

Pursuing Passion, Part 3

By Dr. Thoennes

[Musical introduction]

Announcer:

Join me in prayer. Thank you, Father, for the beauty of this day. Thank you for the reason that we gather we are here, Lord, to worship you, to adore you, to bring you our lives, our minds, our hearts, everything in us, and leave them at the foot of the cross. Oh, God. Thank you for a place where we can come. Thank you for founding fathers who had a vision to have a place where men and women could gather to worship you, to learn from you, to open your word and be taught by the Holy Spirit. Thank you, God, for this day for the possibilities that there are in these three days. Father, we realize that men can plan. We've made a lot of programs. There are speakers, there are musicians. There are people working really diligently behind the scenes. But we know, Father, that unless you show up, unless the spirit of God comes and grips us in our hearts and our minds that virtually nothing will happen, we are reminded of the words of our Lord. We call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say, Lord God, make us faithful hearers and doers of your word work and move in a mighty way. Father, we pray these three days and be especially with Eric as he opens your word this morning. I pray in Jesus name and all God's people said, please be seated. We worship God, but we appreciate those who lead us in worship. Let's thank Irene Merren and her band. Thank you very much. Yes.

Two individuals who made a point to come to me several weeks ago when Irene was here and they said, I've seen the line up, but it would be completed if Irene Merritt and her band were here. So they are we are careful not to get too diligent in promotional materials, but they do have CDs and such and they will be made available. There are some details that will cover regarding touring, but that can be done as Torrey goes along.

Very excited that this is the seventy first annual touring memorial. Bible conference. Yes. Yes. It's really it's an exciting thing. Conferences, conferences happen all over the world. But I keep praying and I know God the spirit is working. I keep praying that God will do a very special thing in this conference, not just because we're here and we gather, but because he's here and he desires to do great things in his people. If you're a guest and I know we have a number, you can read your brochure regarding my friend, Dr. Eric Thoennes. If you didn't know him, you would see from other schools promotion because he's been there and been greatly used literally around the world to teach the word of God. Or you could hear from people just about a mile and a half due east that he capacitors a local church. Or you can hear hear from faculty that he was regarded as one of the very best and chosen by students as teacher of the year. But we claim him as ours.

It is a Bible here. He ministers to students and faculty and staff here and has planted his roots here. So without further ado and isn't it a perfect theme for Eric Thomas pursuing a Passion of Christ? That's what he does. Welcome, Eric, to the pulpit.

[Applause]

Thoennes:

Time for an attitude check. Why are you here right now? Lots of different reasons, I'll tell you that. Some of you are here because. You got to get your requirements done as fast as possible and then head to the beach. So some of you are here because you really want to be here, some are here and you're not even sure why you're here. There are lots of different reasons why you are here. Let me just read a portion of an e-mail, a couple of emails a student sent to me in the past year. She sent this one after I spoke in chapel. Just imagine. If we all came to Torrey conference sessions and chapel generally, how about everything in our lives with this attitude? Listen. I've been praying for you this week in anticipation for today. This is just a chapel service, you know, we have lots of them throughout the year, she said. I've been praying for you this week in anticipation for today that God would give you a humble heart.

It's a little too insightful into my life, I think. I'm very happy with that. And would use you to communicate. A truce to the Biola community that we need to hear. Listen to what she says on

her way to chapel. She said I was ready to meet God face to face today when I walked into chapel. And he showed up. Through the worship and through the word. Just imagine if we went through life and came to chapel and came to Torrey conference sessions with that sort of attitude. She attends our church as well. I never actually met her until this week, she sent me emails like this for a year. This is what she said after one of our church services in the past year. Today, there were two people sitting in front of me in the service that God really laid in my heart to pray for during the service. Imagine that. She decided not to sit there and say, I really like this song. She was actually praying for someone sitting in front of her God laid these people on her heart.

