart was deeply grieved. I was by myself at the time, and I just began to think over in my mind, "What a stupid statement." All Jesus ever wants to do is make you happy. And I thought about my own attitude, and I thought about what God had been doing in my own life in the last month or so and what the Lord did in Brazil, and I thought, "That may be not only stupid; it may be opposite the truth." Very often, I am convinced - and maybe more so in recent days than I have before - but very often, I am convinced that our sadnesses are really of God, that God doesn't necessarily always want us happy.

The first thing I heard when I got off the airplane from you mean little daughter was that Tim Jack, one of our elders on our staff...his little sister had been killed with a gun. That didn't make me happy. And then I heard Marcy tell me that Tim had preached the funeral and presented Jesus Christ, and I thought, "Well, that maybe was one way in which God, somehow in His wisdom beyond our understanding, wanted to bring someone into the hearing of the message of salvation." Who's to say that sadness is from the Devil and happiness is from Jesus? You couldn't defend that biblically. It just isn't so.

After I left Lima, Peru, I couldn't sleep too well, so I opened a book, the Bible. It's a handy book. And I read the beatitudes. And I meditated on the beatitudes. Look with me at Matthew chapter 5 for a minute. I'm going somewhere. It may sound like I'm not, but I am. I'm not sure where. The Lord knows. And I was reading and meditating on the beginning of the beatitudes, "And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain. And when He was seated, His disciples came unto Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for there is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." You know, I never got past those two verses. I meditated on those two verses for about two hours. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the humble, the people who recognize they're destitute, the people who are devoid of resources, the people who hurt, the people who ache, the people who know they have no good thing to offer God, the unproud, the people who see in themselves the sin that marks them, the people who recognize that were it not for grace, they would have nothing. And then I read about the people that mourn, those that have deep sorrow over their sin, those that have deep agony over their inability to fulfill the will of God, those that hurt because of what they see around them. These are the really blessed people.

And I guess it was because my mind was so bathed in this concept of poverty of spirit, seeking nothing, recognizing inability, recognizing that you're nothing and this idea of mourning over your sinfulness and mourning over your failures and your frailties. And then I, as I began to mull over that, and my mind just raced through all kinds of thoughts, I made the commitment in my own heart, "Lord, you gotta make me more of a mourner." I think that while I was in Brazil for those two weeks, I had more tears in my eyes than I have had in a long time since or before. I'm not the kind of person who cries very often, once in awhile. But I had my heart grieved many, many times, and I guess I was ripe for Matthew 5. And I asked the Lord to make me poor in spirit. I asked the Lord to make me a mourner, to hate my own sinfulness, to hate my own failure, to hate my own humanness, to hate my own disabilities, infirmities, to hate my own self-will and pride and all of those things that stand between me and fruitfulness. And then when I got home and turned on the television and heard that guy say, "Jesus wants to make you happy," it just didn't cut it because it says here, "Blessed are they that mourn."

Frankly, in recent days, the Lord has laid much sadness in my heart. I don't wanna just unload all of my problems on you. This isn't one big group therapy session with you the psychiatrist and me on the proverbial couch. But I feel, because God has called me to be a pastor, teacher here and to be one of the shepherds of the flock that I have to speak what I feel is in my heart to speak. I don't normally do this. You know that. I'm usually pretty rigid to stay with the text that I'm dealing with. But the Lord really laid it on my heart, and I began to think over in my own mind that I've been very sad recently. Far and away, the dominating thought that is in my mind having visited Brazil is sadness, not happiness. I'm not happy about what I saw there. And there are other things in my own life recently that have been very saddening things, that have been things that have caused me to mourn

and to grieve. And I began to think those things over.

This morning I didn't even really jot down what I was gonna say while I was trying to eat and think at the same time. And this is what I wrote down. Number one...I gotta have an outline, you know that. Number one, I've been very sad over my own failures. I've been very sad about that. In the first place, I don't even understand why God put me in the ministry. And I was reading this morning...and I'd like you to look at it with me...1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 12. While you're turning to 1 Timothy 1, I'll tell you a little sideline.

