

Session 7 Friday AM Gym By Floyd McClung

Speaker 1:

I feel like I've been at a Beach Boys concert. That was great. You get the privilege of hearing a few announcements this morning. Don't forget that there's a table in the back with books being sold and T-shirts. And you can make tape request, if you'd like a copy of one of the sessions, you can write that down and pick it up later. And there's also a table with cultural--anything you want to know. Go back and talk to the ICS professors who are in the back and who would love to discuss whatever you'd like to ask them, I think.

Also Global Awareness is giving you one last opportunity to see the world in a 60 x 40 tent from 12:30 to 2:30 today. So it's your last chance. So go while it's up. This is a once a year event. And the closing session today is at 10:30. Please come. I think it'll be very uplifting and enriching for all of us. And we're going to have communion after Dr. Pennoyer speaks. And finally and then you're rid of me. I would like to introduce once again our speaker, Mr. McClung, and welcome him so gladly. We're glad to hear what he has to say.

Floyd McClung:

Good morning again. "Peace Child" by Don Richardson. If you haven't read it, I would really encourage you to get it if you're going to buy a book. This is just absolutely fantastic to inspire us with how God used the family, raising their kids, reaching a people group that had never heard the gospel. And I think you'll just find it really inspiring. I love to read missionary biographies.

My kind of feeling or theory about this is that when God touches our hearts and we begin to think about the world and the possibility of what we can do to touch the world, the fire that gets burning, it's our responsibility to keep it burning. We have to stoke the flames. One of the ways we stoke the flame is we put fuel on the fire. And missionary biographies are one of the ways that we do that. There's other ways we do it. Get a map. One of the things I do is always keep a map around me somewhere where I can see the nations of the world. I like to read missionary biographies. I like to hang out with people that have the same kind of passions I do.

There's some people in life who are just passion drainers and they just go around drilling the holes in the bottom of my cup and I just kind of bless them and avoid them. I want to be around people where I can stoke my passions, feed my passions, focus my passions. And that's something that we can do. So anyway, that's another little sermon. And then I brought back Bruchko. We got some more copies of that Bruce Olson's story. Nineteen-year old kid who went down to reach the Motilone.

And one of the reasons I recommend these books is not only will it help stoke the passions of your life, but it will also inform you, kind of introduce you to the world of missions. This talks about people groups and how to reach them. And Bruce went about reaching this people group in a really wonderful way. It took him years and years to make contact with them, to be able to get to a place where he could actually share the gospel. And I think you'll find that really informative. One of the bigger hindrances to keep people from making it once they make a commitment to go and serve the Lord is their own inner issues.

There's a lot of reasons why people don't stay. We've done surveys. One survey showed that for every 50 people in a missions conference like this who say yes to the Lord, only two make it as career missionaries who really go the whole way. And many get sidetracked. And one of the reasons is the stuff, the baggage we carry with us emotionally, our own things. So I wrote that book with that in mind. This book, "The Healing Power of Love," identifying some of the things in our life, the strongholds of the enemy in our mind, as Neil Anderson calls them, and the lives of the enemy that keep us from taking hold of our inheritance in Christ.

If we don't learn to walk in the spirit and live in the spirit, the flesh will get the best of us. I define the flesh as anything or anybody I turn to find my significance or my security other than Jesus Christ. So the question is, where do we go when we're in pain? Where do you go when you're in pain? Music. A lot of people just you can tell where they go because how many CDs they have.

Their CD rack is their comfort zone, so to speak. For other people, it's coffee. Starbucks. Yeah. I feel like I'm getting in the anointing here when I see some of these responses. For some people, it's movies. For some, it's chocolates. For some of us, it's ice cream. Ice cream. Demons follow me everywhere I go. Whatever it is, whoever we turn to find comfort. Somebody who loves me and understands me, someplace we go that makes us feel okay other than the Lord Jesus himself and what He has provided for us through relationship, through intimacy, through His grace.

That's the flesh. There's religious flesh and there's selfish, indulgent flesh. And it will keep us from being the men and women of God that He wants us to be. One friend of mine calls them the

inferior pleasures that keep us from the superior pleasure of God himself. Amen. I want to find my pleasure in Jesus. How about you? And I want to learn how to do that without being religious. I grew up in a religious kind of situation, and I don't want to get into being a religious kind of guy.

I want to be a Jesus guy. I want to be obsessed with Jesus. Absolutely, 150% for Him. But I'm not talking about religion. I'm not talking about quiet time religion. I'm not talking about any kind of stuff that we say, well, that makes me feel good. I'm talking about Jesus Himself being the delight of our lives, being so in love, so fanatically, totally in love with Him that He is everything we need. I want to go get my notes and move up here. Well, this missions conference, we're talking about thousands of people groups that have never heard the Gospel.

