

Session 1-A

Author: Festo Kivengere
Place: Conejo Valley, Thousand Oaks, CA
Date: February 8, 1981
Event: Festival of Faith
Theme: Love God-Love Neighbor and Live
Text: Lk. 10:25-37

Program No. 104 - Love God and Become Alive

pp. 1, 3-9

Time: 11:30

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Lk. 10:25
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Theme: Love God - Love Neighbor and Live 25:30
Text: Mt. 22:34-40 and Luke 10:25 - 37

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Note: Edited for filming = 25:30

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Text: Mt. 22:34-40

(..... I'm going to ask you that we spend a little time in the presence of our God asking the Holy Spirit to take control of our hearts and particularly I want you to pray for me, because you are going to have quite a rough time with my accent, so ^{you} really need, you really have my sympathy. (laughs). We are going to ask the Lord that my accent, my words and your hearing may not stand in the way of the blessing of the Holy Spirit this evening. So) Let us bow in a word of prayer. (clears voice) ←

Dear Lord Jesus, we are now in your presence, what a tremendous privilege to be, that you the very Son of eternal father decided to become our brother, our elder brother. And that your Holy Spirit has in condescending stooping love decided to come our way take over, take control of our thoughts, our words, our minds, that indeed we may experience that life giving love of our Eternal Father (tonight. So that this evening may be an unforgettable evening for most of us.) In Jesus Name. Amen. (short pause) p. 5

(Let me just take this opportunity to bring you greetings from your christian sisters and brothers overseas, my wife and I come from Uganda, as you have been told, and there are many christian people there particularly recently, since Uganda rid itself off that famous dictator, famous for bad things, Idi Amin. And then we went back as)

(returning refugees and in the excitement we have found a new, that through times of -difficulties, and through fires of experience, and through pains and stresses of life, the Lord Jesus Christ and the live the love of God I want to share with you tonight becomes the only sustaining power, the only dynamo.. dynamic to hold what would be broken pieces together, these christian brothers and sisters most of whom have experienced very difficult times, I know many young people back in Uganda who have lost their parents, relatives, senselessly at the hands of a mad dictator, for no reason at all. Such experiences can drive mad, such pains can shutter your human life and leave you hanging or dangling in the atmosphere as it were, but with Jesus, all things in Him are held together. These are the christians who lsent their love and greetings and they are praying for you because they knew, my wife and I would be here this week, this week. Then I want to bring you greetings from Kenya because we came by way of Nairobi and last weekend we had tremendous meetings in the city of Nairobi, with about three thousand young people there, at Kenyatta Conference Center in the city. And we saw many things happen as people listened to the message of God's love. And many young people were giving their testimonies of what God did including a young -Indian lady converted from Hinduism, who stood with a shining face and a brilliant faith and a joy in the Lord and gave us her testimony of what Christ did when she converted from Hinduism to become a christian, she was so full of the joy of the Lord and challenged the christians who in that big conference center as to their faith in the Lord and sharing what had with many Asian business men in the city of Nairobi. These people also sent their love and greetings. We had afairy young man from Zimbabwe, the country which was formerly known as Rhodesia, and now is Zimbabwe, the new nation, there was this young

Uganda

Jesus's
Mission
N'Hai

Indian
Lady

man from Zimbabwe, and he challenged all the young people in Kenya by sharing with us what the young people are doing in Zimbabwe now. They have formed themselves into groups under African Evangelistic Enterprise and they call themselves, the foxes of Jesus, or Jesus foxes, and their organization they call, Operation Fox Fire. And they get these pass words from the bible. You remember the great big man called Samson in the bible and he one day held a number of foxes, you know he had these extraordinary powers, and he tied the foxes in two, just in twos, and he tied them by their tails, bushy tails of foxes then he set the foxes on fire and the foxes set the Philistine fields of fire, so they took they applied it to their activity to go into the bushes witnessing for for Jesus, they call themselves, Operation Fox Fire, and he brought us the greetings from the Jesus foxes in Zimbabwe, I wish you could hear what is happening with these young people. They are changing guerrilla fighters into christians, some of the experiences are just almost unbelievable, Jesus Christ is doing some wonderful things, and then I want to finally bring you greetings from the Sudan, things are happening in the Sudan, a predominantly moslem country, but where Jesus is bringing hundreds of people to Himself through the witness of many of these christians. You may have heard that the Sudan had a civil war for 16 years, and the christian church grew in the bush, thousands of people became christians during these difficult times of fightings, war, destruction and by the end when Sudan became normal again, the christian church had doubled in number. So I bring you greetings from your christian brothers and sisters in Africa. O. F. Fire

