



And, well, that was pretty easy to believe then, when you're in that atmosphere of everybody believing that and not really working that hard and relaxing on the water and stuff. Well, things changed after the first day of real work, and I came home, and my views were definitely different. The fact that I had only become a Christian in May, through my involvement with youth group, I began to doubt what Vina had said, that it was God's purpose for me to be there, when I found myself teaching well-known Bible stories to four-year-olds that I had never heard before. One, I guess, really embarrassing part of the summer was when a whole bunch of kids were talking about the story of Jonah and the whale, which is pretty well known. I'm sure most of you know it. Well, they were saying how good a story it was, and I guess I just kind of had to nod, because I had never heard the story in my entire life. [ 5 : 56 ] And they were asking me how I liked it, and I said, oh, it was good, good, good. But, you know, that was one situation. But, yeah.

Yeah. In the second week, I was teaching a craft. This craft is a memory verse chain, where the children wrote down that day's memory verse on strips of different colored construction paper, which they then put together to form a chain, like the ones you put around your Christmas tree at Christmas.

Anyway, day five's memory verse had no real value to me then, but as I look back on it now, it had great significance.

The verse is Matthew 20, Matthew 20, verse 28. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

Looking back at that point in the summer, I can notice a change. I had come to the realization that there was actually a purpose for me in Montreal, that that purpose was revealed through the memory verse, to serve others, through the gifts God had revealed to me.

[ 7 : 08 ] I could have thought of better ways for God to have made me realize that point. I mean, he could have just sent down a piece of paper and dangle it in front of my face saying, you know, this is the situation, realize it.

But I found out God doesn't work that way. He chose to put me through a lot of things that I was unfamiliar with. He took all my securities away, put me in unfamiliar places and lifestyles that I hadn't been accustomed to.

And, like, in the first week, I was quite homesick. I remember phoning my family four times in a row in the same week.

I mean, I'd never really been away from home for more than two days, I think. I felt discouraged, lost, and I was questioning absolutely everything under the sun that was happening.

I had absolutely no faith whatsoever. Towards the third week, those feelings were beginning to leave me, and I was getting stronger, I felt. I had a lot more energy to entertain and teach children, which puzzled me somewhat.

[ 8 : 16 ] So I asked myself, who was giving me the strength to do this? Who was refilling me after each long, hard day with even more energy than I had the day before? I came to the conclusion that it must be God refilling my strength each day.

At that point, I found myself with a little more faith than I had had. It was, I guess, the only way God could work through me, by breaking down the old walls surrounding nothing and building from the inside to the outside.

He stripped me clean of my outer shell. The armor that protected me, he took away. I was standing there with nothing to protect me, but I believed strongly that he would protect me.

He made me conscious of the gifts he had blessed me with, but not to use them for my own glory, but to use them to serve others. When I was asked to give this testimony by Tama a few weeks ago, I said yes right away, not really thinking about what I really was doing.

I was kind of laid back and casual about the whole thing until about three days ago when I actually had to face reality and try to think of something to say in front of people.

[ 9 : 36 ] I had never really before now had a chance to reflect on what I learned in the summer. But now that I had to do this, I have a real reason.

I had a real reason to kind of sit down. Well, one night when I was sitting down thinking about it, I was reading the Bible and it so happened that I flipped, you know, I opened the Bible and I found myself staring at a passage in the Bible and it was 1 Peter 4, verse 10-11.

And I want to read that to you and I think because basically I think it says what I learned in the summer. Each one should use whatever gifts he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in various forms.

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

For me to grow strong in my relationship with God, I had to make a sacrifice of comfort and security, allowing everything that protected me and kept me safe to be taken away so that I could grow stronger.

[ 11 : 04 ] Thank you. Let's pray, just bowing your heads where you stand there. Our Father, you are Lord of Lords and you are the God of Gods.

And we are very transient creatures who live in a tiny speck of space through a tiny span of time. And in some wonderful way, you have chosen to make yourself unmistakably known to us.

Yet we too are big and important and we can offer an enormous amount of resistance. Lord, may we all hear you knocking at our hearts this night.

And may we have the grace to invite you in. And even that we acknowledge as a gift from you. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Somebody came late for the mission last night, several hours late.

[ 12 : 43 ] They were looking for treasure and nobody was here. So they cracked a window and then another window and reached in and opened the window and went inside and stole some of the church silver.

If only they'd come earlier. They think that stuff's worth something. And indeed it is, I'm sure. But it's not nearly worth what we are trying to give away free night after night after night, which is worth a million times more.