I asked God to open their heart and give them ears to hear what he had to say today and by the reactions through the service, I believe God moved in their heart. I've never met them and maybe never will. But I believe they were changed today by hearing God's word. Hey, guys, you could save a lot of time. Going to seminars about dating and finding the right woman, if you just found one who talked like that. Same for you. You women, if you found a guy who went through life that way, well, you're going to be all right. Imagine if we win at a Torrey conference in chapel and life in general, speaking, looking, longing, praying to meet God, imagine that.

How different we end our experiences would be, we can become so utilitarian in our approach to life. And so cynical and negative and critical. That we can't see God when he's alive and well and present in our midst. So let's pray together. I want to start this whole week by praying this is the first session, I feel weighty responsibilities. You know, people are praying throughout all of

Torrey week around the clock right now. They're praying for us. It really humbles me. What's the difference between someone who would say, I will pray around the clock for Torrey week and someone who comes and says, I got to go to chapel?

You know, I'm just going hoping the chap will speak a little break something or, you know, when he's there, that's what I'm hoping for. You know, what's the difference between those two attitudes? Well, let's ask God to incline our hearts toward him and give us the sort of attitudes that will even be able to see and hear him when he is revealing himself to us through his word and worship. So let's pray. I'm even wanting to turn it over to you.

If you have a voice that you think can be heard at least somewhat, would you help us to pray and commit our week to the Lord? Do that for us now and I'll close us. Lord, I don't want to spend a minute of this week. Here, if you're not going to change us and if we're not coming to be changed. Lord, please keep us from the tragedy of being hears only of your word and not does of it, would you help us to come with soft hearts led by the spirit?

Seeking transformation, holy lives, a deeper adoration for you and deeper reverence for your word, a deeper love for you and for people, Lord, would you significantly increase our Passion for Christ this week? Thank you for my brothers and sisters who encouraged my soul so much,

and I pray that you would help us all take those next steps in our journey toward being like Jesus and seeing him face to face. And we ask these things in his name. Amen.

What are you passionate about? You know, the root word of passion is related to the word for suffering. It's helpful to think about what you're passionate about as what you're willing to suffer for. What's you're willing to suffer for is what you're really willing to live for and even die for and cry for and give your money for and invest your time for, those are your passions. That's what determines how you spend your life, how you focus your life.

Listen to Floyd McClung. We live in a world of competing passions. If we do not die to self and fill our lives with the consuming passion of the worship of God in the nations, we will end up with other passions. It's possible to deceive ourselves into thinking we have biblical passions in reality. When all we have done is to baptize the values of our culture and give them Christian names. We will we will have chosen apostolic passion only when our hearts are filled with God's desire for his son to be worshipped in the nations, the only ultimate passion worthy of your heart and mind and life is Jesus Christ.

He must be your consuming passion. He must be the one upon whose your gaze is fixed, the one who consumes you and takes over in your life. Your consuming passion must be Jesus Christ.

Even before the great commission becomes your consuming passion, the one we proclaim must be. Is Christ your passion? Is he the driving passion in your life? Is he the one who arranges and orders everything else in your life? Basically, I'm asking what you want your life to be marked by, what do you want to be remembered for?

Maybe another way to ask that. What would you like people to put on your tombstone to describe you, your life? What it was like, listen to John Newton, the former slave trader who came to Christ and wrote Amazing Grace, what it says on his gravestone, John Newton Clark, once an infidel and libertine, that means immoral. A servant of slaves in Africa was by the rich mercy of our lord and savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith that he had long labored to destroy.

And that on your gravestone was with Andrew and another in my wife and another in our team from India. And we saw this woman's gravestone in a church and it talked about the majesty of her savior. And it concluded by saying she gave her life to the Lord Jesus Christ. And then it concluded by saying, Reader, have you? This lady's preaching on her tombstone, it's beautiful. What do you want on your tombstone? How do you want your life summarized? You know, we're about to look at a passage in Acts Chapter four that has a phrase that just leaps out at me. It describes in some ways, epitomizes the apostles, the disciples, the follower of Jesus that we look to as they established the church. And you know what it says about them in Acts Chapter four, when it describes Peter and John and the Apostles, it says this wonderful phrase.

