

Side B Tape# 105

. . . . this is in an Anglican setting, and when the Bishop had said the grace, everything was closing, so that the Bishop was closing but the Spirit was beginning. (laughter) Because, no sooner had my Lord Bishop finished the grace than this fellow stood up weeping, a big politician, and said, "Please don't stop my Lord, I'm coming. I want to come to Jesus now." The Bishop loves the Lord Jesus very much so he said, "Oh bless you, come along." So he stayed there. And this man walked and the crowd looked on, 15,000 people outside, and this man was notoriously well-known as one of those characteristic politicians, I don't mean the good ones (laughter). You do have good ones once in a while, but they are very rare. I wish there were more. This was not one of the rare ones. So, he came forward and he stood in the front and he said, with tears running down his cheeks he said, "I want to tell you all, I am a corrupt politician." That was the first time he ever said that, that adjective 'corrupt'. He had known, you know, he had called himself a politician, but now somehow in a strange way he has put an adjective 'corrupt' politician. Do you know what the crowd did? They all clapped. Which means, "We know of course." (laughter) And then he turned round and he said, he said, "But the game is over, that corrupt thing is over. Someone has paid me a special visit. Jesus has come my way. Please forgive me," he said.

Oh, the sweeping atmosphere, there was a hush as he went deeper the Spirit of God touching him, and he just opened his heart and told his miserable story, but redeemed, restored, released, and people were in tears. You know that day, when that man sat down, before he sat down he called on a pastor whom he had hated in this political game. And he said, "There is

a man here whom I have hated," and many people knew it, and he said, "I want you to come and to tell you that our war now is over, Jésus has come." The pastor jumped to his feet, mind you, don't think that the pastor was clean in the game, he too had something to do with it. So, the priest came jumping up and they both embraced publicly, forgiving one another, each admitting his particular side in the mess, but praising Jesus who unmessed the mess for them.

But when they were through, I want to tell you the beautiful thing, we couldn't stop the meeting. The meeting went on for the next hour. People were standing up, all sorts, young people, all sorts, more than a hundred people stood up in that meeting accepting Christ, making their way to the cross. It was a beautiful service, and we all were touched. The Gospel is the good news of God. And Paul says, "I am not ashamed if it can do that." If it can liberate that politician and give him the courage to say, "I am a corrupt politician," which means, it's over now, then we can't be ashamed of this good news. It is the power of God unto salvation or rescue for everyone who believes.

Before I came here I had one of those unusual chances of preaching the gospel for we had my little team in which I work, my colleague in Africa and myself, two of us make a team. We were given this unusual chance to speak to the soldiers of Uganda, my country, to spend a whole month visiting each barracks and speaking to the men, the officers and the men of the armed forces. We had prayed about this dream and we presented it to the President, and the President is a Moslem so we just held our hearts whether the permission will ever be given. He gave it in March. Not only did he give the permission, he gave the authority, he even gave us a landrover, an army landrover and a soldier to drive us and a captain to accompany us.

And then he passed on the order, the order went to each commander of every battalion. "A team is coming of evangelists." He's a Moslem remember, Idi Amin. "...of evangelists. They don't come to speak to a particular denomination, their message is for all men. Give them a hearing." From the President, the Commanding Chief of the Armed Forces. You can imagine what we got. Everytime we came to the barracks we were received as the guests of His Excellency, of course, which is a wonderful thing, we never had that before. And then the next thing was, the order was given and all the soldiers and their wives, Moslem, Catholics, non-religious groups, they all came, and they all sat there, and we were told, "You can^{now} preach to them for as long as you want to." It was beautiful. The hunger of these men. The response that came. The Moslems coming to say, "Thank you, I've never heard that before." Moslems! It was great. Pray for the seeds which have been planted. We did have those who came right through, but we had many who received the seed and who kept saying, "Can't you come again? Can't you come every month?" We said, "We can't. But God is there, we don't have to go. This is living word, when you plant it the Spirit is there to breathe upon it and bring new life."

So, pray for those soldiers, and we have had these unusual openings in Africa, and I don't like to bother you, but I want to say this; do you know that you are meant as a christian to get into that exciting, realistic, concrete personal experience of Jesus Christ? I mean the person. I don't mean the feeling. Have you ever actually, personally responded to that exciting news that God loves you exactly as you are knowing who you are? Isn't that a tremendous thing? Don't you find it terribly hard to love people as they are when you know who they are? I mean, I know my wife loves me, but my, what a job she has to put up with the kind of bits and pieces

of meanness which keep popping up once in a while. God has given her grace to love me, but I think, rather, the important thing is she knows Jesus loves me, so she's stuck with me anyway. (laughter) When you know that Jesus loves them, you are stuck with them. It's not a question of choosing to love them or not. Paul says, "We are under compulsion. The love of God compels us to love them." Because they are loved by Him we are bound to love them, and we become utterly miserable when we don't love them, because God keeps saying, "I love them." And you say, "I don't like them." "Yes," He says, "I like them." So what are you going to do? You keep them outside and He is outside with them, you see, and you are in the cold alone. So you'd better begin to get into the game of knowing you are loved and respond to that love. Let it release you and set you free for humanity. For America, for Africa, for India, for these countries, get into the business of your Lord. It's exciting.

