Do You Realize How Valuable You Are?

By Derek Prince

We're going to begin with a proclamation. We always begin by proclaiming a Scripture. This one is taken from 1 John chapter 4 verse 16.

"We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Now I think it would be good if you were all to say that, phrase by phrase, after us. Don't try to say it with us, but say it after us because it is a most beautiful verse. It's an exciting verse. You say it after us.

"We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Now we will try to say it altogether.

"We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Now the title to my message this evening is a question. Do You Realize How Valuable You Are? And I suspect most of you do not realize how valuable you are. One of the prevailing weaknesses of Christians is a poor sense of self-esteem. And it advertises itself in many ways. Some people when you talk to them, they never look you fully in the face. They always keep their head bowed and their eyes never make contact. Or others advertise it by the way they dress. You know that dress, clothing, carries a message. The way you dress says something, either positive or negative. It's never neutral. When I see a young girl in baggy loose clothing that leaves, you know, there's no way to know what her form is, I say to myself a case of poor self-esteem. And there are many other ways that it indicates itself. I believe it's a very common religious problem. Sometimes we

misinterpret it as humility. But if you have a poor sense of self-worth, you can't be humble since you've got nothing to be humble about. It's altogether different to be humble. When you know your own value then you can be humble.

And so I want to give you the reasons why you should value yourself, why you are valuable. And I want to go back to God's original purpose in creating man as it's recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis. But before I do that I want to remind you that the creation of Adam and Eve was somewhat down the program in God's creative works. He had already created a glorious host of angelic beings, seraphim and cherubim and archangels and angels and many other glorious beings. But there had been a rebellion headed up by one of the chief archangels whose name originally was Lucifer, which was changed to Satan. Lucifer means the bright, the brilliant, the shining one. Satan means the adversary, the enemy. And the reason why Lucifer fell was pride. And let me say to you by far the most dangerous sin that ever threatens us is pride. It is a disastrous sin and we are all vulnerable to it in one way or another. Those of us who are in ministry, if we have any kind of success, we easily get taken over by pride. And I've lived long enough to see ministries that were ruined by pride. My personal prayer is Lord, by whatever means is necessary, keep me from becoming proud.

Now the reason why Lucifer rebelled was that he was proud, and he had a lot to be proud of. In Ezekiel 28 the latter part of the chapter, many of you are probably not familiar with this passage, but Ezekiel 28 deals with two persons. The first half deals with the Prince of Tyre and the second half deals with the King of Tyre. The Prince of Tyre is a human ruler, but the King of Tyre is an archangel, the one who was Lucifer. And this is how he's described, beginning in verse 12.

"...Thus says the LORD GOD: 'You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was you covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created.'"

The most glorious being and he occupied a place of singular honor. It says, "You were the anointed cherub who covers;" who covers the throne of God. One cherub was set apart to stretch

out his wings over the throne of God and that honor was given to Lucifer. I don't know whether you have ever observed that all the pictures that we have of cherubs or cherubim later on in the tabernacle and in the temple, there are two of them—one facing the other. And I think that was God's way of saying, "Just remember, there's another one just as beautiful as you are. Don't ever get caught up with your own beauty." But this is what it says about Lucifer.

"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones."

That's no human being that that's addressed to. That's an angelic being.

"You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you."

So there was this glorious heavenly being of inexpressible wisdom, glory, majesty and power. With the singular privilege of covering the throne of God. And yet iniquity was found in him. He became proud and pride was his downfall. He was cast out from the heaven of God into a lower region.

Just picture the three members of the Godhead—the three persons of the Godhead—taking counsel together and saying, "The problem was we made him too beautiful. It was easy for him to become proud. So let's do it a different way." I mean this is just my imagination. "Let's take something so humble and so insignificant that he can never become proud." And so that was how Adam was created. A remarkable creation. And Adam was made of dust, just common dust mingled with water, and then molded by the hand of God. And we have here the reason why God created him. Chapter 1 of Genesis, verse 26 and 27.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, [you notice God is talking in the plural which occurs several times in Scripture. This is the mystery that God is one and yet more than one.] Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'"

Notice those are two words, image and likeness. The Hebrew word for image recurs in a different form in modern Hebrew in the phrase to take a photograph. It describes the outward likeness, then the likeness is the inner nature. The Triune God created a triune man; spirit, soul and body. But there was that in the outward appearance of man which in a way represented God. Some people find that hard to accept. But let me suggest you this, it was appropriate that when God was manifested in the flesh, it was in the form of a male human being, not in the form of an ox or a beetle or a bird. There was something about the outward appearance of man that could receive the inward form of God. And then God goes on to say,

"'Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image: [Notice we come to the singular here 'His own image.'] in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

That's very important. There's a lot of controversy on that particular theme at the moment in the papers. But God created two kinds of persons: male and female. They're quite distinct and there's nothing in between. And God created them to rule over all the earth. They were God's vice regents.