When I got off the airplane down there...it's about an 18 hour flight. I got off the airplane, and I met Bill Kays, and they waited about two and a half, three hours while Monny Brewer and I went through customs. And he said to me, "You know you're preaching tonight." I said, "No, I don't know I'm preaching tonight. You didn't tell me that." "Well, that's just how it is on the mission field," he said. And then they laughed, and they said, "No, we're just kidding. You're to go to the Egracia Baltista de Ibaranga, which is the Baptist Church of Ibaranga, which is a suburb of San Paolo, and he said, "You are to just give a two or three minute greeting to the people there, and then we're gonna break bread and have the Lord's Supper. And so I said, "Well, I'll be willing to do that if I can stay awake." And so I got there, and it was really funny. I walked into this church that...I suppose it seated 100 people, and every single seat was filled. It was just packed. And the pews were a strange assortment of unrelated pieces of furniture. It was in a rubble area. In fact, you couldn't even see it from the street. You had to walk down a little tiny alley, just about as wide as two people, shoulder to shoulder, and it sorta was there in the back among the bricks and the rubble, down one of the cobblestone streets.

So I went in there, and he said, "It's customary now that you would go sit on the platform next to the pastor," whom I had never met in my life. So I went up there and sat there, and Monny sat with me. And then they were talking. Of course, I didn't understand anything. I know a little bit of Spanish, but I don't know any Portuguese. And then he said, "It's time," he motioned to me...the missionary motioned to me and said, "It's time for you to get up. He's introducing you." And I recognized my name, and I got up. And he said, "The pastor will interpret for you. He speaks very wonderful English." So I stood up prepared to share two or three...well, I hadn't even taken my Bible out of my suitcase or anything. And the pastor put his arm around me, and he whispered in my ear and said, "My dear brother, I am praying that this will be the longest two minutes of your life. I was told you would be preaching the sermon, and I am unprepared." So I had never been interpreted in Portuguese. I didn't even know what was going on, but the Lord provided, and we went on for 40 minutes. I want to hasten to add, 20 minutes of me and 20 minutes of interpretation. And he thanked me and profusely thanked me, and then we had the Lord's Table together, and I stood at the door and said the one thing I was told to say, "Bon noche", which means goodnight, and I said it about 150 times that night to everybody who walked up and looked at me.

But I thought about the fact that here I am, walking into a situation like that, people I don't know, a church I've never been to, and yet the Spirit of God had prepared a way for me to minister. And I had this thought afterwards. I said, "Who am I to do this? Who am...they don't know me. How do they know what my life is like? How do those dear people know that I can minister to them in the Word of God? Why did God ever give me such an opportunity as this?" And I was reminded, looking at 1 Timothy 1:12, of what Paul thought, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me and that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious. But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." And then this verse, "This is

a faithful thing and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." What's the next line? "Of whom I am chief."

And I thought about that. Who am I? Do I have a right to minister at Grace Community Church? Is my life so righteous and so holy that I can be the spokesman of God - let alone a right to walk into this little church down here, where they would be expecting so much, where their hearts would be anticipating what I would have to say and be the minister? Is my life what it ought to be?

Frankly, people, recently I have been saddened over my own failures. Sometimes I have mused in the last few weeks over Isaiah chapter 6, where Isaiah said to the Lord, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst the people of unclean lips." And you remember how the angel took a coal off the altar and touched his tongue, and he was still able to say, "Here am I, Lord. Send me." I recognize my inability. I recognize my sinfulness. I recognize my failure. And yet it doesn't change the desire that I have to be used. It's just a saddening thing. You know, you...in terms of this congregation, I have such a great love for you. And my whole soul and heart is yours, and I want so to minister to you. I wanna build you up, and I wanna pass on to you all that there is that God could possibly give you through me. And yet sometimes I see the failure in my life to be all the man of God that I should be. And then I grieve because I feel like I would then restrict you from being what you should be.

And I want to learn a little more about what it is to mourn. I want to learn a little more about what it is to be poor in spirit. I want to be faithful, more faithful than I've been in past times, to pray for you. I recently shared with the elders the fact that I felt a deep, deep burden about prayer. As I've been studying Ephesians 3, remember Paul begins by saying, "I'm gonna pray for you," and then he goes into that parentheses we've been studying. But then he comes back to his prayer. And as I looked through Paul's letters, I was reminded how he begins time and time again by saying, "never ceasing to make mention of you in our prayers...praying for you that God would do such and such," how that in Acts 6:4, the apostles gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. And this is what's in my heart to do, but frankly, I haven't been too happy about it because I've been saddened by my own failure to be all that I should be because I realize, perhaps better than you do, the significance of Hosea's word, "like people, like priest." As I see my own life mirrored in the life of my children, I see my own life mirrored in the life of my church. You tend to be strong where I'm strong and perhaps, in some cases, weak where I'm weak.

