

TRANSCRIPT

Living a Faithful Life - A Seamless Life

Tom: It's my great pleasure to present, all the way from San Diego, Mark Price.

Mark Price: Thank you, Tom. Good morning?

Congregation: Good morning.

Mark Price: You know what this town needs and we probably would have come to Fresno sooner, is an aquarium. Before I start I want to make a couple comments about Fresno, because I actually have some personal ties to Fresno. My father was born here, he went to St Mary's School here, back in the 20s, so it was a long time ago. My mother from New York was an officer in the Air Force was stationed here. It's here that they met, fell in love, got married and that's why I'm here. And my brother, my baby brother went to college here at Fresno State on a water polo scholarship. And I think it's amazing that all these years this is the first time I've been invited to speak in Fresno, so I'm very, very happy to have this opportunity.

I'm going to start by reading something to you. You mentioned that I perform the different characters, and one of the things that, that has provided me is an opportunity to really study scripture, and I love scripture, absolutely love scripture. If there's time, which there won't be, there's something I wrote where it's as if Scripture is talking to you, "I am Sacred Scripture," and Scripture is telling you his story, it's story. But in studying scripture I've come to learn all the lessons, or many of the lessons, I keep learning lessons every time I go to it. And one thing I learned a long time ago is that in ministry, now this is my 44th year in ministry, there's a lot of people who say, "Well, I can't get involved, or I can't be active because I have this problem, or this issue, or I don't have this talent, or this ability."

And one thing I've noticed from scripture, is that there's a whole lot of people who you'd look at and say, "They got no talent, they got no ability." And my God they're murderers, they lived licentious lives and yet look what God did to them, and for them, and through them. Amen. So I wrote this, it's called God Can Use You. The next time you feel like God can't use you, just remember, Noah got drunk. Is that him? Would you like one now sir? Abraham was too old. Isaac was a daydreamer. Jacob was a liar. Leah was ugly. No, I never understood that, I mean Leah. Who was that Leah ended up marrying?

Congregation: Jacob.



Mark Price: Oh my Gosh, Jacob. But Jacob didn't want to marry Leah, who did he want to marry? He wanted to marry the pretty one, Rachel. And her father, Laban said, "What? Work for me for seven years and then you can marry her." I'm I right? So he works for seven years, and then the wedding day comes, and he marries this woman he thinks is Rachel. And the Bible says, it's not till after the ceremony that he realizes that a fast one was pulled, and he got the less than attractive one, Leah. And so I'm wondering, how did he not know? I'm thinking bag lady, there was something going on anyway. Joseph was abused. Moses had a stuttering problem. Gideon was afraid. Samson had long hair and was a womanizer. Rahab was a prostitute. Does anyone know who Rahab was?

Speaker 4: Yes.

Mark Price: Who said yes? Who is Rahab, besides a prostitute?

Speaker 4: The one who kept the spies.

Mark Price: That's exactly right. Rahab was living in the town of Jericho. Joshua ... Remember the song, Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho? Well, Joshua wants to come in and take Jericho, but he sends two spies in to find out what's going on, and what is his army going to face. These spies were being sought out by the people of Jericho, and this woman Rahab, a prostitute, got these spies and hid them in her own home, and saved their lives. They were able to get back out, tell Joshua what he needed to know, Joshua came in, destroyed the town of Jericho but saved Rahab and her home. Did I tell the story correct? Oh, good. I'm coming to you for, am I right on target?

But here's what you may not know about Rahab. Rahab ended up marrying, becoming Jewish and marrying one of the soldiers of the army of Joshua. They ended up having children, those children had children, those children had ... Isn't that interesting how that happens? Those children had children, until she became a great, great-grandmother of King David. And then David of course, has a lineage that followed him that includes who? Jesus. That means Rahab, this prostitute, is that great, great, great, great, great-grandmother to Jesus. Praise be to God. No matter what you've done in your life, no matter how bad you think you've been, God has a place for you, He has a calling for you, He will use you. Amen to that.