We're talking about peoples whose languages have never been heard in heaven, if we can say it that way. There's a group in Kyrgyzstan, in Central Asia called the Dungan. There's no record of any one of them ever accepting Jesus Christ that I know of. Now, Jackie Freiburg told me that there was an exception to the Uighurs yesterday. But do you know of anybody in the Dungan who have ever come to the Lord [inaudible]? I've never heard, anything I've read about them that any one of them in 2,000 years have ever accepted Jesus Christ.

There's a people group up in the north of Afghanistan called the Nuristani. Some of them have come to Christ, but very few of them. I have prayed for the Nuristanis for years. In fact, it's wonderful because their name means "light." Stan means "land of light." And wouldn't it be wonderful that the land of light would be filled with the light of the gospel? Wouldn't it be

wonderful that Jesus could hear His name echoed with affection and love and tenderness from every single language on this planet? You guys, that's something worth dying for. That's something worth living for, to give our lives for that.

Our Savior will be worshiped and loved and obeyed in every culture by every people. But there are many, many people who have never had a chance. So one of the reasons that I'm kind of prejudiced toward the unreached is just simply so they can have a chance to worship Jesus. Their culture will be redeemed and fulfilled through Him. I went to Kyrgyzstan last year, two years ago, and I asked around. I said, "Tell me where the meanest, hardest group of people are in this whole country, that are most resistant to the gospel." And they told me about a little village up by Lake Issyk-Kul.

And so we drove up to this village. It took us quite a while to get there. And I tell you, I just got a lot of joy in doing this. I stood on a little hill over this village and three or four of my friends, we just stood there and we worship the Lord. And then we just said to the devil, you lose. I just, in faith, said that this village belongs to Jesus and declared to the Lord Jesus that He was worthy of the worship of the people of that village, that His sacrifice deserve the worship of the people. Amen.

Then, late that night, we stumbled into the home of a little church, the elder of one of the little churches, or the only church in the village, and spent the night with this elder. 05:00 in the morning, two of the men in the little fellowship in this Muslim town came over. They knelt down like Muslims do, like Muslim men do. They held out their hands. They worshiped Jesus. And

then when they were finished, they took their hands and symbolically washed it over their face, saying that the blood of Jesus had cleansed them.

And then this man told me how that about a year before, a drunken mob had stood outside of his little tiny home and threatened him. They said finally they were going to kill him. They had torches. They were going to burn the house down with he and his wife in it. He and his wife knelt down in the little tiny living room and prepared themselves to die. And he thought, well, why do we just stay in here and get burned to death? So he went out and they faced the mob, and they looked at the people, looked them right in the eye, and just started to tell them he loved them in Jesus' name.

And then one of the time, the people went away, and God spared his life. I want that in my spirit. I don't want to be a man who backs away from an opportunity to follow Jesus. 100%. How about you? I want to go for it 100%. I want to read to you some of the last words of the Apostle Paul to some of his friends in Acts chapter 20. Why don't you take your Bible if you want to follow along with me? Acts chapter 20. Paul's farewell words to the Ephesian elders. Paul's farewell words to the Ephesian elders. One of the reasons why there are still unreached people groups in the world is because Christians are not willing to pay the price to reach them. It is not my view that they're unreached because it's God's will that they're unreached.

It's my view that they're unreached because nobody has been willing to go to them and preach the gospel to them. Paul said in Romans chapter 10, how shall they hear without a preacher? Amen. So that's our part. God's part was he sent his son. He commissioned us, he empowered us,

he welcomes us to be a part of his mission to redeem people. But you know what, guys? All the easy places have been taken. All the easy places have been taken. If we go now to people who have never heard the gospel, you're going to have to go to people with a weird language, strange food, I promise you. I mean, if you go to Kyrgyzstan is one of my favorite little places. They drink the most unimaginable things. We won't even talk about it. The weather is bad.

I mean, if we're going to do it, it's going to cost us something. There will be a price to pay. And I believe Jesus is just longing for people that will enter into His suffering with Him, who willingly embrace sacrifice. Now, I want to tell you, I don't like suffering at all. I want to clear this up with you. In fact, I'd like to suggest, if anybody here likes sacrifice, you need to go over to the school of psychology and get some counseling. If you like pain, you're sick. Amen? That's the psychological issue there. You need counseling.

I hate pain. When I was in Afghanistan, I got the amoebic dysentery one time, and the Afghan amoebas, man, they're just vicious. They get in your stomach and they grab your stomach and they twist it and twist it and twist it. And I was just laying on my bed moaning and groaning, thinking I was going to die. My wife was not real sympathetic because I kept saying, call a doctor, I'm going to die. And she finally said, get up, you six foot six baby, get up. It's not as bad as having a baby. Get up. No sympathy at all.