I have not done very much, and I'm a poor, one of those poor disciples. I'm learning, however, He's dealing with me, you know. It's a poor preacher who preaches without being dealt with, but I think the preachers greatest blessing is that he's preaching and what he's preaching is dealing with him at the same time. You see? It's a two edged sword, it cuts there and then cuts you. This is why it is a blessing for me, and it keeps me fresh, everywhere I go, you know, I'm talking to people about love and then the Spirit says, "But you didn't love that friend, did you?" You see? After preaching he says, let me tell you one experience. I was preaching in Madras, India, two of us were preaching there and we had a beautiful early morning service in Emmanuel Methodist Church, United Methodist Church there. We had 300 people at seven in the morning. Indian Businessmen, christians before they went to work, and the Holy Spirit was doing a beautiful deep work. We talked

about pride, I had funny illustrations, and that morning we talked about things which hinder christians from responding to Christ and to one another. And we used a funny illustration which helped us in Africa of balloons, use it when you've got time.

We inflated two balloons and we said, the reasons why christians don't get on together in the home or in the business is because each, either a husband becomes a balloon - inflated, and the wife resents the fact that the husband is too big and then she too becomes a balloon in the kitchen because she's human. And then the children sense that mother and father are both rather rough that morning, and because they are also human beings, they all become little balloons. So, the home now becomes full of these things, these balloon-like lives, each is inflated. I was actually speaking about my experience, and do you know what I do? Because, you see, I'm a good evangelical sort of preacher, you know, I take my big bible and I want a family worship. So comes my wife, and I'm the head of the home, you see, quite a big balloon, (laughter) and of course I've got scripture behind me, mind you, I'm the husband and the husband is the head. Forget that the head is quite confused until it is under another head. The Head is Christ, He is the Head of the Church. So, anyway I call my family to pray, but you see, I'm still this balloon. Something happened between me and my wife which made me lie a balloon. She too feels this hard atmosphere and she too sometimes becomes hard because she's human just like me.

Now, can you imagine, we are going to have a wonderful family worship but we are all inflated. How do you get on? You crack beautiful biblical verse, they hit on the balloon and they go back, ^(laughter) And then you say, "Let us have fellowship," have you ever tried to bring two balloons together to have fellowship? (giggles) As soon as they touch, hmmm, they fall apart.

You don't have to work hard on them, they have a tendency to fall apart. That thing which they are full of never allows fellowship. You see, and so the little children cannot enjoy it, everything is crooked, and bang, bang, bang, words, and you go away to bed, you know, balloon-like like that. And we were using that illustration that in order for a sweet christian fellowship, the Holy Spirit has to do His wonderful work of deflating, and the Holy Spirit does that beautifully ^{using} ~~^~~ the cross. When you see Jesus on the cross you can't be more inflated. You lose your self-inflation and you become weak. And we undid the balloons and we made one weak and it lost its this thing and we brought it and we said, "Now look, this one is still full, but another one has become weak, let us see whether they can begin fellowship in Christ?" And you know it was easy. The weak one kept falling on the big one. The big one still kicked, but the weak one didn't respond, and we said, "That's exactly what happens. Sometimes God begins with the wife, and she loses her this balloon-like thing, and she becomes unto the cross soft and loving and ^{broken} ~~^~~ and willing. And then the husband is still kicking, but the wife no longer responds now. The Holy Spirit has began a wonderful, gracious work. It wont, perhaps, be long before the husband also becomes deflated, and then the two who once were balloon-like are now weak but strong in the Lord, loving one another, confessing their sins to one another, willing to be taught. It's a beautiful thing. We had a wonderful time.

We went to our room, in Madras remember, after that great time and our illustration, we sat in the room. And my friend is older than I am, much senior, and he said to me, "Festo, I'd like you to help me write something." He wanted something written and he wanted me to help him. ^{Remember} ~~Remember~~ we have had a wonderful time, we have just come from a meeting, and immediately I became

proud, and I began to feel inside, "Well, why should he use me like his secretary?" Just inside me, and I grew quiet. And he said, "What's wrong? Would you like to help me?" I mean I should have said "Yes," and in the end I said, "Okay, I'm going to write." I started writing, but he said, "I haven't told you what to write." I said, "I know, I know your thoughts I'll write them anyway." Do you see? Immediately he just kept quiet and kept looking at me, and immediately I became that balloon, you know, full of myself, full of pride, and he kept looking at me and in the end he didn't say anything more. And I dropped my pen and I looked at him and I said, "My, God in heaven must be surprised." Here are two preachers who have had a wonderful time just an hour ago, and who have helped others to lose their inflated pride, and here we are absolutely two big balloons, within an hour. But thank God, we know what to do. Immediately, I asked him to forgive me for my pride because I had looked at Jesus. And he forgave me and the room was no longer full of self-inflated balloons. The Spirit had done His gracious work, and I began to ask him to tell me what to write, and I enjoyed writing it. In fact, it was a blessing. I don't know why on earth I was worked up about it? It was my pride.

So you see, my christian friends, this is how God can continue His gracious work in a community, making you busy in the business of your Master. Making you enjoy the experiences of release in the Spirit, flooding your hearts with the love of God day by day, moment by moment. I finish there.