

Torrey 1998 What Motivates You? [Thursday]

By Ron Mehl

[singing 00:01:35]

[crosstalk 00:02:35]

[singing 00:03:00]

Speaker 1:

but let's remain standing, and as we do in honor of our Lord, Michael Anthony, is going to lead us to the Lord in prayer. Let's pray together.

Michael Anthony:

Father, we thank you so much for the privilege that we have of being assembled this morning to wait upon you. The father, we have hearts that are receptive and willing to hear you speak, and so we invite your Holy Spirit to come and perform that ministry within our lives that you send him to perform, which is to lead us and guide us into truth. So, Father, we pray that as our leader, Ron, comes in a moment to open up your word and speak to us from Psalm 1:16, that it would and truly indeed impact the manner in which we live. Father guide our lifestyle that it would be conducive to to a way in which would bring honor and glory to your name. And father we pray for Ron as he comes to lead us in a few moments. Lord, as he has recently undergone a series of chemo treatments, some difficulties physically in his health that have been taking place. We thank you, Lord, for giving him the strength that you have. Thank you, Lord, for his willingness to come and sacrificially give in this time of his life, far and away from his church, his family, to be with us to be able to open up your word. It means that much to him. And father we are grateful for his gift to us as a Biola community that he would come and lead us at this time and

father to strengthen him, touch his life physically, Lord, renew his strength, lead him and guide him. In your truth, Lord, as he leads us, we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you, brother. As you're being seated, say something incredibly inventive but encouraging to your neighbor. Something incredibly inventive, clever but encouraging. Maybe something they've never heard. Like I'll take you to lunch or.. isn't God good? Or. ...Good. And how many of you received something very encouraging at this very moment? OK, thank you, you three. So that was a that was a wonderful exercise. [crosstalk 00:12:55] Now say to your neighbor, let's let's be quiet for the announcements. Oh, good. This is all you guys. You're awesome. You're awesome. Thank you for that. Tonight for Fernando. You will definitely need your student card. It counts for a session, but you will definitely need your student card. Might not be a bad idea to be here moment early. I need to announce for the sake not of those who are here, but not. But you can pass it on because we have a number of off campus guests. Tickets can be purchased at the door. But because that's happening, it would be really good for those of us who tend to run a tad late to run a tad early. And that would just be wonderful. For this evening. I'm happy to announce that the air will be turned on in Sutherland Hall for the afternoon session. [audience claps]. So but I'm sorry to announce that we'll have to turn it off in the other auditorium. No, a little humor there, a little humor there.

Some of you were here, probably most when Ron Mehl spoke yesterday morning. And it struck my heart. He was talking about the incredible impact of our words and not only what we say, but we the way we say them. And Alistair underscored that actually twice yesterday when he talked about the incredible impact of our words in ministry, not just what we say, but how we say it and

how that can really impact and influence other lives. Listen, as Jeff and Melanie Edwards bring us reading, it actually is from an anonymous source and it's simply called information, please.

Jeff Edwards:

When I was quite young, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood. I remember well, the phones past the side of the wall. I was too little to reach the phone, but I remember I would sit and listen with fascination when my mother would speak into it. I discovered that somewhere inside that incredible machine was an amazing person. Her name was information, please, and there was nothing she didn't know she could supply you with anyone's phone number and the correct time.

My first personal experience with this genie in a bottle came one day when my mother was out visiting a neighbor. I was down in the basement entertaining myself the toolbox when I accidentally whacked my finger with the hand. The pain was terrible, but there didn't seem to be any reason to cry because there was no one there to give me sympathy. I remember walking around the kitchen screaming in pain when I looked to the left and saw the telephone. Quickly, I ran for the footstool and slid it underneath the phone, climbing up, I unhook the receiver and put it to my ear. Information, please. Then followed a click or two and a small, clear voice spoke directly into my ear

Melanie Edwards:

information.

Jeff Edwards:

I hurt my finger. I went right into the phone. The tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

Melanie Edwards:

Well, isn't your mother home?

Jeff Edwards:

Nobody's home but me.

Melanie Edwards:

Is it bleeding?

Jeff Edwards:

No. I hit my finger with a hammer and it really hurts.

Melanie Edwards:

OK, well, can you open the icebox?

Jeff Edwards:

Yeah.

Melanie Edwards:

OK then go ahead and chip off a piece of ice and hold it to your finger. By the way, what's your name?

Jeff Edwards:

Paul.

Melanie Edwards:

Well, Paul, it always hurts at first, but I promise it'll get better.