They took notice. That they had been. With Jesus. A great thing to have said about you, what a thing to have described your life. It was so obvious she had been with Jesus. He had rubbed off on her, he had a character and approach to life, a value system that so evidence that he had been with Jesus, that Jesus had influenced him to the point where he actually started to look like Jesus because he had been with Jesus.

Open your Bibles to chapter four. As we look at this beautiful picture of the apostles as the church is being established in the world. See what had happened right before our passage begins in Acts 4:13 is Peter and John Heela lame beggar, and he makes quite a scene after this happens. He leaps through the temple courts. He's rejoicing and praising God for his healing. And it causes a nuisance and it causes a stir. And so Peter and John get in trouble and they get threatened with their lives.

They're in trouble and all they did was heal someone. And they proclaim Jesus and right preceding, we were about to pick it up in verse 13. They're being confronted for this healing that they've done and they preach a very hard gospel. They see that Jesus is a stone rejected by you leaders, and now he's become the cornerstone and then they say their salvation and no one else.

What we proclaim that our worship time this morning. And there's no other name under heaven among which my men are saved, so they proclaim this gospel, this clear gospel presentation.

And listen to the response after this healing and this gospel presentation. That Peter and John evoke verse 13 of acts for. Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John. And perceived that they were uneducated, common men. They were astonished. And here it is, and they recognized. That they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed, standing beside him with them, they had nothing to say in opposition, but when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another saying, what shall we do with these men?

For that inaudible sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and we cannot deny it. In spite of the obvious evidence, they have another agenda. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name. See, Jesus is the issue. And when we're doing things right, Jesus will always be the issue. So they call them and charge them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus and then listen to the response, but Peter and John answered them.

Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God. You must be the judge. For we cannot but speak of what we have seen. And heard. And when they had further threaten

them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people for all all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom the sign of healing was performed was more than 40 years old.

What a scene in the life of the apostles. This Passion for Christ had taken over in their lives, and it gave them this holy boldness that nothing could stop even threats to their lives. And what we see in this passage, they had become like Jesus, their passion for Christ became the consuming passion of their lives, and it drove their lives. What we adore is what we become like. What we focus on is what we become like, what we spend time with is what we become like, what we dwell on is what we become like, and they had become like Jesus.

It was obvious that his character was taking root in them. Listen to Jesus and Luke, 640, a disciples not above his teacher, but everyone, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher. Jesus has rubbed off on them. He left an indelible imprint on them and their lives were now defined by him and his cause. Their passion was Christ, their consuming passion. Now, I can hear you saying, well, they hung out with him for three years, they went camping with him all the time.

If I went camping with Jesus, I'd be like him, too. And I'd be passionate for him, too, of course. How could you put this expectation on me? They were his disciples. Listen, we weren't eyewitnesses, but in many ways, in some ways, more significant ways. We have the ability to have the same passion for Christ. You know, we have that they didn't. Their lives. To look to and to see the power of Christ transforming them, we have the lives of the apostles who went from lunkheads seriously thickheaded.

Jesus favorite name for his his disciples was Ye of Little Faith. That's what he called a more than anything else, they were as much as a doofus as you are, seriously. And as I am, they were they were thick and selfish and Jesus took over in their lives, and especially after the Resurrection and Pentecost, they started to see him no longer, according to the flesh. And we watched their lives transformed from cowards to courageous, bold Proclaimers of the gospel, who will stop at nothing to make Christ known to the nation's.

Something happened in their lives and we have their lives to look to from beginning to end in their transformation process. It's wonderful. We look to them and have their examples. They didn't have that like we do. What else do we have that they don't? The New Testament. They wrote it, we have it, we have it to look to we have it now to look and see the connection between the Old and New Testament. We have the entire completed New Testament and the entire history of the church now for 2000 years to look to to see God so clearly at work in human history, in the lives of people.

