

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

November 17, 2019

SPEAKER

Richard Smith

SERIES

Missions Festival 2019

PART

N/A

TITLE

Whatever It Takes

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 2:10



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Phil: So today we have a treat, Richard Smith from Hope Point Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina is with us and he's not new to Providence. He's been a friend of Providence for many, many years. So we're looking forward to what he's going to bring for us in the word. And so let's lean in to what God will do and speak to us this morning. Thanks Richard.

Richard: Phil. Good morning, Providence. I measure my time, my relationship with you in terms of what's called the Anna calendar. I first started speaking to Providence singles retreats when my daughter was six years old. And I think there's a picture up there with a seashell on her head down at Fort Caswell. And my daughter got married two months ago and she's now 26 and she longs to be here. First time I've ever been at a Providence event without her and my wife. So I know that it's 20 years that I've been doing ministry with Providence. Also have another measurement device. It's called the Brian and Tabitha a calendar. And that's what they look like on their first time 20 years ago. And I really don't know what y'all have done to Brian.

Tabitha sort of looks at the same, Brian sort of looks like her daddy now, but y'all been hard on him. People often ask me, what is the most difficult part of teaching? Is it the sermon prep, putting together the actual structure of the talk of the research, the interpretation of a Bible passage, and for me, the answer always is the difficult part of preaching is applying it the next day or a week later. And I found this out a few months ago, was preparing the very text that we are looking at today. Second Timothy chapter two, verse 10. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. I don't know of a more beautiful missionary mission energizing statement in all of the Bible that day that I preached did at Hope Point down in Spartanburg.

It came out okay. Not too much stuttering, made my way through it, but a week later when life happened, I sort of had a perfect storm of crisis. I had a health crisis with things going on in my leg. And my mom was not doing well in her assisted living home, had a leadership crisis that our church, and I'm driving two hours from my house to visit my mom to help her with that crisis, and I just said, "God, I didn't sign up for this. I didn't sign up for more than I can do." And, and I just preached this sermon on whatever it takes. Then right beside me near my mom's assisted living home, drives up this 18 Wheeler with the name of the company on the side along with their logo: Whatever it takes.

And it was the sweetest whisper from God telling me, I see you. Know your zip code. Also asking me, "Are you serious about that sermon, whatever it takes, or are you whatever it takes guy until there's a major step, major adjustment or a major sacrifice?" This is what amazes me about the apostle Paul when he writes Second Timothy chapter two, verse 10 it defined his whole life from the first time that he met Jesus Christ. He truly was whatever it takes to advance the gospel, I'm going to do. Sometimes when you look at a Bible passage, it's simply the best way to work your way through it by asking questions, your best friends and who, what, where, when, and how. This particular passage, I do go at by asking three questions, who and why and how. The who in this text, not a band.

The who in this particular text is what Paul calls the elect. He says, I do all things for the sake of the elect. I endure everything for the sake of the elect. Now, the church, that's just another name for the church. The church is called by a lot of names in the Bible because the church, you're so beautiful this morning is so glorious in the eyes of God, he has many names for it. He calls it in some cases he calls it a flock because we're like sheep. We wonder. We get into trouble and we need a shepherd who will lay down his life for our rescue and our safety, namely Jesus. So we're beloved sheep. Then he calls us a body because when we look at reaching 60 million people in Thailand, 80 million people in Turkey, it takes everybody. So God calls us a body.

There's nothing on my body I don't need a need. All my arms and legs and my eyelashes and eyes, I need everything. So God says, you belong. There's a place for you here and around the world in his body. Then he calls us a bride. Because we loved the imagery of bride. When a groom says to a bride, I love you, so we have Jesus Christ for 21 centuries has been calling out to the nation of the world. Been calling out to you. I want to marry you forever. What you'd be part of my bride. I love you. I want you. My daughter, when she got married, have a daddy daughter dance at the reception. She said, "Trust me, I'll pick out the right song for us." And I said, "Don't pick all the butterflies and things that don't, don't do that. Don't do that."

So she said, "No, I'll pick a song you'd love." She picked out James Taylor, How Great it is to be Loved by You. And I danced with her. Two weeks after the dance, I told her, send a text to her said, "I am still dancing with you in my head." This is God at the great wedding feast to come. In Revelation chapter 21 where the groom, Jesus Christ marries the church. In all of eternity. He says, "I want to dance with you. I want to marry you." Here's the song that's going to be part of the wedding dance, our wedding celebration. It says in Revelation chapter five, verse nine at this great wedding feast. And they sang a new song. You are worthy. With your blood, you purchased for God, persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. So I just say that to say when we come to Second Timothy chapter two, verse 10 it's just another name for the church.

