

Salvation

by Alan Redpath

The Christian life is about working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling, and shining in a world like this, reflecting the light of the Lord Jesus.

Duration: 1:19:58

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:2, Philippians 2:12-13, Colossians 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the purpose of the Christian's life is not for personal gratification, but for widespread blessing. The Christian is described as living in a crooked and perverse generation, surrounded by people who are morally distorted and have a distorted view of God and the Bible. The preacher uses the analogy of a ship with a leak to illustrate that when the world influences the Christian, it leads to disaster. The ultimate purpose of the Christian is to shine in the world and reflect the light of Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the importance of reflecting the beauty of Jesus and not relying on church programs or modern methods to convert people.

Transcript

This address entitled Get Your Own Salvation. Good morning everybody, thank you very much. Will you turn with me this morning to Philippians chapter 2, Philippians chapter 2, reading at verse 12.

Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputing, that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me.

Let us look to the Lord in just one word of prayer. Speak, Lord, for thy servant hereof. 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.

Last evening we considered together the lordship and the sovereignty of Jesus Christ and its implications in your own personal life and in mine. We based our thoughts upon the previous verses of this chapter and we take up the theme because we noticed that the portion which we read this morning begins, Wherefore. This relates all these following verses with what has already been said.

Because Jesus obeyed up to the hilt and was obedient under death. Because he forsook all his rights and stooped down to the cross and God raised him up to the throne. Wherefore, wherefore, work out your own salvation with fear and with trembling.

A faith which is concerned only with a past salvation, with being saved from past sins, or a faith which is concerned only with a future salvation, being saved from the punishment of our sin. Such a faith is very far short of what the new testament teaches. We have a now salvation, a present day salvation, a full salvation.

And we are to work it out that we may display to this generation in which we live what God can do in and through a man redeemed by blood and indwelt by his bitterness. Negatively this means being saved from the habit and the practice of sin. Positively it means being saved to a holy life.

Dr. Graham Scroggie used to say far too many Christian people are on the right side of pardon but the wrong side of power. The right side of forgiveness but the wrong side of fellowship. And the right side of Easter but the wrong side of Pentecost.

It is the working out of such a salvation that Paul is talking about here. And very quickly this morning, and speaking to you in shorthand almost in order to get through in time, you notice in 12 verses 12 and 13 a program to be fulfilled. Paul is very far removed from his Philippian friends.

He's in a Roman prison and he remembers how gladly they responded to the message when he was with them. But now the human crop has gone. They're left on their own.

And both he and they are very much cast upon the Lord to put their confidence in him alone. And they should work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. You see the Christian walks on two feet.

One foot is trust and the other foot is obedience. These are not only feet but these are the two hands which take hold of every blessing that God has for us. They are the two eyes which show us the truth of God's word.

Not trust only but obedience. Both in happy partnership. As James would say, faith and work.

We need to be very careful to avoid confusion here in our thinking. Beware of confusing the works by which nobody can be saved with the works which was the inevitable result of salvation. We all love, perhaps our favorite verses, Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. By grace are you saved through faith and not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God, not of work, lest any man should boast. But Ephesians 10 follows it. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

So my faith must work. Trust, it's my own salvation calls it. Of course in the first place it's God's.

He purposed it or we'd never have been saved at all. He planned it long before the foundation of the world. He procured it when he put it into effect at the cross.

He profited for our acceptance because he doesn't force it upon us against our will. He presses it urging us by the Holy Spirit to take the offer of salvation in Christ. Yes it is his salvation but it becomes your own when with the hand of faith you take it from the nail-pierced hand of Christ.

Not a second-hand thing. You don't lean on somebody else, not your parent's faith. What a peril it is, what a privilege, but what a peril of having a second-hand faith because you're brought up to believe what your parents teach you.

Is it your salvation this morning? Well have you stretched out a hand and put your faith in Christ? Is it your own or is it still only second-hand? You can grasp this faith now, this very minute. The salvation which buries the past, guarantees the future, and transforms the present. Trust, that's one foot, that's one hand.

And the other one? Obey. Just as the Lord Jesus obeyed completely and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. So obedience to the will of God becomes the principle of Christian living.

He is first of all our savior, but he is also our example. Christ hath left us an example that we should follow in his steps, says Peter. And the Christian life is something that works.

You give a child an engine for Christmas and he's not interested in how it looks, what he wants to know is, does it work? How thrilled he is to watch it working. So the Christian life is useless if it's merely a show, a performance. It must work for the glory of God and the blessing of other people.