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So Rahab was a prostitute. Jeremiah and Timothy were too young. David had an affair and was a murderer. Elijah was suicidal. Isaiah preached naked. Father. [inaudible 00:05:55]. I don't even want to picture. Jonah ran from God. Naomi was a widow. Job went bankrupt. John the Baptist ate bugs. Peter denied Christ. The disciples fell asleep while praying. Martha worried about everything. The Samaritan woman was divorced more than once. Zacchaeus was too small was too small, Paul was too religious, Timothy had an ulcer, and Lazarus was dead. So no more excuses. No matter what's going on in your life, God can use you. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So I'm going to read to you from the Gospel of John, Chapter 19, short verse, 23 and 24. "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who's it will be." In order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my garment among themselves, and for my vesture they cast lots." And this is what the soldiers did. Paul wrote in Romans, "Rejoice and hope, be patient in tribulation and be constant in prayer."

Now, why did I read that particular passage to you? About the seamless garment? In the 1970s, the Pro-life Movement used the phrase, the seamless garment to help promote what they were doing, the idea that all life comes from God, and all life is sacred, it's seamless. That the life is sacred from the beginning all the way to a natural death. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So they used it. In the 80s, Cardinal Bernardin in Chicago used the phrase, a seamless garment to reference some of the things that were important to him and his messages. Starting in the late 80s, I started talking about a seamless garment for this purpose, I believe that our lives, especially us as people who profess to be good Christians, good Catholics, should be like a seamless garment. There should be no seam in our life. We should be the same at church and at play, at work and the ball fields. We should be the same when we come to meetings and when we go to meetings, when we're out of town traveling, or we're in town. Our lives should be the same, we should be the same believing person as an example to others no matter what. That's what we're called to be in our life. Another way to say it is, we should be living a faithful life.

Mother Teresa was asked late in her life if she felt she'd been successful. Have you heard this? And her answer was interesting. She said, "God never asked me to be successful. God asked me to be faithful". Now what's interesting about that, we didn't know until after she died and they released her diaries in the form of a book. By the way, Mother Teresa said, "Do not release my diaries," but here's a bulletin for you, don't die. Because when you die, they somehow don't listen to you anymore. So they released, and I say thank God. They released her diaries in the book. And what we learned in those diaries in that book is this, Mother Teresa, an Albanian nun, had a one year euphoric relationship with Jesus.

She believed Jesus was sitting right next to her and they would talk. And it was during that one year, close proximity to Jesus that she believed Jesus told her what he wanted her to do. "I want you to leave your order here in Albania, I want you to go to India, start a new order, and I want you to save my children." Now we all know that part of the story, don't we? Now, I had the pleasure, I met Mother Teresa on two occasions, and I never knew what I'm about to tell you until I read the book. The book says from her diaries that she spent the next 55 whole years doubting and questioning the very existence of God. Now, we look at that, and we can get all fancy in our language and come up with these fancy verbiage and words and phrases for what that means. Said John of the Cross in his wonderful book, *Dark Night of the Soul*, talks about the ebbs and flows of our faith.

But in reality, if you were very close in your faith to Christ and then all of a sudden it seems distant, it hurts. You can give it all the fancy names you want, you feel distant, and you wonder why has God turned on me. Amen? It happens to all of us in our ups and downs. So Mother Teresa 50 years was questioning the existence of God. Now why is that important? Back to the question from the reporter, "Mother Teresa do you think you've been successful? 'God never asked me to be successful, He asked me to be faithful.'" Did you realize that while Mother Teresa was doing everything she did, building the orphanages, and the hospitals, and saving the children in India, and expanding her order around the world, while she was doing all that was during the 50 years she was questioning the existence of God?

Mother Teresa was living out the very adage being faithful, no matter what. You want your life to go well, be faithful to God even when you're questioning God, even when you're happy with God, even when you're not happy with God, be faithful to the God who created you. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So how are we to be faith ... By the way, I say Amen a lot, so some people think, “Oh, maybe he's a Baptist.” But I'm born and raised Catholic. Baptized in 1956 so I've been Catholic a long time. So I just like saying Amen, it means so be it, right or do you agree with me? That sort of thing, you agree. G.K. Chesterton wrote ... Was one time asked ... Remember G.K. Chesterton the great author?

Congregation: Yeah.