I want to share with you a message ^(script) based on the theme (for these meetings we are going to share together. As the committee was praying am sure and God guided them they choose a very simple theme for guiding thought)

(for the mission, for these few days we are going to be together, from now to Thursday, and the kind of thought that the spirit of God seemed to have given the committee who have brought us together here, is "Love God, Love Neighbor" Very simple, love God, love neighbor. Let us begin as we should have begun, love God, and I am going to read to you where we get those words, they come from two passages or several passages but particularly Mt. chapter as it is on your pamphlet, chapter 22: verse, verses 34-40, and then St. Luke's Gospel chapter 10:25, let me just read from St. Luke's Gospel, then we can see where you and I are going to come into this. St. Luke puts it like this, this is where we have our theme, and by the way, the topic for tonight is, Love-God ~~and become alive~~ and Neighbor, Love God and Live. Love God and become alive, (taken from our theme and this, where we get it from.) Luke 10:25, a teacher of the law, a very sophisticated person came up and tried to trap Jesus, "Teacher, he asked, ("what must I do" this is verse 25,) "what must I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "What do the scriptures say, how do you interpret them being a teacher as you are?" (clears throat) and the man said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind, and love your neighbor as you love yourself." And then Jesus replied to him, "you are right," (Jesus replied,) "do this and you will live", (let us stop there for a moment. Do you see where the question comes from? Love God and then why love God, and the lawyer, this special teacher who put the question to Jesus, put the context there, what must I do to receive eternal life? Now of course to most of us, when we hear these big religious words, eternal life, most of us think of a kind of endless long life, that can be misery you know (laughter) if it is only longevity you know, going on and on and on and until you are too tired. (Is this what the teacher,) is this what the young teacher

Rich
Young
Ruler

Love
Love Neighbor
and Live

5

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is asking? (What must I do to receive a kind of life, which goes on and on and on until you don't know what to do with it? The long, long life? That can be boring, that can be you ^{a kind of life} in the end don't know what to do with it.) But there is something more, let me just explain a bit. This teacher is alive, he is quite alive otherwise he never would have asked the question, ^(Gods) the fact that he comes to Jesus and says, "Teacher, tell me, what must I do?" Remember you can't do unless you are alive, "What must I do?" which means, I am quite alive, then he puts the question, "what must I do to receive eternal life?" What do you want life for? You are quite alive, you are even suggesting that you can do and yet at the same time you say Jesus, what must I do to receive eternal life? What do you want it for? What is the difference between the kind of life you have and the kind of life you desire, (is this the same?) Teacher what do you want? What is, what is it that makes you serious about the question? (What must I do to receive eternal life?) What is eternal life? Now let me put it very simply, eternal life, the kind of life this teacher is asking for, into his life, you see he is quite alive, he is a human being, (he eats, he plays, he learns,) he is a lawyer, his mental abilities is there, his physical ability is there that is why he says, "What can I do, or what must I do" Now what is it that he is asking for? Why does he want to bring that life into this life? Is there a need to have a double life? If you are quite alive do you ask to be alive, when you are alive? (Is,) doesn't that sound (a little bit a confusion?) A kind of paradoxical question, I am quite alive but please I want to receive life, for what? (But I am, we are coming closer to that.) He called it eternal life, (that does not mean long,) it simply means, my life as I live it is lacking a substance which is very important, the kind of life which would make my life live,