You know I come from the part of the world which is known for its coal mining. Perhaps you've heard of the phrase, bringing coal to Newcastle. A phrase which we use in Britain which means how useless it is to bring coal to Newcastle.

It all comes from there. It used to anyway, but now the mines have almost gone out of business. But in the days of prosperity, they used to say in Newcastle in my hometown, they're working the mines just now, they're working the mines.

That meant they were digging deep, boring underground along long coal seams that went miles out to sea under the ocean in order that they may dig up what was their means of living. And the Lord wants us to work the mine, dig deep in the treasure of what is already ours. And as a result of it, you know what happens? Out of the mine of God's word comes a sweeter temper, a cleaner life, a gentler speech, a kindlier behavior, a sweeter tongue, a more gracious life.

All your Christian life has got to work. And you notice Paul says, with fear and trembling, I must tackle it, I must work at it. Not lest I lose it, I never can do that, but lest I damage the cause and dishonor the name of Jesus.

A greater than any of us, Simon Peter once said, Lord though all men deny thee, yet I never will. But how he sinned, and even the most mature Christian needs to watch his step. At any moment Satan may launch upon him a devastating counter-attack and trip him up.

And the higher your climb, the deeper you fall, the further you fall, and the greater the shame to the cause of Christ. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Ah, but I'm not left to do it alone.

I think verse 13 is one of the most thrilling verses in the Bible. It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure. He is the whole object of the Christian life, his good pleasure.

When God made a man in his own likeness, he saw that it was very good. And when Jesus died on the cross, he did so in order to present to himself one day a church that had neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing. And one day when he looks upon the whole company of his redeemed people, he shall see of the trivale of his soul and be satisfied.

Oh, it will be worth it all then. This was the joy that was set before him for which he endured the cross. So now I have to live, not to please myself, but to please him.

And it is he who has come to live in me to make me want to do and to will to do his good pleasure. Oh, to do his good pleasure, that's the problem. That's your problem, isn't it? You know what you want to do, but you don't do it.

To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. To will. Oh yes, I know what I ought to do.

But to will to do it, that's another problem. Because the plain truth of the matter is, let's be honest, if we examine our own heart, we just don't want to do it. We'd rather please ourselves.

There's no real longing in any of us, naturally, to please God. Does it ever disturb you to find that all through your life you've got a rebel heart that doesn't want to pray, doesn't want to get up to read the Bible, doesn't want to witness, doesn't want to serve the Lord, it's all a chore. You have to force yourself to do it.

Oh, to do, yes, I know what I ought to do, but how to do it? It's not what that I need to know, it's how. And to will, why, the whole thing I don't want to do it, how can I be made to want to do it? That great saint of God, F.B. Meyer, confronted with the challenge of God's will and unwilling to yield to it, wrestled with the Lord and the Lord with him until he cried, Lord, I am willing to be made willing. And that was the beginning of a greatly blessed and used ministry.

If you're not willing to do God's will, are you willing to be made willing? Are you so stubborn that God can't break through that even? I'm willing to be made willing, but I can't make myself willing. For no, it is the Holy Spirit within me. Now, whose presence many Christian people seem unaware, or if they're not unaware of him, they're afraid of him.

I would to the God that more Christian people were afraid of sin than they are of holiness. If any preacher speak from the Holy Spirit, people think he's fanatical. Brother, what's the use of forsaking the wild fire of fanaticism and having no fire of orthodoxy? Folks, it is God who works it.

It is the Holy Spirit who works it to make your will and to do his good pleasure, not because you have to, because you want to. You mean to tell me the salvation that God offers leaves me a reluctant, unwilling follower, always hankering after the world and after sin, and only reluctantly being squeezed into obedience to God. What a travesty of the truth.

How do I know that he's making me willing to be made willing? I'll tell you. I become disgusted with myself, absolutely disgusted with myself. I begin to hate myself, and my sin, and my failure, and my breakdown, and I begin to loathe it, with the loathing of the Holy God who lives in me.

I begin to hate it. I used to love it. I used to enjoy it.

I used to urge it. What a sweat and what a chore it was to read my Bible. Oh, what a chore to put on the sham of being an evangelical preacher, of being a fundamentalist.

What an effort. I wasn't with it. Oh, my whole heart was set upon something entirely different, but praise God there was a day in my life when he made me long for himself and be disgusted with myself.

I never brought it to the point of self-loathing. Oh, blessed experience. When you begin to realize that you're rotten through and through, I begin to loathe myself, and alongside that I begin to long for Jesus, and the language of my heart becomes, I hunger and I thirst.