God calls it a flock. He calls it a body. He calls it a bride. In here, he calls the church the elect. And he uses the word elect because this is how you become a part of the bride and the body and the flock. He chooses to go after you when you are not going after him, when you're not looking up, he's looking down. And so he's constantly going throughout the world, choosing people in his mercy to reach them when they are not even thinking about him. The Bible describes human beings as blind. We don't even, we can't even see the treasure of how beautiful Jesus is far more than earthly stuff. We can't see that. We're deaf. God calls and says, we're living in sin. Judgment's coming and we don't tremble, deaf. We're dead. We don't have longings to say, I give you all of my body.

There's no life within us that wants to respond with our giving ourselves to God. And so God goes out right when we're about to walk off a cliff into a bottomless, dark eternity, he stops us. He goes out and he chooses to awaken us. So we will not perish for eternity without him. This is exactly what Paul said in Ephesians chapter one, verse four, the same word for elect that was used in Second Timothy two is used in verse four of Ephesians one. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world. It's the most comforting verse in the Bible to me. That my relationship with God does not depend on the strength of my grip on him, but the strength of his grip on me.

You chose me, I'm secure and I'm telling you until your heart is gripped by the reality that God pursued you and awakened affections within you opened your eyes to him, your ears to him until you realize he did this when you had no power to save yourself, you will never desire for his mercy to be experienced by others in the world that likewise hope have no power to save themselves. You realize you're chosen. You want to go after those that he's in the process of choosing.

That's what the apostle Paul, it was his most exciting message to him in the world that God is out way ahead of Angela in Thailand. God was there eons before she got there beginning to awaken people to their need. He calls him to feel shame so they will long for forgiveness and calls him to feel fear of being separated so they'll long for comfort of being united. He's choosing people all over the world and Paul says, "I want to be there. Right when they start to think about God and have dreams of God in the middle East, I want to be there and say the name Jesus to them so they can be saved." That's what motivated Paul is that God was at work to save them.

That's what motivated Paul when he was so scared. He was on the verge of fear and as he looked at the city of [Carr] , then Jesus Christ came and appeared to the apostle Paul and said, "Paul." Acts chapter 18, verse nine, "Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent because I have many people in this city. Already chosen many people in this city." You might be here today and you might be bothered by this apparent thing that Paul says, "I give all that I have for the elect. I'm going out preaching for those whom God has chosen." And many people ask me, what do you do with that tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility? And my responses is I don't see any tension at all. They're both in the Bible and God loves both concepts, God's sovereignty, human responsibility, and he says, "I want you to in both of them, I'm sovereign, I'm choosing. You have responsibility. You're preaching."

You say "Well, that's a mystery. I can't grasp." Well, welcome to God. Let me give you a tip on Bible interpretation. The next time you have a problem where your human logic doesn't understand God's logic, give God the benefit of the doubt that your human logic is probably wrong. And there's something wrong with your three pound brain in comparison to God's eternally infinite wisdom. So that's the who. God's out choosing people who would not choose him, drawing them to himself. Here's the why of Second Timothy chapter two why world missions? Why missions in Raleigh? Why does this church exist? Verse 10 the second half, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. So this is what Paul thinks.

Salvation is experiencing the glory of Christ, seeing it, loving it.

Listen, salvation definitely means I'm forgiven of sins. Hallelujah. I love being forgiven. It's being saved is being forgiven. Salvation means I am rescued from eternal hell. Hallelujah. That's true. But ultimately in this verse, Paul says, salvation is seeing the all satisfying, immeasurable, uninterrupted beauty of the creator of the world, the son of God, Jesus Christ. And Paul said, I want people to see and enjoy that forever. Jesus wanted that. Remember on the night before he died, he prayed, John 17:24, Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory. Jesus loved his disciples. This is what love does. Love wants the joy of another. So Jesus said, "I want the joy of these disciples to be so great. I want them when they die to see my glory." And he was so committed to the disciples and to you seeing his glory 12 hours after he prayed this prayer, he allowed himself to be nailed to a cross where he could bleed for the forgiveness of their sins so they could get an admission ticket into the city of glory.

