

Return to Your First Love

By Chris Marantika

Speaker 1:

Hi, my name is Dani, and today I have the privilege of introducing Chris Marantika. Well, I'll tell you a little bit about him. He is from Indonesia, as you may have read in the booklet. And one thing about him is that he's had many death threats from Muslims in Indonesia and God has been faithful in keeping him safe. If you weren't here yesterday, he talked about how we want to know God more, but we never asked God if He's satisfied with us. So today he's going to continue his challenge to us about being a missionary and just going out there for God. So let's welcome Chris Marantika.

Chris Marantika:

I've oftentimes asked the question, why after almost 2,000 years after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the world hasn't been evangelized? And that helped me to continue to evaluate myself and also thinking about what's the expectation of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, for His church in our time, modern time. It led me to the Scripture, the Word, the first in the Scripture, Revelation chapter 2, verses 4 and 5. Yesterday, actually I talked about--my talk was based upon 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 9 to 21.

And one of the points I made there is that was repeated by my sister here was that our ambition in life is to please God. That's why He entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. So we may do all other things, many things in this world, but if we miss the main thing, which is to reconcile, to have the world reconciled with the Lord Jesus Christ, with God, then we miss the

whole point. If we want to please God, the thing that is the most pleasing to God is for the lost ones who turn from sin and darkness to the Lord Jesus Christ and become children of the kingdom.

So I'm also not trying to say that all other ministries are not important, they are all important. But if I knew my Bible, if I understand the Scripture, the New Testament, all those things that were done were focused upon one thing only, is to present Christ as the solution to this world problems and difficulties and also to make sure that people will become members of the kingdom. Four and 5. Actually, I feel like this is an evaluation done by our Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of first century, after the church has been in existence for about 60 years.

And he stood there and looked back and said, wow, I'm sorry, you don't have it anymore. You still have a lot of things, but you don't have it anymore. The things that very important for me at the end to enter the final battle at the end times. Revelation chapter 2, verses 4 and 5, where all Jesus Christ said at the end of first century, "But I have this against you that you have left your first love." Yesterday we talked about control by the love of Christ. What does that mean, looking back to Calvary, to that event?

And Paul said, when I begin to think about what's happened on the cross, I cannot help it. I have to go out and share the good news with the lost ones. But here, the Lord Jesus Christ said at the end of first century, I'm sorry, I cannot count on you anymore. You're okay, as a change, you look great, but you don't have it. You don't have what it takes to finish the task. So I'm going to set you aside. When I reach this point when I study, actually, I attended a course, and I was

assigned to write three papers, try to search a New Testament and find three churches and look at those churches and draw the conclusion what factors that made them grow and what were the factors that made them not to grow.

And one of those churches, the church of Ephesus, when I reached this point, I said, wow, I don't want the church in Indonesia to reach this point where the Lord Jesus Christ said, looked to the church and said, yes, you're okay. You have great things going for you, but I'm sorry, I cannot count on you anymore. And sometimes I feel like if we become Christian for sometimes and we have good churches, we begin to feel like we can do it.

But there are some things that are very important for the Lord that become factors that the Lord can use the church and the church can enjoy the blessing, but not being used. And I worry, also, sometimes when I was studying here, seven years I was in the United States. I've been coming back three or four times a year. And I said wow, it seems to me that the church in the United States is moving to a direction where the Lord Jesus will stand and say, sorry. I bless you and I bless you. But I won't set you aside.

Verse 5, He says, "Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first, or else," sanction. Punishment. "I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent." He give a solution. The Lord gave a solution. He said, okay, I have evaluated you, and you don't meet the requirements to be used as a change, so I'm going to set you aside, but I give you a chance. Pause. Stop for a moment, search your soul,

evaluate yourself, see what are the things that have caused you to reach this point where I cannot use you anymore, and then turn around from those things and do the first thing.

So my topic for this morning is return to the first love, or I call it sometimes back to the basic. I call it also Project Ephesus. When I wrote the paper, I called it Project Ephesus. So reach this point 96 AD, Revelation chapter 2, the Lord Jesus said, sorry, I'm going to put you aside. I think it applies also to us as individual. We enjoy the blessing of salvation in Christ. We're being satisfied, blessed by Jesus. But Jesus is looking for people who can partner with Him to accomplish the task. And He can say the same thing to us.