Jesus, my manna be. Ye living waters burst out of the rock for me. Still the desert lies, my thirsty soul before.

Oh, living waters rise within me evermore. A disgust of myself, a longing for him, and then somehow through all that, I see, I smell, I sense victory. Through a hatred of myself and a longing for Jesus, I begin to see through, through it all, and I sense in the air the smell of victory.

And then I will to do his will. Blessed Holy Spirit, who transforms a life and makes it desired, holy and pure and godlike. Only God can work a miracle like that.

No psychologist can. If you can explain a Christian by psychology, you've unflocked him. You've got a church member on your hands, but you haven't got a believer.

If you can explain him psychologically, who can explain the miracle by which God's Holy Spirit comes into a man's life and makes him love what he used to hate, the will of God, and makes him hate what he used to love, pleasing himself. Only the Lord can work a miracle like that. Oh yes, here then, here then, is the program to be fulfilled, and the power which makes the program a reality.

Christ in me, the Spirit of God, working in me to will and to do his good pleasure. The second thing I notice in these verses is that the purpose to be achieved. In verses 14 to 16, this program is not for my personal gratification.

It is for widespread blessing. The Christian, these verses tell us, tell us, is in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Good news for modern men puts it this way.

You live in a world full of crooked and mean people. Full of crooked and mean people. You live among people who are crooked, who can't think straight, act straight, or go straight.

A perverse people, distorted, distorted views of God, distorted morals, distorted view of the Bible, distorted view of pleasure. And in that world the Christian lives. A worldly Christian is like a ship which has sprung a leak, and the water is pouring in.

It's a lovely thing, it's a wonderful thing when a ship is in the sea, but when the sea is in the ship, it's disaster. And a Christian is meant to be in the world, but when the world gets in the Christian, he's heading

for disaster. The purpose of each one of us is that we're to shine in a world like this.

Just as the moon keeps its face to the sun, and catches something of the glory of it, and the beauty of it, and the warmth of it, and then reflects the light out into the world, so the Christian is to reflect the light of the Lord Jesus. He catches the glow, he gets the glory, he gets the thrill of the Word of God, and the Living Word, and he reflects Jesus. Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

All His wondrous compassion and purity, O Thou Spirit Divine, make all Thy nature mine, till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. That's it. You don't reach people with a church program.

You don't get people converted by all the syncopated jazz methods of today. Listen, you can't compete with anybody in this. You're to get the glory.

You're to get the Lord Jesus living in you, transforming on you, and something of the glory shining through. Oh, I pray that God will send you out from this school, every one of you, a glory Christian. Someone who's got the glow, got the thrill, the reality of Jesus.

Isn't that the whole secret? Paul says do everything without murmuring, and without disputing. That of course means murmuring with other people, and disputing with them is one thing. Murmuring.

Are there any school teachers here this morning? If there are, you know that that word, murmur, is what is called an automatic sounding word. You can tell its meaning by its sound. I can hear the hiss of the devil in it.

Murmur. Another such word is bang. Murmuring.

What an amazing thing it is. I tell you, you'll find them everywhere, even in the most fundamental churches. They're always murmuring.

If you'd only put me on the church board, everything would be wonderful. The murmur. Murmur about the diet.

Murmur about the minister. Murmur about he takes too much holiday. Murmur about the fact he doesn't visit enough.

Murmur about the fact he never preaches any good sermons. Murmur, murmur, murmur, murmur all the time. Do all things without murmuring, or disputing.

Does that mean we always have to agree with each other? Wouldn't it be just uninteresting to a world if we had to do that? All the time we had to agree. Doesn't mean that. Tell you what it does mean.

Do all things without disputing. And the trouble in the church today is that we disagree so disagreeably that we break fellowship. And preach here's in hell when that happens.

And you know what happens then? Somebody hive off a little group, and they start their own fundamental independent Bible church. I don't want to tread on thin ice unnecessarily, but I'm telling you that half the history of our independent Bible churches doesn't bear examination. They're all splinter groups who've broken off from summing up and started disputing.

And the mark, the mark of the glory has gone from them. Where to do all things without murmuring and without disputing. Ah, but this means much more than that.

It means that I must not murmur or dispute with God. Oh, to learn never to turn my face from him, so that always through me the light may shine. Are you murmuring about the Lord's way with you today? Some minister listening to my voice who's simply fed up with his church board and congregation.

They never appreciate him, and he's on the point of resigning. Nobody ever gives them a vote of thanks for anything. Works his head off.