You are a people who use the phrase the glory of God a lot. I've heard it 437 times this weekend. You have it right. We're to live for the glory of God. But some of you might be saying, "What is it?" It's a great question. As it is worth just stopping. The glory of God comes from a Greek word doxa, which means the weight of something or the value of something, because how much impact that weight makes. So you think of glory, God's glory think his weight or his impact, and then the value of that substance, essence. So here's a way to think about how valuable is God. How valuable is his glory? Think about your eyesight. What could I offer you today in exchange for your eyesight? I'm going to give you \$1 million today. You give me your... You never see again. Would you take \$1 million for your us eyesight?

Nope, I know you won't. I bet I could offer you \$100 million, but you can never see again. Did you take a hundred mill? Doubt it. So we know your eyeballs are worth about a hundred million dollars. Plus. Just think about how much God is worth if he knows how to make the physiological structure of the eyeball and the 14 photosynthesis processes that the photochemical processes that makes sight occur. How valuable is the one who creates eyeballs? So you beginning to see the measure of God's glory. Think about God's glory like this. Try to weigh God out. If you went to heaven and sell a human body factory over here, God's making eyeballs over here, he's making a brain spinal cord. Over here, he's making 206 bones of the skeleton. Over here, he's making a big sheet like substance called skin, and then all of a sudden he breathes on it and there's a living being. wow.

How many just somebody worth that can do that. Put a value on that. You begin to grasp the glory, the worth of the glory, the weight of God. Let's measure God's beauty. How much does his beauty weigh? Well, if you took all the sunsets of the world, all the snow capped mountains in the Himalayas, all leaping deer, all soaring Eagles, all beautiful music, all art, beautiful. You'd have a hint of the weight of the glory of God's beauty. If you took all the... How much is his power? How much does God's power weigh? Well, if you took all airplanes, all space shuttles, all waterfalls, all race car engines, all rockets, all military weapons, all motorcycles, and you put all of them in one place and way to all of that power.

You'd have a hint of the weight of the glory of the power of God. How much does his love weigh? If you took every generous provision that God had ever bestowed on earth, every rain dropped and fell on every crop produced every kernel of wheat and stalk of corn that we eat. All of the generosity that God has given earth, all of the blessings to your life, your sweater, your shoes, all of the forgiveness, all of the moments where you said, "Forgive me." And he did, and you put it all together in one place. That would be a hit of the weight of the glory, of the love of God.

That's why heaven is going to be the most thrilling place in the world is we get to see the glory of the one who's responsible for everything that is occurring in this world that's glorious. And forever and ever. We get to look at that and be absorbed by it and we feel it and sing to it and bathe in it. Paul said, "I don't want anybody to miss that and I want them to know about Jesus Christ who makes a way through the shedding of his blood for people to see the glory of God forever." And that's what broke Paul's heart in the book of Acts chapter 17 and verse 16 when he went to Athens, Greece, he saw people not giving glory to God. He was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. Here's Athens full of academic achievement, full of materialistic prosperity, and yet all of these people, instead of glorifying God, saying, you deserve all the credit for this, they were giving credit to sticks to rocks, to idols.

And Ronnie and I, my missions pastor. We see this often when we travel to India, we see just massive idols, people going into villages, bowing down, giving credit to this plastic man created by man or, this next picture of all of these people coming to this field of bulls and they come and they pray, asking this bull would give prosperity upon their children. A few months ago we were in Mumbai and there in the Arabian sea. A peninsula juts out where not Hindus go to gather. But an interesting set of Muslims go out and they go 10,000 people a day out to this mosque and they drape handkerchiefs and scarfs upon the coffin of a dead Muslim leader. And they're praying, asking his blessing and it just breaks your heart that they're putting their hope in somebody who was unable to conquer death. How can you put your hope in someone who cannot conquer death?

Like you cannot conquer death with your own physical body. So this is what breaks the heart of the apostle Paul. It must break the heart of us, that you have people, they have one opportunity to live on earth and they're giving all of the devotion, all of the credit to the wrong thing. They're missing God in all of his glory and they're going to miss him forever because they will not glorify God for the gift of Jesus Christ who came to save us from our sins. So that's what motivated Paul. So now we've looked at the who, God, those who God is choosing to wake up the why that they would see the glory of God. Now let's look at the how. How do we reach these people? Paul tells us in Second Timothy 2:10 again, I endure everything for them, hence forth the title of my little talk, Whatever It Takes.

Translation of Second Timothy 2:10 Paul said, "I'll do anything that people will see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. I will even go to prison." Second Timothy 2:9 the very verse that preceded it. This is my gospel for which I'm suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. When Paul says, "This is my gospel" he's not saying this is like my gospel, like I made it up. This is I have sweat equity in this. This is my gospel.