And so I hope you, I hope for that person that they might discover where the true wealth of the church is, and that is in the gospel which we preach, not the silver that we use and the communion service.

Some people are still very confused about that. Can I tell you to look at the passage that's for tonight, and it's Psalm 107.

[ 13 : 58 ] It's all printed out for you. But each night, just so you know what we're doing, we've added the introductory paragraph at the beginning and always closed with the last epilogue line at the end, and then the passage we're dealing with runs from he turns rivers into a desert down almost to the end.

And that's the passage we want to look at. I was very impressed to meet Lamb because I'd heard a lot about Lamb, and there is some hope that Lamb is going to move west and become part of a program of children's missions out here in British Columbia.

So that's very nice. And I was very grateful to hear from Lindsay and the things she had to say. And that trio was magnificent.

Yeah, that's all you could say about it. And I hope that we'll hear from them again and again. It's so surprising to me to see them here, and I was delighted to hear them here as well.

If you look at the passage that's on for tonight, you'll see there's wonderful contrasts running through it. And I would like you just to think about the contrasts for a moment.

[ 15 : 35 ] Rivers and deserts, springs and parched ground, desert and pools of water, fruitful lands and salty waste, hungry people.

And over against the hungry people comes, by the provision of a sovereign God, water, a dwelling place, a city, sown fields.

I don't know if you've ever flown across Canada and seen Alberta and Saskatchewan and Manitoba looking like great patchwork quilts of sown fields.

They also had vineyards, high yield. They got children. They had cattle. The Lord dealt with their oppressors and with their troubles and with their sorrows.

These were all the things that happened to the people that were hungry. God, in accordance with his sovereign purpose, dealt with them.

[ 16 : 35 ] Princes, or those men who rose up and lorded it over them, were treated with contempt and ended up wandering in a trackless waste.

Men who were living by their own power and exerting their own authority. There's another contrast in the same passage between the needy who were raised up from their need and who were set in families.

And then it says at the conclusion of the passage that the upright are glad to see this process going on and the wicked don't say anything at all.

Well, the reason is that if you look carefully at the passage, you will see that the problem of rivers and deserts, springs and thirsty ground, fruitful land and salty wastes, is because of the wickedness of the inhabitants.

Now, what I want to tell you about this is fairly simple. We in British Columbia are living at a time when apparently we have exploited the fish off the coast to such a dangerous level that we might be left without them.

[18:13] We have stripped the trees off the mountains. We've exhausted the minerals in the mines.

And we're in danger of creating a wasteland. It's happened before in the history of the world.

And the thing is that it says here is that the wickedness is the wickedness of the inhabitants of the country. Now, what I think that means is that the true resource of a country is not its mines or its lumber or its fish or its industry.

It's its people. If a country is wealthy, it's because of the people of that country. And there isn't enough mines in the world or trees or fish that if you have a country of greedy people, that it can meet all their needs.

It just can't happen. And so, you see, the needs of our greedy society are exhausting the natural resources of our country.

[19:39] And it's not because there wasn't an abundance of them, but there is a terrible distortion in the amount that we think we need. You people who are young people growing up in our society, what you're going to be told as you are let in in the secret of how our society works is that there's just a very few basic rules.

And as long as you don't break any of those rules and you are out for yourself, number one, only and exclusively, you will prosper and the land will prosper.

And that just ain't so. And the reason it's not so, we have known for a long time and we are reminded of in this song when it says that he turns rivers into a desert.

A river of resources are turned into a place that is dry and totally infertile. Because of the hearts of men and women.

Because of our greed. We think at the moment that if you want to know how the country is going, you should check the value of your BRIC shares, find out what happened on the Vancouver Stock Exchange, note the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and find out where the Toronto Stock Exchange Index is for the day.

[21:21] But that's not it at all. We need much more sensitive equipment than that. What we need is something that can measure not 300 stocks on the stock exchange, but a million hearts of the people that live in this province.

And measure the level of greed in their hearts. That'll tell you more about the prosperity of the country than anything else.

If you get another instrument that will measure the level of thankfulness in people's hearts, that'll tell you a lot about why a country is prosperous.

If you have something you can measure people's capacity for worship with, if you could only do that on a wide sample hour by hour, and the results fed into your computer, you would soon find out where the prosperity of the country comes from.

God considers men to be responsible. We're responsible for the way we live our lives. We are responsible for the condition of our hearts.

[22:34] And the land we live in is a reflection of the hearts of the people that live in it. And that's what this passage is saying.

And a lot of people feel sorry for young people because there's no jobs. And they want a government that's going to provide jobs for people.