He's murmuring. Murmuring because there's no blessing. Murmuring.

Oh, disputing with God with him. Why, Lord, should I come to this? Why have I to get into this situation? Why am I to deal with these kind of people? Take me from it, Lord. Perhaps you came up to found this week just in that state of mind.

You're murmuring and disputing with God. You remember once when John the Baptist started doing that? When Jesus had allowed him to be put in prison. There's one many questions I want answered when I get to heaven.

This is priority one. I don't know about one, but it's very high on my list anyway. Why didn't Jesus take him and make him a disciple? What a wonderful follower of the Lord Why did Jesus allow him to be beheaded? Why did that happen to John the Baptist? I don't know.

But there are no mistakes in the love of God, and I shall know one day. And when John was in prison, he sent a message to the Lord. He said, Lord, are you really who I think you are? He began to doubt what he believed.

Are you really, really the Messiah? Do you know the answer Jesus sent? Just go and tell him. Blessed is the man who is never offended in me at all. Not your business to know why, but it's your business in that situation, in that prison, in that difficult situation, in that grim problem that you're facing in your church now, in your context of your life at school, never to murmur with God.

Do all things without murmuring. Are you serving the Lord with a chip on your shoulder? Finding it very hard to stay with your call? Finding it very hard to stay at school? Almost threatening you're going to leave before the semester's out? Tear off. Can't cope with it anymore.

Too tough, too many exams, too hard work, too little money. And the folks are having it much easier than me, and you're murmuring. I am grumbling with the Lord, grumbling with the Lord.

Happy is the man who never gets offended with me, said Jesus. Jesus said in Luke 11, 36, If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. All the damage and the shipwrecks that may be caused to other people, if there's some inconsistency, some unjudged habit, some unconfessed sin, some murmuring in the Christian's life, may there be none of that in us.

We hear about spots on the sun, but may we be free from them all, in verse 15, free from blame, free from harm, free from rebuke, then be fine. Oh, I want you to get that. I wish I could just spend hours on it.

I know you don't, but I wish I could. Just to show you that the Christian life is a miracle from beginning to end. It's not method, but miracle.

It's not program, but the power of God. Something with the world can never compete, and the sheer power and attraction of a Christian who's delivered from his murmuring and reflects the beauty of the Lord. One last thing, the program to be fulfilled, the purpose to be achieved.

But you know, my friends, there's a price to pay. Verse 16 and 17, what a program. What a purpose.

Oh, it costs. And here Paul tells us of what it costs him to get the Philippians to shine. You see, lights have to be lit, holding forth the word of light.

Light, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Paul wants them to know that in the day of Christ, that he hasn't labored in vain. He wants to know then that he has been God's light to set these Philippian Christians on fire.

No, it takes only a match, the light of torch. Perhaps we can't all be torches, but we can all be matches. We can set one alight.

Peter was a great torch, but Andrew set him alight. Nehemiah was a great torch, but Hanani set him alight. The expungement was a great torch, but a simple lay preacher on a cold, snowy morning in a three-part, empty Methodist chapel in a village in England set him alight.

Zia Moody was a great torch, but Mr. Kimball set him alight. Sure little Lord can make you a match to set alight a torch. How? Well, John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light.

There's no shining without burning. The wax of the candle disappears. The oil in the lamp is consumed.

So Paul says, if I be offered on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice. In this tremendously vivid picture of what it meant to work out the salvation, Paul says, you Philippians are to offer your faith and your work as a sacrifice to God, and my very life's love is being poured upon you. Just as he said in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

So then, life, death worketh in us, but life in you, it costs to set a torch alight. It costs to keep a light burning. It costs, it costs to keep the light burning in Congo.

It costs a bloodbath of misery. It costs, it costs to keep the light burning in Fiji. It costs to keep the light burning in Vietnam.

Many a missionary has paid for it with his life. Many a pastor has had his heart broken, his health broken, and his life shortened. It costs to keep the light burning, to keep the fire glowing.

Oh, but whatever it costs us, it costs Jesus Calvary. Have you started to live your life on that principle, being broken bread and poured out wine? Are you working out your own salvation? Hudson Taylor once said, we may reckon our life by loss instead of gain. What we lack and love and suffer are our most prized facilities for bringing home to heart and prepare the gospel of the grace of God.

Oh, to keep the light glowing. We hear an awful lot together about short-term service. Just come with me for a year to the mission field and see how you get on.

