

The Supernatural Life

by Alan Redpath

The Christian life is a supernatural life, lived by the power of the Holy Spirit within us, and maintained through discipline and being held in the mastery of the law of the spirit of life in Christ.

Duration: 54:15

Scripture: Isaiah 40:30

Topics: "Supernatural Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of being set free from the law of sin and death and being placed under the law of the spirit of life in Christ. He emphasizes the importance of personal discipline in the life of a Christian, urging them to put off the old and put on the new. The preacher also expresses his gratitude for being at the conference and praises Prairie Bible Institute for instilling the message of a crucified life in its students. He shares a personal anecdote about speaking to missionaries in Thailand and highlights the perseverance of one missionary in a difficult situation.

Transcript

My wife and I were in Brazil in the spring of 1970 with the USM and with Wycliffe, and we went on to Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and one night after our meeting in Peru, when I had been speaking for some length, to speak to missionaries on the field for less than about an hour and a half, they think they're undernourished. And at the end of that service we went into our room together, and my wife was unusually quiet. And I thought, I wonder what I've done now.

And so, I said, well, let's have a little word of prayer together now, shall we? She said yes, and she said, really, I think we ought to ask the Lord to bless the people a little more quickly. Message received and understood. Well, I hope he blesses you a little more quickly tonight.

You've had a great start for this evening. We all have tremendous privilege to share the platform with our brother. Realize what the Holy Spirit is doing in the way of miracles through a life abandoned.

May I, just before I get to giving you the word that the Lord has laid on my heart, say this is my seventh, I think, occasion to be at this conference, probably my last one. And I want to say to Mr. Maxwell especially, and to Mr. Randall, how grateful I am for their tremendous joy and the great thrill of being here again. Right from my first visit at Prairie, when I was at Moody Church in the fifties, this place has sort of caught my vision.

And wherever I've gone on the mission field, in many different countries, and met Prairie Bible Institute people, I've always found they're people who stick. People who really stick. That's because they have here, grounded into them, the message of a crucified life.

That life can only be lived by the power of the Holy Spirit within them. So I do thank the President and the Principal for the privilege of being with you. I came for spiritual food myself.

Sometimes a preacher feels very much in need of that. I've enjoyed sharing the ministry with others, and being blessed by them. And I've especially enjoyed going to the Christian workers' hour in the morning.

It's been wonderful. I've got some gems that I'll be quoting when I get back home. No more so than, what is it, a neurotic builds castles in the air, and psychiatrists collect the rent.

Only Mr. Maxwell could say that. And many other gems have got deep down into my heart. And I just thank God for them.

I think I ought to say, too, how greatly I appreciate the, what do you call it, the misfreeble and willing room service that I've had. Been absolutely terrific. I've never known anywhere where laundry is done so fast.

Terrific. And I want to thank them all so much for their care over a tramp preacher. The meals I've had in my room, and the late-night extras, have been a tremendous help.

Thank you all so much. Lord bless you. Now that the faith promise offering is over, at least for this week, at any rate, you won't misunderstand my motive.

In asking just for a little place in your prayer for our family, you have met them, they have met you. But when somebody mentioned a moment ago, C-A-R, those letters mean something very different. Mr. Maxwell spoke about the C-A-R, faith promise.

To me, those three letters mean Central Africa Republic. That's where one half of my wife and myself is right now. Our elder daughter, her husband, and three children.

They've been there for seven years. She's the only white girl, for about a hundred miles, with the Africa Inland Mission. In that whole country of Central Africa Republic, the mission hasn't got one doctor.

Not one. The doors are absolutely wide open. The air I am crying out for help.

They had a doctor for a few months, and he got hepatitis and had to go home. They were without anybody. Their three children go to school in Zahir, Congo.

They're some 500 miles away. And my daughter goes out on the jungle path on a little Honda bike, with medicines, to greet, to help the African, and of course seeks to present the claims of Christ. And she has a dispensary.

And her husband is a carpenter, who teaches the African to build a trade school. Zahir is a very poor country. Very impoverished.

It was occupied by the French. They left it, and they left them in absolute poverty. A lot of Sudanese refugees have gone in there.

Opportunities worldwide. I simply mention that to you. Because when they come home on furlough, I don't want to tear-jerk anybody.

