

# A Saved Soul and a Wasted Life

by Alan Redpath

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*Alan Redpath's sermon calls Christians to recognize the importance of living a life fully devoted to Christ, rather than merely having a saved soul while neglecting their spiritual responsibilities.*

**Duration:** 36:30

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 16:7, Acts 1:6

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not being neutral in one's Christian faith. He shares personal anecdotes and stories to illustrate the impact of a committed and passionate Christian life. The preacher challenges the audience to consider if they are willing to pay the price of discipleship and prioritize their relationship with God over worldly pursuits. He also highlights the power of the Holy Spirit in driving home the message of salvation and urges believers to actively share their faith with others.

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## Transcript

Hi everybody. Have you had a good day today? Have you? Very good. There was a headline in the Edinburgh Evening Paper last July, when there had been a very unusual experience of three days without any rain, and three days without any cloud.

And the headline of the evening paper said, Sizzling 70s. No hope of a break. Well now, we should turn off the heat here a bit.

Still it's lovely being here in this lovely convention, and we're reaching a very critical stage, and those of us who are, I hope, spiritually discerning, far more concerned about a spiritual outreach from this convention than organisation as such, are deeply concerned that before these nights pass, God will really break in and do something new for us. Because I believe we're in desperate need of a touch from heaven. I believe that in my own soul, as I face you all tonight.

I'm in need. You're in need. The greatest need of all is in Christian leadership in this country that there may come upon us the authority of the Spirit of God, and the proclamation of his word in these tremendous days.

So I will ask you just for a moment to bow your head in prayer, fervently, that God may meet with us in these closing moments of the meeting. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Speak just now, some

message to meet my need, which thou only dost know.

Speak now through thy holy word, and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

I would ask you just to turn in your Bible again to the portion of scripture which is read to us, and especially to John chapter 16, verse 7. I will read these verses to you. Will you listen to them very carefully? Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you.

But if I depart, I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father.

Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is just. I rather tremble in bringing to you the message that God has laid upon my heart tonight, because I know it won't be popular. It may come, call for some criticism from any of you, but I trust you will believe that it's given to you in deep sincerity, in Christian love, with a real concern for Christian endeavor, and for all Christian work in this country, that we might see not more of what we've got, not a mere spreading out of further carnality into the world, but a mighty breath of Holy Ghost revival.

We evangelical Christians are sometimes accused, not without justification, by many people of being purely negative, of being separatist, and shut off, and having no concern for social righteousness. The Premier of South Australia came here on Thursday night and said some very pungent things. I hope they all sunk into our hearts.

I was absolutely with him in what he said. It's no good protesting against something unless we have an alternative. There are things which justifiably we protest against, but what alternative are we able to present? That's the shattering thing that very largely the Christian Church hasn't got one.

But you know, separation is one thing and isolation is another. The Church will make its biggest impact upon the world when she is really separate from it, but never when she is isolated from it. The Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, separate, and undefiled.

But nobody was nearer to sinful people than he was. Indeed, he was called the friend of sinners, a gluttonous man, and a wine-liver. That's how they accused him.

He lived close to people. If he came to Adelaide tonight, he wouldn't be found in this Christian endeavour convention. He would be found in the public houses, and taverns, and cinemas, and dance halls of this town.

He would go where people are in desperate need. Very often we, in our separation from the world, observe a kind of isolation and get in a Christian ghetto where we're happy with Christian friends, but where we make little or no impact upon the world. I'm not sufficiently aware of the conditions of this country to comment upon them, because I have only been here a short time.

But I have a heavy heart for the old country tonight, where at the beginning of this century, 75% of the population of London attended a place of worship. The percentage is now less than four. Last Christmas, 600 million pounds sterling was spent on alcohol in Scotland alone, which has a population of only five

million people.

600 million pounds in a week in alcohol. What happens within our churches at 11 o'clock on a Sunday and 7 o'clock in the evening isn't within a million miles of the thinking of young people today. I'm not speaking merely of a long-haired beatnik type.

I haven't seen them here. Possibly you have them, but I haven't seen them. You don't know whether they're fellows or girls.

I'm not speaking of them, but I'm speaking of the average Britisher with a television set, a pay packet which is above average, a home, a garden, and who is completely self-centered, and who in his life doesn't recognize the slightest need for God. He's not merely indifferent to the Christian faith. He's antagonistic to it.

Would you allow me to read an extract from the British press, which was printed only before I left Scotland, and I think this will convey to you the atmosphere of the country. It is undisputed that the Christian tradition forms the basis of conventional morality in this country. However, in an age when traditional Christian dogma is being regarded with increasing skepticism, and when Christianity plays little or no part in the lives of the majority of people, it seems very illogical to continue to use it as the sole basis of moral instruction of the school population.

