

# The Red Line

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Speaker: **Mark Stroud**

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Mark Stroud: There comes a time when we're going to have to stand up and do what's right.

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(Music Playing: 00:00:17- 00:00:46)

And now for 6498, The Red Line.

Mark Stroud: Thank you for joining us on Brothers of the Word, because brother, you need the word. Hallelujah. Well, you may be seated.

Tonight, the Lord is really impressive upon my heart to talk to you about the Red Line, The Red Line. When was the last time you crossed the red line? And when was the last time we got a little bit uncomfortable for the Lord? There is a red line. There's a line that we dare not cross. It's a line that says, "I'm comfortable where I am. I don't really want to go any further." If we have the choice, we love to have money in our pockets. We love to be in comfortable houses. We love for people to like us. We don't like to be unliked. We love to be appreciated.

So, there is a line when necessary when we cross it but we don't like to do it. We don't like to do that. We like things to be mellow, things to be calm. We prefer not to have a lot of conflict at times if we could. But there is a line that the Lord requires us to cross from time to time. When the three Hebrew boys were there, (00:02:02) to go and the King Nebuchadnezzar says, "Unless you bow down and worship, we're going to throw you in the fiery furnace." They, of course, crossed the line and said, "We're not going to do that." Daniel, of course, they told him, "Nobody prays except to the king." But Daniel, of course, crossed the line and opened the windows and he prayed.

Let's talk about David, of course. He crossed the line. He's a king, but he's dancing out of his clothes. He crossed the line, right? The woman with the alabaster box, she had the perfume, the ointment that could have been sold, the disciple said, but she crossed the line by pouring it all on Jesus. Cross your line in your worship, cross the line.

Peter was comfortable in a boat with the other disciples. I don't want to say comfortable, but he was, at least, safe, somewhat safe in the middle of the storm, right? And he saw Jesus walking and he said, "Lord, I want to come out there with You. If that's You, bid me come." He crossed that line and became uncomfortable. Now, the disciples, they told him and I think Acts the 4th Chapter, they told them, "Hey, don't preach anymore in the name of Jesus. Don't you do it." And, of course, they brought him in, they beat him, and when they got back to the church, they told the church, "Hey, they counted it great that they suffered for the name of Jesus," and during that meeting, they prayed a very powerful prayer. I call the Apostles' prayer, really. They prayed, "Father, consider the threatenings of the enemy upon our lives and grant us that with all bonus that we may speak your word by stretching forth your hand to heal and letting signs and wanted to be brought in the name of thy holy child, Jesus." That's a prayer of crossing the line. We're not going to back down. We're not going to back away. This is what we're supposed to do.

But again, here again, human nature, we don't want conflict. We want peace. As a matter of fact, sometimes we get conflict, I mean, our shoulders tensed up, stomach begins to tighten. It just does not do well with us physically or emotionally. It just does not do well. But sometimes, we are required to step over the line in order to -- the Lord calls us peacemakers, and in order to become a peacemaker, that doesn't mean that we become passive and just stand by and do nothing. Peace sometimes has to be made and sometimes when you're making peace, it is going to require some type of conflict at least for a few moments.

So tonight, let's talk a little bit about that red line and what it would take for us to cross that red line and be victorious in the days ahead. Let's talk about that and there are two ingredients that we need before we get to the scripture tonight. There are two ingredients. One, we're going to need sacrifice. We're going to need sacrifice, and know what that means to sacrifice. And secondly, we're going to need that sense of boldness. That sense of confidence that we're making the right choice, because you don't want to step over a line and you're iffy, "Should I do this or not? Should I do this or not? Should I do this? No."

When you step over that line, when you say, “Hey, we got to have that conversation. We’re going to have to do this,” and you better know, okay, what you’re standing on why you’re having that conversation and what you’re doing. Sometimes it would take that, having that meeting, having that discussion. First of all, it’s going to take sacrifice and then it’s going to take some form of boldness for you to cross over that.

In order to do that, let’s talk about sacrifice first for the time that we have. If we could go to the Romans 12th Chapter, some of you know these verses very well. Romans 12th Chapter and we’ll look at Verses 1 and 2. Romans 12:1-2, very familiar, we’ll talk about this here but here again, the question is, when was the last time you stepped over the red line? If it has been a while, then chances are your life has not progressed because even inventors have to cross over a red line, and you’re going to have to get tired of the status quo. When you want to bring out something new and something better and another plan, bringing in new, you’re going to step on someone’s toes. That’s unbearable. It’s going to happen. When you upset the apple cart, as they say, someone will get upset. But what I’m telling you is, before you touch the apple cart, make sure first of all that you are lined up with sacrifices, and secondly that you have a level of boldness, that’s going to require that.