We, too, just like they do, have God's transforming work in our lives and in the lives of countless others, we know that we can look to and be encouraged by, we have the very same spirit of God that changed them, changing us and helping us to see we have the very same word of God at work powerfully in our lives. Don't put them in another category. Don't make acts a history book or you, Longini. Look back at how God used to work.

And you have this historic heroism, as Spurgeon's says, where you don't believe God really works anymore like this and has this sort of power and closeness and concern that our lives are transformed and express the presence in the Passion for Christ. They're intended to don't turn this into a history book instead of a book that transforms your life and sets a pattern for how your life should look. God's at work, he's powerful, he's alive, listen to what Jesus says and John, 16 seven.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. I have a hard time believing that. I do, he said that to his disciples, don't cling to me. I've got to go. If I don't go, the comforter won't come. He says it's to your advantage that I go away for if I don't go with the help or the comforter will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

It's a better circumstance we have now, according to Jesus, with the Holy Spirit at work the way he is after Pentecost than it was to actually walk with him on the shores of Galilee. I have a hard time believing that, but that's what Jesus himself tells us. It's better. It's better. That the Holy Spirit is at work in the way he is now, then they have Jesus right here in the flesh. So how were they like their master, how how was it that they.

Were like him, that it was obvious that they had been with Jesus. Well, let's think about this. Clearly in this passage, the thing that seems to strike the people most is their boldness. Look what it says in 13 now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished and they had recognized they had been with Jesus. They have incredible boldness and apostolic boldness in the proclamation of the gospel is one of the main themes of the Book of Acts.

It's one of the ways we see God showing up in the lives of the apostles. Most these cowards became courageous. This boldness. Look at this boldness in this passage, they're confronted and there is as convinced as they possibly can be that the gospel they preach is objective and true and life changing and binding.

Listen to how they respond to the threat to their life first night. But Peter and John answered them. Whether it's right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must be the judge. Hear what they're saying, if you oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ, we're proclaiming you're opposed to God. It's as clear as it can be. You're against the things of God if you're against the things of Christ, the Messiah. It's not this big, gray, fuzzy area, it's not well, you know, let's have a dialogue and discussion and chat and exchange ideas and we're cardigan sweaters and sit on stools and not preach.

And it's true. If you're opposed to things of Christ, you're dead wrong. You're opposed to the things of God, they can't be more bold than they are, and this is a theme throughout the entire Book of acts, Apollos has said to proclaim and refute the Jews in public. Paul goes and he argues persuasively and convincingly of the things of the kingdom of God. Look at even what they pray for. They are threatened with their lives, told not to preach in the name of Jesus and look where they go.

Pray for the believers. They gather after this season, beginning of verse 23, and they pray a proclamation right out of some two of God's power over threats against their lives. And do you know, in their prayer right after this incident, they don't one time ask for comfort or protection or for their lives to be spared. They don't ask for one comfortable thing, you know what they ask for boldness. The first time and now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant your servants comfort

and peace and security and no threats to our lives anymore and get those bad people away from us know what to look at they ask for.

Grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness. And then look, the prayers answered. The place is shaken and what's the result of this demonstration of the power of God? They continue to speak the word of God with boldness. This is a theme throughout the Book of Acts, and this is a character trait of Jesus, too. He had an incredible boldness. The carpenter from Nazareth would stand up and look the religious leaders in the eye, in the room and leaders in the eye and tell them exactly what the truth was.

And like their master, they didn't have any of the worldly credentials you thought you'd need to have to talk like that. They, like Jesus, were bold. And becoming like Jesus is the result of being with him and others like him, and this relationship is fed by the scriptures and by the spirit. And this brings Christ like character in a holy boldness with it. And I need you to realize that you can pursue a passion for Christ by proclaiming your passion for Christ.