Years ago when I was born in India there was a viceroy over India. He was the Vice Regent of India representing the Monarch here in Britain. And that was the position that God planned for man. He would be the Viceroy, the Vice Regent, the one who reigned on behalf of God Himself. So that was God's plan and God's program.

Then we read the description of how he was made. And there's one verse, Genesis 2:7, contains such a wealth of riches that we could expatiate on it for a long time. This is how it came about, Genesis 2:7,

"The LORD God formed man [molded man the Hebrew says] of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." [living being does not adequately represent it]

The union of spirit from God and clay from the earth produced a soul. The soul is the unique individual, the thing which has the capacity to say, "I will or I will not," the thing that makes decisions, the thing that determines the course of a life. It came into being through a creative act of God when the Spirit of God, the inbreathed breath of God came into the clay and man became a unique individual, a living soul.

I always have, I am so glad to have Jenka here because I think like an African in many ways having spent a good part of my life in Africa. We Europeans, we're sort of rather a long way behind in some ways. We don't see these things so vividly. I like to picture this. You see God said, "The problem with Lucifer was he was too glorious, he was too beautiful, he was too powerful, he was too wise. So we will start at the opposite end. We'll just take some dust. Just dust. Mix it with a little water, make some clay and mold it into a body." And there it was, the body, formed by God. A more beautiful piece of sculpture or statuary or whatever you want to call it than even anything that Michelangelo ever produced. A perfect body. But it was just clay. And then it says, "The LORD breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Hebrew is a very vivid language. The sound of the words is related to the thing that they describe. And where it says, "He breathed" in Hebrew it says _____. Phonetically the "P" sound is plosive, it's an explosion. And then there's the _____ which no ordinary English person can say, but the Scots can say it – Loch. It's that missing sound in our English vocabulary. And that's a long breathed out sound. And outgoing long drawn out sound. Ephoch____ and that contains such a sense of dynamic. God didn't just breathe languidly into that body of clay. He breathed himself into it. He imparted himself. Through that breath God came in. And that piece of clay was marvelously transformed, miraculously transformed into a living human body, into a living human person, with all the faculties that you and I enjoy. There came out of clay through the inbreathed breath of God a man became a living soul.

That's our origin. That's where we came from. We're not insignificant. We're very humble in our origin, but we have a divine destiny. We were formed and molded by the hand of God. We were inbreathed by the Spirit of God, the breath of God. You know I believe that because of that we

have an eternal destiny. That light in us cannot die. It's the light of God and it's a very solemn thought for all of us because we will never cease to exist. We only have two alternatives; we can exist in the presence of God, or we can exist in eternal banishment from the presence of God. But one or other of those, each one of us here tonight is going to experience. There is no such thing as extinction of a human soul. It's eternal. For better or for worse.

So that's how we came into being. We are divine workmanship. We've mistreated it, we've failed to appreciate it, we've squandered God's riches in unrighteous living, in foolish enjoyments and sinful pleasures, but we're still in the likeness of God. I observed that in the covenant that God made with Noah after the flood, He said, "Every man, every person that kills a human being will answer for it with his life, because man was created in the image of God." You see murder is not just killing a person. It's destroying the image of God in a human being. And that's why the abandoning of the death penalty is one of the many steps backward that this nation and other nations have taken. And one day God is going to require that the nations answer for what they've done.

Now, Ruth will be speaking to you one of these mornings on being a woman of God. And she will doubtless, I've really stolen this line from her, but she'll forgive me. She says that in the whole record of creation there was nothing that was not good until man discovered he had no mate. That was the first thing that God said is not good for man that he should be alone. Everything God had created was good up to that point. So woman has a special place. Without woman a man is not what he should be. We read in Genesis 2:20,

"Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was found a helper comparable to him. [I prefer to say a helper to complete him. I believe that's what a wife does to a man is complete him. Certainly it's true in my experience.] and the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made [but the Hebrew says 'He built'] into a woman, and He brought her to the man."