My wife and I hardly recognize our daughter. A few years in a climate like that, and she has lost about 40 pounds in weight. And you know, she's a girl with a sparkle, a love of shops, a love of things, a love of restaurants.

When you go out there, if I stick it for two weeks, I've had enough. That's all I can take. But I know something of what our good dear brother was saying.

You don't have a nice place where you can take your wife for a day out. You don't have anywhere with a nice restaurant handy, where you can have a nice meal sometimes. You don't.

I would value a place, in your prayers, for them. The name is Don and Meryl Lindquist. We're Anglo-American in our family.

He's an American, she's British. So we talk about half and half, and we get on fine. Thank you so much.

And if I may be so personal as to say this, this is the last tour I shall ever come without my wife. Except my wife will be with me, and she'll see my face no more. And I don't like this separated life.

Our younger daughter is a teacher at near Caponry, where we live. And I'm glad to tell you that she's going to Bible College in September, in London. And has in her mind and heart, serving Wycliffe in Peru.

There's value of prayers for our family. Not large, but it's not quantity, but quality. Thank you so much, bless your heart.

Well, Sidlow Baxter. I don't know where he brought it from. Would you mind if I read to you a portion from the word now.

And I felt constrained to look at Colossians chapter 3, and the first 13 verses. At least as the background of my message. Colossians 3 1 through 13.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above. Where Christ is seated, at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. For to death therefore, what is earthly in you, immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away, anger, wrath, malice, slander, foul talk from your mouth.

Do not lie one to another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices, and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge, after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man. But Christ is all, and in all.

Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, loneliness, meekness, and patience. Forbearing one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the

Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together, in perfect harmony. A word of prayer together. 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.

Your life is hid with Christ in God, Paul says here, verse 3. And that leads me right away to say this, that the Christian life is a life of miracle. It is a supernatural life. If you can explain someone's religious experience on the basis of psychology, you've got a church member on your hands, but not a Christian.

If you can only explain a man's religious experience on the ground of miracle, then you've got a Christian. Your life is hid with Christ in God. With all its sin, and all its failure, and all the past, it's hid with Christ in God, forgiven.

Your life, with all its potential, for the future, is hid with Christ in God. Paul has several graphic ways, I think, of stating the same thing in different words. You remember how he closes the 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, the last verse, 21.

He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And the Living Bible puts it this way, God took the sinless Christ, and poured all our sin into him. And in exchange, he poured all God's goodness into us.

I think that's wonderful. That's the miracle. That's how it all began.

But you know, a life of miracle is intended to be maintained on that level. And the tragic thing is that so often, that miracle with which our life begins, is not maintained in great daily Christian experience. And Paul is very careful to show us that this is only possible in, by discipline.

You see some of the phrases he uses in this chapter in Colossians. Verse 1, seek the things that are above. Verse 2, set your mind on things that are above.

Verse 5, put to death or slay therefore what is earthly in you. Seek, set, slay. Seek the things that are above.

Go after them. Set your mind on things that are above. Slay what is earthly in you.

Verse 8, put them all away, anger, wrath, malice, slander, foul talk. Verse 9, put off the old nature with its practices. Put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Verse 12, put on then as God's chosen one. And he goes through a list of traits of character, which a Christian must put on. And finally ends with, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

You see the discipline of this? Set, seek, slay. You must do this. You do it.

Put off the old, put on the new, put off, put on. This is a life which involves everyday personal discipline. Because you see, as Christians, we are set free from one law, to be mastered by another.

That's how the miracle is maintained. Romans 8, 2. The law of the Spirit of Christ, in Christ Jesus, the law of life, the Spirit of Christ, has set me free from the law of sin and death. You see, a Christian is somebody who's had a marvelous revolution.

He's revolted against one master, and he's served another. He's turned from the law of sin, which once mastered him. And is now, his life is now placed under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

This is the law of Maron, to which we've just been hearing, listening. I wonder if the high school kids, will just for a minute turn off, if you haven't already done so. Turn off, while I just tell the folks here, something that happened to me in an airplane, a few months ago.

You know I don't like planes. I am a tramp preacher, and I don't like that either. There's nothing, in my judgment, there's nothing replaces in life a pastor, who is speaking to the same people, three or four times a week, 52 weeks in the year almost, and year after year.

