

Title: Living with Conviction: From Vase to Face in the New Year

Sermon Summary:

This sermon challenges believers to move beyond surface-level Christianity into lives marked by deep conviction and purposeful surrender to God. Using the metaphor of "vase versus face," the pastor explores whether Christians are merely displaying religion (like a decorative vase) or authentically reflecting Christ's face to the world. Drawing inspiration from Winston Churchill's refusal to compromise during World War II's darkest hour, the message calls for believers to stand firm in their faith rather than taking the path of least resistance. The sermon emphasizes that true freedom comes not from physical liberty but from spiritual surrender to Christ, and that genuine transformation requires more than New Year's resolutions—it demands daily intentionality in partnering with the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and live boldly for Jesus.

Key Points:

- If people followed our lives, would they make it to heaven? Our lives are on display as witnesses for Christ
- True freedom requires conviction and refusal to compromise biblical truth, even when it's difficult
- We often float toward danger like water taking the path of least resistance instead of standing firm
- The early Christians chose death over denying Christ because they valued eternal freedom over temporary comfort
- David's defeat of Goliath demonstrates standing up for God's honor rather than cowering in fear
- We must be passionate about Jesus Christ, not just worldly things like sports teams or entertainment
- Hilarious (cheerful) giving reflects complete surrender to God, as demonstrated by the widow's two mites
- Prayer for others in the church body should be prioritized over worldly distractions
- Transformation comes from partnering with the Holy Spirit, not just trying harder in our own strength
- This year should be marked by asking God what He wants us to do rather

than telling Him our plans

Scripture Reference:

- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (Primary focus on generous, cheerful giving)
- 1 Kings 17 (Referenced regarding David and Goliath)
- John 3:16 ("Whosoever" principle)
- Acts (Referenced throughout regarding the Holy Spirit's power in believers)
- Various passages about spiritual warfare and putting on the armor of God

Stories:

- Personal story of floating down the Current River and nearly going over a dam, illustrating how we can drift toward danger without realizing it
- The movie "The Darkest Hour" depicting Winston Churchill's refusal to compromise with Nazi Germany during WWII
- David and Goliath—emphasizing David's conviction that Goliath was defying God, not just Israel
- The widow's two mites—giving everything she had with hilarious (cheerful) faith
- Early Christians facing lions in the Colosseum who chose death over denying Christ
- Personal anecdote about Winston Churchill's wit in responding to criticism
- Churchill riding the tube (subway) in London to hear from common people about whether to fight or surrender