Verse 1 to 3, Revelation chapter 2: "the Lord commends the church." Wow, you have great work going on from outside your active cage. That's great. Many things are just excellent in your midst. You have so many works going on in the case. Secondly, I think He commended for the emphasis of the holiness because I think verse 3, He said, you rebuke the wicked people wickedness. You don't like sin in your midst. So I think this is a good church, active but also emphasizing holiness. But verse 4: the Lord turned around and said but I'm sorry, that's not enough. You're missing something which is very close to my heart. You have lost your first love.

I preached this message when I was a young preacher, 21 years old, very aggressive, made so many mistakes. But yeah, the Lord forgave me, I think because I did all the misinterpretation of the Scripture out of sincerity. And I used to preach, you have lost your enthusiasm. Because when I trusted Jesus, I was 19 years old, I was changed totally from a young man who used to walk head bowed feeling gloomy, to a fairy, a new person, enthusiastic about my faith in Christ,

feeling that just like a rich man, like a man with everything that is going well for me. So I became very enthusiastic.

So I interpreted it first to say that the Lord is saying, you have lost your enthusiasm, your warm feeling about the Lord. But that was wrong. When I studied it, I asked for forgiveness because I misinterpreted that passage. It doesn't have anything to do with feeling or good feeling or bad feeling, not at all. It doesn't have anything to do with enthusiasm. And I like enthusiasm. That's why it's hard for me to speak behind the pulpit and just stand there because I just keep moving.

From when I was 19, I'm the same. January 1997, all the church leaders in Indonesia met to discuss what to do to prevent the Muslims from burning our churches and destroying our building. And I presented the paper, was asked to present a paper about a thousand church leaders from all over Indonesia with the government having discussions. I presented a paper and after that the man came and shook my hand. He said I heard you when you were just 21 years old. When you preach you still have the same enthusiasm like you was 21. But I'm 56 now.

Enthusiasm is very good. Warm feeling towards Jesus is great. But this is not what the Lord says. You have lost your first love doesn't mean you have lost your warm feeling, enthusiastic feeling toward the Lord. Actually he answered himself by saying in verse 5, stop the moment. I think that's good missionary conference. Stop. Go to your room, pray and search your soul. What has caused you not to be used by God? And then the Lord said, Return. I use kingdom first in here because it's short. And two, the first works, it has to do with the believers.

So I came to the conclusion that to find out things that caused them to stumble, the church, to go back to 1 and 2 Timothy, which was directed toward the church at Ephesus because that's the last records we have in the Scripture before Revelation, chapter two. And then repent, turn around and do the deed you did at first, Acts 18 to 20. And if you put the two together, the practice in these two changes together, they counteract each other. The things that they practice here to lose a star church in only ten years when the church was started at Ephesus.

And then two, three years later, they allow for other things to creep into the church. And it crept into the church slowly, it hit up the church and slowly, 30 years later, the church was okay. It was great, active. But at the end the Lord came and said, sorry, you don't have it. You are a church, you enjoy your salvation, but I cannot count on you anymore. You know, the saddest thing in the life of Christian is he enjoys the blessing, but he's not used by God. So I asked, what are the things that caused them to stumble?

I don't want to go too long here because I begin to notice that missionary conferences in USA have been preaching almost every year in many churches. And people want more stories, more exciting and especially difficult thing. I haven't mentioned to you that I was threatened and I have to leave outside of my house almost for a month. From Ramadan in Indonesia, the government sends two secret agents to guard me every day. That's great because I don't have anybody to guard me. But during the month of Ramadan, two secret agents from the military of Indonesia Garden. That's exciting stories.

But as I said yesterday, that's not a true motivation for mission. So it's good to hear those stories. But what we want to do is to love Jesus, and this is what He says here. You have lost your first love, but I give you another chance. Repent and do the deed you did at first. There are four things I found in the book of this 1 and 2 thing Timothy, that really counteracts the things that they did in Acts 18 to 20. And I want to mention them. Passing by Insurgents of false teachings. You look at 1 Timothy 1:4, they begin to talk about dream and dream and stories about dream after dream after dream. Endless genealogy. And this is pretty relevant for Asia because we like to make family trees. I think there are Asian people here. We like that. And then finally we get the root. It's your grand grand grandfather. And they begin to worship that person who is the root at least that's another subject, I think.

Insurgents of false teaching, and I'm seeing it coming to the churches in the west, also, in United States. Why we want to stick to the conservative ideology. Why? It's not because we like to argue with other people, but it is because it has to do with this basic thing. If you have the basics, then logically it will produce activities, practice that's in tune with the Lord's purpose in active evangelistic orientation. They have a lot of things going in the church services except evangelism. And now evangelism become addendum in many cases it's one of the activities and oftentimes dismiss of the budget is very low. Other things are people talk about so many things except winning the lost. Do so many things, spend so much money. I like research, but I think the temptation in this modern day is that we pour money to the research while people go to hell every day.