If he stays long enough, he gets to know them, and they get to know him. And he has a tremendous relationship, which now I miss terribly. However, that involves the necessity of flying.

I must have flown a lot, a lot of miles. But I never just, what can I say, you might think me very bad, but weak about this. I don't sort of relax too well on airplanes.

I'm always thankful to get out of them. I'm not fearful, but I'm very prayerful. And just a few months ago, I was leaving Johannesburg, to come back to London.

And one of these colossal, colossal jumbo jet things. You know, you're only treated like battery hens on planes. You're fed and watered at regular intervals, and you sit there.

And there were about 380 people on that plane, crew of 25. And we got into Johannesburg, and I'll tell you what I do, and let you into a secret. When the thing begins to go along the runway, and it makes a noise, you know, the engines kick off.

And it starts out making a roar. And of course, you see a travel economy class in a jet, it makes a terrific roar. Immediately, it starts at, I watch my second hand on my watch.

Because I know that a Boeing jet, jumbo jet, fully loaded with passengers and gas, weighs about 500,000 pounds, and takes about 46 seconds to get off the ground. So, I always watch it. And it starts, and this day, I watched the second hand go round.

And it's going now, as faster and faster, and I thought, and when it reached about the 40th second, I thought, I felt it hesitate. But the day went on, and my second hand went on 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, still on the ground. I said, oh dear Lord, how long is this runway? And 52, 55, it was still on the ground.

60, still on the ground. 61, 62, and then, it took off. And it rose, and rose, and rose, and went right up, it was a dark night, right up into the moonlight sky.

I said, thanks a lot, thank you Lord, I'm so grateful for that. In about 20 minutes, nobody said anything, in about 20 minutes, the captain came on to us, and spoke to us. He was desperately English.

And he said, good evening, ladies and gentlemen. He said, I am sorry, I have not been in communication with you, but I have lost an engine. My first instinct was to say, don't worry about that, I'll jump out and get

it for you.

But of course, that wouldn't have been any good at all. I suppose, I knew he meant, he'd lost the power. He said, our next stop is Nairobi, and I can't make Nairobi on three engines, with a full load, so we must return to Johannesburg, and we'll be landing again in about 20 minutes.

Well, we did, and was I glad to get out. And we were all on the ground. But look, now, just, just look, listen.

That plane started off on that runway, about half a million pounds weight. And it was mastered by a law. And that law was the downward pull of gravity, which held that plane on the ground.

But at 145 knots, the pilot pulled a stick. And the nose of that plane went up in the air. And the thrust of three out of four giant Boeing jet engines was adequate, the thrust to overcome the law of gravity, and put that plane immediately in the mastery of another law, a law of aerodynamics, which overcame the law of gravity, and lifted it up, and up, and up, until it reached about 35,000 feet.

Now, the law of gravity didn't cease to exist. One more engine out, and we'd have known that. But fortunately, even with a full load of gas and passengers, three engines were enough to get that great, heavy, big thing up off the ground.

And it mounted above one law, and was in the grip of another. Now, that wasn't an accident. That wasn't something that might happen.

It was an inevitable must. The law of the spirit of life in Christ has set me free from the law of sin and death. At one time in our lives, we are all mastered by that law, the downward pull of degeneration.

But another law comes into operation, when I trust the Lord, and when I belong to him. And that is the law of the spirit of life in Christ. And a Christian finds himself mastered by this law.

That's the miracle of Christian living. And he experiences the upward pull of a living Christ in his life. And he's gripped and held by this new law.

Now you see, that is the miracle. And the maintenance of the miracle depends upon his being held, day by day, in the mastery of the law of the spirit of life in Christ. Now I just want to share with you very briefly, one or two evidences of a man who is held by that law.

How would you expect to recognize a Christian who is mastered by the supernatural law of the spirit of life in Christ? I mean, how would you know him? Well, you'd know him in extraordinary ways. It means that in many, many senses and areas, he's reacting supernaturally. For instance, this law of the spirit of life in Christ, rides above the law of social justice, and demands love for hatred, tolerance for intolerance.

Do you remember, in the word of God, the first man who was martyred for his faith in Christ? Stephen. And when he was being battered to death by stones, he looked up into heaven and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Where'd he learn that? I suggest to you, he learned it from one he loved, his Savior and Lord, who not so long beforehand, had prayed on a cross, outside the city wall, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.