And so I've asked God in these recent days to somehow lift me past the point of my infirmities so that you don't get stuck there with me because I wanna be the man of God that He wants me to be. The second thing that I thought about that makes sad is the power of sin. You know, it just...I was thinking this morning of John 11. Look at it for just a minute, and we'll use it kind of as a basis, and then I'll say what I wanna say about this. Jesus was called to Bethany because Lazarus had died. He had a great, great affection for Lazarus. He went to the graveside, and He saw a tomb. He knew that His friend was dead. And in verse 34, Jesus said, "Where have you laid Him? Where did you bury Him?" They said, "Lord, come and see." And then the shortest verse in the Bible, verse 35, "Jesus sobbed," literally, very intense. He wept. And then said the Jews, "Behold how He loved him." Now, what was it that made Him weep? It was the consequence of sin. Jesus wept because He saw the power of sin. He saw what it did. He saw its death power. And at this point, He's already anticipating, just a week away, His own death. And that's why it says in this text that His spirit was troubled within Him, because He anticipated the power of sin.

And this is the thing that should cause us the same kind of pain, when you see what sin does, how it

binds and captures a whole world of people. Monny and I were in Rio, and we had gone down the famous Rio beach, the beach Copa Cabana, Ipanima, both of those famous beaches. And we then took a ride to the top of a promontory, a hill that stands towering above this magnificent city of Rio called Corpal Valdu. And at the top of Corpal Valdu was this monstrous statue of Christ. Some of you may have seen it. There's also one on the west coast of Latin America called the Christ of the Andes. But this is Corpal Valdu. In fact, many of the little villages in Brazil put a Christ figure on the highest hill as a symbol of protection, this massive Christ figure. And we stood up there, and we saw Christ towering into the sky. We came on down the road, just below where Jesus Christ was supposed to be protecting the city, and we came to a big pile of stuff in the middle of the road. So we stopped the car, and we got out. And I said John Kuam, who was a missionary there working with Bill Kays. I said, "John, what is that?" He said, "That is a spiritist sacrifice." And right in the middle of the road...in fact, because of some superstition, spiritism in Brazil, which incidentally dominates the vast majority of the population, the spiritist offerings must be made at the intersection of the streets, something to do with the sign of the cross, something, some perversion of the cross.

And there spread out was this monstrous thing that would have filled a platform like this. And there were funny little bowls with dead chickens that had been bled somehow, and the blood was rolling out of the bowls. And it was all in perfect order. In other words, like it had been set out in symmetry. And between that dead chickens in the bowls were dead fish all laid in certain configurations symbolizing certain things. And there were bowls of rice, and there were melted black and red candles with the black and the red all mingled together. And then there were great big cigars for the spirits to smoke. This huge thing. You know, I don't know how many dozens and dozens of fish and how many of these chickens there were with this blood running all over everywhere and candles and all this wax melted in funny ways. My heart just grieved. And all I could think about was, "Look at the power of sin. It has captured these people." To imagine that that kind of thing could gain for them some spiritual end - the power of sin.

And then they say that Rio comes alive between 10 o'clock and 3 in the morning. And so about 11 o'clock, we went out of the hotel, right there on Ipanima, where we were...our hotel was right on the beach...and we walked up and down for about two miles. The place was milling with an estimated one million people, about a two mile area and nothing but a string of sidewalk cafes serving drinks, and they were literally jammed. You could hardly walk 'til 3 in the morning, and this goes on every night. The power of sin to capture people. They have no idea what they're living for. It made Jesus weep. And we couldn't help but go back to the hotel with our hearts filled with grief.

You know, I felt just like the apostle Paul. I stood up on Corpal Valdu, and there was Christ supposedly embracing the city of Rio. That's a joke. I went up on the Sugarloaf at night and saw that city sparkling - and it's an absolute incredible city to see; it's gorgeous - and all the beauty of God's creation, the wonders of that natural beauty. And then you come down, and you realize that it's just a total commitment to sin. It's just destroying an entire civilization of people. And I felt like the 17th chapter of Acts. Remember that? Where Paul went into Athens, and he was gonna rest. He was gonna take a vacation. In fact, they told us, "We want you to go to Rio for a couple days just to rest because I had preached, I don't know, 12 times in about four days, five days. And we were really tired. So they said, "Here's a couple tickets. Go to Rio and rest." But we saw...like Acts 17, we saw a city given over wholly to idolatry, and we couldn't rest. And so we prayed for Rio.