Eternal
Life



My life as I live it is simply an existence, a routine way of being there, (in this beautiful valley, how do you know young people) you can be quite alive in your physical body and feel that the kind of life you are living is a living death. It is so empty that you don't know what to do with it. And you fill it with this and you leave ^a gap, and you get a few more things to fill it with and you leave a few more gaps and the more things (you put it, you put in it and the more gaps you create, (and you don't know what to do about it.) And so this young lawyer really wanted something very important which could fill the gaps of his life as a human being. He is not alone. Most of us human beings live a life full of gaps. (And the gaps we are aware of,) sometimes we feel, if I can get ^{more} money, or more education, or more health, or more pleasure (or more,) or more of that and more of that and more of the other. And the more mores we get and the more gaps we create. So the lawyer being a religious man (he) came to Jesus (and he said,) of course he was trying to trap him on the matters of the law ^{interpreted} interpreting religious laws of the Jews, but really fundamentally. This man was serious about something very important. "What must I do, in order that I may receive the kind of life which is like God? Eternal life is a quality of life which is like God. (You see, most of us get on in years, we even grow strange hairs with different colors as we go up, go on and we also develop a certain amount of ^{it} ~~r~~umatism in our bones as we go along. Some of us used to run, but now we can only walk, and hardly walk, it means our bodies really grow old, we can't help it. There is a life, which when it enters into my life,) that quality of life (is) like God who never grows old, who never changes, who is eternally fresh (not long, but fresh,) a sort of freshness which a young person can have, an old person can have, a kind of freshness we could, you can have it in Uganda, you can have it in the U.S., you can have it when you are 20 and you can

Quality
of Life

have it when you are 70.) Something very unique, which means a kind of life which is like God, the source of life, so the Lord Jesus said to Him, well my dear lawyer, what do you read in your scriptures (because you are very educated, you see, and then) he said, well (what I read about the kind of life I am talking about,) the law says Love your God, with all your heart, (One,) the heart according to the Jews' understanding is the center of all your emotions, you know your loves and hates and anger and calmness and all these things (which boil in you, they) are called in scripture, the heart. The feelings, the reactions the actions, it said, "Love your God with all your heart, Let God be the center of all your emotions, direct them back to him, Surrender your emotions to him from whom we came. Young people and old people like me, I want to tell you that is a tremendous thing to discover. The problem with human emotions is that they run wild and you can't control them. To love God is to bring back these emotions and surrender them to Him from whom they came, with all your heart and then ^{with} all your soul. The person that you are, the entire person and the entire life, soul ^{the psyche} is like, the person that you are, (with all your soul,) then with all your mind, intellectually, ^{with} with all your strength physically, this is very interesting that is what the law said, (Strength,) the Heart, the Soul, the Strength, and the Mind. And when all these departments of your life are surrendered or committed to God, they become normal, if they are not committed to God they remain abnormal, (they run,) they run wild. You keep bringing them back, they run wild, they are like dry leaves in the wind. (That was my experience at the age of 19 all these emotions my heart, my mind strength, and my soul, every part of me was just running wild, and I kept trying the best I could to bring them back, and they run away from me and I brought them back and they run away from me, My life became one big battle field.)

Law
God

Surrender

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In fact according to professor William Barclay, I became, "A walking civil war," (laughter) ^{in the} words, that was the kind of life I lived, and you call that life, life where there is no control, where there is no direction, you bring the emotions together, they become wild, your mind, your emotions, your physical strength, everything is just running wild.) And your little life becomes one big arena of battle field, and so what is the answer to that? Jēsus said, ("Oh, you know that, ^{the} only answer to this,) if you are going to be alive, you need then to bring all that and commit it to (J.) to me, commit it to God". That is what "love God" is about, ^{where} did they come from? From God, ^{How} did they come (from?) As gifts, you didn't really work for those things which make you a human being? You are a gift of God to yourself. Have you ever known that? How many of you have ever looked at yourself, "Oh God, thank you for the gift that I am to me." You are a gift to yourself. God created you in his image, he gave you all those wonderful gifts which make you a human being. And then sin, in the bible which means, turning away from love, God is love, you turn ^{away} from Him and you are torn into pieces. The anger runs there, then hate runs there, your emotions become on top and you are at the bottom, riding you like a horse, until one day you stand in front of that wonderful lover, who created you initially in His image. And then who came back in the person of Jesus, ^{alive} to restore you back to normality. And when Jesus came, and he put on your humanity and mine and he became a human being like us, what was that? It was love in practical terms, saying, alright, I have come back, ^{are} you running wild? (Your emotions running away? Your feelings can't be controlled,) your strength is being wasted, your soul is torn to pieces (and your fragments)

I have come, ^{and} when He came, he lived and then He died on the cross.