You remember what Jesus said? You have heard it said, the Bible never said it, but the Pharisees taught it, a misinterpretation of Old Testament law. You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies.

Love your enemies. And you notice what Paul says in Colossians 3:13? For bearing one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

And above all these things, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. May I ask you one question? Are you mustered by that law tonight? Or, when you go into church, do you go down one aisle, and somebody else you know go down the other, and you haven't spoken to each other for about a year? And against that person you hold resentment and grudge. You are betraying the fact that your Christianity is phony.

Phony. Just as he has forgiven me, I must forgive others. I said the other evening, I don't receive the forgiveness of God in a cup, to keep to myself.

I receive it in a pipeline, that I might pass it on. Are you the kind of person who holds resentment and grudges? I wonder. If you are mustered by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, you can't do that.

Again, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, it's right above the law, the physical law, of fatigue of natural resources. Isaiah 40 verse 30 and 31. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They will mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not go weary. They shall walk and not faint.

The New Testament passage which constantly thrills me on this, is Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 12 and verse 8, where he speaks to us about a messenger of Satan that was sent to buffet him. We're not sure what that is, possibly short-sightedness, blindness, we don't know. But it may be.

But this is how he reacted. Three times I prayed to the Lord that this might depart from me. Three times.

I suppose most people use commentaries. I've almost given them up because they comment on everything except the thing I'm looking for. But most commentaries on this suggest that three times means he never stopped praying.

Constantly praying that this thing might depart from him. I'm not so sure. Don't you think Paul remembered in the Garden of Gethsemane? One who, as he went to pray, prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, but not us.

I will, but thy will be done. And three times he prayed and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling on the ground. I can't quite express in words what that means.

The writer to the Hebrews says, ye have not persisted unto blood striving against sin. No, but Jesus did. Three times that was enough and that was all that Paul prayed.

Three times. And his answer from heaven was, my grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness.

When I am weak, then I am strong. I hesitate to intrude a word of personal testimony. But all this has so lived to me in recent years that I just want to tell you something.

When I was laid aside with a cerebral hemorrhage and had lost my speech and paralyzed, about nine months afterwards, I was trying to get well enough to go back to the church in Edinburgh where I was pastor to preach. The folks had been so kind, prayed so much. And I thought, well, I don't face it, I was so

nervous, I thought I'd find a little church in a village in Scotland on the west coast, which I knew well, and I knew the preacher.

I said, would you mind having me for a Sunday and just see how I get on? So I said, oh sure, come on. So I went. It hadn't been appropriate for about nine months.

Do you know, when I stood up to speak, do you know how long I lasted? Five minutes. And then my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth and I couldn't say another word and I had to sit down. And the next Sunday I was to preach at my own church in Edinburgh.

And all that week, I shall never forget it, it never, it was an eternity. And I thought, Lord, I just can't make it. I can't make it.

And when I went to the church that day, I thought, well, I, they were promised, I promised that I would, so I'll go. The church was packed. Dear folks had prayed constantly for me.

And they'd waited for this day when I would be back as I had been. There were eight steps up to the pulpit. Steep steps.

And when I got to the bottom one and saw those eight steps, I was as weak as a kitten. And I said, Lord, I just can't get up those steps. And then I felt a touch as if Jesus was there.

And he got me up. And I lasted for about fifteen minutes. A short time afterwards I went to Chicago again.

The Moody Founders Week. The public address equipment had broken down. Church was full.

And they said, well, you'll have to go and speak from the communion table. We can put a little microphone there. And I said, Lord, I can't do that because there's no means of support.

I had to lean against the pulpit to stand. But I went to that communion table. And I felt a touch.

And I lasted for an hour and ten minutes. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. When I'm weak, then I'm strong.

And I'm quite sure that our brother who's spoken to us could tell us many and many a time when he and his wife had been absolutely worn out and felt the same touch. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus rides above the law of physical fatigue and exhaustion and gives us a touch from God. Something else which is really very exciting, I think.

This law of the spirit of life, when you're mastered by it, it rides above the law of physics that everything contracts under pressure. Christian doesn't. He expands under pressure.