Mark Price: He was asked one time in his life, “If you were shipwrecked on a desert island and could have only one book, what book would it be?” And his answer ... Everybody thought he'd say the Bible. He said, “If I were shipwrecked on a desert island and could I have only one book, the book I'd want is a book on shipbuilding.” You see, because he knew that his faith was something that grew with people. He grew in his faith by being there with people, and he was a help to others and their faith by being with people. A book on shipbuilding. So what I'm going to do today is I'm going to provide you some ways that we can in our lives, live a faithful life, live a seamless garment life. And they are to be faithful, be grateful, be helpful, be joyful, be merciful, be hopeful, be truthful and be innovational.

So first be prayerful. Philippians 4:6-7. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests mean known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Be prayerful. Do you know ... In my 44 years of ministry I've done a lot of counseling, and I've met a lot of married couples. I do a lot of talks for the leadership of Retrouvaille for example, that deals with marriages and hurting marriages. And when I'm with a lot of people all around this world, one thing that has been very sad to me is the number of married couples I meet in our Catholic church that don't pray. They don't pray, they say, “The last time we prayed really it was at our wedding, or the last time we prayed was at this function or that function.”

And I ask, “Why did you get married in the church? You got married ... Did you do it for the pictures? Why did you get married in the church? If you invited God to be in your life, why don't you continue to talk to God as a couple, and be a couple for each other?” One of the main reasons that I'm in ministry, and my hero in the faith was Bishop Fulton Sheen. And for years, and years, and years when I was young I used to listen to him, and got to reading his books, and loved his books. And now I know his venerable, Fulton Sheen. I've had the pleasure of being at the church with his nephew and niece in Illinois and met them, but never met him. But he used to call us to prayer, do you remember that? Those that are old enough to remember Bishop Sheen.

And he'd say an hour a day, so from the time I was 11 I tried to listen to that, an hour a day of prayer.

And that hour a day is so important because it really does create a foundation for the rest of your day. And prayer by the mean doesn't just mean asking for things, it means ... if you take the Hebrew word and look at it, it means really doing an introspection of your own life, and that takes time for us to do that. Look at our lives, what's going right? What's going wrong? What do we need? What can I give of my life to others? That's what prayer really should be, a deep understanding of ourselves and that relationship with God. And Fulton Sheen used to call us to prayer. And he told the story of one time being at a train station, and the train was running late. And he said to his friend, "There's a church that I want to go down and pray, and if I'm not back, and the train is coming, come and get me."

So his friend was worried, Sheen had been gone a long time. He went to the church, and he couldn't see Sheen. And he walked up and down the pews and there he was, Sheen laying down, sound asleep in a pew. And he woke Sheen up, and they're walking back to the train station, and he started to chide Sheen, and he said, "Hey you've been on TV, you've been on radio, you tell everyone to pray. You tell me you're going down there to pray, I found you sound asleep." And Sheen looked at him and said, "I gave God the hour, what He did with it was His business." Let's remember to pray in our lives, and if you're praying now that's absolutely wonderful. Bring your family into it, if you're not praying with your family or your spouses, I encourage you to continue it. Saint Monica, do you remember her? She prayed for 30 years. 30 years she prayed for one particular thing, what was it?

To bring her son back into the church. And we now know her son as Saint Augustine. 30 years she prayed for her son, never quit because she knew that the God that we serve as a faithful God, it's a God who makes promises and fulfills and keeps His promises. Amen to that.

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: Saint Monica knew that, and that's something that we should know and understand in our own lives. The newest character I perform is Saint Francis of Assisi. Now if you're like me, your knowledge of St Francis of Assisi was as a garden statue. But the more I got into studying him, I'm telling you this guy is amazing, he's absolutely truly amazing. One of the wealthiest families in all of Assisi, in when he was born 1184. 1184, 1186. And gives it all up to follow our Lord and Savior. He prayed every day, it says that he made five and six lengths a year.

This is how much he prayed. And he would pray so intently, so introspectively that they say sometimes he would just burst into tears. And sometimes he would start to laugh and do somersaults down the side of a mountain, because he was so into the prayer and communicating with God. Do we even come close in our lives to that kind of relationship with God, where we are so filled ... He used to say, people would say to him, "Why are you so filled with joy?" And he'd say, "Because I'm filled with Jesus." How many of us should be filled with Jesus to the degree where we feel joy every day in our lives? Saint Francis did. So the first step is to be prayerful.