He got
of y

And as He stretched his arms on the cross, what was happening, He was saying to broken men and women, to people like me, ^{at} the age of 19, come and I will put you together, ^{we} love that word in Africa today, together,¹ Young people who are together, men and women who are together, life in its togetherness, wholeness, and harmony. So my dear friends that is where we begin, love God and become alive, ~~//~~ run away from Him and your life is one big conflict that's why there are men and women committing suicides everywhere, not because they don't have food, as we have experienced famine areas in Uganda, and other parts of Africa and Asia, it's not famine which makes people commit suicide, there are many people who commit suicide in plenty, driving big cars, and then life is broken, I told you that William ~~Berkeley~~ ^{used} expression, "A walking Civil War". But you know, there are driving civil wars, if you don't walk, you drive, and as you look at your freeways you know some people drive 100 mph, driving civil wars, conflict in the heart, conflict in the home, conflict with the neighbour, conflict between friends, broken engagements, broken marriages, broken experiences, lonely people, tonight, and I want to stop here. Jesus said to the lawyer, you understand that if you present your life to God, who loved you first and you respond to his love and you put your emotions and you put everything that makes you a human being into his hands, ^{He} will put you together, come to him because, he loved you first. So you see tonight what I am trying ^{to} share in this Festival of Faith is to invite you all as He invites me tonight, if you have got experiences which are running away and you are trying to put them together and you can't manage it, and Jesus came purposely from His Father and He says this is the love of God. First, he created you, second, he died for you, now he is expecting you bring th your emotions, your heart, your mind, your ^g strength, your soul and stand in front of him as He is

included
11:20

P-104

Walking
civil
war

hanging on the cross and say Yes, mine is a broken life, I am guilty, I am fragmented, I have experienced bad things, I can't control myself but you are my controller, I want to be in your hands tonight, do you know, that is the Gospel the good news of Jesus Christ, to put broken lives together, to heal the wounds which we incur, to forgive the sins which we commit, to put our lives together, to restore us in the direction of his love, and as we are in his love we become alive. 16

(I can't say, I can't tell you stories tonight, time is short and we dare not waste your time, but I want to tell you. One day I saw a man, and the man was under circumstances which I can't explain here actually the man was about to die, not to die a natural death, he was going to be shot by soldiers because he was accused falsely, and this man was a christian, and he stood in front of these soldiers and he looked at them and he said, may I say something before you shoot me. He was a christian young man, 30 years old. He left behind a wife and two little children. And as he stood before these soldiers who were ready with their guns, this christian man in whose heart the love of God had done a healing, instead of standing there with bitterness and abusing and cursing them, as we normally do, he said to the soldiers may I say something before you kill me? And the soldiers said, "Alright, quickly." And he said, one, three things to say, one, "I love you, for Jesus my Saviour loves you", two, "I love my country, I am not a traitor," three, "May I sing you a song?" There he stood, 30 year old young man, school master, and he sang a song to the soldiers, with their fingers on the trigger, "Out of my bondage, sorrow and sin Jesus I come, Jesus I come, Out of my misery, into your world, Jesus I come to you," He sung in his mother tongue which the soldiers understood, and he sang four stanzas of that beautiful hymn, as a testimony and when he concluded, he put his arms down, eyes all full of life, a heart beating in tune]