I didn't read about it. I didn't go to a conference about it. I'm suffering for it. What he means by my gospel, I love it enough to suffer for it. Like Paul Bunyan, the writer of Pilgrim's progress. I alluded to that Friday night he goes to prison for preaching the gospel. He could've got a get out of prison card if he had had just stopped preaching, but he stayed there 12 years even though he had a wife, four children at home, one of whom was blind. Because earlier in his life he had written these words. I have loved the Lord and wherever I have seen the print of his shoe on earth, I have covenanted to put my own shoe there as well.

What ever it takes is the heart of Second Timothy chapter two, verse 10. What I do love though about Paul being in prison is the note of triumph. The note of triumph in verse nine how it ends. This is my gospel for which I'm suffering, doing whatever it takes even to the point of being chained like a criminal, but the Lord of God is not chained. Thank you. I had to tell the first service to amen goes there. You want to see a picture of the Christian life. You read verse nine. That's victory.

Victory is not going through life not having any problems. Victory is going through life, having many problems in your service to Christ and knowing that none of those problems can stop the gospel. That's victory. Paul said, I'm chained up. I'm in the capital city of Rome in a Roman prison cell, chained to a Roman guard. Gospel's not chained. Why? Because every day, every eight hours, I get a new guard to share Christ with. Share the gospel with him. He goes home and tells his wife, met some guy who's talking about a risen savior named Jesus Christ. He shares with her. She shares with her neighbor down the street when her husband's at work. Every eight hours is occurs. It goes all the way up to the palace, all the way up to Caesar.

Then Paul, while he's in that Roman prison cell, chained to a guard, he's writing four books of the New Testament, one of which I'm preaching from today. Word of God is not chained. And as the early church is watching, Paul in all of his courage preach the gospel while he's chained in a prison, the early church has more courage to preach the gospel because of Paul being chained in Rome. The word of God is not chained. When we give our lives for the Gospel, no matter what happened, we are giving ourselves to something that cannot fail, cannot be chained.

Over the past few weeks, I've been reading a book called Not Forgotten, it's written by David Brady, his brother John. We went to school together. John Brady is now the vice president of the IMB. Their parents served in Belize for 40 years as IMB missionaries and David wrote a book Not Forgotten about 18 Southern Baptist missionaries, some of our earliest. The point of the book is they're not forgotten by God. They may be forgotten by us. I'd like to tell you about the first of those that I read about. Her name is Sarah Rohrer.



Her father died when she was nine years old. Therefore, she was raised by a widowed mother. On August 3rd, 1860 Sarah and her husband John went to the dock of the Sandy Hook Harbor in New Jersey and boarded a ship, the Edwin Forest, because they had been appointed as Southern Baptist's first missionaries to Japan.

And her mother on that dock, begged her daughter, don't go. What you going to do? Your mother. Sarah is 24 years old, mother's bagging, and she said, "This is the happiest day of my life apart from your tears, but if I die, understand mom, I have died in the path of duty." Well, the ship left the Harbor. John and Sarah Rohrer were never heard from again. Their ship went down in the ocean. This is what David Brady, the author of the book, writes about that event. The Rohrers never arrived, never preached one sermon, never led one person to Christ.

They sank before they started. What could God have been thinking? Such a life was not fruitless. The greatest battle had already been won. Sarah had fully and happily surrendered all of her life to Jesus. She died in the path of obedience, and with one quick step crossed the finish line into the joy of her master. As Christians, we do not fail when our goals for Jesus are not reached, we fail when we fully do not surrender our goals to Jesus. Are you on the path of duty to Christ or are you on the path of duty to self? Sarah is not forgotten by God. Nope, and maybe Sarah will not be forgotten by you. If Sarah's commitment inspires you to step onto the path of obedience, then that would be great fruit. If this were your last day, would you be found in the path of duty?

From the day that Paul met Christ, he was on the path of duty, the duty of delight, of making known the glory of the love and beauty and forgiveness of Christ and the city of God to come to all the nations. And that's why Paul said again in second Timothy 2:10 please love that verse. I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they might see the glory of Christ.

Paul cared more about the advance of the gospel and the growth of the church among the unreached than he did about his own safety and about his own success. He said, "If I've got to be chained like a criminal, if I have to be lonely, thank you Angela for letting us know about that part. Whatever happens to me, people can ruin my reputation. It doesn't matter as long as the gospel advances. All incarceration, all beating, all accusations, all I want is for the scattered people of God to become the gathered people of God and for sin, blinded people to become glory, seeing people." Whatever it takes. So I want you to ask yourself today, three questions. Do I love my life too much?