I hate pain. But you know what? I don't want the fear of suffering or sacrifice to keep me from being totally available and obedient to Jesus. I'd rather just face my fear and believe God to give me grace when I need it, to be able to do anything He asks me to do. I've always been just by my

very makeup, I guess I've been a fanatical kind of guy. When I played basketball, I just went all out for it.

And one of the things that affected me and made me like this is I grew up in the church. And if it hadn't been for my mom and dad, I wouldn't be a Christian today. Because you know what turned me off was not Jesus. It was Christians. And what turned me off about Christians was that they weren't real. They weren't authentic. They weren't totally, completely sold out to Jesus. And to me, if it was like, if it's worth believing, then it's worth dying for. And if you won't die for it, then why say you believe it?

Now, Paul, on his final missionary journey, went to say goodbye to the Ephesian elders. Something really fascinating happens. I want to point it out to you. It's in Acts chapter 20, saying goodbye. Look at about verse 17, we'll just read a few words and we'll get into the part that I want to mention to you. From Melitus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. This is verse 17 of chapter 20, and verse 18. When the elders arrived, he said to them, you know how I lived the whole time I was with you from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

I served the Lord with great humility and tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. Now, what I want you to do is we read. I want you to tick off in your mind with me Paul's core values. This is Paul's world view, so to speak. This is more than his theology. It goes deeper than his theology. It goes down to the gut, his core of his being. And he's saying, this is what I really stood for as a person and saying goodbye to the Ephesians. He is saying to them, here's the kind of person I am, and here's the kind of person I was.

And I'd like to say this to you. It is possible to have the right doctrine, but to have the wrong heart. It's possible to have an evangelical mind and have a Babylonian heart. It's possible to live in America and sign off in the Apostles Creed. But your heart belonged to the idols of our culture, to be more of a child of America than to be a child of God. And I want to tell you that one of the things about our culture that is so dangerous is it's so nice. The values of non-Western cultures are actually, can I say it, aggressive values.

The spiritual warfare that people face in other cultures often is a very violent, aggressive kind of spiritual warfare. But in our culture, it's a seductive warfare. We are lulled to sleep by what one Western anthropologist said is the beauty of the American birdcage. He said, Americans are like canaries caught in this beautiful birdcage. It's golden and it's jewel encrusted. And we sit inside our birdcage happily chipping away like little canaries, because that which has taken us captive is so beautiful. And that's the present condition of the church.

We have been seduced and taken captive by the culture that surrounds us. And then we bow down and worship the very thing that enslaves us. And I would like to say to you, the call to follow Jesus Christ is the only thing that can save us in America from that which enslaves us. The nice, comfort oriented, convenience oriented culture that we're a part of. I fear for the American church. While Christians in other parts of the world radically follow Jesus and pay a price to follow Him, we have turned faith into something that means getting more out of life instead of being able to follow Jesus through anything.

Here's Paul saying to the Ephesian elders, this is what I stood for. Listen to his core values, verse 18 again. "When they arrived, he said to them, 'You know how I lived the whole time I was with you. From the first day I came into the province of Asia, I served the Lord with humility and tears. Although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews, you know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

"I have declared both to Greeks and to Jews that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I'm going to Jerusalem not knowing what will happen to me there." I have to say our management-oriented, plan-dominated, strategic-thinking church has lost a sense of obeying the Holy Spirit of God. If we can't plot it out and have two-year goals and a five-year strategic plan and be able to justify it to a group of businessmen, it doesn't make sense to the Evangelical Church.

And Paul was not in control of his life. In contrast to this, he said, 'I don't know what will happen to me.' How about us getting to a place of such desperate dependence upon God that we don't even have to know, but we know that we're really staying close to Him and will obey? I'm not against planning. I do it. I'm against planning that is determined by rationalistic Western thinking, where we rule the Holy Spirit and His intervening in our life out of the process. Now, compelled by the Spirit, I'm going to Jerusalem not knowing what will happen to me there.

I only know that at every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. The spirit was warning him. I wonder how that happened. You will go to jail and you will suffer.

What would you do? Better yet, what would your mother do? What would your missions pastor say? What would your church say? What would your missions board tell you, missionaries? "I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me if only I may finish the task and complete the race that the Lord Jesus has given me, the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

Now let's jump down to Chapter 21. He goes on in his journey. The scenario is repeated there. By the way, I really urge you to read the rest of Paul's farewell message to the Ephesian elders. And if you would almost write up a mission statement, put down Paul's mission statement out of this sermon. Describe his vision and describe his values. I'll tell you something, by the way. Values drive vision. Your core values determine who you are. It determines the risk you will take, the decisions you will make, the goals you set. Everything has to come out of our gut and who we are at the core of our being.

In Chapter 21, he's still going on. He's gotten on a ship. He's crossed over to Phoenicia. Then they come to Cyprus and they landed a tire. They begin to unload from their ship. In verse 4, it says "Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit, they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem." Here's this little phrase 'through the Spirit.' "But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way." So it happens again. "Through the Spirit, they urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem."