The second is, be grateful. Colossians 3:17. "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." True happiness and success is wanting what you have, not having what you want. But we live in a world where everyone seems to want something different, "I want what they have. I want what my neighbor has. I want a younger cuter wife. I want a fancier car. I want a bigger flat screen TV. I want all the things I don't have," but true happiness with God is going to come when we are happy with what we do have, and we learn how to be happy with those things that are in our lives. We're called to be grateful. Two years ago, next week, I had which was a series of strokes. And I had very, very bad strokes.

In 2009, I had started my series of heart attacks, but in 2016 I had strokes, and the one that I had in May of 2016 with Colette at a Hobby Lobby store. And thank God I was holding on to the shopping cart, because I completely went paralyzed on the left side. I couldn't talk, I couldn't even call to Colette. I couldn't even get her name out, and I went through a period, and over the last two years I've been recovering. I've been recovering by working every single day at it, because I don't quit, and I have a God who created me who doesn't quit. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: And so, every single day for two years I've had to reteach myself to speak, and to speak clearly, to use my ... Especially this hand, I've had to teach myself ... I still have problems doing buttons, and I still have problems seeing off my left side. And sometimes I'll stumble on my left side when I walk. But you know what? I'm a whole heck of a lot better than I was May 21st, 2016 and I believe it's because of God. Now I could have sat there and felt sorry for myself, when you're in a hospital bed and nothing moves. But instead I chose to be grateful. I was thinking to myself in the hospital bed, "What do I have to be grateful for?" And you know what I told myself? I was grateful that I didn't get both sides paralyzed. Honestly, and I focused on that.



At least it was only one side, because I had this side to push me up out of bed, I had this side to do other things.

So we have to look at the things in our life that we don't like, and find reasons to be grateful in spite of them. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: Because we have that kind of a God, that kind of a healing God. So first is, be prayerful, second be grateful, number three is, be helpful. Galatians 6:9. "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up." Amen? I did not give up, I won't give up. There was a young boy who I happened to meet in Ohio, burned over 80% of his body. And he was in the hospital laying there, and everybody figured he was going to die. Doctors are saying he's going to die, his parents are walking around crying figuring their son is going to be dying. And after he'd been in the hospital a month or so, his teacher came in, and she brought with her a stack of books. And she set the books on the table next to his hospital bed, and then she sat down and she said, "See those books, that's your homework." He said, "You're getting way behind, you're missing too much school. You better get back to those books and start studying."

And do you know that they say that within a day or two that boy started to get better? And he got better and better until finally he left the hospital, and he's doing fine to this very day. And his parents asked him, "What happened? What changed?" The little boy said, "As I was laying in that bed and listening to you doctors, and you mom and dad saying that I was going to die, I was believing it. But when my teacher brought me homework, you don't give homework to someone who's going to die." Changed his whole outlook. How can we be helpful to the people around us? How can we go beyond ourselves to be helpful to those in our lives, or that God puts in our lives? People we don't even know. That's what we're called to do, be helpful.

Number four, be joyful. Philippians 4:4. "Rejoice in the Lord always, I shall say it again rejoice." Already told you about Saint Francis of Assisi, he prayed so much he'd be filled with joy and people would say to him, "Why are you so filled with joy? 'I'm filled with Jesus.'" But what you may not know about Francis, is that since the time he was 19 years old he would suffer the rest of his life with malaria. You may also not know that he suffered much of his adult life after going into the ministry with leprosy, that he got from serving the lepers, the lepers that actually brought him to his faith. He suffered for many, many years with a pain in his eyes, so bad especially in the last few years of his life, he couldn't be out in the sunlight because the pain



was agonizing to him. And it was so bad, this pain that his brothers wanted to do something to help him, they brought a physician in.

And you may not know this, and if you go to my website and you see me doing Francis, I do it with scars on the side, because what the physicians did alleviate the pain was they ... What is it called?

Congregation: Cauterized.

Mark Price: Cauterized him, thank you. The nurse, Colette. They cauterized him from the eyes to the jaw, thinking somehow that would release the pain. It didn't work, agonizing pain. Remember, through this he's joyful, he's joyful. So the cauterizing didn't work, so what did they do next? Remember they're practicing medicine. They pierced both his ear drums thinking that would release it. So this is a man, who was suffering and agonizing in pain almost all of ... Christians will sometimes think, "Well, I'm a Christian so everything's going to be good and happy." Where do you get that? The guy we follow was murdered after three years. These great people of our faith suffered many, many times over and yet they remained strong. The only thing that's in common with all of them is remaining faithful no matter what. So find reasons to be joyful no matter what.

