

# **God's Always First, Right?**

## **Rags to Riches series**

**by Chris Famisaran**

Let's pray. God, we thank you for the opportunity to be here today. And as we continue our study on rags and riches, be with us in Jesus name. Amen.

Many years ago, there was an individual by the name of Darrell Dore, I don't know where this took place. But what I do know was is that he was on a rig out in the middle of the ocean, particularly the Gulf, actually was in the Gulf of Mexico. And suddenly, the rig started to wobble, left and right, left and right, he was inside the rig. In the middle of the rig, he couldn't just run out. And as the rig was swaying, eventually it gave way and it fell over into the water. Well, being that the water is there, guess what happens? The rig enters the water. And he is flummoxed, the rig sinks deeper and deeper and deeper into the water. All of the lights go out into the room that Darrell was trapped in, then begins to fill with water. And as he's thrashing in the darkness in the cold water, he realizes there's this little bubble in the corner, a huge air bubble. And he makes his way over, hoping and praying that somebody would eventually find him. And so for hours, he's praying that a lot of prayer. And eventually, as the minutes and the hours ticked by, he could see a little light shimmering in the darkness. He squinted again, that can't be is it possible? And lo and behold, the light got bigger and bigger and thicker and grew brighter. No, he wasn't hallucinating. The light was real. It was attached to a head with a mask and a breather, a diver and come down to rescue him. And his long nightmare was over. Amen. How many of you have been freaking out by them? I would be.

Let's go to the Bible. Matthew chapter 6, we're going to continue. And I left some other verses they should be on your handout as well. I'm not going to be able to get to all of them. But this is just kind of for your reference. Matthew chapter 6, verses 20 through through 24. All right, we all there. Okay. The eye is the what? The lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of

light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body excuse me, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness. How great is that darkness. So Jesus, halfway through the sermon on mount starts to share a parable. The eye is a lamp. I mean, what you see is the lamp. And the lamp signifies light. Obviously, when it's dark, you want to have light. Otherwise, you can't drive. Have you tried to drive without light in the darkness. If it's got a really bright moon, you might be able to get away with it. I'm not saying I'm speaking from experience, but it's scary, especially on a windy road. Or if you're walking along a trail you want like you don't want to hit your head on a tree branch. Or you don't want to step on something that could hurt you. And then Jesus thing goes and says No one can serve two what? Masters either you'll hate the one and love the other or you'll be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money, other versions that says Mammon. Now it might seem at first glance that these passages don't go together, but I assure you they will match.

Growing up. You ever feel like you had to have a little night [light] by the side? In case the boogey man tries to come out? Alright.. I remember we were living in this little town called Claremont not not Upland Claremont But San Diego Claremont. Funny enough, I found the house that I used to live in a couple years ago, was a way lot smaller than I had remembered it to be. But I remember, you know, sleeping in my bedroom and I had this closet in the corner that I thought like, monsters literally would come out because, you know, I was a child, I was just a couple of years old. And so I asked my mom, please can I just have a little wall light that you can put up, she would turn the light on. Now as an adult, I need complete darkness to be able to sleep. If the lights turned on, somehow my body senses it. I don't get the best sleep. But growing up, we wanted this, this symbol of comfort of hope that it's okay, it's gonna be all right. Light helps us make us feel confident. Without light, we have darkness. Light helps us to shed light on the path on where we should head. And oftentimes, you know, sometimes when we feel the most fearful, what do you think that tends to be? At night? Particularly Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night maybe around 2, 3, 4 o'clock in the morning? You sometimes feel that panic inside. I've learned a while ago. Never make decisions when you're scared obviously. But also don't make big

decisions in the middle of the night. Wait until morning when you've had some rest.