Now, what has happened to Paul and the repeated warnings that he receives? So struck Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts, that he records this three times in two chapters. He tells us in no

uncertain terms it was the Spirit that was speaking to Paul. He attributes the warnings to the Spirit of God. So in the first instance, when he's speaking to fishing elders, the Spirit warns him. And Paul says, but I don't count my life dear to myself. And they keep going. Then they're with some of the elders and disciples down. Entire same thing happens. Spirit warns them. And the very next verse it says, and they got on the ship and kept going. And then in chapter 21, verse 7, verse 10, it happens again.

Where are they? They've landed in Ptolemais. They greet the brothers, stay with them a day. See, they've left. They reach Caesarea, and they stay, now, Caesarea, at the House of Philip. And verse 8, it says, "Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied." Verse 10: "After we'd been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his hands and feet with it, and said, 'the Holy Spirit says, in this way, the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" Third time it's happened.

Okay, let's say you're going to go to Turkey for an outreach. Anybody going to Turkey for an outreach? Let's say, oh, good. What's your first name? Ness. Okay, let's say Ness is Paul. Ness is the Apostle. It sounds like an apostolic name to me. She goes home to say goodbye to her church. Somebody comes up to her and says, 'the Spirit has shown me in a dream, if you go, you are going to suffer.' She says 'I'm going anyway.' So she goes on her way. She stops in Kansas. It's got relatives in the church that supports her. And again, people come up to her right in the

service and say, 'Don't go, please. The Holy Spirit showed us, if you go, you're going to be in danger and you're going to suffer.' She's a little shaken by this.

Then she goes to New York. Former Biola students have a little radical prayer meeting. She meets with them in New York. Before she gets on the airplane this time, some charismaniac comes up to her, grabs her arms, binds their arms together, takes her shirt off, wraps her feet and says, 'This is what will happen to you.' And her friends get down on their knees and they plead with her, 'Don't go, please. We love you. Don't do it.' You get the scene.

Now, when this happens at Phillips House, it says, they pleaded with Paul, what would you do? And let me say it to you this way. As your core values are so, you will interpret the prophecies according to what is in you. So it is how you will hear the Spirit. If you do not count your life dear to yourself like Paul, you will consider the prophetic warnings prep. But if you're still holding on to your life, you will say, 'Thank you, Jesus. I knew you didn't want me to go. You're just testing me to see if I was willing, Lord.'

If you come from a charismatic background, don't be offended because that's my background. That's my experience. I believe the Holy Spirit's gifts are for today, but I believe we have over-spiritualized guidance. We believe we've made the whole scene kind of mystical. In fact, I call it charismatic mysticism. We have been commissioned. We have been invited, we have been told, we have been instructed. But, man, we look for outs so quick. We look for any reason not to lay down our lives for the Gospel.

I want to tell you there's a reason why there are not many missionaries in North Africa. And it's not because the Spirit does not call people. There's a reason why there are not many in the Middle East. There's a reason why the doors are open but the people don't go to Afghanistan. It's dangerous. You die there. There's a reason why there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people groups in India, have never heard the Gospel. You know what? I've come back to the United States and first I was just angry with the Church, and then I've started weeping over it.

I am jealous that we Americans don't miss out on what God's doing for superficial reasons. His Spirit is preparing his bride for his return. It is the greatest time of revival in the history of the church. Right now, tens and tens and tens of millions of people, hundreds of millions are coming into the kingdom of God right now. And who wants to stay home and watch soap operas when we can be a part of what God, the living, eternal, majestic, wonderful, awesome God is doing? You know, friends make me puke. I can say it because it is so superficial. Who wants to watch as the stomach turns, when you can watch as the Spirit moves? Are you with me?

I've got three simple points to make with you this morning. Number one it's a privilege to suffer for Jesus. I say this honestly to you today as one who has suffered very little, embarrassingly little. My life has been threatened many times. I've had AK-47's pointed in my face. I've had knife threats. I've had people threaten the lives of my children. But I haven't been beaten. I've never been beaten. One time I spent a day in jail once and I was already thinking of newsletters. I could write about it. I'm embarrassed to say. But you know what? As big a coward as I am, I believe it is a privilege to follow Jesus. I've been deeply touched and inspired by the example of friends who have given their lives, acquaintances who have suffered for their faith. Paul said in

to the Philippians 1 verse 29: "For unto us it is given not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake."

If it was His vocation to suffer, why should we think, as His followers, we have something better than the privilege of suffering? Why has the Evangelical Church abandoned our cities in the United States? It's because we think we have a right to suburbs. Why have we left our black brothers and sisters alone? Because we don't want to die. Let's face it. Amen. Are you with me? It's dangerous. I talked to one black friend who works in Pasadena. He said, "Do you think bullets discriminate between white and black skin?" He said, "I'm just as scared as you are, but I will not forsake my brothers." To follow Jesus is to follow Him. It is a privilege to suffer for Him.