How many of you men would agree that women are a mystery? And how could anybody build a rib into a woman? There's no explanation given. A lot of things are explained, but at this point the Bible is silent. We just have to bow before the inscrutable wisdom of God. And so the LORD brought the woman to the man,

"And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman.'"

In Hebrew man is ish and woman is ishah. So there's a direct relationship between the two words.

"Because she was taken out of man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

So that is the original creation of the human race. And you see we are divine workmanship. Very humble material, but divine workmanship. And if we don't realize that we'll never find the fulfillment that we need in life. If we do not realize how inexpessibly valuable we are, if we have a low sense of our own value, we can never become what God intends us to become. So it is very important for all of us and each of us to come faced with this fact.

Now the image of God in us has been defiled and desecrated but it is still there. And that's why God said "If you murder a man you will pay for it with your life because the image of God is in that man." And when we abort babies we are aborting the image of God. I don't want to get into that subject. Enough has been said on that I am sure.

So Adam and Eve were created for one supreme purpose—to have fellowship with God. And the record makes it clear that God came each evening into the garden—it says in the wind of the day, when the cool breeze sprung up in the evening, then God came to have fellowship with Adam and Eve. But, you know about the serpent and this is something I want to speak about more fully later. But God gave Adam a job. The job was to be the keeper of the garden. He was there to keep the garden, to protect it, to watch over it and he failed to do so. You see the first failing of the human race was in a man. The first one actually recorded was in the woman, but the man was delinquent in his duty. He failed to be where he should have been. You see that's the problem of our contemporary culture. It's delinquent males. It's men who have abdicated from their responsibility. Almost inevitably women have moved in to fill up the vacuum, but it's never God's plan. God has one plan and it works.

So, let's read the temptation that was confronted Eve. But you have to remember that it was Adam's fault that Eve was there without his protection and the serpent got into the garden, because Adam should have been protecting the garden. And it says in Genesis chapter 3,

"Now the serpent was more cunning that any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?'"

He didn't immediately deny the word of God. He questioned it. But when Eve entertained his question she was defeated. And the moment we permit ourselves to question the word of God we're on the way to defeat. If we look back at the history of the last hundred years or so, toward the end of the nineteenth century, there was a movement of theologians originally I believe in Germany that questioned whether the Bible was really the accurate inspired word of God or whether it was a compilation of documents and so on. And that movement spread to other countries--to Norway, to Britain, and finally to America. But the consequences of entertaining

unbelief concerning the word of God are so disastrous that we each of us need to consider.

This original question was raised in Germany by German theologians. And out of Germany have come two men who have probably caused more human suffering than almost any other men in human history. The first was Karl Marx and the second was Adolph Hitler and in my opinion they were the direct product of questioning the Scripture. When we entertain the question we have opened the way for the power of Satan.

So the woman said to the serpent,

"The serpent said, 'Has God indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; [She didn't want to acknowledge that there were any limits, you see.] but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die." Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

You see, there are three downward steps. In the English language each of them begins with the letter D in regard to the word of God—to Doubt it, to Disbelieve it, and the third step is to Disobey it. And when you get into doubt you will begin to disbelieve. And when you disbelieve, in due course, you will disobey. We cannot afford to entertain Satan's questions about the Scriptures. It sounds very intellectual. It sounds very, what would I say, honest. We have to admit we don't know. But it's the way to disaster. And so, probably all of us are familiar with the tragic scene that follows.

Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and she gave to her husband and they both ate and their eyes were open. And when they got knowledge, you know the first thing they knew? They knew they were naked. That's the first knowledge that came through eating. And they were expelled from the garden.

But God in his infinite mercy did not give up on the human race. He had a plan and He was determined to fulfill it. I want to turn to a Scripture in James chapter 4 verse 5. Now there are as many different ways of translating this verse as there are translations, but I will give you what I believe to be the right way, and it happens to come from a version called the New American Standard. And it makes sense. James 4:5,

"Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'He jealously desires the Spirit that He has caused to dwell in us?'"

