

A Christian American

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[0 : 00] You should have gave me a better warning than that, brother. Get me all tore up before I try to preach.

If you have your Bibles, turn to Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10, one of the most beautiful castles in Ireland came to a strange and unusual end.

And Castle Ray was one of the architectural gems in all of Ireland. And it fell into disrepair and was uninhabited to the point that the peasants went and took the stones that had been so craftily cut and easily now removable to use them for building chimneys and shacks and pigsties.

They were slowly dismantling the castle. And the surviving heir, Lord Londonbury, visited and saw it being scavenged stone by stone.

So he ordered an agent to come to build a six-foot wall around the castle and top it with stone. And he left. And three, four years later, he came back and he found a six-foot wall around the place where the castle had been.

[1 : 32] But there was no castle. It had vanished. Disappeared. He asked the agent, why did you not do what I told you to do?

He said, I did do what you told me to do. He said, then where's the castle? He said, is it for me, my Lord, to be going all over Ireland, digging up stone with the finest stone in Ireland could be found right here in the castle?

He had torn down the castle in order to build the wall. He could have had both a wall and a castle, but he chose to tear down the castle and build a wall.

Church, if we're not careful in the day in which we live, we'll work so hard to build a protective wall around the church to keep out false ideas and the people that hold them that will miss the very opportunity of ministry that God has placed us in the middle of.

And I'll be honest, that may be the greatest challenge of any Bible-believing church that cares about reaching out to others for Christ.

[2 : 54] God has placed us. Christ has commissioned us. The Holy Spirit has empowered us. But if we get too wrapped up with the activities and the ideologies and the politics of our world, we'll neglect the only thing that really matters because it is the only thing that has eternal consequences.

Let us work so hard to keep the world. Let us not work so hard to keep the world out that we never reach them. And then we fail at the very mission that Christ has given us as a church.

I want to be clear this morning about what's important to us. And the reason why it's important to us is because it's important to Jesus. And because what's most important to Christ ought to be most important to his disciples, to his students, to his followers, to those that use the name that comes after him, from him, and that's Christian.

Most important thing is found in Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10, beginning in verse 25, and it says this, And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him, speaking of Christ, to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

And he said to him, What's written in the law, how do you read it? And he said, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

[4 : 39] Jesus said to him, You've answered correctly. Do this, and you will live. Now how do we carry that out in America today?

Well, the first thing we do is we love the Lord. We love the Lord. He describes it as a love with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind. Can you love with any more than that?

I think that's about all you got, you know? And I really think that the overall meaning of that is to love the Lord with everything that you are. That's really the big meaning. But let's break it down.

I mean, when it mentions the heart, he speaks of, as Solomon did, in Proverbs, when he says that the heart is the wellspring of life. Everything that we are flows out of our heart.

It's our thoughts, it's our words, it's our deeds. If you love the Lord like you should, it's going to affect how you think, it's going to affect what you say, it's going to affect what you do.

[5 : 48] When the soul is mentioned here, his audience, the first audience that Jesus was speaking to that day, would think of the soul as the seat of the emotions. What are you passionate about?

What are you devoted to? The New Testament says that what you love with all your, that the things that you're most passionate about are the things that you love with all your soul.

Then it says, when he speaks of the mind, he speaks of the seat and the center of your intellectual life. It is interesting how unresolved we can be if we're not careful.

Live and think a certain way when you're not at church and then come to church and act as if we live as the Bible teaches. If we're not careful, people you see during the week will not recognize you at church.

And your own family may not. And that should not be. Now you do get forgiveness for that ride to church, okay?

[6 : 57] That stressful ride to church sometimes. If you love the Lord with all your mind, your dispositions will change for him.

Your attitude will line up with him. How you see things will be consistent with scripture.

Now the purpose here is not to dissect yourself into three or four different parts, soul, heart, mind, and strength, but instead to love the Lord for all that you are.

Now I love my family. I talk about them. I think about them. I do for them. They are my heart. I'm passionate about them.

Mess with me, I don't care. But you mess with my family. I become a zealot quickly. I love them with all my mind.

[7 : 58] They're on my every thought. I'm consumed with my family. I pray for them first thing every day. I think about their schedule.

Think about what they're doing. Think about what appears to be their mindset. I pray through those things. I check on them throughout the day. I locate them on their phone. If I don't know where they're at, I want to know why I don't know where they're at.

I lock the door at night when they're all in. I love them with all that I am. And I will do everything that I can do.

That is my strength. To do what's best and what pleases them. I love them with all that I am. That's how we're to be for the Lord.

Sold out. Dedicated. That's what he's talking about. Consumed folks. Love the Lord. The second thing is love his message.

[9 : 10] The final message of Christ. The Great Commission tells us to tell the story of the gospel. The good news of Christ. To ask people if they know the Lord personally.

Ask him if there's ever been a time in their life when Christ has changed them. Ask him if they're saved. Lead them to Christ. Nurture relationships to provide that kind of opportunity.