When Sally and I first got to Holland, one of the great privileges we had, is we were taken and adopted by Corrie Ten Boom. We came from Afghanistan. We'd been working with Western kids primarily dropped out hippies running a halfway house, drug addicts. We got to Amsterdam when we were living on a house boat behind the central train station in the harbor of Amsterdam. And we did not exactly get the most welcome reception by Dutch Christians. In fact, one man came to us. He saw me with my long hair, my kind of guru outfit. He said, "You Americans, please just go home. You're so strange. Just please."

And after about six months of just total discouragement, Aunt Corrie heard about what we were doing and she took pity on us and she invited us over to her home. We had two little kids at the time. My son Matthew was just a few months old. Aunt Corrie would invite us over every few

months and tell us stories about the concentration camp in the war and the stuff that came out later in the book and in the movie, she told us about. Something had been birthed into her spirit that can only come when you embrace the cross and you follow Jesus into the hard places. When she and her family decided to hide Jews, they put themselves in harm's way. And God gave them grace to do it. When she saw a German guard beat her sister Betsy in front of her eyes and kill her sister, God gave her grace to forgive.

Toward the end of her life, in fact, it was on her 80th birthday, she came to us on what we called the Ark. This was our boat, our halfway house. We had a big house boat with two of every kind, literally. Every color, every size, every problem. We had them. And Aunt Corrie had been invited by Billy Graham to come and preach in stadiums and make the movie and appear on television with him. And ironically, to have somebody lay hands on her and send her here to America from Holland to preach the gospel. She chose to have a bunch of hippies pray for her.

Can you imagine this little 80 year old Dutch grandmother sitting down in the middle of a circle with about 50 of the most strange-looking people on the planet? You talk about a people group and we are in the middle of a strange people group, and here we are laying hands on Corrie Ten Boom, praying for her. We walked back to her car after this commissioning service to send her to America. Aunt Corrie said to me, 'Today is my 80th birthday.' I said, 'Oh, congratulations, [foreign language] Aunt Corrie.' And she said, 'Yes, the Lord has told me I'm going to live ten more years.'

I said, "Wow, that's wonderful." She said, with a little twinkle in her eye, "I bought new suitcases to celebrate." I said, "Wow, that's great." Knowing this, a couple of years after that, when Aunt Corrie had a stroke, heart attacks. And then when she was 84 years of age, 84 and a half, she ended up as an invalid in bed. When she was about 86, she lost her voice and she couldn't speak anymore. And between the time that she was bed fast and the time that she lost her voice, Sally and I visited her in Fullerton, California, where she was staying. Friends were taking care of her and nursing her.

And a couple of months after that, we heard she had another stroke. And I was just so puzzled by it. She told me that God had promised her ten more years. And so I went to the Lord and I said, "Lord, please, You have no obligation to tell me anything, but could You give me some insight into why you're letting Aunt Corrie suffer?" And by the way, just to say to you, aunt Corrie died on her 90th birthday. God gave her exactly ten years, but they were marked by suffering.

I said, "Lord, please, can you help me understand why Aunt Corrie is suffering?" It's a really good story, and I can't compete with that. If I could only time it to play the right hymn, you'd think God was speaking to us or something. I said, "Lord, please. I don't understand." The Lord reminded me of that passage in Paul's Letters of Corinthians, where it said these words: "This slight, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." Now, I had a little conversation with the Lord. I said, "Lord, help me understand." Now, I don't claim this is kind of like extra biblical revelation. I'm certainly not going to go start a new denomination.

But here's the thought that came to my mind, that just as the suffering and the concentration camp was used by God to prepare her for a lifetime of ministry on repentance and forgiveness, you see, after the war, she traveled all through Germany, speaking on forgiveness to Germans. She even met the German guard who killed her sister and forgave him, because he came to her now as a new Christian and said, "Please forgive me." The Lord said to me, "Just as I use the concentration camp to prepare, I'm using this suffering to prepare her for something new I have for her."

I want to tell you, there is a direct correlation between suffering on this earth and service and eternity. I believe in rewards. The Bible speaks of them, speaks of them very clearly. Brothers and sisters. I believe the greatest reward, the greatest reward, is to kneel before Him with offerings to present to Him that have been born out of the struggle of our lives. And we give Him something worthy of His suffering. And He says back to us, "Thank you. Well done, son." I can think of no more wonderful reward. I long to lay crowns at His feet.

Paul said to the Thessalonians, "Are you not my crown of boasting before the Lord, brothers and sisters?" He is worthy. It's a privilege. My daughter has suffered. My wife has suffered. The little sacrifice that we have made nothing. And I want to tell you, coming back to America, I have felt seduced by American culture. I started thinking about what's going to happen to me when I die? I don't have a pension plan, and I have insurance in any of this stuff. And I start thinking, Lord, what is going to happen? I better get into mutual funds. And I don't condemn anybody who does that. It probably takes more faith to do that than it does to do what I'm doing. But you know what? My heart got distracted.