Now one of the questions that we're going to ask today is God always first in our life? Last week we asked the question of where do your treasures live? Are you building treasures here on Earth? Are you building eternal treasures? And so this week we're going to work on you know asking ourselves Where does our true ultimate loyalty lie? Okay, so big question, Where's your loyalty? Now oftentimes will probably say well it's the my spouse is to my children. It's the my parents, it's my best friends. We show our loyalty in some other areas. For instance, we share we show our loyalty by the brands that we may wear Nike, Jordans, Reebok, Adidas. Five Guys, What a Burger. In and Out or Shake Shack. Duracell or Energizer. Coke versus Pepsi. Ford versus Chevy. Yet somehow RAM or Dodge just sneaks through the middle and does quite well. If you're in a Formula One Hamilton versus Verstappen. Mercedes rebel versus Ferrari. Personally, I'm a big Chieko fan. Ronaldo vs. Messi. Lakers Celtics. Anybody prior been born to 2000 will love you know, maybe the 60s, 70s, 80s and today everything just is lame. Right. I'm really becoming like, I'm not old, old, but I don't like today's music anymore. Because it has no soul in it. Sorry. It was Billy Corgan, lead singer of the Smashing Pumpkins was talking to you. I don't know he was on a podcast. And he relayed this idea that nowadays with AI, a 15 year old can go on AI and write a song. It could be a decent song. But you know what it doesn't have. It doesn't have soul. It doesn't have depth. It doesn't have meaning. When you think when you hear Adele, you hear the passion, the pain, the angst in her music. Pick any songwriter that has experienced and lived these songs and written them down has sold. And you gravitate to those people. Because you know that what they're saying they're being honest, they're being true. They've lived that experience and we can identify with that experience whether it's happiness, sadness, joy, regret, frustration, anger. You know, there's also the great debate, which is better Star Wars or Star Trek... Star Wars. Or if you're younger NexBox versus PS five. Back in the day, it was Nintendo versus Sega. How many of you remember Sega? Sonic the Hedgehog. And probably the immortal battle that will last for many, many years or maybe eons is iOS versus Android. Gustavo, Why do you have to make my life difficult when it's a green bubble? I can't just send you a PDF. Now we tend to believe we tend to be rabid fans of our loyalties and will sometimes defend them

with great honor. Right sports teams. Do the Raiders love their team? Yeah, they do. They will fight you for it literally in the stadium. Soccer fans for football. Do they love their team? They're ready to go to war. Do you remember in the 80s, I think even the 70s the what was known as the hooligans, they will go out and they will literally I think there were more wanting to just actually fight and actually go to the game. And soccer had a bad image and they had to tame it down, but their loyalty was to their fan base.

Another example of of loyalty, Bobby, the terrier story of loyalty. Dick And Ruth Frost wrote a book called What was the Cold War, it was basically about devotion, and loyalty. And in the town of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1850, there was a man by the name of what was his name, John Gray, who was a gardener, and he went to Edinburgh hoping to find work. But there was no gardens to tend. So he became a police officer. And his regular shift was in the night where he was a night watchman. And so he would patrol and go around. Eventually, he realized, kind of lonely being by myself. So we adopted a sky Terrier, by the name of Bobby. And for several years, Bobby followed John, everywhere they went. Now, unfortunately, I believe it was in the winter, I think was it? When was it? Winter of 1858 Bobby contracted tuberculosis passed away. What a.... sorry, John John passed away. And what became of Bobby? Bobby would not leave his memorial, his grave. And so every day he would sit and watch his grave. Now, the caretaker to the cemetery would try to shoo off Bobby and he'd always come back. He tried to get rid of him, he'd always come back. Finally, the city council decided, you know, all all unlicensed dogs are to be disposed of. And yet, was it Mr. Chambers, William Chambers, who was the provost, personally went and got a license for Bobby. And he was cared for in fact, the caretaker had a change of heart and built a little shelter for him right next to John's grave. And for over 14 years, Bobby stood and watched over John's grave. Can you imagine the loyalty? 14? Sorry, six. Yeah, at 16 years, he finally passed away, but 14 years. He watched John's grave.

