

The Message - EVERYTHING

- *PLAY JOHN SMYTH DVD – 5 minutes*

INTRODUCTION

Today we are honouring those who gave everything in the Vumba massacre. It is right not to forget these people. But this was not a one off tragedy - we also honour those who today are laying their lives down for Jesus and His gospel. In doing so we take this opportunity to reflect on our own lives and to make sure we kneel in surrender to King Jesus.

So many have nearly given everything, they nearly entered the victory place of total devotion but stopped short of 'everything'.

Will we give everything today?

- Matt 7:12 So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you.
- Matt 13:46 Parable of the Pearl - When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.
- Matt 18:26 Parable of the Unmerciful Servant – At this the servant fell on his knees and begged “Be patient with me and I will pay back everything.”
- Matt 19:27 – Peter answered Jesus “We have left everything to follow you.”

Will we give everything today?

(Tell the story of John Huss, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and/or Majsobtsova – see below)



John Huss, a Czech priest, a key predecessor to the Protestant movement of the 16th c. Before the Catholics burned him at the stake, lying in chains in prison he wrote this:

Without you I cannot do anything and especially, for your sake I cannot go to a cruel death. Grant me a ready spirit, a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, and a perfect love, that for your sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Pastor, whose book *The Cost of Discipleship* is a classic. He was part of a staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship. He was executed by hanging in April 1945 while imprisoned at a Nazi concentration camp, just 23 days before the German surrender.

He wrote these words before his death:

Suffering willingly endured is stronger than evil; it spells death to evil ... The worse evil, the readier must the Christian be to suffer.



Maria Skobtsova began her early life as an atheist then a catholic and then by a fresh look at the humanity of Christ where she wrote: “He also died. He sweated blood. They struck his face.” She became a Christian. Her and her father helped many Jews escape the occupation.

On Easter Saturday 1945 at the Ravensbruck concentration camp she took the place of a Jewish woman who was going to the gas chamber, one day before the Red Cross liberated the camp.

She wrote these words as she went: *Lord, I am your messenger. Throw me like a blazing torch into the night.*

CONTENT

Jesus never asked us to do something he never did himself.

Luke 13:31-33: *Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, “Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You.”³² And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.’³³ “Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.*

Jesus gave everything:

1 | Performance religion will never lead to everything

Verse 31: at that time some Pharisees came to Jesus.

a. There were around 6,000 Pharisees: some full time, some professional students, others had jobs. They believed in the Old Testament as well as explanation and application.

e.g. what does it mean to obey the Sabbath rule of no work?

- A tailor couldn't carry a needle in his jacket on the evening before the Sabbath in case it was still in his pocket when the Sabbath came.
- Healing the sick was work.
- Careful details of what was being worn or carried: a woman's hairclip is it worn or carried? If carried it is a burden and so work.
- Example today: to open a fridge door you must disconnect the light the night before the Sabbath, lest you violate the rule “do not light a fire on the Sabbath”, modern day kindling is light. Letting warm air into the fridge also causes a problem because that will cause the compressor to activate before it would otherwise have. This would cause the compressor to spark, also a violation. So, install a timer to run the compressor at set intervals, rather than a thermostat, which the doors opening would indirectly affect.

b. But of course they could never find enough things to do to satisfy the thought that God was pleased. If by living a good life you are trying to satisfy yourself, others and/or God then it is never enough.

c. Moralistic religion: “I obey therefore God accepts me.”

Gospel: “I am accepted by God through Jesus and therefore I obey.”

d. The Pharisees were more interested in the performance of works to get to God than the relationship with God. This is legalism and there are never enough works. Performance will never lead to everything.

2 | Leaving early is NOT everything

a. Someone will always want you to back off, back down, do less, calm down or just leave.

The Pharisees want Jesus in Judea and Jerusalem where they could watch him and trap him.

But Jesus was on the road for everything.

b. Christians have more prophetic words from God on leaving than they do in going forward, overcoming the problem, dealing with the issue, carrying out their destiny.

c. The temptation is so divine, it is so wise, and it can appear like god.

“Leave the road of difficulty. Leave the road of dedication. Think of yourself.”

d. Jesus said: I will not leave until I have given everything.

3| The fear of losing opposes the giving of everything

Verse 31 Herod wants to kill you; **Verse 32** Go and tell that fox.

a. What is your worst fear right now?

The fear of not having enough, the fear of not experiencing it all, the fear of being hurt, the fear of being left alone? Fear is calling you NOT to give everything.

b. Jesus is heading for his death. When a person is committed to giving everything then the suggestion that the person will lose something, if not everything, is not a fear but an encouragement.

c. Jesus sees Herod as a fox, a schemer, sly and crafty. Watch out not for the big foxes but the small ones.

4| Prior to everything is persistence

Verse 32-33 I will ... keep going

a. Can you stand firm in green pastures? Can you stand firm in the valley of the shadow of death? I will reach my goal! Jesus never lost sight of His goal.

- What was it that caused Moses to give up and ask God to kill him (Numbers 11)?
- After experiencing a wonderful revival at Nineveh why did Jonah want to curl up and die? (Jonah 4)
- What made Elijah move from Mount Carmel to a cave and wallow in self-pity? (1 Kings 19)

b. It seems that every person who ever achieved anything, every person who became all that they could become, battled at some point with discouragement.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9: We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed in our hearts we felt the sentence of death.

Paul wasn't specific about the details and we don't know why he was despairing of even living any longer. But, he wanted to let the Corinthians know that he had suffered and that he had overcome.

c. Your determination will silence the voice of discouragement and enable you again to excel in passion.

- How can discouragement beat me when I am determined in my purpose of life:

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

- How can discouragement beat me when I am determined in my service:

Joshua 24:15 Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

- How can discouragement beat me when I am determined in my status as a Christian:

Romans 8:37 In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

d. A CODE OF PERSISTENCE by Herman Sherman

- I will never give up so long as I know I am right.
- I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on until the end.
- I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
- I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goals.
- I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.

- I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.
- I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women have had to fight defeat and suffering.
- I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me.

It's never too late to become determined again.

e. You may have experienced failure, you may have been overwhelmed with discouragement and you may have quit from everything in your life, but TODAY you can receive His touch on your life and rise in a new level of determination. When you think it's all over God comes in and says, "We haven't begun yet, I am about to light the fire of passion in your life."

- God came to Jonah and brought understanding to his situation.
- He came to Moses and challenged him with the question: 'Is the LORD'S arm too short?' meaning 'Watch this space'
- He came to Elijah and called him out of the cave and into the place of the still small voice of God and brought balance to his life.

It is never too late.

f. One day you will meet Christ face to face and I think we all will say:

"Jesus thank you for enduring so much. Thank you for being so determined to go to the place of passion, the place of suffering, the cross. Because you remained in that place, you purchased my freedom, my sins were forgiven, my life transformed, you changed my world and guaranteed my eternity."

5 | His everything was everything

Verse 33 *He came to die*

a. Jesus himself has nowhere to lay his head. His calling was to serve God through the wandering life of a rabbi, walking from village to village, calling people; long days, dusty hills, dependent on hospitality.

b. We are natural survivors and controllers of our lives. We need to lose self-rule.

Jesus' death shows us:

- The cross is the place of death not beauty
- Giving everything is to say goodbye to our plans
- Dead men do not sin
- Everything is the only way

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

CONCLUSION

One day we will meet people in heaven who have given everything. We will meet Jesus. We will meet the Elim Vumba missionaries who were killed. We will meet the present martyrs of the faith. They will say to us, "It was tough down there on earth wasn't it? It was hard to give everything but we are so grateful we did. How was it for you?" What is our response today?