You know what saved me? As I said to the Lord, this is what saved me. "Lord, please, when I'm 70 years old, give me a people group that I can go and die amongst." And I have set the affections of my heart on finishing where I began. He may never let me do it, but I'm going to ask Him the rest of my life. I'm going to plan as if it's his will. It's a privilege. Second thing I want to tell you, not only is it a privilege to suffer for the Lord, we can prepare ourselves for suffering. We can prepare ourselves for suffering.

Let's read Hebrews together, chapter 13. Hebrews, chapter 13. By the way, can I suggest to you that we should not water down what the New Testament says about sacrifice and suffering by equating it with giving up curling irons and hairdryers? Let us not equate suffering with going without coffee. Have you ever heard the expression, I will bear my cross for the Lord? Well, I guess I just have to carry my cross. It's like a real cross to me. And you know what we often are talking about is the weirdest little stupid things. Let's compare our suffering to His, not to some cultural thing that we have to give up.

And again, I want to say to you, I'm an American boy. I love In-N-Out. I discovered Krispy Kreme. Haagen-Dazs demons follow me. I love comfort. I, too have come back from outreaches and said, "Oh, Lord, thank you for America." But I do not want to get into thinking that giving up a few cultural comforts has anything to do, it's anywhere close to what Jesus talked about when He said, "Take up your cross and follow me." Here's what the writer of the Hebrews says, verse 12, chapter 13. "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us then go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore.

For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Let us then go to Him outside the camp."

Where is the camp? May I suggest it's any place right now that you would follow Jesus, too, that stretches your comfort abilities? May I suggest and this is no way to speak derogatorily, but it's for you to move into the inner city. I was invited to go to Fuller a couple of years ago and I did a seminar, a workshop on spiritual warfare. And it was entitled Fighting in the streets or something like this. I had 55 students, graduate students. The theme was spiritual warfare. Most of them were missionaries in preparation.

We were a half a mile away from California's largest daytime crime neighborhood, Pasadena. It's got some really bad areas. In the 55 students who were there, studying and preparing to go as missionaries, how many of them do you think had been over into that black neighborhood? How many of them that were preparing to go to Africa had ever been to a black church or lived with somebody in a black home? Zero. And why is it that we think getting on an airplane will change our hearts? If it's not a lifestyle, then it's not a part of our character, it's not a part of our values.

No wonder so many American missionaries can't stick it out, because they haven't cultivated, they haven't chosen a lifestyle of sacrifice. Now, brothers and sisters, I want to invite you to go outside the camp, and I'm not going to tell you where it is. Find someplace where you can lay down your life for Jesus. My wife and I have been back in the States, and we're living in a little small town in Colorado. We yearn, we believe God's going to grant our desire this year. We yearn to go back into a city. It's the closest thing that we can get to that challenges us right now.

But the little city I live in right now has got 10,000 people, 30% unemployment. Sixty percent of the babies are born to single moms. There's 55 bars and 20 churches. It's a broken little town with tremendous pain. For me right now, my assignment outside the camp is to sit in the bars and listen to the pain of men who don't have jobs, who have given up on life, to listen to kids whose fathers beat them and mothers are with several guys. Find someplace outside the camp and prepare yourself.

Now, I want to read to you from one of Richard Warm Brown's books. "What should we do about these tortures? Will we be able to bear them? If I do not bear them, I put in prison another 50 or 60 men whom I know, because that is what the Communists wished for me, to betray those around me. And here comes the great need for the role of preparation for suffering, which must start now." Can I repeat that sentence? "Here comes the great need for the role of the preparation for suffering, which must start now." It's too difficult to prepare yourself when they put you in prison.

I remember my last confirmation class before I left Romania. I took a group of 10 to 15 boys and girls on a Sunday morning. Not to a church, but to a zoo before the cage of lions. I told them, "Your forefathers and faith were thrown before such wild beasts for their faith. Know that you will also have to suffer. You will not be thrown before lions, but you will have to do with men who would be much worse than lions. Decide here and now if you wish to pledge allegiance to Christ."

They had tears in their eyes, these young boys in the confirmation class. When they said, "Yes, what can we do to prepare ourselves?" I took my children for a walk through the red light district. We'd lived there since they were three years old and five years old. When they were ten years old and twelve years old, they were starting to take sin like it was normal. I mean, we lived amongst the most amazing perversion and degradation. Sex clubs, child pornography, live sex theaters, girls on the streets, everywhere. My kids walk through that every day to get to school.