Something happens when you proclaim Jesus, when you seek to reach others with your passion for Christ, it intensifies. It increases. You appreciate it more. Paul says something crazy to Filemon. He says this. If I leave in six, I pray you will be active in sharing your faith. So that you

will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Did you catch that? Share your faith because it becomes more precious to you when you do. This just steamrolls, it just snowballs and it picks up speed. You have a passion for Christ, you proclaim it in that passion increases. There are lots of obstacles to being like Jesus realized he was uneducated, like they were not anti intellectual, not anti learning, but they didn't have the credentials, the PhDs, the degrees that you think you need for these things. Boldness and passion for Christ does not come with academic degrees, although that could be part of it.

It doesn't come from any worldly status or accomplishments or qualifications. They were uneducated, relatively speaking, common men like Jesus listen to what it says. And John, 7:15, the Jews marveled, saying, how is it that this man has learning when he's never studied? What they meant was when he doesn't have the credentials that we do, look, if you're a Biola for resume padding, leave. That's that's distasteful in the sight of God. If you're not here to have the same passion that the apostles had invested in them as they learned most certainly from Jesus on the way.

If you're not here to have your heart changed and your passion intensified for Christ, if you're here for credentials, leave and go to Cal State Fullerton. Nothing wrong with Cal State Fullerton, it's just they give credentials, I went to a school just like that. And that's why most people are there to make money. God uses the foolish things of the world, and he doesn't we don't judge

anyone any longer, according to the flesh, D.L. Moody, one of the greatest evangelists and preachers our country's ever known, was said to have murdered the king's English.

But he knew the king. And that's all that matters. And if you're going to rely on your accomplishments, your education, or if you're going to be inhibited by your lack of them, you don't understand how God works. We are to be weak in ourselves and strong in God. James Denny said this No man can give the impression that he himself is clever and at the same time that Christ is mighty to save. If you are learning the things you're learning so you can seem clever, you're missing it.

You get to know Jesus by spending time with him, and yes, that can include assignments and formal academic environment and even in the process of acquiring credentials, that can happen. But that's got to be the goal. That's why we're here. There are lots of obstacles to sharing your faith today, lots of things that inhibit this sort of apostolic boldness. One of them is this idea that we should just live it, that it's distasteful to just talk all the time and not have a life behind that talk. And that's absolutely true. We've got to have lives that demonstrate the truth we're proclaiming. But I feel like we've swung away from maybe a generation or two's emphasis to now thinking that I'm just going to live my life and everyone will come and say, what must I do to be saved? When the reality is, is you live a nice moral life, they won't be able to tell you the part from the nice moral Mormon guy down the street and in some ways, he may do a better job. Or Muslim guy down the street, for that matter.

It's about Jesus and it's always both living and telling, it's always life and proclamation. Listen to Romans 10:13. For everyone who calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. How are they to calling him new if they've not believed in how do they believe in him who've they've not ever heard? And how we do that here without someone preaching in the holiday to preach without unless they are sent as it is written. How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news? Preach is such an unpopular word today. We don't even call people preachers anymore, their speakers. Speakers are things you buy at RadioShack. What happened to Preachers'? And that's what it says, how are they here unless someone preaches the good news, but they have not all obeyed the gospel for as this is Lord who is believed from what we've heard. So faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God.

The word of Christ, it's through hearing and proclaiming, we've got to do this and just live it, just live your life and let that be, your witness in St. Francis of Assisi is quoted often, you know, preach the gospel at all times and only use words when necessary. It sounds so cool, doesn't it? It's not biblical and maybe he said that because he hung out with animals all the time and they didn't understand him anyway, but it's always both I'd like to change Francis's expression if he really said it, to preach the gospel at all times and use words whenever possible. Always let people know who it is you're living for and who's enabling you to live this way. It's always live until I remember I was. Cross-country skiing was done one time, we stopped a little sandwich

shop and I came in the same time this young lady did, she must've been about 16. She goes up to this guy at the counter and she says, is anybody here to help me to change a tire?

