

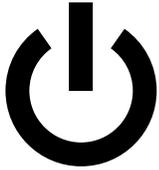


Speaker: C.L. Shepherd

Title: Authentic Resolve

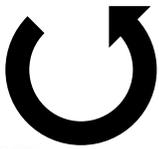
Summary: Authentic resolve is not just verbal, it must be physical.

Key Verses: Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 12:2; James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:18



Power Up: *Take a moment to prepare*

Shep opens with a quote about our lives being a fifth gospel, critical because many don't know Matthew-John. What story does your life tell?



Replay: *Take some time to watch*

Note seven dominate themes of Shep's story: **1)** extreme poverty; **2)** a fatherless home; **3)** an indifferent church; **4)** suicidal despair; **5)** God's great salvation; **6)** discipleship; **7)** a call to ministry that calls others to ministry.



Comment: *Take some time to talk*

Which of the stages or themes of Shep's powerful testimony touched your heart the most? Explain why.

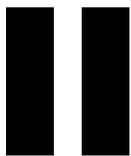
Most of us know nothing of the poverty described—"only fingerprints and lightbulbs in my fridge"—but nonetheless have unhealthy views of wealth. **How do you think about money? How often? What do you do with it?**

Read James 2:14-17. How does this text support Shep's definition of resolve? Why do we often use prayer to keep distance from others?

Isaiah 50:7

Shep comments, "I'd rather be lonely going up than have company going down." **What are ways you go against the flow to show God's love?**

Shep admits, "After salvation, before discipleship, I was still waiting to die." **What hope did discipleship offer him? Who disciples you? How?**



Pause: *Take a moment to pray*

Thank God for blessing us with all the blessing of the heavenly realm (Eph. 1:3). Thank God for having a plan for our lives. Ask God to give us eyes to see others' needs and resolve to meet those needs in Jesus' name.



Take Action: *Make it personal*

"I love you." We cannot hear the expression enough. Tell someone you love them this week. Tell them God loves them. And, to top off this simple but radical act, show your love by a sincere act of service.

Bonus Features: Additional Notes and Quotes from C.L. Shepherd

Prized Statistic: “I never practiced or played football without first praying.”

Gypsy Smith Quote: There are five gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian. The problem is most people never read the first four.

Famous Quote often attributed to John Wesley: What is the secret to great preaching? Set yourself ablaze for Jesus Christ and men will come to watch you burn.

Family Background

“I was born into the struggle.”

“I used to think every boy needs a father. Now I know, a man needs a father.”

- 9 bros; 6 sisters. Single mom. Two jobs: No money.
- I grew up Po (couldn't afford the R)
- First Christmas at 9-years old: Asked for a pillow.
- Winter break and summertime were the worst time of the year. No free lunch.
- Fatherless; father in jail; first meeting, nothing more than a handshake

Poverty Ignored

“Mother was religious. Everyone [in church] was bragging on the love of God, but no one was showing it... Everyone knew my problems. No one offered to help... I sat in classes with students like you. And you said nothing to me. You had the antidote. And you said nothing...”

“If hopelessness and helplessness were a thing, I felt like it was my home address.”

“I hated myself and wanted you to hate me. I wanted someone to kill me. I was hurting inside and wanted everyone around me to hurt.”

The Change

“I was so distracted by the hypocrites in the church that I never gave the God of the church an opportunity.”

“I don't know your salvation [story], but I came to Jesus with a gun in my mouth.”

“Jesus Christ is the greatest man who's ever lived.” (Not Ali, Tom Brady, Jim Brown)

“If God raised Jesus from the dead, he can raise you from any situation you find yourself in.”

“[This is] the train wreck of the gospel: [God] doesn't come in to rearrange the furniture. He wants to blow the house up.”

“We are not born winners. We are not born losers. We are born choosers.”