Go with a Peace Corps. You don't have to sacrifice anything. You'll come back then with more money than you went.

Go with a Peace Corps. Opt out for that. Just go for a short term, my friend, that's flirting with the will of God.

That's all flirtation, mild flirtation with obedience. God says set the fire and keep it burning. I was in Somali Republic about a year ago, 18 months ago.

I saw there a precious young couple, a married couple, living all by themselves in an isolated mission station. Members of Stephen Alford Church in New York, a great couple. Four years there on the field, I saw them back again a few months ago, a week, a few weeks ago in Toronto, where they live.

Exhausted, health broken, contracting all kinds of tropical disease. But the one thing that matters to them is to get well and strong and to get back again to do the fight. It costs them.

It costs them as a family to keep the fire burning. It costs everything. They don't talk about any other possible rivals or any other interests.

It costs them to keep the light shining. The lady came to see me some time ago when she was about to quit her job. Well, she said, it's too tough for me in that office, that factory.

I'm the only Christian. I'm the only Christian. Can't stand it.

Can't stand the blasphemy and the cursing and the swearing and the foul language. And oh, I just feel hopeless. I'm going to quit.

I said, well, listen, if you're in a big hall and there are many lights shining, it doesn't make much difference if one goes out. But if you're in a great hall and only one light shines, if the other goes out, it's a complete dust. And maybe God is going to take some of you and put you into a place where you're the only light.

And you're pouring out your light on the sacrifice of the cross in order that the light may burn and the torch may shine. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

And it's God, by his Holy Spirit, who lights the flame of sacred love on the mean altar of your house. Shall we pray? God favor from the Pope. Convention alongside Dr. Culbertson and others.

That year, Dr. Culbertson brought to us a series of messages, Bible study, on the theme, God's provision for holy living. I believe that series was subsequently published in book form. I don't want to borrow his material, but I do want, this morning, to borrow his title.

And that is the subject for our opening session of today, God's provision for holy living. And this is a subject which should be of priority concern to all of us here this morning. And Romans 8, 1 to 13, provides the principle and the answer to a victorious Christian life.

I want to state to you, quite briefly, emphatically, three great principles. The first one, the Holy Spirit conveys a new nature to the Christian. The modern paraphrase, good news for modern man, puts Romans 8, verse 2, this way, the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death.

A new nature conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit, life in union with Christ Jesus. 2 Peter 1.4 says we are made partakers of the divine nature. Colossians 1.27, Christ in you the hope of glory.

Ephesians 4, talking of putting off the old man with his deed, then says in verse 24, put on the new man. Now, the new man is not the old man, polished up, refined, made religious, Christianized, dry-cleaned and pressed, improved, or even regenerate. 3 We receive this new nature at the moment of our conversion.

It is then that the Holy Spirit comes to take up his abode, his permanent abode, in all of us. 1 Corinthians 12.13 tells us that we have all been baptized by the one Spirit into the body of Christ. We've all been made to drink into the one Spirit.

Now, my brethren and sisters, that is the Church. And let's not tear it apart. It doesn't matter about our labels, whether it's Brethren with a capital B, or Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Methodist, or Baptist, or anything else.

This is the Church, with sharing together life in the Holy Spirit. And until I get to heaven, I will stand for the principle that I want in this life, to have fellowship with all who are on the same wavelength, all who share the same life. And I don't care a scrap what a man's label is.

If he's been baptized by the same Spirit into the body of Christ, he's my brother. And I owe him my love. And with respect, he owes me his too.

This is the Church. And this is the miracle of bringing to us a new nature at the moment of our new birth. So the Holy Spirit becomes our second and new nature.

Now, because he is God, he cannot sin. And given freedom of action in the arena of our heart, he will produce nothing but good fruit. He cannot sin.

I want you to underline that in your thinking. Each one of us have within us a nature implanted at our new birth which is incapable of sinning. Have you ever had any problems with 1 John chapter 3 and verse 9? I wonder, could I take just a second to read it again to you, 1 John 3 9? Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him.

And he cannot sin because he is born of God. Now, have you seen some commentaries and possibly heard some preachers who say what this verse really means is that when you're born again you do not continue in the practice of sinning? But the verse doesn't say that. Nor, I believe, can the original language of this verse be understood to mean it.

It just means what it says. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. Who is born of God? The life of Jesus in us, the Holy Spirit, and he doth not commit sin, for his seed, his seed, the seed of God, remaineth in him.

And he, he cannot sin because he is born into our heart of God. So we've received a nature which cannot sin. Well, you may disagree with my interpretation of 1 John 3 9. It's all right, we'll leave it till we get to heaven, don't get angry with me now.