And this guy goes, you don't know how to change a tire. And she said, I know, and he goes, shouldn't be driving a car if you don't want to change a tire, just what she needed. Right? So I just. Oh, dear. I'll change your tire for you and let me go help you. So I went out, found out her name was Melissa. I walk out to her old beat up Buick Skylark and see inside in dead winter. I see inside is a little baby, a little baby boy sitting in this this car seat and her friend Jenas standing there outside the car cold waiting for the tire to be fixed. And so I meet Jean, I meet Melissa and I start changing the tire. And as I'm changing the tire, we're talking about the Packers because we're in we're in Wisconsin at this time. We're talking about the weather. And all the stuff in the lawn was leading me clearly to talk to her about him. No doubt about it, he was saying, Eric, take this deeper than the Packers. And I had this overwhelming opposition to God's leading in my life at that moment, I said, no, Lord, can't I just do a random act of kindness, you know, that's what all the bumper stickers say. And can I just be a nice guy for once? I said air go deep.

So I swallowed hard and I said, Hey, Melissa. Sure, have a cute baby there. Is it yours? Yeah. So these beautiful she said, thank I said, what's his name? She said, Skylar. And I said, hey, Melissa, is Skylar's dad still around? She said no. I said, man, she goes, Yeah. And I wanted to go back to talking about the Packers at this point. Lord is leading me away from that, and I said, hey,

Melissa, I ask you, that's not going to be long before Skylar grows up and starts asking you some really hard questions about the meaning of life and death and God and all those sorts of things. What are you going to tell him? When he starts asking those questions and she said, oh, you know, I went to a religious school growing up and I learned some things in the Bible, but, you know, there are just some things about Christian. I understand. You know, I believe God's a creator and all, but some things just throw me in Christianity. I said, like what? And she said, well, like the virgin birth.

And I said, Melissa, you just said you believe God created everything from nothing of the people of the virgin birth. And she said, oh, yeah, I never thought of it that way, and I said and I said, as a matter of fact, you know, Mary, with that whole virgin birth situation, probably experienced a lot of the same stuff you went through and having Skylar. She said, wow, I never thought of that either. And I said, you know, Melissa. When I grew up as a little kid, I was the stinky kid in my school, you know, every school has one or two stinky kids. I said that that was me and my brother. Seriously, and and I said I had a rough, rough childhood. And I said, but somehow in the midst of the mess, my mom sat me on her lap and read the Bible in pictures, four little eyes to me, and at some point it all made sense.

And, you know, I can't remember a time in my life I wasn't aware of my relationship with Jesus Christ as the defining truth in my life as the most important person in my life. And I I don't know what I would have become if it weren't for Christ. Skyler is going to need clear direction like that

someday. And she said, you know. You talk like my mom's friend. You have to have a sense suddenly that you are right, then an answer to someone's prayers. This overwhelming sense that there is a Christian woman in the family's life here that prays for them and says things about Jesus to them. And I said, hey, Melissa. And then she said you were the stinky kid, huh? And I said, yeah, and she said, so was I. Really? She said, yeah, and she said, hey, why would Jesus come to Earth? And I put the jacket on and I put the crowbar down, I stood up and I said, Melissa for us. He came for us.

I got to just lay out the gospel for her, and it was wonderful to just talk to her, is this this broken girl who just needed to hear these things? You know, Gina was listening the whole time to now when when we were. I know what you're thinking. It takes you a long time to change a tire world. Well, it was on soft ground, and every time I'd get the way to the car of the jack would go and normally I'd go. But in this case, I said, yes, more time. So let me just move this. Jack doesn't seem to be working very well. We had a wonderful time and guys, when it was over, she she said, you know, I have a children's Bible at home.

I said, why don't you start reading at the school? And she said, I think I will. And as we're leaving, she says. Can I give you a hug? I said, well, sure, and I gave her a hug and she drives away and I tell you that story because I wanted to just be a nice guy. I just want to let my life demonstrate my love for Christ, no, it's always live and tell. We demonstrate the power of Christ

in our lives, but we proclaim it as well, you know, another lie that we hear that keeps us from boldness is people don't want to hear about Jesus.

