

No Compromise

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Preacher: John French

[0:00] Good morning, church. It's good to be here. I'm with you and part of the team now. So if you've been away on holidays, John French, I did do a summer series last year on the Upside Down Kingdom from the Sermon on the Mount, and my role here is Director of Missions. So it's good to be here with you and sharing someone who has inspired me. So where do you find inspiration? Who do you look up to and think, I'd like to be like that person? One day I would just like to be like...

and fill in the blank. And who is it for you? If it was to be a fictional person for me, it's a little bit of Indiana Jones, but let's go real people. As Christians, we're actually to look to the example of Jesus Christ. Follow the example of Jesus. Be like Jesus. But Jesus is God's son.

He's perfect. It's kind of a bit of a high bar. So it's pretty hard to fill those shoes. So it's a good thing for us to look to those who have journeyed and gone before us and draw inspiration for how they've struggled in their walk and they've been bold and they've persevered to see how Jesus changed and shaped and transformed them and draw inspiration from them. Because it's on their shoulders that we stand. This summer, we've been looking at inspirational Christians, those who run the race, who faithfully sought to follow Jesus' commands and his mission to go and tell the world, living and loving like Jesus. So we've heard from Diedrich Bornhofer and Adoniram Judson and John Patton last week. So a person who's inspired me is someone a bit more recent. You may have heard of him. I'd be surprised if you haven't. It's the singer-songwriter Keith Green.

Now, I've listened to his music over the years, but it was actually reading this biography, which I think is on the list that Nick's putting out, No Compromise, and it's written by his wife, Melody, that really inspired me as I got to know the person behind the music that I'd listened to when I was growing up. So I'm going to share a few pieces of his bio and then how Keith Green has inspired me and hopefully will encourage us to run the race in 2023. So Keith Green, he was born in 1953. He was a pianist, singer and songwriter, and he was originally from Brooklyn, New York, but he moved to California when he was young and grew up in California. He took to music at a young age and before he was two, his mum said he had perfect pitch when he sang his baby songs. He learned the ukulele at three, the guitar at five, and the piano at seven. At the age of eight, he received positive reviews in the Los Angeles Times, and at age 11, having written 40 original songs, he signed a contract with Decca Records, becoming the youngest person ever to sign with the American Society of

Composers, Authors and Publishers. Keith Green had a Jewish background and heritage, and he grew up reading a range of religious holy texts. His parents were a little bit liberal, and it left him open-minded but confused and deeply unsatisfied. As a child protege, there were high expectations, conditions. But as a teen, his music career failed. And this is around the same time that you remember Donnie and Marie Osmond, their career was skyrocketing, his just didn't. So he ran away from home. He began smoking marijuana and used some psychedelics in hopes of finding spiritual truth. He became interested in Eastern mysticism and the free love culture. And after experiencing what Keith Green described as a bad trip, he abandoned drug use and became interested in philosophy and theology. So when Keith was 19, he met with a fellow spiritual seeker and musician named Melody Steiner. They were inseparable and got married a year later on Christmas Day in 1973. They weren't Christians then, but they thought Jesus was a pretty groovy guy, so let's get married on Christmas. He now had a partner in his spiritual and musical quest. In 1975, Jesus opened his eyes. And as a Jewish person, he became a believer that Jesus is the [4:46] Messiah. A week later, he convinced Melody and Melody also embraced Jesus. Having made that step, Keith Green didn't do anything half-hearted. He was always someone that was very bold. And back in those days, people would label him a Jesus freak. Green later stated that in the