You put three men in a burning, fiery furnace, you know, Daniel's friends. And in it they meet one like unto the Son of God. That's not contraction, but it's expansion.

Think of Job. Loses his children, ten of them, his farm, his cattle, everything. One thing only left, a wife, a nagging wife too, who says to him, Job, the only thing that you can do is to curse God and die.

And God gave to Job songs in the night. You put two men, Paul and Silas, into prison and thrash them and beat them till they're bleeding. And out from that Philippian jail come songs of prayer.

A Christian doesn't contract under pressure. He expands. I was in Hong Kong just a year ago and was at the boundary, 25 miles west of Kowloon, standing there at the boundary of Red China.

We looked across, a Chinese pastor and I, and we looked across the river over which many, many refugees have tried to get out. Many have succeeded and many have been killed. And this dear Chinese pastor, whom I loved so dearly, and what a preacher he was, he said to me, that's my country.

All its magnificent mountains, all its massive expanses, that's my country. And he said, do you know that the church in China is twice as strong as when Chairman Mao took over? And then he added this significant comment, there isn't a hypocrite left. Of course not.

The hypocrite can't take it. The phony collapses. But the man who has the law, the spirit of life mastering him every day, can stand any pressure and in it expand.

Say, I want to know so much about this. Let me hasten to prepare for landing in Venice. This law of the spirit of life in Christ, it rides above the law of self-preservation and promotes the law of self-denial.

John 12, 24, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Galatians 2, 20, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Henceforth let no man trouble me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

There's a very strange sort of cross going around in evangelical circles today. It's undetected in many areas. The old rugged cross had no truck for the world.

For the flesh, it meant the end of the journey. But the new cross is quite a friendly pal. And indeed, it can be the source of plenty of fun and plenty of enjoyment.

It lets the Adam in us live without interference. His life motivation isn't changed. He still lives for his own pleasure.

Of course he sings choruses and watches religious movies instead of drinking hard liquor. But the accent, the emphasis is on kicks, fun, thrills. On a higher religious plane.

And the preacher no longer demands the end of the old life before the new life can begin. He tries to sort of key into public interest by showing that Christianity makes no unpleasant demand. It offers what the world does on a higher level.

And whatever the world seems to be clamoring for at the moment is cleverly shown to be the very thing the gospel provides. Only the richest product is better. The new cross that's around today doesn't slay the sinner, it redirects him.

It gears him into a sort of cleaner and happier way of life. It saves his self respect. The old cross was a symbol of death.

And it stood for the end of a human being. The man in Roman times who took up this cross started down the road and he said goodbye to his friends. He wouldn't come back.

He wasn't going to have his life redirected. He was going to have it ended. See, the race of Adam is under the death sentence.

God salvages an individual by liquidating him and raising him up to newness of life. He ends one life that a new life might begin. In coming to Jesus, I don't bring my life, old life, onto a higher plane.

I leave it at Calvary. God offers life but not an improved old life. The life he offers is life out of death.

Standing always on the far side of the cross, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. And that simply means that I must repent and believe. I must forsake my sins and must forsake myself.

And the law, the spirit of life in Christ promotes the law of self-denial. I'll tell you something else too, I think it's very wonderful. It rides above the psychological law that familiarity reduces signs of wonder.

In other words, it breeds contempt. Psalm 92 verse 4, they shall still bring forth fruit in old age. Have you thought about what some wonderful old men that were in the Bible? Abram, heard about him this afternoon, made great words.

John, at the age of 90. Daniel, after all his experiences in Babylon, fancy opening his windows three times a day to pray towards Jerusalem. Held into a den of lions and all the lions locked your.

It rides above the law of psychology that everything, that familiarity reduces a sign of wonder. When I was at the UNF conference recently in Thailand, I spoke to about a hundred missionaries in a room where there were no windows. There were gaps in the wall, of course, but no windows.

About a hundred there. All the lights were turned out to keep the mosquitoes away. One light had to be left open for me to read my Bible.

And, of course, all the nation's mosquitoes bore right in on that light. I'm always a filling station for mosquitoes, and that night I had a dreadful time. Temperature was up in the 90s and humidity was high.

I couldn't, it seemed I could never keep going. But, you know, there was one lady, missionary, who was wheeled in a wheelchair right into the front by her colleagues and put in the front row. And just dimly, dimly I could see her.