They want to hear the gospel to be offended. They'll be appalled to be ticked off. You know, I know that's what the intelligentsia and the media will have us think, but I don't think that's true. My experience has been that most people want truth and answers and people of conviction to give those answers. In that truth, they really do. I almost never run across someone who says I don't want to talk to you about your Jesus.

I can count on one hand in my life who reacted that strongly against the gospel. Somewhere in my family. But it's amazing to me how positively people receive just when some natural conversation about Jesus. I went to my barber when we were in Cambridge last semester, Louis, and he's cut, I walk in and he starts telling jokes about women, you know, and everybody's laughing and and do you ladies know that barbershops are places where women don't fare well?

Usually it's where they go and complain about their wives and women in general. And and so I'm sitting there and you're talking about women and telling jokes and stuff. And I'm just sitting there and he says, Can I ask you a question? Are you married? And I said, Yeah. And he goes, Well, you know what I'm talking about then. And I said, actually, Louis. I'm thankful every day for my

wife. My wife is a precious gift to me, and I can't imagine my life without her. And he says, can I ask you a question? And I said, yeah, and he said, Are you a Christian? I said, yes, I am, and he said, And your wife is and I said, yes, she is. And he said, I used to date one of those Christian.

And he said, I wanted to marry her and she wouldn't marry me because I wasn't a Christian. He said I'd still marry her if she would. He said, well, that's why your marriage is like that. I said, why do you think so, Louis? And he said, I got that God thing in the middle of it all. I said, Why don't you come and speak at a Tory conference on marriage, Louis? It'd be really good for us. Louis was not intimidated by talking about Jesus. He was eager to talk about him. He was interested. He was he knew a lot about it. Guys, people aren't going to freak out if you talk to them about Jesus. They don't. Some do. And that's all right. Let them freak out. Let's be nice, smile, love them. Little freak out, but you're not going to find that. I can tell you story after story of people who are eager to hear the gospel when you simply talk about it like it really matters and is true, I sound like Joe Evangelist's, don't I?

Let me tell you a story about two incidences in one week where I failed miserably in my boldness. I believe some sort of lie. First, when I walk into a restaurant with a friend for breakfast one morning and I walk in and the hostess sees us and she looks at me and she says, Did you do something wrong? I said, no way, and she said, well, people don't smile like that at six a.m. unless they did something wrong. I said I didn't do anything wrong. And guys, it went through my mind to say, Ma'am. I'm a Christian. And this is the smile of a man who's been

forgiven. Those words went through my head. You know, when I said. She leads us to our seat. The waitress comes over, she says, watch this one. He smiles a lot. She left. Guys, we're paying the check on the way out. And she looks at me and she says, You're still smiling. It went through my mind to say it again, man, I'm a Christian and you're looking at the smile of a man who's been forgiven. Those words went through my head and you know what I said, don't you?

Oh, and guys, she said. Aren't you going to say anything? And I walked up. Same week I'm at a salad bar, a lady looks at my tray and says, Oh, look at you. Year two, healthy. And I said, well, look at you, you've got that big salad, all those greens on your plate yourself, and she said, oh, well, I went for a cholesterol test this week and now I'm trying to be all righteous and holy and pure. It went through my mind to say, ma'am. You need more than greens for that. You need Jesus. You know what I said, right? Who exactly? I don't know why I don't want to set myself up like I've got this all figured out. But what I do know is when I am pursuing a passion for Christ and that passion is taking over in my life, nothing stops us from being bold and proclaiming that truth. And that proclamation perpetuates passion.

So it works. I love the scene where these guys go into this picture with all of this passion in this bold proclamation of the gospel, not based on their worldly status, and they are challenged with threat to their lives and look at their response. Verse 19, but Peter and John answered them, what is right for in the sight of God listen to you rather than the God you must judge for we cannot listen to this. We cannot. But speak of what we have seen and heard. Did you catch that? We

have no option. This is how it has to be. Maybe they would have said, to be quite frank with you, sometimes in my weak moments, I wish there were other options. But there is no other option we're compelled by the love of Christ.