God jealously desires the Spirit that He has caused to dwell in us. When He breathed Himself into God, into man, He established a love relationship that He has never been willing to cancel or revoke. In spite of all the evil that we have done, in spite of all the tragedies and disasters that sin has brought upon us, God jealously desires the Spirit that He caused to dwell in us. Some people don't like the phrase that God is a jealous God. But to me it's an amazing example of God's condescension. That He's willing to be jealous of people like you and me. That He wants our love so much that He's jealous if we love in a way that's contrary to that. And so in due time over the centuries, God worked out a plan to reconcile man to Himself, and the plan was Jesus.

I love the story of Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19. This is the outworking of God's redemptive plan. Luke 19, it says,

"Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich."

He was also hated, because the Jewish people hated those who collected taxes from them on behalf of the Romans. They were also usually dishonest. They made illegitimate gains for themselves. However, he had heard that Jesus was passing that way,

"So he wanted to see him, but he could not because of the crowd because he was of short stature. [He couldn't see over the heads of the crowd.] So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way."

If you go on a tour in Israel the guides will probably take you to the sycamore tree in Jericho which of course is not the, but what they will point out to you which is very interesting that a sycamore tree has very smooth bark and it's branches begin rather high up the stem. So to climb a sycamore tree is not easy. There are no little low branches and the bark is slippery, so I don't know what Zaachaeus did. Maybe he jumped up, caught hold with his arms and pulled himself up, but it meant a lot of effort. Furthermore, he was a wealthy man and it was rather undignified to be seen climbing a tree. But he was there and he just wanted one glimpse of Jesus. That's all he expected to get. But as Jesus passed by he would be able to look at Him above the heads of the crowd, but something happened he had never anticipated. When Jesus got to the place He stopped, he looked up and he said, "Zaachaeus hurry up and come down. I'm going to stay at your house tonight."

I noticed that Jesus never had to be introduced to anybody. Nobody said, "That's Zaachaeus the tax collector." Jesus knew him immediately. And I don't know that Zaachaeus could understand what was being said. "I want to stop at your house tonight." So he climbed down and came with Jesus to the house and all the people were criticizing. "He's gone to be guest with the tax collector, a man who takes unfair taxes."

"Then Zaachaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord I give half of my property I give to the poor; and if I've taken anything from anybody by false accusation, I'll pay them back fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house…'"

One thing I notice about salvation is it affects what you do with your money. If you claim to be saved and you never change the way that you handle your money, I doubt whether you're saved. Because the moment that salvation came to Zaachaeus his was of handling money was totally different.

And then when they all criticized He said this, verse 10 of Luke 19,

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

So God never gave up on that breath that He breathed into that body of clay. And ultimately He sent Jesus to bring it back to Himself. He came to seek and to save that which was lost and cut off. That was why Jesus came. He came for the descendants of Adam. His favorite title which occurs more than forty times in the New Testament, the Son of Adam. He was the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, but He called Himself the Son of Adam, the representative of the Adamic race. He came to save us. That's how valuable we are in the sight of God.

There's a passage in 1 Corinthians 15, which is very exciting to me. 1 Corinthians 15:45 and following.

"And so it is written, 'The first man Adam [the first Adam and you know Adam in Hebrew is directly connected with the word for earth which is Adama. So his name indicated he was taken from the earth.] 'The first man Adam became a living soul.' The last Adam [that's Jesus] became a life-giving spirit.'"

The first man was of the earth, earthy. The second man is the Lord from heaven. So Jesus has two titles and it's very important to get them in the right order. First of all he was the last Adam. He was the end of the whole Adamic inheritance. All the sin and rebellion and the evil was cut off at His death. When He died, it died. When He was buried, it was buried. And when He rose again, He rose as the second man. A new kind of man. A new race. The Emmanuel race. The God man race. The race in which God and man are united in one nature. And that is what we are born into through faith. If we believe in His atoning death and His triumphant resurrection we become part of the second man. A new kind of being that had never existed before in which God and man are united in one person. That's the destiny of us as Christians. It says in 1 Timothy 2:5,

"For there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus."

That was many years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. So there is a Man on the throne of God. The Man Christ Jesus. That's a breathtaking thought if we can absorb it for just a little while. There is a representative of our race at the highest place in the universe—a Man Christ Jesus on the throne of God. You see God takes the lowest and raises it to the highest. He started with dust, but His destiny is to end on the throne of God. From the lowest to the highest.