And I could see her writing notes, listening to everything I had, and I saw her face just lit up, lit up with joy and thrill as the words got to her heart. Towards the end of that conference I said to Oswald Sanders, the director then, I said, tell me what's the story of that girl. Oh, he said, in 1951 when we were driven out of China, she was a new recruit.

A year later she got polio and was absolutely crippled, couldn't move. We took her to our best hospital in Manoram, and she had the best possible treatment for five years, but there was no improvement. So very reluctantly the field council said we're afraid she'll have to go home.

So she went back home, she lived in Northern Ireland. Two years later we had a letter from her, and she said, I'm no better now than I was, no better. But she said, I'm crippled, still can't move a muscle, but my hands are alright, I can work a typewriter.

I'm sure God doesn't want me to stay here in Northern Ireland, he wants me in Thailand. Won't you have me back? I can be a secretary in the hospital and relieve missionaries to do their private jobs. He said, oh

well, we can't possibly refuse that.

So we had her back, and she's been doing a wonderful job now for nearly five more years as a secretary. But I want to tell you something, he said. He said, you know, when we have missionary personality problems on the field, which every missionary society does, and every missionary station does, don't think missionaries have a sort of hail around them, they're just themselves over there just the same.

Finding it probably more tough and more difficult because of the climactic conditions. And he said, whenever we have these problems and people get on edge, or whenever anybody is absolutely sort of on the point of climbing up the wall, they all go to her. And somehow this polio, which seemed a disaster, God has used to make that woman a channel of blessing at a depth we know nothing about.

See? God put his marks upon us. And the law of the spirit of life in Christ rides above the law of psychology. But familiarity breeds contempt.

Oh God, deliver me in old age from ever getting stale. Lord, keep me fresh. And one last thing, I can't resist this.

Because you see, the law of the spirit of life in Christ rides above the law of mathematics that 2 plus 2 equals 4. They don't. You may sound mystified. You perhaps look it.

You see, Christianity, mastered by that law, deals in multiplication by division. Come with me just for a closing moment in your memory. To the one miracle recorded in all four Gospels.

The feeding of the 5,000 it's called, but there must have been at least 15,000 with women and kids. There they all are, sitting round there. And the disciples, 12 of them, get together, form a committee, and pass a resolution.

And carry it unanimously. Send them all home. We have none to anything for them.

They're quite beyond them. Jesus moves an amendment. And carries it, not by a show of hands, but by a demonstration of power.

How many loaves have you? Five, two fish. That's enough. Give them to me.

Put them all down. They're sat down. And listen, he took the loaves.

He blessed the loaves. He broke them. And he gave them back to his disciples, for the disciples to give to the crowds.

And everyone was adequately fed, and every disciple had a full garbage can left over to take home as a reminder of that day of miracles. When do you think the miracle happened? As Jesus held five loaves and two fishes in his hand, did they suddenly become enough to feed 5,000? Certainly not. When the disciples held them? No.

I'll tell you when it happened. When every disciple gave all he had to the people. For God is always prepared to multiply when I'm prepared to share.

And the law of the spirit of life in Christ deals with multiplication by division. And when I let him take me, and all of me, and bless me, and break me, that hurts, and give me back to the crowd, then he multiplies.

Oh you say, such a life is absolutely impossible to me.

I agree with you. But I tell you this, it's altogether possible to the life of Jesus in me. Listen, all God's demands upon my life, from a human point of view, are totally illogical.

But from God's point of view, they're absolutely logical. There is no such thing as a war of containment, or peaceful coexistence with the flesh. If I try that, it will quit me every time.

The only answer is unconditional surrender of all I have, and all I am, to the control of the Holy Spirit, in order that he in me might produce the reactions of the life of Christ. Seven days a week. Message received and understood? I trust so.

A life of miracle. Because it's the life of Jesus. And therefore your reactions reflect him every day.

Let's pray together. Oh Lord Jesus, we're humbled before you tonight. We've seen pictures and heard stories and heard accounts of amazing transformations that have taken place in ignorant, superstitious, tribal people, who've discovered the reality that Jesus himself is the resurrection and the life.

And we're so ashamed that here we are, in this privileged land, and we ourselves haven't learned to practice this every day.

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