Look at Romans 12th Chapter, Verses 1 and 2. I could almost repeat it, verbatim, accord it. It says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” He said, present your bodies unto God, a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Number one there, then it says here, “And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Let’s pray for a moment. “Father, we thank you in Jesus name for this moment as we gathered around your word, and Lord, we ask that you would speak to us tonight expressly by your spirit. Everything that you have planned and ordained for tonight to take place Lord, we say, “Yes, and have your way.” Speak Holy Spirit, in Jesus name, Amen.”

All right, so first of all, God tells us, this is something very scary. Let me ask you this question. When was the last time you were scared in your worship, terrified in your worship? You’re about

to release something that you knew that somebody was not going to like. When was the last time you were scared? Even in the Macedonian Church in 2 Corinthians the 8th Chapter I believe, the bible says that the people there were poor. But when it came time to give, they gave beyond their ability to give. They gave beyond what they could afford. When was the last time that you gave beyond what you could afford willingly? When was the last time that it was scary? I mean, you came, your hand is shaking, shaking to the offering plate, shaking -- maybe in times of worship, you had a word from the Lord and you know you had this word. Oh, my God, but what so and so going to say? But you know this was God, this was an act of worship.

When was the last time you were scared, the last time you were scared, not just in the house but I got to talk to somebody, I got to tell them about Jesus. When was the last time you were scared? If you say it was yesterday, it was a few minutes ago, well then, you're not very far. But if it's been a while, then that could possibly mean that you're allowing fear to hold you back. And if fear holds you back, you will not progress in life. We don't like conflict. But unfortunately, conflict is part of the game so to speak. It is a part of life. You're going to have to go through it. You're going to endure it.

And so one of my mentors once said, "We're going to have to be comfortable or have to become comfortable at being uncomfortable." And that's just a fact of a matter. Many times when I have had to go and speak in places or I have to go to some sort of meetings, my God, I was uncomfortable, uncomfortable, because it's always easy to see others higher than ourselves. It's always easy when you're in a group of people, your peer group and you would say, "Well, they got this and they got that and look at me, I don't have this and I don't have that." But really to tell the truth about it, most of your peers are saying the same thing about you. You got this and they have some of the same hang-ups. I guarantee you, some of the same hang-ups. But again, we're going to have to cross that line.

I'll give you another example about David and Goliath. Of course, David was anointed king but he was not the "Anointed King" at that time. Saul was. He could have ignored it, but he couldn't ignore it at the same time. He had to cross the line. Saul was there.

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The whole army was there. Surely, they could have taken care of it, but he had to cross the line.

There comes the time when we're going to have to stand up and do what is right. There comes the time, as they say, you have to put on your big boy pants, your big girl pants and get up and just do what is right. And before that time comes, again, it is going to require sacrifice and some form of boldness.

Let's go again here in Romans 12th Chapter. It says "That you present your body as a living sacrifice." The word sacrifice, of course, does mean sacrifice, but it also means -- this is something powerful here, the word "sacrifice" also means or connotes being a victim, a sacrifice is a victim. Think about it, in the Old Testament, they brought the bulls, the goats and rams and things of that nature, that was the victim. A victim is someone that something is done unto it. A force is coming up on it, whether is willing or unwilling, something is happening to it.

So God is saying, "Let me do something to you, because I present your body," and your body, of course, it means this, "the flesh", yes. But body means also the totality of all things. The totality, your whole body of work, all of you. Of course, your physical form, your finances, your marriage, your home, your body, presents your body, the totality of all that you are, present that to me. The word "present" means to place it before him, to put it in his hand.

Now, here is the scary part, because what is God going to do? Once I say, "Lord, here am I, use me." What is he going to do? Well, that requires a certain measure of trust and if we'd be honest, this is also something that we're going to have to be led of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit has to lead you into that level of trust and to that level of deep abandonment, when we say, "Lord, I give it all to you." Even as Mary, the mother of Jesus, declared, she said, "To the angel Gabriel, bid unto me even according to your word, (00:12:04) said, "It let it to me." That's when we take up our cross, we deny ourselves, take up our cross and we follow after him, that total abandonment is what we need.

So first of all, I'm telling you, sacrifice -- and the word "sacrifice" denotes being a victim that is you letting this happen to you. God let your plans happen to me and when you say that, you are also

saying, “Everything that I had plan for me, no more. Now, what you want calls that to happen to me.” He says, “Present your body a living sacrifice, meaning, you’re not going to die, you’re going to go through this alive.” Every single day, present your body a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God which is a reasonable service, you present with the whole body of you and then Verse 2, “And be not conformed, that’s a choice. I will allow myself to go through this process to be not conformed, to be not as this world.”

Now, when I say “world,” I’m not just talking about the sinner on the street, because unfortunately, in many of our houses of worship and around many of those that call themselves Christians, they are conformed to the world. And when you stand up and say something like, “Hmm, fornication is the saying you shouldn’t sleep around.” Some of those were about to bite your head off, because that’s so deep in to the flesh and it’s so deeply embedded in to the culture that there are some topics that you don’t want to bring up but there is a line.