midst of his scepticism when he was searching, he had been lost in a fantasy till God's love broke through. And that's one of the lyrics in one of his songs, Love Breaks Through. Their newfound Christian faith was put straight into action. As soon as Keith opened his heart to Jesus, he and Melody opened their home, which was quickly nicknamed the greenhouse. Anyone with a need. Single mums, the homeless, those affected by drugs and domestic violence. The requirement, they had to remain clean if they were going to live there, and they had to be open to hear all about Jesus. They ran studies every day. Not only did his life take a radical change, so did his music. His quest for stardom ended, and his songs reflected the absolute thrill of finding Jesus, and were often birthed during his own spiritual struggles. He was really aware of the hypocrisy of religion, and how every time we point the finger and make judgments, there's always three pointing back at ourselves. And he was always self-reflective. And he actually was quoted as saying, he was constantly praying, please change my heart and convict me of my sin. He was bluntly honest, calling a spade a spade. So when he made mistakes, he would talk about them, believing we miss something essential when we overlook the frailty and brokenness of humanity and in ourselves.

He struggled with the same things we all do, developing self-discipline, deadlines, bad attitudes, selfishness. He knew he was far from perfect. For Keith Green, meeting Jesus was one thing. Becoming more like him was another. And I'm just going to, throughout this talk, I'm just intersperse it with a few clips of his songs, and we're going to listen now to a bit of his song, I want to be more like Jesus.

I want to be more like Jesus. I want to be more like Jesus.

I want to be more like Jesus. I want to be more like him.

[7:58] I need to be more like him. I need to be more like him.

Our Father's will was done by giving us the Son who paid the highest cost to point us to the the Lord's will be more like him.

And when I think of him, taking on the whole world's sin, I take one look at me. Compared to what I'm called to be.

I want to be more like Jesus. I want to be more like Jesus.

I want to be more like him. Remember, there's no brain in love. You can lay down your life for a friend.

[9:11] I can keep going. Just out of interest, show of hands, who knows Keith Green? Wow, I'm glad I'm bringing this up then as well.

Like, get into his music. I know it's quite falsetto. It's hard to sing along to in that key, but amazing. I want to be more like Jesus. Just, it's amazing inspirational stuff.

Keith Green came to a deep understanding of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Both to forgive sins and to love one another. Knowing that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

Evangelism was at his heart. As he walked with Jesus, he was motivated by God's love. And learned each day more and more about God's grace. And in a busy schedule, he went hard.

The importance of pausing simply to behold God's glory and enjoy his presence. His message was clear. Match your beliefs with your life.

[10:14] He's quoted as saying, If you praise and worship Jesus with your mouth, and your life does not praise and worship him, there's something wrong. He was a prolific songwriter and produced a number of albums with Sparrow Records.

He would give them away for whatever people could afford. And he'd even give them away for free. Hundreds of thousands of records have gone into prisons and to the poor without charge.

Melody and Keith established last days ministries and relocated to East Texas. He appeared on many TV and radio programs. He toured offering free concerts.

He'd go on university campuses and stadiums. Performed to tens of thousands of people. Always with a desire to share the good news of Jesus. Finishing each concert with an altar call.

He'd play songs and talk in between it and reference the Bible. He'd have an invitation for you to give your life to Jesus. And thousands upon thousands came to Jesus. Wherever he went, he saw the great need.

[11:18] And he was frustrated that Christians were sitting back and settling for comfortable mediocrity. And so we're going to listen to a clip now.

It's called, a little bit again, it's called A Sleep in the Light. And sort of wake up Christians. You've got this message of light and you're living life, not sharing that with others. Let's have a listen to

some of this now.

Go to Abn Mount ■■■æ, Höngst 1. Our focus is on Sunday of O pc. S-find 5, AM, 2019 of the CLO Dihole Do you see, do you see, all the people sinking down Don't you care, don't you care, are you gonna let them drown How can you be so numb, not to care if they come You close your eyes and pretend the job's done Oh bless me Lord, bless me Lord, you know it's all I ever hear No one aches, no one hurts, no one even sheds one tear But he cries, he weeps, he bleeds, and he cares for your needs