Now I want to take two parables. Matthew chapter 13. Have you ever pondered on this chapter? It's the chapter of the seven parables. It's a rich and exciting chapter. But I want to take two of the shortest. One is one verse and the other is two verses. In verse 44 my Bible heads this The Parable of the Hidden Treasure. Jesus is speaking.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

If you think yourself into the history of the Middle East, how did that treasure get hidden in the field? Well, probably there was an invading army that came at some time. And a man was afraid of losing his possessions. So he quickly went to a field and buried his treasure in the field. But who knows what happened. War swept that way. He never got back. And so the treasure lay buried in the field.

And then another man comes along and he discovers the treasure and he's very, I would say, crafty. He doesn't tell everybody about it. He hides it. He covers it up. And he goes and buys the field as though it was just an ordinary field. Maybe he pays a little excessive price. People marvel. "Why would he buy that field? There's nothing in that field. It's not worth what he paid for it." But once he owned the field he digs up the treasure you see. And then people understand why he bought the field. And I want to say that man is Jesus. I know there are different ways of interpreting parables, but I want to interpret it this way. That man is Jesus. The field the parables tell us is the world. Jesus died for the whole world. He paid the price for the whole world, but it isn't the world He wants. It's the treasure in the field. What is the treasure? God's people. So he was willing to pay the price for an apparently worthless field in order to get the treasure which is

you and me. That's how much He cares for you and me. That's how much He thinks of us. That's how much we mean to Him. We are not unimportant, we are not insignificant, we're not worthless. We're extremely valuable. So valuable that Jesus gave His life to purchase us. Never again from tonight onwards talk about yourself as if you were insignificant or unimportant or worthless. Just discard all that thinking. It's not Scriptural. I'm not telling you to be proud, but I'm telling you to realize your true value. Because you gain nothing by this attitude of poor me. I don't amount to much. I'm just a little something or other. That's not pleasing to God. You're a son or a daughter of God. God has no second class children. You are important. You are very, very valuable. You're special. Begin to understand that here tonight. Drop that cringing attitude. Drop that sense of worthlessness. You don't have to apologize for being you. It's you that God wanted. He wanted you the way you are. But He won't leave you that way. You're not glorifying God by being so humble, because it's not humility. Its act is unbelief. You are a child of God tonight if you've received Jesus by faith. You're part of the treasure.

I think the ministry of the gospel is digging the treasure out. If Jesus bought the field He leaves it to us to dig the treasure out. And when treasure has been under the earth for a long while it's often corrupted and tarnished and that's part of the ministry too, is to polish it up and clean it up. I think that's the ministry that God has given me to polish up the treasure that has been so long under the ground. God has given me a sense of the value of God's people.

When I was a very new Christian—about two years old in the Lord—the British—I was in the medical corps—posted me to the Sudan. The Sudan, believe me is a tough country. As a matter of fact, it's even tougher now. It's the most persecuting of all countries of Christians at this time. But I originally went to Khartoum which is the capital. Then the army posted me to a little sort of railway station town called Atbarah(?) I was put in charge of what's called in the medical language of the army, a reception station. And it was like having a palace. I had two rooms, two beds, nobody in them. I had a nightdress for the first time. For two or three years I'd slept in my underwear, but now I could have a nightdress. I had no patients in the reception station, so I put on one of the nightdresses and slept in one of the beds.

And then somewhere in the middle of the night I got this tremendous supernatural burden of prayer for the people of the Sudan. And I tell you they're not easy to love. They're pretty fierce and they're not gracious or easy to get a connection with. But I got up. I was to burdened with prayer that I was pacing two and fro in that little room in my white flannel nightdress. As I was praying, I

was praying for the souls of the people of the Sudan. And I looked down at my nightdress and I have to tell you it was luminous. There was such a sense of the glory of God that my nightdress was actually shining. And God gave me a little glimpse of how He values intercession.

And then I was moved to another station on the Red Sea called Jabati(?). There I was put in charge—I was only a corporal. I couldn't be anything more because I'd been a conscientious objector. And I was put in charge of the native labor, the Sudani labor in a hospital. I had to deal with the Rieas(?), the head man of the labor whose name was Ali. So we had to meet every morning in my office and plan the activities for the day. And I couldn't see any way to relate to Ali. He was distant from me and I was distant to him.