Francis wrote very few things, but one that he did write was the Cantic of Creation. Have you heard that or read that? Cantic of the Creatures. You may not know that he wrote that in the last years of his life, when he was suffering and pain and agonizing, while on the dirt floor of a convent, and rats and other animals are crawling over him, is when he wrote that Cantic of the Creatures, which we still praise, listen to today. It's been put the song. He rose above what he was going through to find the joy that you only find in God through Christ. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So be joyful of your life. I had heart attacks and I told you about and strokes. One of the things that comes from heart attacks and strokes lots of times is depression. So I got hit with depression very, very badly and I didn't want to leave the house. And it was very, very difficult for me for a long, long time to even leave the house. I had to argue with myself, I debated on a daily basis with myself, convincing myself to leave the house, go out for a walk, just get some fresh air or go do something. And how was I finally able to do it? I said to myself, "Let me go find ways to give joy to other people. Let me take my mind off of what I'm doing, let



me put somebody else first ahead of myself.” You want to live that faith filled life, that seamless life, find that joy in your life, and give joy to other people.

Number five, be merciful and forgiving. Matthew 5:7. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall be shown mercy.” If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you. Matthew 6:14. Some of you know the Lord's prayer, right? There is that little phrase, forgive us our ...

Congregation: Trespasses.

Mark Price: Trespasses, which also mean sins. Forgive us our trespasses. What's next?

Congregation: As we.

Mark Price: As. Too little, two letter word, as. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others. Now, we pray that every single day in our lives, or certainly every time we're at Mass. But what does that mean? It means, Father God, Creator of all things, forgive me in the same way I forgive others. Do you realize you've been praying that, every time you pray the Lord's Prayer? And yet how many of us have people in our lives that we know we need to forgive? Including ourselves, we need to forgive ourselves. But we have people in our lives that need to forgive. One of the lessons of 9/11, and this came to mind because of all the hearings going on, they're re-talking about things of 9/11. The two things that most of the people who died in 9/11 either in the towers or the plane that they had in common, one was they connected with God, whatever their God was.

Those of you that are military people you might remember the expression, there is no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole. So they're about to die and they discover, “I better connect with God.” But the other thing that they did if they had access to a phone, they made a phone call. Did they call their insurance agent, or did they call Charles Schwab? They called family and friends. I'm I right? They called loved ones. And there's a lot of stories like this one of the woman in the South Tower, who called her sister. A sister that they hadn't spoken in 40 years to each other. And when they got on the phone, neither of them could remember why they stopped talking, why they hadn't seen each other, why they stopped connecting. All they could do was cry and say, “Please forgive me, I love you. I'm sorry, please forgive me.”

Why is it that sometimes it takes being at that point in our life where nothing else matters, before we realize what truly does matter, connecting with God and being a people of mercy and forgiveness to those around us, and to ourselves. Jesus died on that cross, a very painful horrible

death as you know. And when he was on the cross he didn't say, "Get an army and go avenge me." He said, "Forgive them." And we say we follow him, but do we really learn from him? Do we in our lives learn the mercy that he taught us while dying on the cross? That he taught us through his three years of teaching, through his life. Do you know why we're told to forgive? Do you think God what needs us to forgive? No. It's because God knows we need to forgive, because when we don't, it eats at us like a cancer. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: And by the way forgiving doesn't mean that the other person thinks that they should be forgiven for anything. It has nothing to do with the other person. And it has everything to do with you, and you doing what God has called you to do, and told you to do. And by the way, the only verse that says reiterated after the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, is the one I just read. It says, "If you are not willing to forgive others, your heavenly Father will not forgive you." It's the only part of the Lord's Prayer that's reiterated there. That's interesting, isn't it? So be a forgiving people.