And in that way, we want the resources of industry and mining and so on so that we can go on being as greedy as we are and exploiting the resources.

And God says that's not the way it works. God says, I'm in control and I will turn rivers into a desert and springs of water into a thirsty ground and a fruitful land into a salty waste because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

And so this passage opens up the condition of our hearts. We don't live as we looked at last night. [ 23 : 49 ] We don't live by right. We live only by permission. And the one who gives us permission, who gives us grace to live our lives, is God.

And we have to live as responsible to him. But it's not just land and resources. It's the wealth of our minds as well.

And our minds can go from being, you know, rivers of information, you know, streaming with new ideas, streaming with creativity, streaming with ideas.

It can move from that into a completely barren, depressed, discouraged, fruitless, meaningless sort of operation that's going on up here. And there's no ambition and no drive and nothing.

Nobody's going to solve that problem for us unless there is some change in us. When there is a change in us, then he turns desert into pools of water, parched lands into springs of water.

[ 24 : 59 ] And the hungry, the people who are really hungry, are going to find a place to dwell, a city to live in, fields to grow, vineyards to provide for us, and fruitful yields from them all.

All those things are going to belong because of that. And that's where a fruitful, creative, artistic people are going to come from.

The essential condition is the condition of men's hearts. There isn't enough, there isn't enough wealth in the world for the capacity, I mean, it's a completely bottomless pit, to try and satisfy the greed of men.

where you're hungry, hungry for, and in need, you get a different situation developed.

I'd like to show you how it works. And this is a little illustration I have to try and demonstrate for you. You take this point right here, which is the central point, you can all see that?

[ 26 : 13 ] I don't imagine you can, but there it is anyway. And up here, this way, you have this. And this is the rich.

got it? That's the rich. Down here is, the contrast is, the hungry.

Got that? And this contrast is, brought out in scripture, because it says, that, he fills the hungry, with good things, and the rich, he sends empty away.

Now, there's all sorts of, there's all sorts of variations on that. There's a lot of people who, think they're rich, and don't know how poor they are.

And one of the great discoveries you can make, is to discover, your own poverty. The poverty of your own heart. That's why Jesus says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[ 27 : 34 ] We can discover our own poverty, but we can also mask our own poverty, with what we think is riches. And what Mary says, in the Magnificat, is, that the hungry, he fills with good things, and the rich, he sends empty away.

So this thing is traveling, on a fulcrum like this, so that, it's going, the rich are going down, and the hungry are coming up, and they become rich, and then they go down, and then they come up, and then they go down.

And, she says, that's the cycle, the way our world works. Now, if you only belong, to my generation, we started off poor, and we've become richer, ever since.

Guess what happens next? The great advantage, of young people today, is that they're hungry. they're looking for something.

And if only they can realize, the full extent of their hunger, then, I think, the hungry will be fed, with good things, while the rich, are sent, empty away.

[ 28 : 44 ] Now, what I, what I mean by that, is that, if you, if you look here, you see, what, what, the way we live our lives, is that, we all want to, share the riches, of our world.

We all want a piece of this. Nobody wants to get caught hungry. We're really afraid, of being caught hungry. But what, this psalm, illustrates to us, is, that the hungry, are filled with good things.

And the rich, are sent, empty away. And what, what I think that means, is that, uh, is that, we need to be looking, at, at this.

Who are, the hungry people, in our world? We have, a, a doctor, in our congregation, who's, for most of his life, been a missionary, among, the Muslims.

And he is, uh, I warn you, to be careful, about meeting him, because you might be on, your way to the mission field, within weeks. But, uh, but he is, very much aware, of, the hungry people, in the world.

[ 30 : 04 ] Hungry, for the good news, of the gospel, of Jesus Christ. He's aware, of what resistance, there is, to the good news, of the gospel, of Jesus Christ, too.

But he knows, that the hunger, is there, in men's hearts. And that hunger, that hunger, is going to be, satisfied, by our God. And, uh, that's, one of the things, that's happening.

But you see, there's more than that. It's sort of, the awareness, that, when we find ourself, in the place of need, that's where God, can meet us. That's where God, can provide for us.

And that's why, as Christians, we should not, be orientated, in getting, a piece of the pie, up here. But sharing, the action, down here.

Because this is, the place, of God's blessing. This is the thing, that God is doing, in our day. And this is, why we need, to be concerned, with the prisoner, and the poor, and the third world, and the neglected, and the wounded, and the handicapped, and the retarded, and the people, who are hungry, spiritually hungry, for something, from God.

[ 31 : 25 ] Those people, are prepared. Well, it's not just, that they're prepared, but God is prepared, to meet them, in their distress, and to provide for them.