Then one day I discovered that he believed in Satan. So I said I believe in Satan too. And strange as it may seem it was the first connection between us. We both believed in Satan. Well one day he was late in reporting to my office and he came in limping and he said, "I've been to the reception station because I have something on my foot which is hurting me." Now I had read in the Bible… I don't think I'd ever seen anybody lay hands on people and pray for them. If I had I didn't remember it. But I knew it was in the Bible so I said, "Would you like me to pray for you?" He said, "Yes."

Well, I treated him like a bomb that was about to explode. I stood at a careful distance, put my hands on him and prayed a very simple prayer. That was all I could do. About a week later he came in and showed me his foot. It was completely healed. So after that we had a connection. We became friends.

Then he wanted to teach me how to ride a camel. And so I learned to ride a camel and believe me riding a camel is no joke. I don't know what it is about a camel, but when one part is going up another is going down. You never have a stable ride. I'm not talking about the camels that they turn loose at the pyramids in Egypt. They're not Sudani camels.

Then I said, "Would you like me to read to you from the Bible?" He said, "Yes," he was getting very interested. So I thought we'll start at John's gospel. I read from the King James Version which is the only version that most people used in those days. But all his English he had learned from soldiers. He had a very quick memory. He couldn't read or write, but he had a very accurate memory. So I read the King James Version translating it into soldier's English all the way, which was quite a challenge. And then he said, "Why don't we take a ride out on our camels and go out

somewhere?" So I said "Fine."

I was in charge of the rations so we armed ourselves with things we needed to eat and we rode out on our two camels and sat down at the bottom of a hill and there was a little stream of brackish water running down the hill. Now I'm not sure that I would do today what I did then. And I'm not necessarily recommending it. But he said, "Now we, Sudanis, we drink this water. But you white people you don't drink this water." "Well," I said, "since there's nothing else to drink, I'll drink it." He said, "Why would you do that?" "Well if Jesus said if you drink any deadly thing it will not hurt you." So I drank the water and he drank the water and we both did well.

So then I got to John chapter three about being born again. And that phrase lodged in his mind--born again, born again. So when we were on the camels on the way back he said, "Born again. What's that?" "Well," I said "God will give you new heart." Well he just laughed because in those days heart transplants didn't exist and he couldn't understand anything but a heart transplant.

"Well," I said "It means you get the life of God." So I said to him, "Would you like to be born again?" And he said, "Yes." "Well," I said, "listen. This evening when the sun sets you go to your hut, I'll go to my billet and you pray to be born again and I'll pray for you." So he said, "All right."

Next morning we met. I looked at him. I said, "Did you pray?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Did you get anything?" He said, "No." So I was disappointed, but the Holy Spirit whispered in my, "Remember he's a Muslim."

So I said, "Did you pray in the name of Jesus?" He said, "No." I said, "You have to pray in the name of Jesus if you want to be born again. Are you willing to do that?" He said, "Yes." "Well," I said, "this evening you go to your hut, I'll go to my billet, we'll pray. When I met him next morning I looked at him and I said, "You've got it." He said, "Yes I did." And everybody in the hospital heard about that. They came to me and said, "What happened to your friend Ali?" I said, "He got born again." They said, "What's that?" I said, "Let me tell you."

The commanding officer of the hospital sent for me and said, "What happened to your friend Ali?" I said, "He got born again." He was a Presbyterian. A good religious man but he didn't know

anything about the new birth. So as a result of that two of my fellow-soldiers came to the Lord.

Well, I want to say that all came out of that night of intense intercession for the people of the Sudan. And without travail, there will be no birth. Unless we travail in prayer we won't see any birth. It says, "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." As soon as the Church travails she'll begin to bring forth children.

Now I want to go to the next parable and this is my closing thought. And this is where it comes down to you. The next parable in Matthew 13:45-46. This is the parable I love. Verses 45 and 46.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Now there are different ways of applying this, but I want to give you one application which can make a change in your life. First of all I want to point out that he was a merchant. He was not a tourist. He was a man who spent all his life dealing in pearls, and he knew the real value of a pearl. And then he found this one pearl, so wonderful and so precious, that he sold all that he had to buy it.