The Lord says “If you cross that line, you can save some.” If you seek to save your life, to save your relationships, to save your job, to save this or to save that, when the Lord is calling you to step over the line, and declare what he says in love with love, because it’s the Holy Spirit that would drive you, that would draw you to them. It’s the love of God.

Many times Jesus was moved with compassion toward the people and it’s God’s love that will compel you, not the wrath, not the judgment, not – “Hey, you’re going to the bad place in the basement, unless you stop doing that sort of stuff.” No, we’re talking about all that. God’s got a better way and it’s just love. It’s the love of the Spirit that draws you over with love and compassion to touch a life and to see that life delivered, but it’s going to take crossing a line. You may say something like “Brother, can we talk for a second? Would you mind if do sit and talk for a second?” of course you don’t want start with that heavy topic, maybe you want to talk about the weather. I don’t know, talk about sports. Ask about their family. How are you doing? How’s mom and them? How are they doing? How are your folks? How are your relatives? How are you? And let the Lord lead you, because you’re going to have to cross.

And you know when the Holy Spirit is doing it -- let me tell you, when the Holy Spirit is doing it, one, there is an overwhelming sense of love and compassion.

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And two, you'll know that there's no way of getting around this. You're going to have to have this and you have it in love and those that are of God will hear you, and those that are not of God, at least you told them. But you don't want to leave them with an excuse. You don't want to leave them having blood on your hands and then something happens to them and you know that you should have said it and you didn't say it. That's even worst.

So the Lord, first of all, says "We're going have to have -- or rather live a sacrificial life." Present your body, the totality of you, present that a living sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable.

The Lord also tells us that we can present to him another type of sacrifice, that's a sacrifice of praise, a sacrifice of praise. Now, this is another thing as well, because sometimes if we'd be honest, we don't really feel like praising. I can't get no talking here. I feel like it. Sometimes depression creeps in and why does depression creep in? Because we begin to look at things, we begin to engage our senses to this physical world. And if we look at this physical world, it seems like there's not so much to praise Him for. But if we only knew what God was doing even behind the scenes, if you begin to count how many times he's kept you safe and sound, how many times he has provided for you, how many times he has healed you, how many times he has forgiven, how many times he has delivered, how many times he has rescued, and the love of God that we don't deserves, he still pours upon us and he lavish us with his love. And he will love you and he loves you and he gives to you even beyond our efforts. He loves us period. That's a good thing to know.

So, he says that we can give him a sacrifice of praise that is pouring this out unto him and we can also give him sacrifices by doing good deeds and by giving to the poor.

Now, understand something, in giving sacrificially or living a sacrificial life, again, we are counting self, what we have, not as important, should I say, to the major thing that God is doing.

You're going to have to look forward, knowing that what he has said and what he is saying is better than what we are saying.

Let me get you one more scripture then we're going to close out tonight. I'm enjoying myself with you guys tonight. But understand something, if I can speak that word prophetically, there's going to be a red line that you're going to have to cross. And when you approach that that red line, I want you to already know that you're doing this by way of sacrifice because you're going to sacrifice something to get over that line. Be willing to sacrifice. I may lose this person as a friend. I may lose -- but what are you sacrificing for? Sacrificing for him, sacrificing for Christ.

I love you brother. I love you sister. I love you. I thank God for you, but His will is going to have to be more important. And many times, His will is more important than their feelings. I rather you hurt my feelings and save me from pain and all those other stuff than to play cake my feelings and you don't tell me that there is a pothole in the road, a big whole sinkhole in the road. I don't want to hurt your feelings and I end up in the hole, because you didn't tell me. Let me end with this here and this is just advice from the Lord, not we're going to get through it all tonight, but this is just wonderful advice and a word from the Lord here in Matthew 16:24-26. This on the new living translation, I love the way this reads, "Then Jesus said to his disciples, if any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way. You must give your own way. Take up your cross and follow me." Verse 25, "If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it, but if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul. Is anything worth more than your soul.

So there's going to be a line that we're going to have to cross. I think that is what I came tonight to tell you. If I could speak prophetically tonight and we're going to pray, I pray that moment that you will have that sense of boldness. I pray that moment that the love of God would just overwhelm you, the purposes of God will overwhelm you and that you won't let that moment slip while trying to save your life. Save a friendship, save money, save your reputation, but have crossed that line and there's victory always on other side because I'm telling Jesus is worth it.

So father, I pray all those that are listing and watching right now, Lord I pray at that moment that we would not let it slip. I pray that moment that your Spirit will come upon us in a mighty way and that the love of God would just over shout to us and that your courage and confidence and conviction would fill our hearts that we would do the thing that is need for. We bless you tonight in Jesus mighty name, amen.

Well, thank you for joining us for Brothers of the Word. Because brother, you need the word.

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