Please do have a lot of research, but the focus should be continually winning the lost for Jesus, for God, for Christ. Incompetent leadership of the Church of Ephesus. Leaders were greedy. Success is measured by material blessings. So Lord speaks through Paul and says the love of money is the root of evil. Chapter 6, 1 Timothy. Money is no problem. But now people begin to think we cannot do God's work without money. We can do it without money. I went home after I graduated from Dallas and we slept on the floor three months because we didn't have money.

I have my doctorate ready with a master plan to implement fishing in Indonesia 101. So my father-in-law, who was an army general, went to visit me because coming back from the United States with doctorate, he wanted to see how great that was and he was amazed. We slept on the floor. My wife and my son, the only child I have, who graduated from Biola. He's on the floor. He said, what happened to you? You came from the richest nation in the world. You should have something, at least a car or something. Why do you come home like this? I said we have a vision from God. We don't have money yet, but God is going to give the money. But we have a vision. We want to do it. We want to reach Indonesia with the Gospel, planting in one church every village, and do it in one generation, 40 years.

But today it's almost like, if you don't have abundant material blessing, you don't qualify for the ministry. I think today God is calling men and women who will come out, step out in faith and say I want to reach the world for Christ and let God take care of the rest. And now today it's difficult to get missionaries who are willing to go before counting how much money they do need before they go, please. I'm not saying that you have to go and suffer with your family. I have a principle that I talk about a lot. It's what I call three peace principle pray together, pay

together and proclaim together. So if you go to Indonesia, we don't have much money to give you, but we can give you mangoes because there are a lot of variety of mangoes in Indonesia and a lot of missionary wives, I visited them and they make mango pie, very good.

But incompetent leaders begin to creep into the church. Incompetent, what does it mean? Not spiritual. Unspiritual leader. We cannot do missionary work with unspiritual. So to prepare to go to the mission field, the most important thing is spiritual preparation. If you don't know how to pray, if you just pray like I don't know in here. I came to visit my son here. He walked as a guard parking at the Biola and then he began to get some money. So he took me to eat hamburger and he paid for me and he asked me to pray at the hamburger restaurant.

And I pray Indonesian prayer. It's a long prayer. And suddenly he kicked me. It wasn't. So I said amen. I said. Son, what happened? He said, dad, this is America. This is not Indonesia. In Indonesia, even you pray on and on and on. You pray for food, but you keep praying on and on and on and on and on. But in America you come to Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Amen. I mean, that's okay too. But my son also said that don't criticize America because you have your education there. I know that, but sometimes we need to evaluate ourselves.

Spirituality is the most important thing. So beginning now, maybe you haven't seen the call, but begin now. Pray, pray, pray, pray. I used to wake up 4 o'clock in the morning and pray until 6 o'clock. And my wife likes to sleep 8 hours a day. I sleep 5 hours a day, 4 hours a day. So when I began to pray, she couldn't join me. But then finally she joined me because she begin to feel like what I'm saying is pray, pray, pray. The fellow of spiritual life now, today, when you are still a

student because we need in our world today many missionaries, but we need spiritual missionaries, we need many preachers, but we need spiritual preacher.

Here they do that competent leadership in Acts 18 to 20 and [foreign language] in 2 and 1 Timothy. Harmonious fellowship of God, servant fellowship, unity, oneness together. Now, after I did this study, I came to the conclusion that it is hard, first thing it is hard to find in the New Testament any evangelistic activities that didn't end up in the planting of a church. So I got something, I got some ideas from the Lord. Oh yeah? So how do you reach Indonesia for Christ? That's my prayer since I was 19 years old. I didn't know how to do it, but I prayed: Lord Jesus, Indonesia for Christ in our generation. Enthusiastic, not knowing how to do it. We just prayed the prayer every day.

And when I did this study, after twelve years doing church ministry in Indonesia, the Lord used me to plan five churches. Over 700 Muslims were converted. In those five new churches became Christian. They advertised them and we formed five churches after that. And I did this study, I said, oh yeah, to reach Indonesia for Christ, you have to plan one church in every one village and do it in one generation. So it is called Vision Indonesia 111. But I said this day, I said yesterday that when I wrote the master plan, I didn't know how many villages are there in Indonesia. And I think it's good not to know everything because if you know so much, you begin to feel like you're so smart and you tell God what to do instead of following His will in your life. And I was finishing my doctorate, so I was very smart. But God made me to forget to find out how many villages are there in Indonesia so I don't have to do it.