We prayed for Osmar. Osmar is a Brazilian who started the church in an apartment because there are no places to build a building there. In one area called Ipanima Beach, which is, I don't know,

maybe a mile long at the most, there's 400,000 people living in high-rise apartments. There's no property for a church. There is no message there. There is no witness at all. And Osmar, whose great heart aches for Ipanema and Rio, started a church in his house. And so that night they invited us to come. And Monny and I sat down in the little house church. The people who meet in the apartment, they asked us Bible question after Bible question after Bible question. And we prayed for Osmar, that somehow God would help him to touch 400,000 people with that little house church.

We saw a city given over to idolatry, sin. It's a saddening thing, you know. And I thought to myself, "We are so smug in our American culture. You know, we have gotten our theology so pigeonholed, and we are so involved with each other in the fellowship that I wonder whether we ever really see what's going on." And the sophistication of American sin causes it almost to be invisible to us. We don't get around like that. We don't get where the world is. It's not nice to go there, expose yourself to things. We lose the perspective of Jesus who went out where the publicans and sinners were and touched their lives.

So I've been sad lately. I've been sad over my own failures, and I admit them to you. But God, by His grace, is going to change my heart, and I think great things are ahead. I believe so, one day at a time for me, and I wanna pass it on to you.

And I'll tell you another thing that makes me sad is the power of sin, and I saw it all over again. Because, you see, you culturally propped, you know what I mean. In your own culture, you stop seeing it anymore. And I'm here, and I'm protected by these great walls of Grace Church. I come wandering in here everyday, and it's a whole bunch of Christians. And I go home, and they're all Christians at my house. And I go over here to a meeting with some more Christians. And I don't...and then all of the sudden I'm slammed in the midst of a culture, and I see spiritism, demon worship, godless materialism all over the place, and I can't hide from 'em. And I have a whole new sense of the power of sin to capture men.

The city of San Paolo has 12 million people. And you know something, there is one skyscraper of 20 floors or more completed every day of the year, 365 days a year. It's gonna be the biggest city in the world. And the little Egracia de Baltista Ibaranga had 100 people in it - 100 people, one of the significant churches in the city. The whole city given to idolatry. Their gods are spirits, the dollar...or in their case the cruzero, sex. That's their gods. And I guess I saw that in a way I had forgotten I should have seen it here.

The third thing I thought about as I was thinking about what makes me sad was added to the power of sin, and that is the lost. You know, I not only saw what sin was able to do in capturing people, but I began to think of the individual people, lost people. And you know, I felt a sense of terrible frustration 'cause I couldn't talk to anybody. But then you know what came into my mind? This is really amazing. I began to think, "Boy, this is great. This'll give you an excuse for not witnessing. You can't talk their language. You don't have to say a thing. And nobody can blame you." And I thought, "Man, where did I ever get a thought like that?" I should be running out saying, in desperation, with tears, "Find me somebody who can translate." But, you know, we get so smug. We get so protective. We don't want to world to mess with us. We don't wanna run shoulders with them. We don't wanna open up our mouth and speak of Jesus Christ. I'll tell you, the Lord gave me a new commitment to that. Boy, I tell you, I got on my own hide. When I started hearing my mind say, "Well, this is great, McArthur, you don't have witness at all. Here nobody'd ever care because you can't talk the language."

Yesterday, it was so much on my heart that I spent the time while I was watching my son play a baseball game talking to the guy sitting next to me about Christ 'cause I was saying to myself, "Well, what are you gonna do now? He knows English." When I got on the airplane...that airplane...listen, everywhere you go, the airplanes are all full of Japanese people, all over the world. They are moving. They are everywhere. The whole airplane we were on was packed. There wasn't one empty seat on a 18-hour flight from San Paolo home. And you know, there were probably about eight people on that airplane that spoke English. And I knew what would happen. I knew I would be on that airplane sitting next to two Japanese people for 18 hours, who would be talking and talking, and I would be going, (mumbling). And you know what happened? The Lord be praised. He dropped one guy right next to me, and every single person around me, four seats in any direction, was Japanese. Guy right next to me, his heart was wide open. And we had eighteen hours to talk about Jesus Christ. He's from Lockinyata.

Well, I guess God gave me a new vision for the lost, and I thought of this, Matthew 23. I just...I've said to the Lord so many times in the last few days, "Lord, I wanna see things like you see 'em. I wanna be like You." And I thought of Jesus in Matthew 23:37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he said, "thou that killest the prophets, stoneth them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and you would not. You would not." And He wept. He cried over that city.