Andrew
- shot.
- his testimony

(with the heart of Jesus, a liberated human being, he had flesh like you and me, he had a wife and two children, he did experience pain but he is a liberated man, his emotions, his strength, his soul and everything in him is together, he is in control, are you? And as he finished, the bullets went the body fell Andrew is his name, he went straight to be with the Lord, and he left behind a testimony in God's love, men and women can be together, you want to be together tonight?) And as I conclude may I say, have ever really responded to this love of God? Or do you really simply sing about it in your church and listen to pastors explain but you have never come to terms with it, and the Lord Jesus as he hangs on the cross, he expects young people, old people, broken hearted men and women to come to Him for healing. So as I conclude tonight I want to say there is an invitation, not from me, I never died for you I am only announcing that Jesus loved you that much and that when you respond to his love, you don't respond to the preacher, you respond to Him who loved you and died on the cross in order that He may heal your wounds and bring together your broken life and forgive your many sins, tonight there are people among you who have never experienced that, but like the lawyer, you are saying, "What must I do tonight in order that I may receive that whole life? And if you are here, and you want that to happen tonight, I want to tell you the way is absolutely open. God on the cross is God with open arms to receive anyone, and if some of you say yes Bishop I would like to come but I am too bad, if you are too bad you qualify because He did not come for the good. The Good don't exist. What exists are broken hearted men and women like me and like you, so tonight I want to finish by inviting you to please take opportunity. And we are going to close now in a moment of prayer. It is going to be a moment of dedication. And as we close, I want you to listen to these words ringing in your ears.

Invitation

What must I do tonight to receive that life which is complete in Jesus, the forgiven life, a restored life, a reconciled life, a life liberated that young man who sung to the soldiers, completely whole, and to be whole tonight. Okay, let us pray. And in the prayer, I am going to ask that you do something tonight, don't wait until tomorrow, because Jesus did something very, very precious, it cost His blood and sweat on the cross. It won't cost you that much, it doesn't cost me anything, it ^{all} costs us the fact of saying yes by faith, I agree to respond to your love. That's all, if you agree to do that, and there are some of you on the ready, when we bow to pray now, I am going to ask those who want really to do that what the lawyer did, and Jesus gives ^{you} him permission, go and do that and become alive. (Do what? Respond to his love tonight and then become alive, those who want to do that tonight, as we bow in prayer, you can indicate because I want to pray for you, then afterwards there is room prepared here where we are going to pray with you encourage you may be you have got burdens, may be you have got fear, may be you doubt, may be you have got some problems that are physical and need the fellowship of brothers to pray for you to encourage you so that you may go home singing like that young man in Africa who sung to his enemies, so if you are in that group of serious people, I want you to indicate when we are praying, let us now bow in prayer, every eye closed. And those who feel that God is speaking definitely to you, indicating by putting up your hand, if you feel that God is speaking to you tonight and that you want to respond to his love, may be you did respond to his love once, but you lost that experience, and now you want to come back into the fold of those of Jesus Christ, he loves those who come back you know. So if that is going to happen, let us be quiet, and you can indicate by showing your hand, as a serious person tonight, don't stop by saying, the African Bishop spoke, but do something for the love which came your way.

so as we close our eyes please indicate that, and then we shall lead you afterwards to the, that room for a little short time of conselling and prayer and encouragement.] Anyone, who feels that God, God bless you, I can see a number of hands indicating that they want to do business tonight with God, to respond seriously to his love. (Any other one? That does not, it is not to embarrass you, it is an indication, you mean business tonight, that is all. Yes, God bless you. There is no embarrassment here, you don't respond to me, you respond to Him, and afterwards then, even those of you who are still shaking afraid to indicate perhaps it is not your church tradition, you know, your church they don't do this kind of thing, here we are here together, if you are Episcopalian, or Presbyterian or whatever you name it, whatever your church is, what matters tonight is to respond to his love, indicate that, it will encourage your faith and then afterwards we are going to the room. Yes, praise God for that.) Yes, in the quiet of the heart by faith, God bless you, and we praise God for the indication, now I am going to share a short prayer for you.

Lord Jesus Christ, these are very precious moments in your presence, we thank you for these who have responded to your wonderful love, for the healing of their wounds for the forgiveness of their sins, for the restoration of their faith, for the joy of experiencing freshness of life.
and
Oh, thank you, that you loved us first, /now they are responding to a wonderful love. Bless them, encourage them, even those who did not put up their hands may they have the courage of going, coming forward to be be counselled, to be encouraged, and to be prayed with, for healing, for restoration. In Jesus Name. AMEN. 25:30