Jeff Edwards:

After that, I called information police for everything, I asked for help with my geography homework and she told me how to find Philadelphia. She helped me with my long division. She even told me that my pet chipmunk that I caught in the park the week earlier would eat fruit and nuts. Then there was a time, Goldi, my pet canary, died. I remember calling information, please, and telling her the sad story. She listened and then said the usual things the grownups say to soothe the small child, but I was inconsolable.

I remember asking her, why is it that bird should sing so beautifully and bring such joy? Only to end up as a heap of feathers at the bottom of a cage. She must have sensed my deep concern, she said softly,

Melanie Edwards:

Paul. Always remember that there are other worlds to sing in.

Jeff Edwards:

Somehow I felt better. A few days later, I was back on the telephone again, information, please, information. The voice is now so familiar. How do you spell heaven? All of this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest when I was nine years old, my family and I packed up and moved to Boston. I miss my friend very much. Information please belong in that old wooden box back home and for some reason I never thought of trying the new tall, shiny phone that sat in front in the kitchen. As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me.

Often in times of doubt and doubt and perplexity, I would recall the serene sense of security I had once felt. I appreciate it. Now, how kind and caring and understanding she was to spend so much time on just a little boy. A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane sat down in Seattle. I had about 30 minutes in between flights, so I decided to call my sister, who lives there now. Then, without thinking, I picked up the phone and dialed my hometown operator. Information, please. I hadn't planned this. But I heard myself saying, could you please tell me how to spell heaven? There was a long pause and then came the soft spoken answer.

Melanie Edwards:

Well, I guess your finger must have healed by now, huh?

Jeff Edwards:

So it's really still you. I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time.

Melanie Edwards:

I wonder if you know how much your calls meant to me. I never had any children, so I looked forward to your calls so much.

Jeff Edwards:

I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked her if I could call her again when I got back into town.

Melanie Edwards: Oh, please do. Just ask for Ruth.

Jeff Edwards:

Three months later, I was back in Seattle. This time, a different voice answered the phone I asked for Ruth.

Melanie Edwards:

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Are you a friend?

Jeff Edwards:

Yes, a very old friend.

Melanie Edwards:

I don't know how to tell you this, but. Well, Ruth had been working here part time lately because she'd been sick. She passed away five weeks ago. I'm sorry. By the way, is your name Paul?

Jeff Edwards:

Yes.

Melanie Edwards:

Well, Ruth left you a message, she wrote it down in case you called, let me read it for you. Tell him I still say there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean.

Jeff Edwards:

I thanked her and hung up the phone. I knew what she meant.

[Audience claps]

[Singing 00:21:32]

Speaker 2:

thank you, Lord Jesus. Thank you that. It's not us who finds our way to you, but rather. It is you who reaches out and grabs us. But in the midst of our sins. In the midst of our own turning away from you got you still hold us in your arms of love because Jesus died for us. We don't know how to understand that mystery exactly. So all we can say is thank you for that. We go out in response to your great love for us, we. We..we ask that we be changed. That we would think your thoughts and speak your words. That we would look in the mirror of your scriptures. That we would see our own sinfulness. And by that turn and and return to you got. We will live our

lives according to your plan. We can't do this by ourselves, Lord. We need your help. Well, we ask ourselves. We ask for this nation. Lord, we ask for our speaker this morning that you would bring your Holy Spirit to speak to us, that just as you saw in our hearts, that you would he would bring us a word. We are thankful for the things that you've done. That's why we're here. We praise you in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Ron Mehl:

Well, good morning, everybody, I. I guess like all of you feel like not only is this time together extremely special, but I appreciate it yesterday, especially Gordon's words about love and affection, because when he said that love is a choice and that love is sacrificial, I think there's no question about that. That's true. It's just getting a handle on it. I think more and more. And as he spoke, I thought, oh, Lord, I'm thankful that you chose to love us, too. I think if God loved us based on feeling, it would be real problems for most of us.

I guess I don't know about you, but we have in our church where I pastor probably one of the ugliest guys I've ever seen in my life. And I wish you could just come and visit to just see him and meet him. He probably is one of the most unattractive people you've ever seen in your life. And he's married to the most beautiful woman. I mean, when they walk in, it's it's it's just absolutely bizarre because here he is as ugly as can be. I mean, somebody beat him. I mean, there's no doubt about it. I mean, this guy is a long ways from anything that resembles, you know, some degree of sanity. And now his wife, who is so unbelievably attractive, the moment she walks in with him, you ask yourself the question that people always... Have you ever seen a couple together and you thought, how in the world did she end up with that? I mean, how in the

world did she end up with him? And I've noticed a couple of you coming in this morning like that, that that you wonder now what in the world did she and what in the world could she even begin to believe and observe about this guy that would make her even begin to think that this this is the guy that is going to be for me.