If it came to me, war widely accepted that the teaching of morality and citizenship did not necessitate this indoctrination of Christian beliefs, and that in fact the intolerance and bigotry so often engendered by it was directly opposed to the aims of such teaching, most humanists would regard it as a more desirable attitude. That's the defiant attitude of the vast majority of the population of Britain today. Now, is this country very much different? Is it really very much different? The vast majority of people in Britain who are dope addicts, sex perverts, are like what they are because they have no parents to pray for them, and they come from homes which have broken up.

Two young people aged 13 were caught two months ago in Edinburgh up to mischief at three o'clock in the morning. They were taken by the policeman back to their home. They were both brothers, and the policeman knocked on the door and the mother got out of bed and opened the door, and she was absolutely mad.

Not mad with her children, but mad with the policeman for waking her up, and she said to him, why on earth can't these kids live as they like if they want to? Now, I come from a climate like that, and I find it very, very interesting to be in a country where maybe things are a little different on the surface, but I wonder if they're much different basically. Because I'm quite certain that the major priority of our life is to reach this generation for Christ, and I do not rule out mass evangelism as part of the method of achieving that aim. The New Testament Church frequently used that method.

You are, I hear, having Leighton Ford and Billy Graham in this country shortly. I know them both personally, and I think I can say that I'm a friend of both of them. When Billy Graham came to Chicago, I was vice-chairman of the committee and rolled my sleeves up together with hundreds of others, and we had a wonderful time, and thousands of people were one for Christ.

But in Chicago, Billy Graham said to me, he said, you know, if the church was doing its job, I'd be out of work, and he's dead right. The answer to Australia's need, dear friend, is not Billy Graham or Leighton

Ford, it's you. You on fire with God.

Every one of you. Men and women, fellows and girls, who not only have given themselves completely to Christ, but have received from him the fullness of his spirit. The only answer to forces of spiritual evil which threaten our generation, the only answer to hold back atheistic, materialistic communism, the only answer to it, to a force of spiritual evil, is a force of spiritual good.

I had the privilege of living just for a week or two in Malaysia and Singapore before I came here, and I sensed the pulse of Asiatic young people. And I saw exploded forever the idea of the superiority of the white race. And I saw moreover thousands of young Christian students at university who had sold out for Christ, and who were vital in their witness for him.

Do you know at the main hospital in Singapore tonight, there are no less than 40 converted Christian doctors. 40 converted Christian doctors in the one hospital. And hundreds of people who are really doing the job seven days a week, and who are in business to pay expenses, but who live for one thing only, to win men and women for Jesus Christ.

I say that the only answer in the area in which you live, in your home, in your school, in your factory, in your office, is that when men confront you, they confront a man filled with the Holy Ghost. I don't mean by that an abnormal Christian, but I mean a normal Christian. Will you forgive me if I intrude into this meeting a word of testimony? I was converted the first time I heard the gospel at the age of about, of nearly 20.

It all happened because in training to be a chartered accountant in a city in the north of England, one of the fellows in that office was, as I now know, a Christian. I had never met such a person before. If you'd met me at that time, you'd have said, there's nobody less likely to become a Christian than Alan Redbirth.

I just lived and whipped it up for everything that I could get out of life. And I had fun. I enjoyed it.

It wasn't getting me anywhere, but it was expensive living, but it was good fun. But for two years in that office, I'd lived alongside this man who was, I thought, a religious maniac. The office hours opened at nine o'clock.

He was always there at quarter to nine. We stopped for lunch at one until 2.30. He only took an hour. We had a break at 11 for something stronger than tea, and then at three o'clock, another break for tea.

He hadn't any break. We finished at 5.30. He went on to six. We wanted to get home at four to play golf.

One day, a dozen of us sat round a public house in Newcastle drinking beer, and we vowed to one another that in less than six months, we'd knock this rotten religion out of him. And we launched a hate campaign. I was designated to report him to the partner for failing to keep half his hours correctly.

That was quite true. He kept them too well. Others were delegated to report him to various clients for badly auditing their books.

And generally speaking, we all sought to make that man know that we didn't want anything to do with him. But we couldn't make him mad. We couldn't make him lose his temper.

When I reported him to the partner, the partner said to me, if you all kept office hours like he did, I could do with half the stuff. That's what I was afraid of, of course. The whole plot collapsed.

And look, he and I were delegated to go and audit a company's books in the north of England in a little town. A paint factory was located in this town, away from civilization because the smells were so acute. And we had to live in a little hotel with one bedroom.

And I found myself shut away in the company of this religious maniac for three weeks, night and day. The first night we got into our bedroom, I got in first. I noticed there were two beds beside each other.