Number two, do I love temporary comfort, my temporary comfort more than the eternal joy of other people? Number three, do I love my goals more than God's goals? I recently watched a great interview by many believers in the, that are part of the growing church of Iran, which statistically many people say is the fastest growing church in the world. And the interview, everybody who was coming to Christ in this church we're Muslim background, that church is so dynamic. They have no buildings.



They've no trained preachers, no seminaries, no Bible schools, no 501C3s and they're just growing by leaps and bounds because they've seen the glory of the love of Jesus Christ. It's come to rescue them from sin and take them to heaven. You ought to see the background's of the people that have come and they look like they're, they look just like the church of Corinth.

You can't believe these people, their lives were changed. And now they're going out and the churches growing because they say we believe in spreading the news of the glory of Christ's love at any cost. One person said, "I'd rather have Jesus Christ than freedom. What would 50 years in prison mean compared to eternity with Christ in heaven? It doesn't matter." The one thing that you need to know when you read the gospels is that Jesus Christ emphatically said, "It would never be easy." So that's a paradigm shift we need. It'll never be easy. Unreached people are unreached for a reason. They live in difficult places. It'll never be easy. Second story from David Brady's book involved the of John Lake. He grew up in Edgefield South Carolina, not far from my hometown of North Augusta, 1903 he was appointed as a Southern Baptist missionary to the Pearl River Delta for the China people in South China. At that time in 1900 there were 1 million lepers in South China dying slow, grueling deaths. They had already died cultural, sociological deaths from rejection of family and community.

But John Lake was inspired by the command of Christ, go heal the sick and the lepers. So in 1910 he started visiting leper colonies in the Delta region, South China, Pearl River area. He started bringing them food, clothes, Bibles, evangelism tracks. They begged him, find us a place to live away from this city, a place where there's clean water, where we can fish and make a living for ourselves. So he began searching for a place and finally three miles off of the shore, he found an Island, eight square miles with a mile long river freshwater right in the middle of it called the Island of Tai- [Kam] and with the help of business men back in the United States, businessmen who knew that God had gifted them to go earn a living and make money to share the glory of Christ with the nations. I love when business men and women get that. I make a lot of money for a reason. They bought the Island of Tai-Kam.

And they moved hundreds of lepers there. Over the next 25 years, several hundreds lepers came to live on Tai-Kam. They built 50 buildings, eventually a medical clinic, vegetable gardens. They raised poultry, sheep, goats, and hogs. John Lake wrote many poems while he lived on Tai-Kam. My favorite is called Tai-Kam. This is how the poem ends: While robbers, oh, this is, let me tell you, in order to gain access to Tai-Kam, he had to persuade the pirates who live there, let him bring lepers onto the island. Dangerous pirates. He shared the gospel with the pirates. Some of them received Christ, but all of them were courteous to this incredible act of love. Son ow the poem will make sense.

While robbers find Christ. That's the pirates. While robbers find Christ upon the cross, lepers, cleansed, forget their pain and loss. Almost all of of lepers would die in World War II. When the Japanese invaded Tai-Kam, but all of them who died are now in heaven watching us worship because of John Lake. Last story I want to share with you, 1854 Charles and Eva Gaillard, they went to China. The language was hard to learn. The people were slow to respond, but finally, after seven years of work, Charles Gaillard baptized 37 Chinese people. Two years later, July 27th, 1862 a typhoon swept through the area where he was living. 37,000 people died, including missionary John Gaillard.

What stuns me about his death is not the way that he died, but what happened 15 months before he died. He thought he was going to have to come back to the States. The civil war broke out here in America. The IMB said, "We don't have enough funding to keep our missionaries overseas. It's very unstable. Many of you need to come back". He said, "Pay me just \$300 a month. Let me stay." And then he wrote a letter to the IMB begging to stay. This is how the letter ends. I have no desire of seeing America again. I am as happy and contented here as I could be anywhere on this side of heaven and when I go to heaven, I do not want to go alone, but to collect a whole army of people to go with me. Let's pray.

Father, would you give Providence the desires of their heart through the money of businesses? Jobs, through sacrifice, through their praying, through the night, through their growing on short term trips, through their sending out of career missionaries. Would you give them the desire of their heart that this church would have the privilege of taking an army of people to heaven, entire villages, orphanages, people from hospitals, medical clinics, all over every tribe, every village, every nation, every tongue. Give us the desires of our heart that many thousands, millions, billions even would see forever and enjoy the glory of God in the face of Christ. In his name I pray. Amen.



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)  
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.  
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.