Six, be hopeful, be positive. Isaiah 40:31. "But those who hope when the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow were weary, they will walk and not be faint." There was a boy who was born without a right arm. And he went to his parents when he was about 11, and he said, "Mom, Dad I want to learn judo." And these were good loving parents but they said to him, "I don't know if judo is the best sport for somebody without a right arm." But the boy did what all kids do, those of you who are parents "Please, please, please, please, please, please. Mom, Dad please, please, please, please, if you love me [inaudible 00:31:07]." So Mom and Dad said, "Fine, we'll get you a coach." And they got the boy together with a judo coach. And from day one this coach is teaching this boy one particular judo move.

Every time they get together, week after week, month after month one judo move. Well at the end of the probably eight months, the boy was put into a competition. Do you know he won the first round? He won the second round, he got to the semifinals, he won the semifinals. He got to the finals and the won the finals. And he was shocked. And he went to his coach and said, "How did that happen? How did I win? You taught me only one move." And the judo instructor smiled and said, "Yes, but I taught you the most difficult move in all of judo. And the only way for your opponent to defeat you, is to take hold of your right arm."

See this coach is like our God. Our God does not see what's missing from us, our God does not see our shortcomings, our God does not see our failings, our God sees our possibilities, our God sees who He created. Scripture says that we are a holy nation, a royal priesthood of people set apart, chosen by God. Scripture says that we were touched by God, and chosen before we were even born, and we were chosen for a specific purpose, to proclaim the glory of His Son. This is the kind of God who sees the possibilities within us, because He sees the true us that he created. Amen? He doesn't see what the world sees.

Number seven, be truthful. To thy own self be true. Ephesians 4:25. "Therefore each of you must put off false hood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body." Turn to others. I owned an advertising agency for most of 40 years and my clients were automobile manufacturers. And so I did a lot of work with Toyota, a lot of work with Chrysler, [inaudible 00:33:17] first book even mentions my programs that we did for Chrysler in '78, '79, '80. But when I was working for General Motors, and Chevrolet division at one point back in the 80s, they had a truck that kept blowing up. They built, incorrectly they put the engine too close to the side panel, and if it got hit even a little bit on the side, it would burst into flames and blow up. And people were dying and being maimed.

And I attended a meeting along with other ad people and other corporate people, where ... You won't maybe believe this, where they were talking about, "What are we going to do? Are we going to fix the truck, or we just going to continue to pay off the family of the dead and maimed?" And do you know that they decided to just pay off the families of the dead and maimed. It was cheaper to do that. And I argued against it, I said that's wrong. And I was an ethicist in the early days, before they were called that sort of thing. I said, "You can't do that, that's just wrong. You have to make the tough decision, you have to make the right decision." And I was ignored and I quit working for General Motors. And I never worked for them again, never did any advertising after that for them, my choice.

But I didn't like the fact that they had a vehicle out there that was killing people, so I let CBS know, and a story was run on 60 Minutes. And guess what? They fixed the truck. We have to in our lives, do the hard things and be truthful and speak truth to power, and make the right choice even if it costs us in our paycheck. We have to do what's right by God, because if we don't do it, who else is going to do it? If you don't stand for something, as they say. You'll fall for anything. So as people of faith, we have to be willing to stand strong for what is right in our world. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: And set up against what is wrong. Number eight, the last one. Be innovational. Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God." I think was in the 80s. Thank you. This is my five minute call, so I'm going to get through this real fast. In the 80s one of my clients was Toyota. From about '83 through I think '87, '88. And Toyota, it was at the time when ... Remember they're putting pictures of missing kids on milk cartons? To find missing kids. So I said to Toyota, look we're doing these millions of these mail pieces for a couple different ad campaigns, the back side is blank, why don't we put a picture of a missing child?

And so it took some time, but they agreed to it and I went to the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department, this was a big Northern California thing, and I got from them a picture, and the name of a missing girl and the particulars, and we put it on the back of this mail piece. And do you know we sent millions of them out? Did you know that we found that missing girl? And she was reunited with her family. You see, God's will can be done through us, each of us, if we can in our own lives find ways to be creative, to use the platforms we're given the businesses we have, the people around us to do creative things in the name of God to help the people around us. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So that's how we live ... And I'm going to end with one story. By being grateful, prayerful, by being grateful, by being hopeful, joyful, forgiving, truthful and creative. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: That's how we live a faithful life, a seamless garment life. Let me end with this, one part of my ministry is called The Lay Pastor Society, and back in 1980, it was really clear to me that we were having this lack of priests, and I was so fearful that people were going to get lost in the cracks, because our churches were big, a lot of people, and the number of priests were dropping. So I thought and prayed, and prayed, and prayed and came up with this concept, this idea that a priest friend of mine actually named Lay Pastor Society. And what it is very, very simple. You divide your parish into groups of 20 families, you have one lay pastor for each of the 20 families. And once a month all they do is call them, nothing lethargical, they call them, "I'm thinking about you, I care about you, I love you." Amen?