We were sitting at the table with Bill and LoriKays, our missionaries from Grace, and Bill and I and Lori all went to highschool together. We played football and baseball, Bill and I, and we went to seminary together too. We were sitting at the table, and we were talking about how many people were in San Paolo and how were they gonna be reached, and Lori began to cry. And she just started to cry. She couldn't talk. And I didn't say anything, and I just kinda looked at Bill as to if say with my eyes, "Is everything okay?" He said, "Oh, she's just crying in the frustration of the lost people in the city." You know, the Lord really spoke to my heart, you know, "She's one up on you, guy. You know, you haven't gotten to that place where the Lord's broken your heart over that yet." And she just went on crying, and she couldn't talk. Silently in my heart, I said, "Lord, help me to cry over the city that I'm in that's lost, like Jesus did over Jerusalem."

I met missionaries. The second week that I was there, I spent with 300 missionaries, teaching them the Scripture. From all over the place. From the big cities like San Paolo and Rio, which has seven million people, to the Amazon, where one guy is working way up the Amazon with a tribe of naked natives. And all of these missionaries...some of them drove 60 hours to be there for the feeding of the Word of God for four days. And I spoke, and I watched them hang on every word, and I watched them talk and share about how they could ever reach their people, how they could ever reach their people. And I listened to them tell me the troubles and the difficulties and the problems. And now the tribal work is going to be so difficult because the government's gonna kick all the Wycliffe people out, so they don't want them translating Scriptures into any more of those tribal languages. And they've restricted now any travel. People can't leave and come back anymore. And every time a missionary wants to go out of the country, he has to post a huge amount of money 'cause they don't want people leaving. They don't wanna give any more missionaries permanent visas, so they have to come in for three months and then leave every three months, go out of the country and then come back again. And they were aching about how they were gonna accomplish their work.

I met a man named Frank Cook. In fact, I celebrated his birthday with a great big birthday cake. Frank is 100 years old. He's been in Brazil since 1911. He's preached the Gospel in 782 towns and

villages. He buried his wife in 1934, and he's still there preaching Jesus Christ. He's 100 years old. And I saw the ache in his heart for the people, and how are you gonna reach the people. 67 years that one man has been preaching Jesus Christ in Brazil - 67 years. I'll tell you, when he talked, I listened. And I saw how the frustration was filling the hearts of those people as they wondered how they could ever accomplish a goal of reaching those people for Christ.

And I was reminded of the fact that Jeremiah wept a lot. You know that? He was like Jesus in a sense. In Jeremiah chapter 13 and verse 15, Jeremiah cries out to the people, and he says, "Hear and give ear and be not proud, for the Lord has spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God." Jeremiah's crying to his people to give God glory, to respond to God's Word or else there's gonna be judgment, he says, "darkness, and your feet will stumble on the dark mountains. And while you look for light, He'll turn it into the shadow of death and make it gross darkness." And he says, "People, people, will you turn? Will you repent? Will you be not proud? Will you give glory to God?" Or else there's this judgment. And then you see his attitude in verse 17, "And if you don't hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep bitterly and run down with tears."

The lost. Millions of people without Christ. Millions of people to spend a Christ-less eternity in an eternal hell. And just a few little missionaries to reach millions of people so that they can become infinitely frustrated.

And I guess in my own frustration, I went up to the Italia Building, the highest building in San Paolo. And Bill said, "I wanna give you a vision of the city." So we took the elevator to the highest building in San Paolo. I mean, you have never in your life seen anything like it. You think we've got tall buildings in Los Angeles? Listen, ten thousand those many buildings is how many skyscrapers are in the city filled with people. And he said, "I want you to get a vision for these people, this city." And I looked over that city, and I couldn't believe it. And I said, "Where do you start?" And the answer came in my own mind, "You start on your knees. That's where you start." And Bill said, "When you go back...", the last thing he said to me as he threw his arms around me, and he embraced me at the airport...he said to me, "John, will you tell the people...will you tell the people what the need is in Brazil? Will you tell the people of the millions of Brazil who've never heard of Jesus Christ?" I said, "I'll tell 'em."

There's a fourth thing I thought about that makes me sad, and that is false teachers. False teachers make me sad. I was up in the mountains with the pastors, 100 pastors from all over Brazil, key pastors and also seminary students. There are three major seminaries - the Presbyterian seminary run by the Presbyterian denomination in America, but it's been nationalized; Baptist seminary run by the Southern Baptists, and it's also been nationalized; and a Methodist seminary. And I said to some of these seminary students...I said, "How are the seminaries?" "Well," they said, "that's why we're here because we wanna really know how to minister because they don't teach us that there." Well, in some cases they do. In some cases, there's some good men.