And when we get there, you will just come up to say, well, after all, you were right. Now, it is this, it is this nature of God, this seed of God, born in us by the Holy Spirit, which cannot sin, and which becomes the means of victory in the Christian life. So our first proposition this morning is that each one of us receives a

new nature when we are born again, a new nature which cannot sin.

My second proposition, the old nature continues to exist in the regenerate heart. The old nature, which can do nothing but sin, continues to exist in the regenerate heart. And the Christian will keep it right to the end of his journey.

The old nature, which in Romans 8 is called the plesh. This chapter, the most thrilling in the New Testament, the charter of Christian liberty, the arena of the Christian battle and victory, this chapter underlines, you notice, the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. No less than 12 times in Romans 8, verses 1 to 13, 12 times is the reference to the flesh, and 12 times a reference to the Spirit.

Now, what is the flesh? It is not simply that which we consider bad in us. It is not simply this five foot nine, six feet six feet two of physical body. It is much more than that.

It is our whole being, our whole nature, all that we are apart from Jesus. Spell the word flesh backwards, and miss off the h, and you have self. All that I am apart from the grace of God.

And Paul declares about it in Romans 7 and verse 18, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. So, the new man is Christ in us by the Spirit. The old man is self, all that I am apart from Jesus.

And the flesh, this old nature, is sold to sin. Romans 7, 14, I am carnal, sold under sin. And, please note, this situation is beyond cure.

It is unchanged in the life of the Christian. Verse 7 of Romans 8 says this, Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The flesh will always offer unyielding opposition to the Spirit.

It refuses to cooperate. It hates being religious, it hates to pray, it hates to read the Bible, it hates to go to church, it hates to witness, and it hates to preach. And God doesn't seek to improve it, and to polish it up, and refine it.

And we spend years trying to improve the flesh, and make it better, and make it good. And ultimately end in the hands of a psychiatrist, or end by drinking masses of coffee and taking lots of tranquilizers, in a vain attempt to improve. Listen, God is not in the self-improvement program.

He is in the Christ-replacement program. He's concerned about replacing myself with himself. And so, therefore, God can only do one thing with the flesh, crucify it, slay it, kill it.

And in a minute, we shall see, I hope, how he does that. Now, it is possible for a Christian to live after the flesh. If you look down at verse 12, again I read from this paraphrase, Good News to Modern Man, it says this, So then, my brothers, we have an obligation, but not to live as our human nature wants to.

For if you live according to your human nature, you're going to die. But if by the Spirit you kill your sinful actions, you will live. And that simply says to me this.

And listen, this deals with our eternal security. I believe in it, and I believe all of you do. But this tells me this, that those who willingly and knowingly continue to live after the flesh simply betray the fact that they have never been born again.

I quote from that great preacher of a former generation, C. H. Spurgeon, who says, An unholy life is the evidence of an unchanged heart, and an unchanged heart is an evidence of an unsaved soul. What is the value, says C. H. Spurgeon, what is the value of the grace which we claim to receive, which leaves us exactly the same as we were before we received it? Such grace is invalid in terms of New Testament Christianity. So speaks a great Baptist preacher of former years.

And in my heart, I find myself giving a sense of awe, in a sense reluctant and yet authoritative, Amen. Amen. Because I know that unless I have a belief which has transformed my behavior, I'm not saved.

Because it isn't my belief that saves me, it's the one in whom I believe. And he in me must change my behavior. So therefore, my second proposition is this, that the old self continues to exist unchanged, unaltered, in the regenerate heart.

Now, our third proposition, the Holy Spirit within us has power to overcome the flesh. Let me just repeat these for emphasis and clarity. When I'm born again, I receive a new nature which cannot possibly sin, God, the Holy Spirit.

Two, the old self remains unaltered in me until my dying day. And my old self, left to its own, can do nothing but sin. My final proposition this morning, the Holy Spirit within me, and He alone, has power to overcome the flesh.

Romans 8, 2, the law of the Spirit of life, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death. Now, the basis of this victory was laid for us at Calvary, and the Holy Spirit merely fulfills in us what the Lord Jesus did for us on the cross. That's why He has come to live in us, to make real, every moment of every day, everything that Christ did for me at Calvary.

And there at the cross, He not only bore away my sin, the things that I did that are wrong, but He also took with Him at the cross my old self, and through it, by His obedience and by His holy life, He had triumphed over the flesh. Look at the third verse of Romans 8, 3. Again, I read from Good News to Modern Man. What the Lord could not do because human nature was weak, God did.