And our orientation, in this direction, is only like, joining a sinking ship. And young people, you get mixed up, about this.

Because your parents, very often, want you to share this. But if you're wise, about what God, is doing in our world, and how God, runs our world, you will know, that he turns rivers, into a desert, and springs of water, into thirsty ground.

That the hungry, are fed with good things, and the rich, are sent, empty away. Well, that's the picture. But then, there's another picture, which goes, with that.

And that's this one. And, and it's a picture, of, utter, and abject poverty. You can't, it's, it's the person, of, Jesus Christ, on the cross.

[ 32 : 44 ] And you see, what he does, and what we're told, by full, that he does, is that though, he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor, that you, through his poverty, might become, wonderfully rich.

And that what we need to do, is see that our lives, are gravitated, towards, this person, in his, dire, poverty.

Most people think, that if God, was to come among us, he would come among us, in some demonstration, of his, tremendous wealth. But he doesn't.

He comes among us, as, one who is, the poorest, of the poor. And not only is he, the poorest, of the poor.

Isaiah says, that he's not, the kind of person, that would attract you. He has, we're told, no form, or comeliness.

[ 33 : 53 ] He's not somebody, who by his, physical appearance, would attract you. He is, despised, by people. And you don't have, to travel far, to find, him, despised.

He is, rejected, by people. Proud, and self-sufficient, and arrogant people. Like we are, so often. Reject him.

I still, find it, hard, to name, the name, of Jesus Christ. It's all right, as a preacher, to stand up here, and do it. But in conversation, in, with ordinary people, without having on, my disguise, here, it's, it's hard, to talk about Jesus, because he is, the rejected, and the despised, and the despised, person. And you don't want, to join in, with the rejected, and the despised. But that's who he is. He is a man, of sorrows, and acquainted, with grief.

He is, stricken, smitten, afflicted, bruised, chastised, and nailed, to a cross.

[ 35 : 20 ] And I tell you, that this has, deeply offended, many, many people, in our world. the terrible, poverty, of Jesus Christ.

It's deeply offended, because he cannot be, who he claims to be, if this is the appearance, that he has. And this is the appearance, that he has.

For though he was rich, yet for our sakes, he became poor. That we, through his poverty, might find, a kind of, eternal, riches.

And so, that's why, St. Paul says about him, that, in his letter, to the Corinthians, he says, I am, I am resolved, to know nothing, among you, save, Jesus Christ, and him, crucified.

The thing, that you've got, to know, is the absolute, poverty, of who you are.

[ 36 : 36 ] You see, in our materialistic, and self-sufficient, scientific world, we think, we have, most of what, it's possible to have, and know, most of what, it's possible to know.

that's the way, our world thinks, that's the way, our world behaves. And we think, we're spending, the years of our lives, trying to get, the two or three percent, of what there is, to get our hands on it. And it's a scramble. But when you come to know, the man who is despised, and rejected, stricken, smitten, afflicted, bruised, and chastised, then you will discover, that all your riches, are as, filthy rags.

That you just don't have, anything. In terms of what, it is meant, that you should have. You will, I hope you like, this is one of the, really nice verses, in scripture.

Nice and hard on people. That is. But, in, in, in, in Revelations, chapter three, it talks about, people saying, I am rich, I have prospered, I need nothing, not knowing, not knowing, St. John writes, that they are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

[ 38 : 15 ] So that when you see Jesus Christ, on the cross, smitten, afflicted, bruised, chastised, you suddenly discover, he's like me.

He's the one, that I belong to. There's the person, that understands, who I am. And so he asks us, to put our faith, and trust in him.

And to be, obedient to him. He asks us, not to be, surfeited, with the fullness, of all that we have, in our world.

But to recognize, the poverty, of mind, and heart, and spirit, and pocketbook. Ah, to recognize, that poverty, as being the true condition, of our lives.

And to recognize, that the way, our sovereign God, works, is that he is concerned, for the poor.

[ 39 : 26 ] For he himself, though he was rich, yet for your sake, and my sake, he became poor.

He became despised, he became rejected, he behaved, he fell under, the curse of God. And as such, he's the one, that we're to turn to.

And you see, young people, all of us, human beings, we don't move that way. We move for the satisfaction, of our greed, and our desire.

We want, and we want, and we want, and we want. And if we really want, Jesus says, we will identify, with the poverty, of our world.

We will identify, with the despised, and the rejected, Jesus Christ. And we will recognize, that he, by his poverty, has made us rich, beyond, all that we can imagine.