This is a little modern version of it. But I can imagine him going home to his wife and saying, "Honey, I've sold our car." "You sold our car? Why did you do that?" "Well, I found a pearl." "A pearl? One pearl." "Yes." "Well thank God at any rate we still have a roof over our heads." "No, I sold our house too."

But you see he was a man who knew what things were worth. He found one pearl that was worth more than everything he had in life and he sold it all and bought the pearl.

Now I want you to think for a moment. There are many different ways to interpret this, but I want you to think of yourself tonight as that one pearl, uniquely beautiful and valuable pearl. You know that pearls are the result of suffering. Out of the suffering of an oyster that a pearl comes forth. So maybe you've been through suffering and you've begun to question whether God really loves you. And you've begun to think, Well, I'm not really worth much. I'm not important to God. There are other people who are important, but I'm not. I want to tell you that is not true. You are

important to God. So important to God that He gave His Son Jesus to die on the cross for you. You. Specifically you. Jesus sold all that He had. He left all the riches of glory in heaven, became a carpenter's son, became a traveling preacher, and when He died on the cross He literally owned nothing! He was buried in a borrowed robe in a borrowed tomb. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ Paul says, "That though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor. That you through His poverty might be rich." Jesus sold all that He had. He gave up everything for you. I know that He purchased the treasure in the field. That's God's people as a company. But He also purchased the one pearl of great price which is you. You. You in your weaknesses, your failures, your lack of understanding, your frustrations, your loneliness, your fears, Jesus died for you.

I really believe—I've convinced myself of this—that if no one else would ever have got save, Jesus would have died for me. If there had never been anybody else, thank God there are millions of others, but I like to make His love individual. I like to make it personal. I like to say for me He died, for me He gave up His throne, for me He laid down His life, for me He suffered on the cross, and He was buried. And then for me He rose, He ascended, He's at the Father's right hand.

Now if you have a problem with self-worth, if you have a low sense of self-esteem, you don't really feel that you matter very much to God or maybe to people—you may be lonely, you may be wondering how you ever got here—I want to tell you God brought you here. You have an appointment with God tonight. And I want you to think of yourself this way... I think of that merchant having bought the pearl, he's holding it in the palm of his hand, and he's looking down at it and he's saying, "You're beautiful. You're the most beautiful I ever saw. You cost me everything I had, but you were worth it. You are sooo beautiful." Now I want you to think that you, individually, are that pearl. You yourself. You're there in the palm of the Lord's hand and He's looking down at you and saying, "You're so beautiful. You cost me all I had, but I love you. I'm glad I died for you."

Now I want to help you a little further because I know from dealing with people how common this problem of a low sense of self-esteem is. I want to suggest that if you have a problem with believing that you're really valuable to God, that you stand to your feet here and I'm going to lead you in a specific prayer. You have a problem with self-esteem. Now don't be afraid, don't be ashamed. If you have that problem stand up. That's right.

Now we're not in a hurry. This is a very important and solemn moment. The devil did everything he could to prevent me from getting here tonight. But he's a defeated enemy.

Now I want you to think of yourself just now—for a little while shut everything else out and see yourself as the one pearl in the palm of the hand of Jesus and remember the palm bears the scars of His sufferings. I want you to think Jesus is speaking to you and He's saying, "You're beautiful. You cost me all I had, but you're worth it. I'm glad I gave my life for YOU." Can you perhaps say these words with that picture in your mind? Say these words after me. "Lord Jesus, I thank you that you died for me. That you gave Yourself on the cross, a death of agony and shame to purchase me. And Lord I belong to you. I'm Yours forever. I know You will never leave me. You will never forsake me. I'm graven on the palm of your hand. I'm beautiful in Your eyes. More beautiful than all the worlds You created, because You set Your love on me. And because you love me, Lord, I love You. Receive my love tonight. I just give myself afresh to You tonight. I thank You I'm not unwanted. I'm not unworthy, I'm not a castoff, I'm not rejected. I'm accepted in the beloved, in You Lord Jesus. I'm accepted. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you again and again!!! for that wonderful love which You poured out on the cross. Thank you, Lord."

Now those of you who have been standing, don't sit down for a moment. I want you to find somebody near to you. You may never have met them before, but I want you to look them right in the face and say, "I'm not rejected, I'm not unwanted. I'm precious to the Lord." Will you do that? Just turn around. Verbalize it. "I'm not rejected. I'm not unwanted. I'm precious to the Lord."