One pastor said to me, "You know, I work on the side." I said, "What do you do?" He says, "I do," what do you call it, "fetal therapy." I said, "Huh?" He said, "Yes." He said, "It's a wonderful new psychological technique." I said, "Well what do you mean?" He says, "Well, we have a man down here who was the first man in the history of the church who's ever properly integrated theology and psychology. And he just came down here, and he's training all of our pastors in this denomination to do this because this is how you heal people's problems. I said, "Well, what is it?" "Well, you get...it takes about six hours, and you get the person involved to get on the floor and ball up like they were when they were a fetus." And I said, "Huh?" "Yeah, and then you take pillows and pack 'em all

around them so that they have the feeling they're in the womb again." Boy, I was saying, "This is where I bail out, folks." And then he said, "You see, because most of psychological problems are problems that began when you were a fetus. Well, when you were a fetus, you couldn't deal with them. But now that you're an adult, we regress you to being a fetus, and you can deal with your problems there and correct your whole lifestyle."

Boy, I've heard it all. This guy's a Christian. They flew this guy from England to tell the pastors that. I said, "Lord, it's not tough enough to win people to Christ, to start churches and to get pastors. But then the Devil comes in and teaches them all that garbage." And now they've got people laying around the floor for six hours with a bunch of pillows around them trying to get back to when they were a fetus, straighten out all their problems.

You know, I tell you, people, it gets a little old to fight the false teaching, and I thought about that when I was watching that dumb television thing the other night. "Jesus wants you happy now." You know, it's bad enough we...we say, "Well, we've got a church, and there's a guy preaching." Yeah, but listen to what the guy's saying. Boy, no wonder the apostle Paul said to the Ephesians elders in Acts 20 that "I have not ceased for the space of three years, night and day with tears, to warn you that grievous wolves will move in among the flock, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves, false teachers arise, leading you astray." Listen, we have to fight it all the time, and it's heartbreaking. I get so tired of the false teaching. I get so tired of the baloney. And here you go to another country, and you just...they're all over the place.

You know, running rampant in Brazil are the Moonies, Sun Yun Moon, capturing people, Mormon missionaries everywhere on their bicycles, false teachers. They make it so hard, and they always seem to...you know, they always seem to get the exposure. You know why? 'Cause Satan runs the system, doesn't he? So the system caters to the false. And they just...they splash all over the place. These dear young men from the seminary...they came up...you know, they'd come up in the morning, and there was one guy...he was a neat guy. His name was Ruben. He interpreted for Monny while Monny was teaching him stuff in the days, and then I was teaching through another interpreter, wonderful guy. But these kids would hang around me all day long. I mean, we're walking around like a bee hive, just all the time. And poor Ruben. He was...he interpreted from dawn 'til sunset. "Well, he would like to know, blah, blah, blah." "Oh, well..." "Now, he would like to know, blah, blah, blah." And they just kept asking question, question. "What about the authority of the Bible? What about how do you build the church? How do you teach the Word of God? How do you make a sermon that really has power? Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. You know, we've been taught such, such and such. Is that true?" "No, that's not true. This is Truth." All day long trying to unscramble the egg.

And Adi Valosa, wonderful guy, a Brazilian who was a graduate of Dallas Seminary, now works with Bill Kays, who was my interpreter. Super guy. A few months ago, he's landing in San Paolo and had a heart attack, 42 years old. The Lord spared his life, and the doctor finally gave him the approval to interpret when I got there. It's the first time he'd done it since his heart attack. He was a little nervous, took an extra dose of his heart pill. Man, we had a great time. But Adi told me that the seminaries had almost all gone liberal, and that was his great heartache for the people that were being trained there. And so you can't help but be saddened by false teachers.

I don't wanna see totally depressed because I still have joy in my heart because of the Lord, right? But I have joy in my heart because I love you, and I love my wife and my kids. And I thank God for every good thing that He's given. But I'll tell you, you can't just go through life with all of that. The

party is over. And I think from time to time in my life, the Lord jolts me into realizing that this is not a fun and games deal. And we get so smug here, ya know because we're all locked in the little box.

Well, there was another thing...I gotta say this...another thing that makes me sad, and that's the messed up church, the carnal church, the church where the pastor's teaching people to crawl on the floor and pretend they're a fetus. You know, in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 in verse 4, Paul says, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears." And he said to the Corinthians - that's who he's talking to - "You break my heart. You make me cry. When I write, I write with tears dropping all over the page.