[ 40 : 39 ] I want to stop, and sing a hymn now. And the hymn is number 56, in your book. And it describes, in the words of one man, John Newton, how rich we are.

Turn, will you, to 56. This verse, once again. He has promised good to me, His word, my hope, sing yours.

He will not cheer, and portion me, as long as life may be.

Please be seated. I feel a little bit lost, in talking to you, in trying to, to, to share with you, this point, this one point, that I want to make.

But, you know, we've talked about, the wanderer, and how, the wanderer, came to the point, where, he cried out, to the Lord, in his distress, and the Lord, heard him.

[ 42 : 24 ] And then we talked about, the, the prisoner, who from his, stinking dungeon, cried out, to the Lord, in his distress.

And the Lord, set him free. And then how, the sick, fool, filled with guilt, and not deserving, anything, cries out, to the Lord, in his distress, and the Lord, hears him, and rescues him, from all his distress.

And then how, the person who is, totally overwhelmed, by the raw, violence, of the nature, of the world, in which we live, cries out, to the Lord, in his distress.

Well, the thing that, all those pictures, are saying is, that God, is in, in control. The way, for the wanderer, freedom, for the prisoner, healing, for the sick, and peace, for the overwhelmed.

And this section, we've dealt with tonight, is to say, that the man, on the cross, is in control. But he's only, in control, of you, consciously, when you, let him in.

[ 43 : 53 ] That, that verse, from Revelations, chapter three, and I read a part, that part where, you say, I am rich, and I have need, of nothing. And don't know, that you're poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked.

You don't know, the poverty. And, what you should do, is you should, cry out to the Lord, and say, Lord, I will not live, with this poverty.

I will not live, without knowing you. I will not live, without the riches, that you've promised me. I will not try, to do this thing, on my own.

And I don't care, how rich, or powerful, you might be, unless you come to terms, with your own, poverty, in terms of, God's loving purpose, for you.

you're badly deceived. The Bible is all in favor, of great wealth, except for one thing, that the people, who have it, are very easily, deluded.

[ 45 : 10 ] there was a time, when, when the saints, you know, the monks, and people like that, used to, used to try, and live, with begging bowls, in their hands, so that everything, they ate, would come, by, the mercy of God.

they used to, seek, to be, ill, so that in their, illness, they would see, the grace of God, at work.

Some of them, subjected their bodies, to, freezing water, for hours, and hours, in hope, that in their, physical suffering, they might see, the reality of God.

You don't have to do that. your poverty, and our, our need, is all around us, and you just have to see, and to see, that that poverty, has been met, through Jesus Christ.

The one who, says, to you, I stand, at the door, and knock, and you open the door, I don't kick it down. And, you acknowledge me, to be, sovereign, in your life.

[ 46 : 37 ] I don't force, my will upon you. He says, you can go to hell, and mean it, quite literally, because you have, the freedom, to do that.

But, he says, if you will, open the door, I will come in, and suck with you, and you with me.

And, that's up here. You know, that's what the psalm, is all about. It's not, that you are born, to be, the captain, of your fate, and the master, of your destiny.

It's not, that you are, to live your life, for the gratification, of your own greed. It's that you are, to, consciously, and deliberately, choose, the thing, which God, has prepared, for you.

And, that thing, which he's prepared, for you, is to live, in fellowship, with his son, Jesus Christ. and, you might, mistake, who Jesus Christ is, because he is, despised, and rejected.

[ 47 : 56 ] And, yet, he is, the king of kings, and lord of lords, and is, not going to, force himself, upon you.

the epilogue service, which follows, over in the chapel, right after this service, is a very, simple way, of, in a sense, saying, Lord, I open the door.

I want you, to come in, and be, my master, and my lord. I want you, to, I want you, to be, my true wealth, my true riches.

And, and that's, what you'll have, an opportunity, to do. I think, I told somebody, earlier this week, that, in a sense, we're looking, for, a verdict, from you.

And, your verdict, doesn't take, very long, to give. You know, a trial, may last, many months, and the jury, may be out, for many days.

[ 49 : 15 ] When the verdict, is given, it only takes, a moment. And, the purpose, of the epilogue service, is to provide, a place, where you, can give, the verdict, to the person, who's knocking, at the door.

And, you can say, come in. , engag■■■, Amen. For all our hearts, and mind, and body, for our homes and loved ones, for all his beautiful and beautiful beauty, God above all, we thank you for giving your Son, to our Savior and friend, and in all the time of your joy, and to you, and helping others to know about you.

For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God. The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look upon us with favor and grant us his peace. Amen. You seated? During the last...