Then I wrote the Master plan, I went home. When I got to Indonesia, I was very sad to find out that there are 67,000 villages in Indonesia and they are located in 3,000 islands in that fourth largest nation in the world. Two hundred million people today. Eighty-three percent of them are Muslims and they speak over 600 tribal languages and dialects. I said Impossible. How could you dream such a dream? So if I knew before I went home, the story might be different. I chicken out before I start because the challenge was too big. But I didn't know.

And I have shared with God's people about this. Partners international and organization in the United States have adopted the project. No chicken out. You have to go on until the end. I was embarrassed because I have a doctorate and I didn't. I have Roadmaster shared with people. But that's what God did so that I can continue. And the master plan looked like this. I want to share it with you because yesterday I didn't. Because I want to do this at the end. The mission is: Indonesia for Christ in this generation. And I do hope you begin to be faithful in prayer, even though you're not sure exactly how to go about doing the work of mission in America or in Europe, or in Africa, or in Asia. But pray.

And my prayer is not one soul in Indonesia, but Indonesia for Christ in this generation. Keep praying until I did the study and I found out that I came to the conclusion that in order to reach the rise of Christ, we have to have one church in every one village. And do it in one generation because I believe every Christian is responsible for the lost people in his or her generation. And as Indonesian Christian, I'm responsible for all lost people in my country. How do I do a master plan that unites the body? Mobilized the body of Christ to plant one church, vibrant Bible-believing, evangelical good singing church in every village in Indonesia. I added good singing

later on because a church was planted by a student and I was asked to lead the Lord's Supper. When I went the first Lord's Supper because they were all Muslims became Christian. So I give the model the Lord's Supper. But I didn't know that it was too difficult to go to that village. Took a bus and motorcycle and walk about 2 miles. And when I got there, I was late 1 hour.

But in Indonesia it's okay. The chief always comes late. I'm the leader, so they called me Chief. So I come late. That's okay. 1 hour. But when I was approaching the church, they were singing. I was approaching the village, they were singing. And the songs actually did the village. I said, we have to really have good singing churches in Indonesia because most of them don't like the preachers, don't like the preaching, but they like the music. They don't like Arabic music, but they like the Western tune. So I started the first school of church music in Indonesia.

Dr. Locke from Biola helped me to set it up and begin to develop it there. So if you have a choir coming, we can travel from city to city singing. And Muslims like the singing, but they don't like the preaching. Yeah, if I preach in radio, they turn it off because they know that I begin. I tell the stories for about 15 minutes. But the last five minutes they know that I will bombard them with the gospel. So they turn it off before they hear the gospel. Decision not to do that. Spiritual nursing means theological training.

So we started by starting a Bible college at seminary. Two program graduate and undergraduate program running at the same time. The school was started in the city of Jokjakarta. This is the country of Indonesia. The map, this is, number two is Jokjakarta. And I came with an idea that I think it was from the Lord, because finally I decided we want to plant one church in every

village. To plant a church, you have to produce leaders who know how to plan a change. So we require that every student, in order to graduate in addition to academic requirements, Hebrew theology.

I mean, they have to swallow his book of church in God's program and all those theology and also Greek and Hebrew. But in addition to that, no student is allowed to graduate unless he or she plants a church in a village consists of 30 believers, not counting the transfers. So he said they have to be Muslims. The first year, there was a confusion at the school because this is--no school in the world has this kind of requirements, so you have to be a tough president. I founded the seminary, I became president, self-appointed president several years and then put all those requirements for all these requirements.

So the first semester, one of the students, by November, he came to me and said I wanted to quit. I said, Why? I couldn't plan a church. I've just finished high school two years and I've become Christian only two years from Islam. How do you expect me to plant a church? So I said, come to my office. So we went to my office and we sat down together. And I counsel him. And the way I cancel people is that students, I talk to them and then slowly I raise my voice and then I preach to them. And he cried and I cried and then we prayed together. So when I said amen, he said well, at least I tried. So he stayed.

Well, he became a model for us. During the Christmas holiday, we have three weeks, sorry, six weeks holiday. He went home to his home, his house, his village, where everybody there was Muslim. Muslim. He went there and the first thing he did was he went to visit his father. Muslim

father. He witnessed to his Muslim father, he witnessed to his Muslim mother, he witnessed to his Muslim aunties, uncles, brothers, sisters, nephews, all his relatives. By the end of second semester, first year, over 70 people have trusted Christ. We taught them during the holiday, simple Bible doctrines. And then they were baptized and he met the requirement when he entered the second semester.