He condemned sin in human nature by sending His own Son, who came with a nature like man's sinful nature, to do away with sin. So, Jesus, by His obedience, by His refusal to act independently of God, which is the basic principle of sin, of human nature, demanding its own independence, Jesus took to Calvary a life that had refused to live on that principle, and in dying, slew it. Condemned that kind of sin, the root of all sin, in His death at Calvary.

But, you see, that crucifixion which is carried out in principle is only realized and experienced day by day by the Holy Spirit working in us in answer to our faith, and to our yielding, and to our obedience. It is through the Spirit that we keep in subjection the deed of the flesh. And if I'm not on my guard, that old nature which is so much alive in me, and in every one of us, will launch a massive counterattack after forty years of Christian living, I'm no different a person from what I was when I was converted.

I'm only worse, that's all. And it's not dramatic, it's only true, to say that today, after this session is over, there's no sin imaginable which I am not capable of committing but for the grace of God, and for the life of Christ in me. The only good thing about me is Jesus, and the only good thing about any of us is Christ.

And yet the amazing thing is that after preaching on a theme like this, people come up and say, or if they don't come up to me, I hear them talking, that man believes in sinless perfection. Rubbish. I don't believe

in it because the Bible doesn't teach it.

What I believe in is sinful corruption, that there's nothing good about any of us. And the pressures of Christian life are caused by the refusal to admit that, and the determination to strive to get our own victory, when Jesus all the time has given to us the victory. But if I don't recognise that principle, this old nature in me will launch, 40 years after my conversion, a massive counter-attack, and I shall be absolutely humiliated before this day is out by a terrible defeat of which I'm ashamed.

I tell you, my friend, I live every day of my life in constant fear, lest at any time I should take myself out voluntarily from resting in Christ, from trusting in Christ, and start to do it myself. The moment I try to get my own victory, I head for disaster. And if left to myself, I'm lost.

But if I yield to Holy Spirit control, every attack of the old nature, He copes with it. It's up to Him, not me. So, you see, when the Holy Spirit is given freedom, He will work just as forcefully and permanently as the old nature worked before God came to live in me.

As it was natural for me to sin then, so it will be natural for Him to give me victory now. That's why Charles Wesley used to sing, take away the bent to sinning. Don't only forgive me for what I've done, but, Lord, deliver me from what I am, and straighten me out, and clean me up, and take away the bent, the twist, the bias towards sin, and make me a new man in Christ.

You see, I hold in my hand a pen. When I take it into my hand, the nature of that pen and the weight of that pen are unaltered, and I hold it there tight. If I release my hold on that pen, the law of gravity will cause it to fall on the platform and break.

That might be a good way of getting hundreds of new pens, because when they can't be, it's probably only one. But I hold it tight, and as long as I hold it tight, the law of life in my hand overcomes the law of gravity. That pen isn't struggling to get hold of me.

Ah, no, but I've got hold of it. This pen isn't fighting away there to keep there, it's just still, it can't fight. And its nature and weight are unaltered, but I hold it tight in my hand, and because of that, there's a law of life in my hand that won't let it go, and it can't fall and overcome the law of gravity.

Now you see, when I receive Jesus, my old nature remains unchanged. Sin has the same terrific hold upon it, and if left to myself, sin even now would irresistibly attract me. But the power of the Holy Spirit has come and taken possession, and I don't struggle to hold him.

He's got tight hold of me, and in any situation, every day, he holds me fast. And his hold on me overcomes the bias to sin. But the working of his power is in direct proportion to my submission to his will.

And this is the point of fighting the battle. Dr. Alan Fleet of Columbia Bible College, at least president there for many years, once told a very telling illustration, I thought, which I'll give to you, about imagining the congregation to be in a court, and there was a prisoner on trial for murder, and he was assuming that capital punishment was in force. And after considering all the evidence, the jury came up with a verdict.

The man was guilty. So what does the judge do? Does he shoot him? No, because if he did that, he'd be guilty of murder. He pronounces the sentence.

He says, you're worthy of death. And then having pronounced the sentence, he hands him over to the executioner, who's responsible for carrying it out. Now you see, when things hit me, and temptation comes at me, and this old sinful nature seeks to assert itself, it's wonderful that in the midst of the battle, in the thick of the fight, I can say, now Lord, this belongs to the old life.

Between me and this, there's a cross on which Jesus died. This is no part of the life of Christians. Lord, I have sensed that this should be slain.