And love certainly is a choice. There's no question about that. But I I think maybe as you turn to Psalm 116 this morning, I'm going to ask you to do that, please. We're going to kind of work through this Psalm because it's one of the greats, one of my favorite Psalm's of all, I think, because it has to do with the deep love of God that God has for you and me and we have for him.

But let me tell you a story as we approach Psalm 116. I don't know if you've heard about Dave Rieber before. Dave Riber is an amazing young man, a great communicator. He he was in Vietnam and and in his trek in Vietnam, he was sitting in a foxhole and he was holding a phosphorus hand grenade in his hand. And as he stood there ready to throw it, a sniper's bullet hit the grenade. It went off. And, of course, immediately he began to burn and not just burn a little a lot. There's nothing they could do. They took him now and tried somehow to bring some treatment to his life. His body was totally burned, his face beyond recognition. Nobody would even know what he looked like. You couldn't even begin to believe this was the same person. They got him back to the United States. And when they got him back to the United States, well, he was in a war in a burn ward with those who were severely burned. And as he laid there, he knew that this was the day that his wife was going to come and visit him. And while she was coming to visit, he tells the story how that the man next to him, who was burned very severely as well prior to Dave's wife coming to visit him on that day, he said, I was laying there. I couldn't

see anything. I was bandaged from head to toe. I had little slits in my eyes so that I could see out. But he said, I heard these steps coming down the walkway. And he said as they came down, he said, I noticed they stopped at the bed next to me. And he said, of course, no one is recognizable. And he said, and so bet after bet, the person that was coming to visit someone would take the clipboard off the end of the bed. They'd read the name and say, well, yes, that's my loved one, or that's the person I'm here to see.

The man next to him had become a friend because they had talked as much as they could. And and the man next to him, his wife, came first and she came to visit him. And when she arrived there, she pulled the clipboard off and she looked and read and of course, noticed that that it was her husband. And with that, she took her ring off. She said to him, You're not the man that I married. And she took the ring and she threw it on his bed and she walked off and and left. That's all she said. David said it was about three days and that man died. And David said it was not a matter of a couple of hours. And my wife came and I heard these little steps coming down the hallway. And he said when they got to my bed, he said I was scared to death because I figured that if this wife wouldn't be able to handle him, how would my wife be able to handle what she sees in me?

He said, All I remember was that my wife came and I could remember her picking up clipboards, putting them back, and she got to my bed when she got to my bed. She obviously noticed that this was, yes, her husband. And she leaned over and with a great deal of tenderness, she she kissed him on top of the forehead. And when she kissed him on top of the forehead, he was looking through just the slits in the eyes. And and he looked at her and he said, how in the world

how can you possibly love me when I look like this? And she said to him, you know, hon, you weren't all that good looking in the first place, she said. [audience laughs] And she said, frankly, don't kid yourself, big boy. This is maybe quite an improvement on you. And Dave tells the story about if you saw him today, it's like his whole face is gone. The surgeries have been, you know, overwhelming. And just for me, it's not only is that a horrible looking sight, but now, of course, when he stands out with his wife, they talk about their deep love and affection that they have for one another.

And by the way, his friend next to him in the bed next to him within two days died because, of course, the scripture is very clear about this, too. When you hold and withhold love, then something always ends up dying when people don't really know and really don't believe that I'm really loved that God really loves me, that I am forced to look someplace else, to find somebody that will. To believe that maybe in my heart, well does God really love me? Does he even care? Because if he doesn't, then I'm going to look in a place and find a place and find someone that really, really does. But as Kirk said, love is a choice, and that's why I want you to turn here to Psalm 116, because I think it's one of the great Psalms, but certainly about the love of God for you and me. I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my supplication because he hath inclined his ear unto me. Therefore, will I call upon the Lord as long as I live.

So why in the world should I love the Lord? I mean, what are the reasons that I should love him? Why in the world should I put him first in my life? Why should he be so? And why in the world should I be at all concerned about going deep into the love of Christ? Why should I be so concerned about going deep into an understanding of God's love for me? And I want to give you

a couple of illustrations right here in Psalm 116, it first says this, in verses one and two. One of the reasons that I love the Lord and you and I should, with all of our heart and know him even better is because he listens just for my voice. That's what it says here. He inclined unto me. He listen to my voice. God was concerned, so concerned about me.

This is really what the rendering of this these two verses means. It literally means this God is in heaven very, very well. I mean, this is a mellow version, but God is in heaven, very, very busy. A lot of demands, a lot of work. And you know what he says, it doesn't matter to me what I'm doing, how busy I am, what the projects are. [audio clip ends]