And you just lay back and keep slow banging in Oh, can't you see, it's such a sin Cause he brings people to your door And you turn them away As you smile and say God bless you, be at peace And all heaven just weeps Cause Jesus came to your door You've left them out on the streets The world is sleeping in the dark That the church just can't fight Cause it's asleep in the light How can you be so dead When you've been so well fed

Jesus rose from the grave And you, you can't even get out of bed Do we see the people sinking down Do we care about the lost Or are we gonna let them drown You know, mission isn't my job It's not Steve's job It's not Jess's job It's all of us In all walks of life Wherever you are Sharing the love of Jesus Keith Green had big plans There was so much more he wanted to do He wanted to go to the mission fields Of the nations And into secular clubs To reach people with his music However it wasn't to be On Wednesday, July 28th, 1982 Keith was killed in a plane crash And God called him home To be with Jesus The crash took his three-year-old son, Josiah And his two-year-old daughter, Bethany Melody was home with their own One-year-old, Rebecca And she was actually also Six months pregnant With a fourth child, Rachel Keith Green was only 28

[14 : 46] Keith Green inspires me How can we all draw inspiration From him to run the race? His music may be of its time But the lyrics remain thoughtful Theological And powerful Go on Spotify Download some Get a playlist They're amazing Apart from his music for me It was his no-compromise attitude Keith Green uncompromisingly Flexed the two key muscles Of Christianity Conviction And compassion Conviction Jesus is the way And the truth And the life No one No one comes to God Except through Jesus Keith put God first He was full-on for Jesus He lived what he believed No compromise Keith said I only want to build God's kingdom And see it increase

Not my own If someone writes A great poem No one praises The pencil they used They praise the one Who created the poem Well I'm just a pencil In the hands of the Lord Don't praise me Praise him On one occasion He locked himself In his van overnight And he didn't sleep A wink As he spiritually Wrestled with God Over the command To love the Lord Your God With all your heart And soul And mind And strength How are you going With that Well he wrestled With that And he was praying For guidance And direction With the struggle Of putting God First in his life Number one Even before his family That he so dearly loved And he emerged In the morning And through tears Went to the piano And played melody The piece that he composed And it's called I Pledged My Life to Heaven For the gospel Compassion Free concerts Records An open home Houses for victims Of domestic violence Drug rehab Prison ministry He lived a generous life Of loving others The way Jesus loves His attitude Of no compromise Conviction And compassion Came out in his lyrics Of his songs And how he lived his life We had that Bible reading From Nolan a moment ago From Psalm 51 And it's an amazing He puts that to music Creating me a clean heart Again listen to that later It is powerful And just listen And meditate on those words He wrote Asleep in the light I want to be more like Jesus He wrote Song to Josiah Even though Josiah was three And killed in the plane accident He was confronted By this young boy And the world That he was going To grow up into And a lyric from that says If I And for all the parents here You can I think Understand His sentiment Behind this And if I could I would protect you From what you will see The world is so enticing But it's dead to me And I'll show you If you will listen And I'll promise To listen to But probably the song That influenced me the most Growing up in my teen years And in my struggle With Christianity And coming to faith Was the prodigal son sweet And again That's a piece You really need to sit down And listen to It goes for nearly 12-15 minutes And it's based on Luke 15 The son who had wandered From his father And squandered his inheritance And came back Seeking forgiveness I remember always believing There was a God And that Jesus died And rose again But I was living a double life I remember As a teenager At school Doing the thing at home And going to church With the family But then being a different person Around my friends And not meshing My faith Together I actually remember Praying a prayer Jesus I know you're going to return And probably soon But I know what I'm doing is wrong Please don't return yet That's nuts

But I remember praying that Thankfully by God's grace He hadn't returned yet And still hasn't The prodigal son Sweet spoke to me The son who left home To pursue independence Only to find out That his disconnect From his family And following his own heart Left him empty And destitute The reminder in the song I once was lost But now I'm found Was dead But now I'm alive Through Jesus We find ourselves In the hands of God So we're going to listen To that conclusion now So here's a spoiler If you've never heard The song before This is the crescendo This is the end of it And it really still gets me So let's have a listen To this ending I was near home In sight of a howl My father just stayed Dropped open his mouth