Thank you, Lord. And at that moment, in answer to my assent, I hand over the responsibility to the Holy Spirit, and he carries out the execution. See? And when Satan comes at you with thoughts at which you're ashamed, and sinful thoughts are not sin, that's how the devil gets at us, with thoughts, eye-gates, ear-gates, and he packs them into our minds.

And when they're coming and overwhelming us, when the enemy comes in like a flood, Lord Jesus, I consent that it should die, and immediately the Holy Spirit prays. But everything depends on your consent. Ah, that's the battle.

Do I want salvation more than I want sin? Do I want deliverance, or do I want sin? At that moment, when Satan is putting on full pressure, am I crying out to God, Oh Lord, this doesn't belong to me, it's the old life, slay it! Or am I saying, well, I quite enjoy it still, I think I'll indulge it, and immediately I go down. Take away the love of sinning, Alpha and Omega be. You know, there are some people who think that this old self ceases to exist, and every root of it has been eradicated at the moment of our conversion.

If that was true, Romans 8 wouldn't be in your Bible. There's no scriptural authority for it. The word for crucifixion of self is really render inoperative.

We are dead to sin in Christ, but sin is never dead to me. And our life must grow constantly into the stature of the fullness of Christ, and the Holy Spirit must increasingly fill my life. Up to the very end of the journey, there'll be more victories to win.

Somebody once told me, when you get older, you'll find the Christian life easier. I don't find it easier, I find it harder. In fact, I find it impossible, absolutely impossible.

If it wasn't for Jesus, I'd be gone and lost, the hope was in a minute. Oh, but then you see, he's there every moment of every day. When I flew up from Fort Lauderdale, or where was it, Tampa, on Monday morning, I got into one of these jets.

I'm always very prayerful on those occasions. I'm very thankful to get out of them. And as the thing roared along the runway, just about at the time to take off, I said, now Lord, now Lord, I'm trusting you.

And off it went. Oh, not because of anything I did, but listen, listen. Oh, at a speed of about 150 knots, the law of aerodynamics took over, and it began to soar up into the sky until it had reached 30,000 feet.

The law of gravity still existed. I'd have known about that if the engine had failed. But because that airplane had power, thrust, it overcame the law of gravity, and it soared into the sky.

And the law, the spirit of life in Christ, has set me free from the law of sin, because his law in me overcomes the law of sin and death. Oh, hallelujah. I can't resist it.

I don't know how you can sit there, you know, take it in. Or perhaps it's too respectable to say hallelujah, I don't know. But I tell you, my heart says, when I feel in my life, in answer to my willingness for this self to be kept in the cross, I feel in my heart today the upward pull of Jesus, of a living Christ who died on the cross to save me from what I do, and who lives in my heart to save me from what I am.

For years, I settled for a half salvation, forgiveness for what I do, but praise the Lord for delivering from what I am by his new self, living in me by his spirit. Now, just one more word, and I'm through, because I want to ask you, what do you think is your part in victory to the Holy Spirit? Well, first of all, surrender of your will into the hands of God. Romans 6, 13, Reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God.

Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. God's word tells me that he can set me free from what I am. And for that purpose, his spirit lives in my heart.

As long as I cease to resist, to resist him, he delivers me. But if I cease submitting, he ceases working, he goes out of business. When I say, no Lord, all right, he departs.

Doesn't go out of my life, but he goes out of business. And that halt in his operations is caused not only, not only by open rebellion, but also by the desire to fight our own battle, which is always the symptom of carnal Christianity. I've written in this portion in my Bible, Lord save me from the tension of trying to get my own victory.

At the moment I do that, I'm just heading for defeat. Victory in every situation is mine because it's his. And it's mine if by faith I appropriate.

Oh, but you say I haven't enough sense of will to maintain a constant submission. I surrender and then it happens again. I try and I give my heart to God and well, it works for a while, but not so long.

Don't worry, my friends. I was speaking yesterday on that wonderful word. Good.

It's his purpose to make your will strong, to will and to do his good pleasure. So I submit. And finally, I believe.

I believe. I take him by faith, not by tears, not by striving, not by resolution, but by faith. And that requires a definite act as real and definite in a moment of your Christian life as it required for your conversion.

You accepted pardon for past sins by faith. Have you ever yielded your life to the control of the Holy Spirit for present day victory and deliverance over sin? That's the only foundation on which you can build. And if I could, but I can't, I would talk to you about the fruit of that life, which is seen in Galatians 5.22, the fruit of

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