Paul says later, it's a non-negotiable truth of our life that we speak of what we have seen and heard in guys. This is the bottom line in this sort of apostolic passion for Christ and apostolic boldness, catching a glimpse of who the risen lord of the universe is in all of his beauty and majesty and grace and compassion and having that soul overtake you in your life, that you live with a reckless apostolic boldness and passion that looks like reckless abandon to world leaders. That's what this is about. Seeing Jesus for who he is, they have no choice but to proclaim him. There's nothing else we can do. They said, listen to Peter and John say these words after they saw Jesus and understood him for who he was. Imagine what it sounded like to the ears of Peter and John to be told you can't talk about Jesus anymore. OK, if you got to heal people, fine. But stop with the name of Christ.

Imagine how that sounded to Peter. Don't talk about Jesus. At all anymore? Oh, you don't understand. That's simply not possible for me. You see, because I was a humble fisherman. And I met him. And I saw him, you should heard him teach or some of you did even. And you remember he taught with authority like we've never seen before. It wasn't just what he taught, it's that he taught not only the things of God, he taught as God with the authority of God, he would

take Torah, he'd take the law, and he'd interpret it not based on any other rabbi's interpretation, but is even on things like the Sabbath and even on things.

Like the law itself, the Ten Commandments, he would tell us what it really meant or authority like we've never seen. You don't want me to talk about that. Oh, and he helped us understand the teachings like we never had before. Oh, in the miracles, you've heard about the miracles, right? We saw him heal, laying people just like we were able to do through his power. We saw him give Blind People sight. We saw him raise people right from the dead, right out of the tomb walk, and you don't want me to talk about this.

We saw him, he leper's. We saw him cast out demons and show demons and show his power over the demonic in the spiritual realm, how can we not talk about this? But, you know, most of all, it was just who he was, it was his character, it was his holiness. Let's be honest, at times scared me and intimidated me and I didn't know what to do with it, but he was holy and so pure and after a while you wanted to be holy like that.

On his compassion, you should have seen his compassion. He would actually touch lepers, and he knew the details of the lives of widows who had one son left who had died. He knew about people who had had diseases for their lives and he cared so deeply and compassionately for them

in his grace. I failed him so many times and he always was so gracious with me. Mingled with truth all the time. How do you not want me to talk about this, how can I not talk about this? And do you know what he did for you and for me and for all of us?

He lived a perfect life of righteousness and he died a disgusting death on a cross. So I didn't have to. And he rose out of the grave alive, never to die again, and you don't want me to talk about this, and he changed my life forever. I failed him over and over again. On his way to the cross, I denied him three times, just like he said I would. I denied him. I thought I was so strong and I was in the night, the night one was about to die for me. Deny him. And he died for me and you know what happened after he rose from the dead, he came looking for me. That's why when I saw him on the shore, I jumped out of the boat and I ran. I couldn't wait. I swam to the shore. I couldn't wait for the boat to get there. I had to be with the one who'd forgive me. I had to and I have to talk about him. I have no choice. Kill me if you must. But I've got to talk about Jesus. I've got to live for him. I've got to give everything for him. I can't turn him into a hobby. I can't turn him into an occasional pursuit on weekends. He's my life now, and you don't want me to talk about him. Can't you see that's impossible? He's everything to me. Everything. His loving kindness, just like David said, is better than life itself.

So take my life if you must. But Jesus is my life. Heavenly Father, help us to reorient our values and our perspectives. Would you help us to be different people? Would you help us to look at this example of these fishermen, uneducated common men? Who had a passion for Christ? That

determined everything. Either lift him up in our hearts and minds. And I pray we would lift him up in our lives and words. And we ask this in his name.

[End of Recording].