I was in Copa Cabana, the famous beach in Rio, and I went to a church, the church there. So _____ to church, and I got up, and I just opened my Bible. I didn't even have a note or anything. I just flipped my Bible open and did an exposition out of Ephesians 'cause that was on my heart. I just went verse by verse and shared with them the Word of God. And when I got all done, I went back to the door, and I was wearing robes, you...you wouldn't believe me. I had this big high funny thing on. It's a very liturgical church that some American missionaries started, and they were from a liturgical background. I had red stuff hanging all over and gold stuff. And it was something. But anyway, I was at the door, greeting the people, and one dear lady came out, and she grabbed my hand. She started to kiss my hand. She just kept kissing my hand. And I was...I mean, that doesn't happen around here. And she kept kissing my hand, and then she looked at me, and in broken English, she said, "Oh," she said, "You...you taught us the Bible verses by verses. You told us what the Bible means. Oh," she says, "this is what I believe Jesus wants all the ministers to do. But you are the only one I ever heard do that." Oh, man, that just broke my heart.

They've got denominationalism down there just like in America. And one of the heartaches is that everybody's in his own little box. They don't even wanna mingle. And the pastors aren't learning how to teach the Word of God. And those young seminary guys...when I was...they were with us all week, and I would do one Scripture exposition after another, and by the time the week was over, all they would ask me about, "How do you do that? How do you...how do you...tell us the books to get. Tell us the way to do that." Like Bill Kays said, it was probably one of the most strategic things that ever happened to the church in Brazil, to take those hundred pastors plus all those seminary students and just let 'em feed on exposition of the Word for one whole week.

And one guy is a pastor of a Four Square church down there, one of the largest churches around, several thousand people, at the end of the time threw his arms around me and hugged me real tight, tears in his eyes. He said, "My life has changed this week. I wanna give myself to teach the Word of God."

I'll tell you, my heart breaks over the church because I see...I go there, and I see they got the church, but the church isn't doing it. And that's why Osmar has a house church because the ones that are there, they don't do it. They don't teach the Word. They don't minister in the way that the Lord would minister if He were there. I have this burden for America, you know, so many churches in America. Some of you people are right here because you know the churches don't feed you.

I recently wrote an article for Moody Monthly on how to build biblical structure, how to build elders in your church. You wanna hear something interesting? 1,400 plus pastors have written me asking if we'd help them to do that. 1,400 in the last month have written me right here at Grace Church. When I got home from Brazil, I had a stack of mail - that is not an exaggeration - that high from pastors who

wanna know how to put the church together the way God wants it. You know what that says to me? Somebody's looking at us.

You know those little Brazilian guys in seminary? They said, "John," through the interpreter, they said, "John, could we come to Grace Church to see what happens in a biblical church?" I say, "How are you gonna get there?" "Could somebody bring us there? We wanna do it different. We wanna revolutionize the church." One guy said to me, "If I have to work for the money, I'm coming there to see." And I said, "Lord, I don't want this responsibility. If we've got everybody looking at us, we're really on the hot plate, aren't we?" And so as I was thinking about this, I was saying, "Lord, I pray with all my heart that You'll keep Grace true and pure." Amen?

Listen, people, the eyes of the world are looking at us. I got a letter yesterday from Alaska: "Will you come and teach us how the church is to be?" I got a letter yesterday from Haiti: "Will you come and speak to the missionaries and the pastors of Haiti to show us the principles of the church?" I got a letter yesterday from South Africa: "Will you come to Cape Town. The Anglican Church needs revolution." I can't go all those places. But somebody's saying, "We gotta do it another way," and they are looking here because we are committed to these things.

But people...I shared it with the elders a few weeks ago. You know, we're in great danger at Grace Church 'cause we got everything going so good. I believe this is the most dangerous time in the history of Grace Church. We know how to do it. We can crank it out. We got the message, the materials, the books, the committees. We got it all knocked. And the whole of Christianity in America has that same problem. We're so used to having experts on everything, we are siphoned off of God. You know, when a Christian has a problem, He does one of two things: goes and buys a book about his problem or go see a counselor who's an expert on his problem, and he does not do the one thing he should've done, and that is get on his knees before God. One of the worst things that ever happened to the church is the proliferation of counselors that have siphoned people off of a one-to-one relationship with God.

And we can do it right here at Grace Church. What do we need to pray for? We got our building. What do we need to pray for? We got our gymnasium. What do we need to pray for? We got our preacher and our staff and our everybody does everything for us. And all the sudden we get up off of our knees, and we get into a bunch of activity, and one of these days we're gonna wake up and say, "We're just like Laodicea. We're rich, and we've got it all. And we really don't know that we're lukewarm, and the Lord's gonna spew us out of His mouth." And so my message to you this morning is you're gonna have to get sad before you get glad.