Let me tell you if you don't know yet America needs Jesus. They need Jesus desperately. And I've only been around for so many decades but I'm telling you America needs Jesus worse now than they have ever in my life.

And I got a feeling ever in the life of America. America. And it's our responsibility. He's not only invited us he's commissioned us to do something about that.

America needs Jesus. And as the woman who broke the flask of Spikenard and the room was filled with the aroma of her sacrifice as she anointed the feet of Jesus.

[10 : 18] So we need to fill rooms that we go in with the aroma of our admiration for Christ. Somebody says something's different.

Something smells good around here. You know. Something's precious here. It's one thing to believe the message and to be thankful for. It's another to love the message.

To share the message. To trust the message. More than friendships. Trust the message. Trust the message more than our anticipation of how the conversation is going to go.

Trust him. Trust him. Love the message. And then lastly although I don't want you to get your hopes up. Love our neighbor.

That includes the ones that don't act like us. That includes the ones that don't look like us.

[11:22] It's going to get uncomfortable here. That includes the ones that don't think like us. When the lady was caught in the act of adultery she was not alone yet she was the only one that was mentioned.

And she was dragged out before a bunch of angry old men with rocks in her hands. And Jesus shut the show down when he said those who are sinless cast the first stone.

And you could hear the stones dropping as they quietly just soldered away. They dropped their rocks and they went home.

What do you do with those around you who are not Christians? What do you do with those around you who are not living for the Lord?

Or who are living and thinking in ways contrary to scripture? What do we do? Do we pick up the rocks of judgmental thoughts? Do we pick up the rocks of hurtful words?

[12:31] Maybe a little spicy gossip? Now we don't call it that we call it prayer concerns but it sounds a lot like gossip sometimes. Baptists tend to be like a pack of hunting dogs.

When they're hunting they work together but when they're hanging out at the house they fight. And if all we're worried about is coming together and hanging out we need to get busy.

We need to get busy. when our priorities are seeing God work and move not only in our lives but in the lives of those around us we come with an anticipation of what God's going to do in us not what God can do for us and that's when things get real folks when we're excited about what God wants to do in us and through us and we can talk about all the things that are wrong in our country.

There's plenty. We can talk about popular ideologies that are out there right now or we can pray for our neighbors and we can try to win them to Jesus. Let's make his priorities our priorities and admit that no human ideology no political party no fallible sinful human will ever line up in such a way that we put more confidence or get more attention to become more motivated or energized by it or them than we do by the Christ who saves and changes lives.

That's the priority. Nothing wrong to align with those that go along with that but I'm just telling you many of us have our dander raged by cultural clashes of our day and if we're not careful we'll become so hateful about it that we won't bother winning the world of Christ.

[14:13] The most recent conversation has been about Roe v. Wade and the Dobbs decision by the Supreme Court that put the decision about abortion back in the hands of each state and all of that happened amazing as it is when it happened all it was as I said last week was a constitutional injustice that had been made right period.

That's what happened and it has led to a lot of animosity but hopefully a lot of lives are saved by states that stand up for the rights of the unborn.

Now how do we respond to that? Well I hope I don't assume but I hope that you're pro-life and that you care about the protection of the unborn because the womb of a mother ought to be the safest place for a child but for 60 million babies in America over the last half century it was a trap that led to a horrible death and I'll save you the details of how that all went down.

But I will say this if they treated a pet the way they treated the unborn the people that are picketing in the streets fighting for the rights to do whatever they want to with the unborn would be in the streets fighting for the rights of their pet and I'm a dog lover.

I got two decent dogs you know one of them's a little ornery one of them's a little young you know but an unborn human baby is much more important than my favorite pets yet we live in a world where people are making absolute fools of themselves to show how important it is that a woman have the right to end her pregnancy.

[16:03] By the way ain't it fascinating that we're not hearing about they them pronouns these days we're hearing about she her pronouns I'm not trying to be smart I just want to be clear because the devil has a way of twisting stuff folks be careful he has a way of twisting stuff when Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas said that such decisions made by the court like Roe were demonstra demonstrafully in error and needed to be revisited he was cussed he was called racial terms by those who spoke out against racism responses were chaotic they were upside down they were twisted and as twisted as the actions in the streets of protest I saw a friend tweet the other day they're acting animalistic in the streets and I said you misspelled demonic because that's what it is friend

I don't want you to misunderstand me the venom is that of the slippery snake in the garden I promise you I want you to be clear Christian and I want you to hear me today you got to hear the whole message I'm sorry but you got to listen to it all Ephesians 6:12 says we don't fight wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the authorities against the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places our fight is not against people don't forget who the enemy is and if that's your neighbor they are your neighbor regardless of their thoughts regardless of their beliefs regardless of their opinions Christ has given us a responsibility to reach them for the Lord Clarence Thomas said this in the midst of all that he said you could be in the middle of a hurricane