Sixteen hundred teachers have been started by students and most of them just finish high school. Are you telling me that the power of God is limited only to the preacher who have 35, 40 years experience? No. You want to make mistakes like I did so many mistakes in the church where I pastor and when I went there for revival meeting, sometimes I was embarrassed to see a couple when they were young people. I was so--I harassed them. Is it quiet in the church or you don't come to my church when I was a young preacher, now I'm little wiser. Because I'm married, I have one child, I'm older, a little wiser, but God forgives all those shortcomings. Yeah. And so four years later, 325 churches were planted by the students just in four years period. So I began to think, how do you reach the whole nations, 670 villages, if you wait for all the graduates from one school?

So I was flying the United States during the petition. You do things and I pray Lord, it's not going to be a complacent. It's too long to wait for all the graduates from one school. And the Lord instilled to me an idea, another expansion of the vision instead of waiting for all the graduates from one school, you plant technological school to plant churches. So I begin to divide the country and see how it is divided according to the structure of the government. And finally, I

made the expansion of this Master Plan that by the year 2015, it was written in 1975. 2015, 40 years, we will plant 400 news centers for television training.

From diploma one in one year, study after high school, certificate for those who finish junior high school, but they cannot continue school. Diploma two, diploma three. BTH. Master of Arts, Master of Theology and Doctor of Ministry have just started last June. All level of training. But you cannot graduate unless you plan a change. Mobilizing the body. If you think about missionary in Indonesia, this is the Master Plan. The Master Plan says five years, I graduate in each center and one machinery in each center.

So we're talking about 1800 missionaries by the year 2015. And some of them went to Indonesia. And like Michael Wilcox, Michael Wilcox came to Biola Talbot second year. He felt the urge from the Spirit to go to reach the Sassak people in Lombok, the island of Lombok. So he went to Indonesia to study the language. This is the island of Lombok. 17. I think people, very few people become Christian. They're very fanatic and rich Islamic community. So he went to study the language and then he went to EDSI, to the seminary to see me. And so he studied at the seminary arts seminary for two years, finishing his Master of Arts in Islamology.

And then he recruited students and went with him to the island of Lombok. And they started the first logical school there, the only one there in the island of Lombok, in the midst of Sassak people. And about 100 native Sassak Muslims have trusted the Lord and followed through baptism. But last year, the end of last year, Michael Wilcox was asked to leave the country. His visa was not extended. He was expelled from the nation. But he's my hero because in seven years he already put the presence of Jesus Christ strongly in the island of Lombok.

What I'm saying is this there are many difficulties, opposition, and rejection. But let us not plan our missionary work based upon what the world is saying to us. We move on and do it. The Lord will open the door. If we leave one country, we go to another country and we all together finish the task of evangelizing the world. So we now have 17 all together, public colleges and seminaries throughout the country, five seminaries and twelve bubble colleges. And by the year 2015, we will have 200 sorry, 400. That's a lot. But I like vision that is beyond reach. You only can believe God accomplished it.

It's reasonable, it's logical, but it cannot be reached by human being. But we believe that God will help us to reach it. And so I hope that you will continue to pray and hear God's voice that has been still to you. Search yourself. You may have everything going on as a Christian, but if you miss the first love which is one saturation to the scripture second evangelistic seal doing the work of evangelism third spiritual life, emphasizing spiritual life, guarded spiritual life and fourth harmonious fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

Wow. These are new. These are new things. These are basic things that have been emphasized throughout the century, the history of the church. Back to the basic but step out in faith and do it. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I'm so grateful You have given me the opportunity to be with my brothers and sisters here. Thank You for what You have done in United States of America. You have blessed her, blessed your church here.

Thank you for Biola that has a strong impact in mission field throughout the world until this very day, even in Indonesia. But I do pray Lord that we may humble ourselves now. We go to our rooms, our places and then pause and stop and think and evaluate ourselves. Are we being used by You as an individual, collectively as a congregation or even as a family? Help us, Lord to remember things that has caused us to fall and to repent and do the first work to return to our first laugh. In Jesus name, amen. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Okay, I have a few announcements really quick before you guys go. This evening there is going to be the India children's choir at 8 p.m. In the gym. There are some flyers that are on campus that say 7 p.m. And they're wrong so don't read those. And then tomorrow or actually today, there is an extra sign up sheet for the Mormon temple for the exploration. So if you guys are still interested in doing that, you can go sign up. And then after three, check also at the registration table to see if there's a possibility of more sign ups for the church of Scientology because that might happen today. Have a great day. Bye.