[19:52] He ran up the road And fell to my feet And cried And cried Father I've sinned Heaven's ashamed I'm no longer worthy To wear your name I've learned that my home Is right where you are Oh father take me in So let's have a listen

Bring the best rope, put it on my son Shoes for his feet, hurry, put them on This is my son who I've got at times Prepare a feast for my son's life I prayed and prayed, never heard a sound My son was lost, oh thank you God he's found My son was dead and now alive

Prepare a feast for my son's life My son was dead, my son was lost My son returned in the hands of God Alright, so powerful It's a picture of, you know, God just embracing all those who return and just running to them It's just, maybe this has given a bit of insight for you guys of what drives me Seeing people sinking down, needing to know Jesus We can't compromise the message of Jesus' love and forgiveness We need everyone to know the hope we can have in Christ This is the truth Conviction and compassion This is the great imperative Jesus has commissioned us all with Keith Green, forgiven, he's home with God We don't know how much time we have left When Keith got in that plane that day He didn't know that that would be his last Let's make the most of the time that we have As people inspire us We too can be inspirational What will be our legacy?

What will count in the long run Is if we invite people to know Jesus If we inspire them and point them to Jesus As we run the race in 2023 Be inspired to live for Christ To show conviction and show compassion And while we've hopefully been inspired by others We're actually, we aren't called to be like other Christians We're called to be like Christ Follow Jesus uncompromisingly Trust God and get going Speak the word in love with gentleness and respect Remember Keith's words If you praise and worship Jesus with your mouth And your life does not praise and worship him There's something wrong Remember this A Christian is a walking sermon They preach far more than a minister does For they preach all week long

[24:29] Let's pray Heavenly Father, we just thank you that Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses Let us throw off everything that hinders And the sin that so easily entangles And let us run with perseverance The race marked out for us Fixing our eyes on Jesus The pioneer and perfecter of faith For the joy set before him He endured the cross Scorning its shame And sat down at the right hand of the throne of God Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners So that we will not grow weary and lose heart Lord, strengthen us to run the race In such a way as to win the prize When we focus on Jesus We do not run aimlessly As we are convicted of the truth May we share the hope we have Like the host of witnesses that have gone before us May we love like Jesus Showing compassion And speak the truth in love

Amen I just wanted to share some lyrics From one of Keith Green's songs Make my life a prayer to you I want to do what you want me to No empty words No white lies No token prayers No compromise I want to shine the light you gave Through your son you sent to save us From ourselves and our despair It comforts me to know that you're really there Well I want to thank you now for being patient with me Oh it's so hard to see When my eyes are on me I guess I'll have to trust And just believe what you say

Oh you're coming again Coming to take me away I've been challenged this morning I hope you have too Is God speaking to you now?

Perhaps there's an area of your life Where you're compromising You might openly with words Bargain with God And say Lord You can have this But not that part of my life But the way you live Might demonstrate that to God Perhaps there's Certain times of the day Or days of the week That you haven't handed over to the Lord Perhaps there's a relationship in your life That's not honouring to God Perhaps your relationship With the internet Social media Are you honouring the Lord in all that way?

Have you handed that over to him Or have you compromised your Christianity In that part of your life? Please take some time today To examine your own soul Your own life Perhaps examine your

priorities Perhaps there are parts of your life You just need to surrender to him No compromise No compromise That's the way the Lord wants us to live He doesn't want just parts of us He wants every part of us He wants us to be fully committed I don't want to live That's what I've heard He wants us to Surfers That's how we do approach the Lord And it also helps us To advance the Lord And It's a good But who does that■ samsung She wants every day Don't miss Even us To be