One night I took my children out and I sit with each of them on a kind of midnight tour, and I tried to help them see through God's eyes. I pointed out the man who was getting ready to shoot drugs, and we talked about him. I pointed out a pimp who I knew and talked to many times. I walked him down the street and we talked about the women, and we called them by name. I wanted somehow for their hearts to be gripped with the reality that we were talking about human suffering, people separated from God suffering, the alienation and the consequence of sin, their sin and other people's sin against them. I wanted their little hearts to be impacted.

I tell you, I have not got anything to leave my kids but this thing, I want to leave them. I want to leave them a passion for people that is born out of the broken heart of God. It is what I pray for and weep for and fast for, for my children. The one thing I can do is aim myself outside the camp. I live in this nation, but I dream of those who have never had an opportunity. And I pray that my kids will have that as their inheritance. We can point ourselves in the right direction. At least to do that.

At least walk the streets of neighborhoods that are strange or different to you. At least go to a church of another culture. Every time I go to a Christian college, I hear whining about church

services. Can I suggest you find a little church of a different ethnic group than your own and serve? Just go to learn. Can I suggest you journey into Los Angeles? If you do nothing else, do some drive-by praying. I learned to pray this prayer when I walked the streets of Amsterdam. "Lord, let me see what You see. Please, Jesus, let me feel what You feel." I prayed the prayer that Dr. Bob Pearce prayed: "Lord, let my heart be broken with things that break Your heart."

We can prepare ourselves. I want to read. In closing to you, I have a third point, but I don't have time to preach it. It's the purpose for suffering. I've taken most of my points right out of John Piper's book, "Let the Nations be Glad." If you want to read it, it's chapter three. Let me quote from a friend of mine by the name of Libby Little. Libby and Tom live in Afghanistan. They're back there now. Libby spoke at the last Urbana and in Interserve's little newsletter they quoted from Libby's message at Urbana.

Tom and Libby have lived in Afghanistan through a lot of war, through a lot of suffering and difficulty. Let me read what Libby said to the students at Urbana a couple of years ago: "The Book of Acts weaves a realistic account of the kind of life a follower of Christ can expect, one which involves both suffering and joy. In Acts 8:26, we read the Spirit directed Philip to go to a place and stay near. I wonder if Philip ever questioned how long he would need to stay near. Our family was called to Afghanistan and we were called to stay near. That was 20 years ago, and we're still there. I'm trembling here before you, not from the frightening things we've experienced living in a war zone, but I'm trembling as I recall the times that God called us to stay and not to leave the place of suffering.

"It was a place we found God, longing by His Holy Spirit to communicate His mercy and His lovingkindness to those who suffer. It did not take long for the glamor of missions to wear off. The memory of the applause of friends back home was soon drowned out by the thunder of migs bombing the city where we lived, the terrified screams of children on the street, and the last whimpering cries of the slaughtered just houses away. During the first lull in fighting, an evacuation convoy was arranged for foreigners. We struggled, my husband and I, to hear if God might be calling us to a safer place. The evacuation convoy came and left without us. Our neighbors were puzzled. Later, we heard them call us no longer the foreigners, but the people who stayed.

"During our first Christmas there, we learned the full impact staying had on the community. Over 50 women and their children all squeezed into our home, a little living room, to hear the Advent story. Some wept. Some of them wept hearing it the first time. Others ran to find their husbands and told them to go to the house of the people who stayed, and hear the good news. During the next 15 years of civil war, two of our team members were murdered. Colleagues were tortured. Our homes were hit with rockets. The hospital where my husband worked was completely destroyed.

"The front line of battle moved to our neighborhood streets. Weeks were filled with dragging the wounded and dying from collapsed buildings, rounding up terrified children and taking them to safety. There were robberies, attempted rapes, beatings, and threats to our fellow team members. Perhaps for me, as a mother of three daughters, the hardest part of staying was always to trust God daily for the safety of my children. I think of the times they were asked to stay near the

injured when we ran for help. When our oldest daughter peeled charred skin from a little boy's burned back. When our other two daughters helped us register desperate crowds at refugee camps.

"I confess I often wanted to escape the seriousness and sadness of war. Just last Christmas, I frittered away a whole day, putting up decorations, trying to ignore the sounds of fighting outside. But that evening, however, someone came to our gate. Before I ever saw who was there, I felt Jesus say, "Put all that away and make room for me." There at our door was a family of nine. They were covered with splinters of glass, shrapnel bits and soot. The blood in their faces told of their narrow brush with death when a rocket had hit their home. They come to stay with us.

"I tell you, that night, whenever Jesus touched their pain and their suffering with his mercy, the Holy Spirit filled us with joy. There is an urgency to living life in a war zone. Things move quickly from the superficial to the deeply personal. Eight men knocked at our gate on a heavy day of rocketing. 'Why have you come today?' I asked in disbelief. Their answer: 'We may die tomorrow. Tell us today what is true.'