I think they're ready now there ain't but too many preachers who can preach that hot you know let's find out what's going on wow that's a first are you picking up with what's going on I'm serious are you picking up on what's going on we're in a fight we're in a fight you stand for truth all of hell will come against you Clarence Thomas said you could be in the middle of a hurricane or you could be in a calm day and north is still north you could be in a thunderstorm and north is still north people can yell at you north is still north it doesn't change fundamental things right is still right so don't let the truth get lost in the midst of the chaos however we cannot let it affect our need to reach out to the lost folks who are mad and raging about abortion or any other worldly cause look lost they look without hope do you know why they look without hope because they are they need

Jesus and we should never compromise where we stand we should never be silent but we should also and I want you to hear this just as loud I want we should not be rude we should not be abusive we should not be dismissive and we should not be without prayer in Ephesians chapter 4 Paul tells us that Christ gave us the church and its leadership to equip us to unify us and to mature us and he says in verse 14 so that we may no longer be children tossed to and from by the waves and carried by every wind of doctrine by human cunning by craftiness and deceitful schemes rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him in other words Paul is telling us don't get so caught up in the ways of the world not to get won over by them but to speak the truth in love even when you don't like them much folks love your neighbor my grandpa used to say about people didn't like him kill them with kindness kill them with kindness don't spit back when they're cussing mad love them with the love of the Lord

Jesus he will do a marvelous work far more abundant than we ask or think that's scriptural brother don't you want to be a part of such as that church we got to have a heart to win our neighbors all of them not just the ones we like we have to have a heart to reach our neighbors for the Lord win them to the Lord have the character to make them notice and when they notice it when they notice there's a difference in us share the message with them invite them to church I promise you if you'll invite them to church I'll give them the gospel when they get here I promise you I will we'll just trust the Holy Spirit of God to work in any way he wants to in their lives but I promise you I won't short change the gospel anytime God gives me the ability to stand here regardless of the paparazzi that's flashing their lights at me today but our great test our great test in America today is our character and how we treat people and God has instructed us to be a people of love first first

[22 : 40] Corinthians 13 verse one through three says if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels and have not love I'm a noisy gong a clanging cymbal Christian if you start mouthing out about the things of the day and forget the love of Christ you sound like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal and if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love I am nothing and if I give away all I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love I gain nothing we must not be ungodly toward the ungodly or we will be no better than the rest of the world and we will miss what God has called us to do and we will fail at the mission that he's given us the greatest thing that we can do for this church the greatest thing that we can do for this city the greatest thing that we can do for this state and this nation is to love the

Lord and to love his message and to love our neighbors Tony Evans has made it clear for years that it is technically incorrect to call yourself an American Christian or a white Christian or a black Christian because you made your location or your color the adjective an adjective is to modify the noun and if you put Christianity in the noun position and you put your nation or your color or your culture in the adjective position you have to keep shaping the noun to look like the adjective that describes the noun so if your culture stays in the adjective position you got to keep shaping your Christianity to look

American or to look white or to look black or to look Republican or to look Democrat but if we keep it in the adjective position then everything that we claim that we are is marked and modified by our Christianity our job is not to be any of those things because they'll all come up empty we're to look like Christ and to live in America we must be Christian Americans and that my friend there's a lot of ways to celebrate and all these men that have left I've been given to go in we're good okay so if you think we're just gonna I'm gonna let you burn up in here don't worry okay I've been told we clear okay the hamburgers are ready apparently but anyway the best thing that we can do for the Lord Jesus Christ if you're a Christian today the best thing that we can do for the Lord Jesus Christ the day in which we live is to shine for him to let it show not only at church but in private at the house at work and in public you'll be amazed at what the Holy Spirit of God will do to open up doors when we boldly live the truth in love and allow God to make a difference through us I'm asking you not only to be a Christian not only to be an American but to be a Christian American with every head bowed and every eye closed my greatest burden today is that there may be one here who've never given his or her life to the

Lord Jesus Christ and if that is true in your life today I want you to know that we're going to stand and we're going to sing in just a moment and it is your opportunity to come and follow the Lord Jesus Christ when you come I'll be happy to make sure that someone shares with you what it means to give your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ I encourage you to be obedient to follow his will and his way you just trust him as he speaks to your heart and life you just trust him sometimes people want to wait until everything gets lined up in their life just right I'm telling you you'll wait until you breathe your last if you're waiting for everything to be made right in your life it won't be made right by you it'll only be made right when you surrender to Christ so surrender your life to Christ today maybe you're here and you are a Christian but the reality is your life don't reflect that you're not taking advantage of the opportunity that God has laid before you the crowd that influences you the neighbors that God has placed before you whether at home or at work or in the places that you go

[28 : 25] I encourage you today to be obedient and follow the Lord maybe God's leading you to be a part of this church maybe God's leading you to join us on this journey I don't know but I encourage you simply to follow the Lord Jesus and what he'd have you to do today trust him trust him let him have his will in his way Lord Jesus I love you and I thank you for your love for us and I ask God right now in the midst of the chaos of our world that you'll help us to simply be obedient and to follow your will and your way in all of our life right now oh God in Jesus precious name amen