And the reason I wanna pass some sadness onto you is I think some of us have gotta deal with some things in our lives. I look around the world, and I see churches, and I think like Jesus in Matthew chapter 9, and I'm sure He wept over the multitude because He saw them as sheep, what, without a shepherd. And here God has given us so many shepherds. But we're in the danger of getting so oriented to systems and so much methods; we've got such great teachers and great this and great this, and we can lose sight of the vision that we must depend on God everyday. If I could say one thing to you, I'd call you this day to account before God in your own heart that you give yourself every day of your life to great desire and earnest prayer before God that He would keep this church pure and holy and that you as an individual not let the church or the books or the counselors or the experts substitute for your deep relationship with the Living God.

You know, I can get up and preach before you. I know how to preach. I can preach before you in the flesh, and you wouldn't even know it. You wouldn't even know it. Because I know how to do it. I've done it. But I don't wanna do that. And you don't want me to do that, do you? I don't ever wanna open my mouth in this pulpit unless I'm energized by the Spirit of God. And I don't want this church to become a church that's so wrapped up in methods that it loses God. And I wanna call us back to the place where we started seeing a broken heart over the things that broke God's heart and Jesus' heart and Paul's heart.

Oh, there's so much more I wanna say, but I...stupid clock. The bane of my existence. It's just not a time for laughing. It's just not a time for parties in the world. And you know, those people said to me - bless their hearts - they said, "How many people you have in your church?" I said, "Oh, a thousand." "Could some of them come to Brazil. We need some of them who have your vision. Could you send us two or three of your staff members just for three months to teach our pastors?" And we in America, we just keep...we're stepping on each other to minister. You know that. Yeah, really. We've got more useless ministries in America than you can imagine. We're spending a fortune on, in America, in Christian hocus pocus that's unnecessary, when the rest of the world doesn't have anybody.

Romans 10...I kept thinking of it last night. "How shall they hear...how are they gonna hear except somebody be sent?" I said to Monny as I was saying goodbye to him, and we put our arms around each other, and we prayed, and he took off for Venezuela, and I getting ready to come home. And I said, "Let's pray that God'll raise up people out of Grace." Wouldn't it be great if we just unloaded about 3,000 of 'em on the world? He said, "Well, I'm very involved here. I don't know if I could do that. Yeah, that's just the problem. What really matters? What really matters?"

So I'm asking the Lord to do a couple things here. One, I'm asking the Lord to do a work in my heart. I'm asking the Lord to drive me back to prayer in a way I've never done before. I'm asking the Lord to purify this church. I'm asking the Lord to make us sad in our hearts over what we oughta be sad about and drive us to our knees. And then I'm asking the Lord to take a bunch of us and chase us all over the world 'cause we've got something to offer.

I almost didn't speak this morning because I felt so sick last night and today. And then this morning I was reminded of Aphoditus, who was nigh unto death for the work of the Lord, and I figured, "Well, I'm not exactly nigh unto death. I guess I can do a little more work for the Lord. And because it was so burning in my heart to say what I said, I just had to be here."

But I wanna close our time this morning with just a brief word of prayer with you, and I'd like you to just make it a commitment time, would you? We'll just close a little different today. And I'd ask you to just open your heart to the Lord right now. I've stumbled around and tried to express the inexpressible, tried to say what maybe doesn't have words. Trying to articulate a feeling is hard. I'm not that good with words. But I wish you'd just open your heart to God and say, "Lord, whatever You wanna say to me from what John has shared, say it to me." Will you be honest enough with the Lord to say that right now, silently, in your heart? And then would you follow it up by saying, "And Lord, make me obedient to what You say?"

If You want me to pray more than I've prayed...maybe that's it. I talked to a man down there who said, "John, 20 years ago I promised the Lord I'd pray one hour every day, and I've kept that promise." What is the Lord saying to you? What's He saying about your life? Some of you people are

preparing in seminary. Some of you are thinking about it. Some of you could go right now to assist in a work around the world. People are in need. What do you count valuable. I don't know what the Lord's saying to you, but listen and obey it.

Thank you, Father, for speaking this morning, and I just ask that...I trust in Your Spirit that what I shared this morning was what you wanted me to share. Do a work in my heart, Lord. Make me the man You want me to be. Do Your perfect work in my life, in the lives of all the pastors and elders here. Break us before You. Make us poor in spirit. Make us mourners. Make us hunger and thirst after righteousness. And we'll give You all the praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2017 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).