"Actions during times of crisis speak volumes. A friend of mine spent each day for several weeks, running from her shelter, ducking machine gun fire, to reach a hospital to care for the wounded. She heard patients say 'She comes to us because she is a Christian.' We know of staff and patients that have come to a living faith at such times. With very few words from us, we will

return to Afghanistan in a few weeks to join a team of international Christians called to do medical development and relief work to the glory of God.

"Each of us knows the obedience to God, that obedience to God does not mean immunity from suffering. Staying near may involve injury, even loss of life. We believe that Jesus would say in His kingdom, there are things worth dying for. At a time when short mission trips are very popular, you might consider long term service. God may want some from your generation to go and stay. And stay near, long enough and near enough to share deeply in the lives of those you're called to serve. As said in one book, the authority to speak into people's lives comes from a commitment to live among them as servants.

"It is said that people today define good and bad in terms of comfort and safety. The Great Commission cannot be squeezed into a safe or comfortable mold. Jesus is on the front lines. He may be calling some of you to join Him in communities at war or to bind up wounds and comfort those who mourn. Having witnessed a flesh and blood battlefield for 15 years, it seems that such places are sadly neglected by Christians.

In this compelling book, "The Cost of Discipleship," Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, 'When Jesus calls a man or a woman, He calls that one to come and die.' This is not a call to personal performance. We are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus. The cross is still a cross. It is a symbol of suffering, of death, and unconditional obedience to the cross brings exceedingly great joy. Thanks be to God."

Let's pray, shall we? Lord, in my own weakness and humanity, I confess to You the fears I have faced, the lack of courage that I have had in my own heart. I don't stand here today, Lord, as one who has any authority in myself. But I am deeply convinced of the truth of Your words, Lord, that we are to take up our cross. And I am equally convinced of Your amazing grace to enable us to do anything You call us to do.

And Lord, I'm also deeply aware that You long for people to go to the hard places and I invite You, Holy Spirit of God, to do what you ask us to ask You to do. And that was, would you please raise up laborers from this room today? Would You please call people to the hard places? We lift up the Muslim world to you, Lord. We lift up the 500,000 villages of India. We lift up the Buddhist of Tibet in such darkness. We pray for the tribal peoples, Lord of Miramar in Southeast Asia, and I pray that you will call laborers from here today. Every single one of us are weak and fearful and bound by culture. But, Lord, we believe Your grace can set us free and enable us. You can empower us to go, Lord. And so would You call us today, Holy Spirit of God?

Just take a moment and wait silently in the presence of the Lord. Would you just weigh a response in your heart this morning? I want to give you an opportunity. In a moment, if you would say unequivocally, by His grace, you will follow Him to a hard place, you'd offer today, you'd volunteer, you enlist in His army to go for Him. If you would take up your cross this morning and follow Jesus, would you just simply stand to your feet and say, 'Floyd, by standing, I'll commit myself to a hard place'?

Dear Father, we present ourselves to You this morning as living sacrifices. We're so aware, Lord, that we cannot do it. But we come to you now, this morning, and we say we will follow You. We ask You, Lord Jesus, for the privilege of serving you amongst Muslims. We ask You for Libya. I ask you for Mali today and Mauritania. I ask you for the Saharawi of Western Sahara, Lord. I thank you for the eight who have professed You. I thank You for Janet, the first believer.

Lord, would there be many more amongst the Saharawi? I pray for the Libyans, Lord. So few. The Saudis. I pray for the laborers to be called to Turkey today, Lord Jesus, to the Kurds. I pray for the Afghans, the Nuristanis. I pray for the Dungan today, Lord, that there would be, as a result of commitments made in this room, Dungan who would come into the kingdom because we know Jesus is Savior.

Be worshiped amongst the Dungan, I pray. Thank You for what You've begun amongst the Uighur, the Juan people, Lord. We ask, Lord Jesus, that You will call us, so that around Your throne, there will be people from every tribe and tongue and nation and people and language worshipping You. Use us, we pray. Empower us, Lord. Protect us from the lives of the enemy. Keep the seed that is planted in our heart today from being snatched away by the cares of this world or being trampled under the hardness of our own hearts.

Lord, Spirit of the living God, would You thrust us as laborers into the harvest field? And I pray, Lord Jesus, young or old, that we could complete our lives like Paul did, saying, Lord, it matters not to me what happens to me. This one thing I do, I want to complete the task and finish the

McClung. Session 7 Friday AM Gym

race. We want to finish well, Lord Jesus, for the worship of Your name, for Your glory. Come upon us, Holy Spirit. Empower us. I pray in Your precious name. Amen.

You may be seated.

Speaker 2:

I have a song I'd like to share. My name is Mike. Most of you probably don't know me, but it's not really important. Lord gave me a song right when I first got saved, and I really feel like put it on our heart and on my heart for this. I'll go ahead and share it and really listen to the words and just think about it for our lives.