I put one at one side, one end of the bedroom and one at the other, and put on myself as far apart as I could. And then when we went up to bed, he knelt down to pray. There was no carpet on the floor.

It was merely wood. So I thought, I'm sure I'm as good as he is, so I knelt down as well. I'd never done that in my life before.

Do you know how long he stayed there? 50 minutes. He did? 50 minutes. Oh, I have reason to remember.

I was counting him on my watch. And I was, I had my eyes open and I was determined not to give in before he did. I had cramp and housemaid's knee and I ached and every bone in my body.

And then when he got up, I stayed down a bit just to show him I was better than he was. And then I dashed into my bed and tucked myself in and tried to go to sleep. And I heard a foot coming over to my bed.

Someone sat on my bed and he said to me, Redbird. I said, what do you want? He said, do you want to be saved? That's the diplomatic approach, isn't it? The softening up process. Do you want to be saved? Ah, but you see, I had lived for two years with that man.

And I'd watched his consistency. I'd watched his integrity. I'd seen his life.

I'd criticized it, pulled it to pieces, done everything to seek to destroy his Christian faith without any effect. And as I had watched him, I had become increasingly conscious that there was something to be saved from and someone to be saved to. And there and then, in that little country public house in the north of England, on that very first night, I opened my heart and I received Christ as my Lord.

For six months, he took me to a brethren hall. You see, I had a good beginning in life. He took me to a brethren hall for a Bible reading every Wednesday.

And when the Bible reading was over, we walked for two miles along a riverside to catch a train. And sometimes we never spoke to each other. Not because we were not on good terms, we were.

But there was gradually dawning on my life that this Christianity isn't a play thing. It isn't a hobby. It isn't going to church.

It isn't playing religion. It's discipleship. It means a cross.

And it gradually dawned on me that if I was to be a Christian, I had to completely reverse the kind of life I was living. And on one hand, there was the Christian life, the way of the cross, the way of discipleship, the way of adventure with Jesus. And on the other hand, there was rugby football.

There was the possibility of playing for my country. There was all that went with rugby football in my life, which involved drink, gambling, shows, nightclubs, dances, girlfriends. And on the one hand, all that on the

other, discipleship.

And I weighed up the two. And I knew that they didn't go together. I knew that I couldn't be a Christian and live like that.

And it's not easy to tell you this, but I want to be honest with young people here. I went to that fellow six months after my conversion and said to him, I can't take your religion. It costs too much to be a Christian.

I want to have a good time. I'm going to forget all about it. And he said to me, well, you'll never be happy until you're right with God.

Nonsense. I'll show you. I left him.

Two years later, I qualified as a chartered accountant, went down to London in business, got a good job with Imperial Chemical Industries, and started going up the ladder with plenty of money. And I had a good time. And I did everything I could to forget God.

At one period, I went to a different theatre and a different nightclub every night for three weeks to forget. But I was miserable. Absolutely miserable.

That's how I know that I was a Christian. You see, I said to some people in the counselling room tonight, the trouble with some folk is they've gone too far for the world to use them, but they haven't gone far enough for God to use them. I used to love all that kind of thing, but now I hated it.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit had come into my heart, because I was born again, and because he was battling with me and fighting with me and saying that's not the way, the way is discipleship across. And I was miserable. I wouldn't listen.

Say, among this great crowd tonight, as this convention draws to its conclusion, are you still fighting that kind of battle? The Holy Spirit tugging, pulling, pleading with you, and you saying I'm not prepared to pay the price? It's much more important to me to be popular, to rise to the top of the tree in business, to get on in games and to have a good time, drink, show, dancing, girls, much more fun. Discipleship out. One day a telephone rang in my office, and it was my friend who'd come to London from Scotland.

He was now director of the largest provision store in Scotland, come down in business. He said, come out to lunch with me. So I said, all right.

I came out to lunch with him. He never talked about religion, never talked about the Saviour at all, talked about nothing except business. I was very uncomfortable and hardly said anything.

Before he left me, he shook hands with me and he said goodbye. But don't forget, will you, that it's possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life. You get that, young people? It's possible to have a saved soul but a wasted life.

I couldn't get rid of that. The following day, I was going up to Liverpool to play Rucker against Lancashire, an important game. I went up and played all the way through the game, saved soul and wasted life, saved soul and wasted life.

Later, the team dinner, the dance, the nightclub, the show, the drink, saved soul and wasted life, saved soul and wasted life. You fool. And in circumstances about which I told you a night or two ago, which

occurred very soon after, I was absolutely broken before God and came to the end of myself.

And Jesus came in to control my life. And I remember sometime after he came down to London again to see me. And I went out with him.