That's all it is and it made a world of difference. I started it in one church and it grew to 600 around the country. Never charged a nickel for it. Doing speeches and performances is how I

funded that. And this one woman, a late pastor Lucille called me one day, and she said, “Mark, I want to tell you about this woman who I call every month.” I say, “Okay.” She said to me, she says, “First, I want you to know she's old.” And I said, “Well, Lucille you're 88.” I said, “So how do you define old?” And she said, “Well, she's in her upper 90s.” And I said, “Oh.” And I said, “When you call her how does it go?” She says, “Well, that's what I want to tell you about.” She says, “I call her and she keeps saying how lonely she is.” I want you to know that there are people who are lonely around you.

Some of you may get fed up with all the emails, and the phone calls, and the texts and everything that you deal with on a daily basis, but there are people who don't get any of it. There are people who have family members in the same town who never hear from them. There are people who are lonely, and we as followers of Christ should figure out ways to reach out to them. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: This is what we're called to do. I was preaching at a Christmas Eve Mass once, and when you're up here you see things differently. Like we see what you're doing. This one couple was sitting there, Christmas Eve, and the man reached over to take his wife's hand and she slapped it away. And so I knew there was some tension. So I stopped my talk and I said, “Hold on here.” I said, “I see some tension out.” I said, “This is Christmas Eve, the eve of the day we remember bringing Jesus into this world, knock it off.” I said, “In fact, all of you stand up turn to each other say love you, Merry Christmas and give each other a hug.” And you know the whole church did it, it was beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. The end of mass, on the back of the church and there's a woman standing there, upper 70s tears rolling down her face. And I went over and said, “What's wrong?” And she said, “My husband died seven years ago, that was the first hug I had in seven years.”

There's people that need hugs, there's people that need a smile just around you and you may not even realize it. Amen?

Congregation: Amen.

Mark Price: So I end with this. Lucille told me that she went over to visit this woman, and she said that the date and time was set up. She shows up at the woman's door, and the woman from that meant the door opened, Lucille told me she felt uncomfortable like she showed up at the wrong day or time. She said she could tell the woman had her hair done special, was wearing

probably one of her fanciest dresses. When she walked into the house she smelled baked goods baking. She looked over the dining table had a fine linen on it and it was set with China. And Lucille said, "I'm sorry, we were expecting somebody? I'm I here at the wrong time?" And she said the woman looked at her and said, "Oh, I was expecting somebody. I was expecting you."

So here's what I believe with all my heart, with all my heart. When I had my heart attack, they were putting me back under and I thought I was going to die, but I learned an important lesson and the lesson was this, my doctors told me afterwards that, "Did you know you prayed out loud we were putting you back under? And I said, "No, but it doesn't surprise me. What did I say?" And they said, you said, "God, I'm ready to go. I'm ready to go. I would like to be around to see what happens with my daughter but if you want me, I'm ready to go." Now, what does that say to a guy who's been preaching for 40 years? It says I must really believe this stuff, because when I was there at the place where the rubber meets the road, there was no doubt in my mind that there was a Jesus Christ waiting for me when I got on the other side. Amen? And that is wonderful to learn.

So here's what I believe, if we live our lives as faith filled people, as seamless garment people that when we die and we're standing at those great gates, and those gates swing open wide. And we see the throngs of people we've heard about, and we hear the music that we've heard about, we're going to feel uncomfortable. And you guys with all of our egos, everything you're going to feel uncomfortable. And we're going to walk in and maybe try to hide behind people because we don't want to be in the way. And then we're going to see someone walking toward us, someone we never met but we know because we've been talking to him, for many, many years. And he's going to walk up to us, look us in the eyes and we're going to say, "I'm sorry, am I in the way? Am I a problem? Were you expecting somebody? And he's going to look at us and smile and say, "Oh, I was expecting you." Amen. Thank you.