Sometimes the question that pops up in my mind is, am I just as loyal? Am I loyal to God? Or more loyal to God than all the other things in my life? To be honest, that sometimes don't want to ask that answer that question because I think to be honest, there are things that get into my life that is sometimes distracts me from my loyalty to God. In fact, I tried to look up the statistics and I got all kinds of different numbers, but the average you know how many hours people spend on

their cell phone a day. Seven, roughly average is seven. You know, some others sent 11 or 12. But seven hours is the average that adults, kids, adults. Although I listened to a lot of podcasts, so I hope that counts. Where you tend to focus in devote your time says a lot about who you are. work, family, church. Jesus also says having two masters will also cause burnout and resentment. Anybody have you ever worked for more than one job to three jobs? And sometimes one boss will want you more or the other will want you also. And they're constantly fighting for your time. Or maybe you just don't like either one and you just have to work and you just put the time in right? Yet priorities, where do we place our priorities? You can't have both. You can't have both God and the world. Because eventually it will burn you out. You will become exhausted and not just resent you will despise one or the other. So moving forward, give your time to the Lord, be faithful. Otherwise, you try to have both. It's gonna be a headache. You know, I have Pete, I have friends who are both nurses, firefighters, med techs, they tend to double up because they have free time they can work their schedules, especially if they work per diem. Some of them love their job. They really do. But eventually, they've just become so burnt out. Because really, in many ways, we sometimes say thank you. But how often does that think? Thank you. Go? How often do we say it? Firefighters, we love firefighters, because they save lives, nurses, they save lives. But if they're not going to feel appreciated, to be honest, don't we all want to be appreciated? Just a simple thank you is enough? Now the reflection I want you to think of to this idea. Does the idea of serving two masters apply to those who are financially well off who have time to think about serving? Truth is no. We all are in the same predicament where we spend our time what we focus on matters, caring for our families, of course working, but ultimately to God. Anything else after that I think is is is gravy. And then the other those first three, well, actually your family and God is the most important. And your job is also important because you want to be able to eat right. But take time and prioritize the decisions again that I said last week matter. As you move forward. It reflects who you are. Am I going to build treasures up here on earth that will eventually be destroyed? Or my thinking eternally? am I building relationships with my family, my neighbor, my boss, the cranky postal worker, the clerk at Ralph's, the unsynced librarian. Many people do a service and they never get things. One of the things that we can do you know how we can serve the kingdom. Go and say thank you. It's not that hard. And be a blessing. And love.

Well, one of the opportunities that you can show your loyalty as well is to faithfully serve the Lord. And so as we're going to exit by the way team leaders and deacons, as soon as we're done, make your way outside. But we want to give you an opportunity to be able to find an opportunity to serve here at this church. Okay, so all of our our ministries, our leaders, or individuals we've asked to also substitute are going to be outside here we have ministries in terms of our audio visual, our music, our deacons, and our as I said, we need help in Sabbath School. Right? Many, many areas of ministry that you can serve and be faithful to God. And if we don't have a ministry that you're passionate about or thinking about them, please come see me, whether it's today or later. And let's have an opportunity to be able to discuss because as I said, the first day that I was here, I want to educate, equip, and empower you for ministry. Amen.

All right now, to move forward. Today, discuss with your family and if you don't have family, local, with a friend, how you can better serve God as a loyal follower, and go do it. As you see with your eye, may God shed light in your life that you may see. And may you say, Lord, Here am I send me, Father in heaven. Thank you, Lord, for all that you're doing in our lives and as we move forward Lord opportunities to serve our abundance. Lord, we pray that you will help each of us to know where our calling is, Lord, if there's something that you desire, an area for us to serve. Help us to see that. And Lord if there isn't yet, let's talk about Lord and be able to find a niche opportunity. And may we Lord go out with love and empathy just as you did, but also with courage in Jesus name, everybody said Amen,

Grace and peace.