And this time I did all the talking, told him about all the Christian work I was doing, all the witnessing, all the work, all the service, the plough that I was paying in my church, the activity I was busy engaged in, the youth work and everything else. And it fell as flat as a pancake. He wasn't a bit interested.

And I couldn't understand why the man who led me to know the Lord should be so absolutely uninterested in all my Christian activity. And when I'd finished talking, I just gave it up. We'd had our lunch.

He paid for it. It was at the Savoy Hotel, so he didn't need to pay. Paid the bill.

And then he said, well, now he said, I'm glad to hear all that. But the waiter who served our lunch, I think he needs to hear about Jesus. And he got up from the table, went across the dining room to where the waiter was standing, gave him a beautiful little New Testament, Gideon New Testament, had a word with him about what it meant to love the Lord, came back to the table, left the waiter a very generous tip, and we went out from that hotel, and I felt about that high.

Why have I taken all that time to tell you that? I'll tell you why. Listen to these three words. Do you want to be saved? It's possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life.

That waiter needs to hear about Jesus. Three statements that came from the lips of a man filled with the Holy Ghost, and therefore from the lips of a man whose word was driven home to my heart with neutrality, with power and authority. Do you see it? Wherever that fellow went, nobody was neutral about their Christian faith.

It was impossible to be. Everybody jumped off the fence. I don't mean that everybody couldn't convert.

Oh no. But everybody got off the fence of neutrality. Some were against, some were in favour, some were glad and some were mad, but nobody was neutral.

And wherever he went, he forced an issue simply because of the character of the man that he was. Now, you tell me this. Why is it that there are so few people like that in this day and age in which we live? I'll tell you why.

We're so proud of our Christian endeavour. We're so proud of our efforts. We're so proud of our society.

We're so proud of our church work. We're so proud of our activity. We think it's no end of a thing.

And we don't know the Holy Spirit in fullness, in power, in revival. That's what we need. Oh, that he would rend the heavens and come down upon us all.

And show us the one thing that matters is this, that you and I should not merely be dedicated and consecrated to God, but that God should come into our hearts and fill us with himself. So that, you see, wherever we go, there'll be an atmosphere around that will convey the reality of the presence of Jesus to other people. Next time you read your Bible, read Acts 1 and verse 6, and you'll see the amazing thing that the first movement in world evangelism was not the church going out to the world, but the world coming into the church.

Something dynamic had happened inside it, something powerful, something tremendous, and it had attracted like a magnet the world to come inside. When they heard this sound, they all came together. There are hundreds of churches in this country, I venture to say, that you would never know if the Holy Spirit departed.

Hymn, prayer, hymn, reading, notices, solo, collection, hymn, sermon, benediction, go home twice a Sunday and nothing ever happens. Does God ever break through? Does he? Oh, this generation has never seen a real breath from heaven. It could begin with you, if you're ready to pay the price of it.

Let me conclude by telling you just this. There's a man I know in England, he's an evangelist. He went one day to conduct a mission in a town.

He was going to stay with a very wealthy family, very wealthy family, and they had staying with them a German girl who had come over to England to learn the language. She was very cynical about Christianity, very bitter against it, very opposed to it, and she was dismayed at finding herself in a Christian home. So this lady and gentleman spoke to her and said this preacher was coming and they wanted him to have the best treatment and they said, would you mind going and ordering the meat for the weekend, the butcher? And they gave her the exact details of the part of the animal that she was to bring home and she went to the butcher shop and she gave him all the story of what joint she had to get and what part of the animal and the butcher was so intrigued that he said, say, is there anything happening in your house? Somebody important coming to stay with you? Oh, she said, it's only a preacher, some preacher.

The fuss they're making, you'd think God was coming. You'd think the good Lord was coming the way they're going on. So the butcher was quite surprised.

She went away. She came back the next weekend and the butcher noticed her and he went up to speak to her and he said, by the way, he said, how are you getting on with that preacher friend? Oh, he said, do you remember I said to you that you'd think the good Lord was coming to our house? He said, I certainly do. Well, she said, he came.

That was all. He came. And a man who preached powerfully from the pulpit and who was a Christian gentleman around the family table, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, was used to break down all the cynicism and heartless of that girl's heart.

I ask you, dear friend, could that have been you? Could it? The answer to Australia's need, spirit-filled men and women. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you? Let us pray together. Lord Jesus, we ask thee very definitely tonight that thou would do a wonderful thing for each of us.

Thou would make us men and women after thine own heart, that thou would make our one concern to be that we know the fullness of God's blessing in our lives, that we may stop at nothing less than God's best. Save us from settling down to a second best experience. Help us to know all the fullness of thy power, to be filled up with all the fullness of God, and to live seven days a week for thy glory.

We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen. Would you mind turning with me to the last hymn, which is number 20?

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