

What Is Christianity All About

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath emphasizes the excitement and challenges of the Christian life, encouraging believers to actively run their race of faith with discipline and commitment.

Duration: 44:33

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a lost sheep and relates it to the journey of finding freedom in Christ. The speaker encounters a sheep that had strayed away from the flock and was lost. After several failed attempts to bring the sheep back, the speaker finally succeeds by gaining its trust. The speaker then draws a parallel between the sheep's journey and our own spiritual journey, emphasizing the importance of looking unto Jesus and being under the control of the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes with the speaker sharing about the impact of their ministry, where many people, including former drug addicts, have found deliverance and are now passionately serving God.

Transcript

Well, this week will soon be over, and maybe your immediate reaction for some of you is to say thank the Lord for that. Others will have entered into something fresh in their experience with Christ. Others perhaps have maintained a sort of calm neutrality.

And this morning I wanted just to share a few thoughts with you about what this Christian life is all about. We sought to define what a Christian was last time I was with you. And this morning, what is a Christian life? How does it work out? I just want to read a couple of verses in Hebrews chapter 12, which you will know, I think, pretty well.

Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Now I just want to say one or two practical things this morning, which I trust may help some of us share them with you, mostly out of my own experience, really. By way of contrast first, I was in California two or three years ago, and going up and down the state on behalf of a particular denomination, which will be anonymous, and every Sunday preaching in a different church.

Well, I never preach more than twice a day now, but I asked for permission to sit in on the college age group at the Christian Education Hour at 9.30. So I was allowed to do that in all these different churches, see, and in most places there were about 50, 60, 70 or about kids, college age, and I sat and listened to them, and watched them. And I listened to someone who was giving them tremendous doctrine, sound of the bell, all absolutely correct. And I watched those kids, and I saw at least, I would think without exaggerating, at least 75% of them bore to tears.

They could hardly wait till 10.30, and then they were off. I discovered that most of them, practically all of them indeed, were children of members of the church. And they were being brought up in a sort of sheltered environment to protect them from society.

And they were absolutely turned off, completely bored with the whole thing. And I couldn't help thinking to myself, I'm absolutely certain when this group grow up into fellows and have wives and children, I'm sure that they will never introduce their kids to a situation with which they've been bored to tears. And I quite shook me that situation.

Then if you hold that in your mind just a moment, just a few weeks ago, a month or two ago actually, I was again in California. And this time I visited the most fantastic place I've ever seen in my life. Perhaps you've heard of the Jesus Chapel.

It's really Calvary Chapel near Los Angeles. And the assistant pastor there happened to be a young fellow, he and his wife, who were over at Capernaum in England. And now he's assistant pastor, so I went there.

And you know, it's a tent. And I'll tell you how it all began. Just an ordinary sort of church, about holding about 600 people.

And one day a hippie came in. And came and sat down, and amazing to say, he got converted. And the pastor said to him, now look here, I don't want you to conform, see.

I don't want you to conform and do what we're doing. Don't join us in doing our thing. But get out among your own people and lead them to Christ.

And this fellow had really had a real experience and he just did that, you see. And before long, crowds of these folks began to come into this church. And of course they came in all very dirty and a bit smelly.

And sort of untidy, general mess. Long hands and all that. And they used to sit, they sat with their feet up on the pew in front of them.

See, and some of them put their toes through the little holes for communion caps. Well, the church members didn't quite like it, you see. And there was a fuss on, a riot on the pastor's hand.

And one day the minister came along to the church. And he saw a notice outside the church. No bare feet allowed.

So that Sunday morning, at the morning service, he called a church meeting for members. And said, will all church members please remain. So they did.

And at the end of the service he said, either, either that notice is removed. Or, I cease to be your pastor today. Well, he lost a few folks over that.

But he won the battle. And within a matter of weeks, the situation exploded. Till the church was far too small and had to make a tent.

And it's a huge tent. Seats about 3,500 people. It was only up about a month.

And then it blew down in a gale. But they put up another one. And, do you know this? I was there one Saturday night.

And from about 7.30 till 10.30. 3,200 people were inside that tent. All sorts of way out people. As well as the, you know, those who are not so way out.

Young and middle aged. Mostly young. And sitting on the edge of their seats.

Listening to a couple of music groups. They weren't playing hot rock. But they were playing folk music.

And most of those who were playing had been high on drugs. Just about a year ago. But they'd been completely delivered from them.

By the power of Christ. And were singing with tremendous authority and power. You know the difference between a sermon and a message.

I mean a thing that's correct. And a thing that's got punch in it. And you also know the difference between a solo, a performance and a message in song.

Now these folks, as I listened to them. I tell you when they sang, they got right into my heart. With compassion and love and concern for people.

As they sang and gave testimony to the tremendous reality of Jesus Christ in their lives. Now there were kids about 19 years of age, that's all. And I looked at them.

And I saw those 3,000 people sitting there absolutely, absolutely spellbound. And you know leaders of boards of denominations, various sort of hierarchy. Have been very concerned about this, in case it's getting all people off the rails, you know.

And so they send their high ups across to the church to see what on earth is going on. And what makes it tick. And when I came the week I was there.

By the way every week night 2,000 young people meet for Bible study. Nothing but Bible study in the tent. Different pastor takes a different portion of the word every night.

And 2,000 youngsters sit and listen. Nothing but Bible study for an hour. And my they drink it all in.

Well this chairman of this certain board, denomination board. Saw my friend and the pastor and said now look here. What exactly, what's going on here? How many committees have you got? So the pastor said we haven't any.

Oh he said you must have some committees. You can't go on without committees. Well he said we've got one.

Oh he said that's it, I knew, I knew. What was it? An evangelistic committee. Oh yes he said that must be it.

Well how many serve on it? 3,200. Get that? Everybody involved all the time. Because they love Jesus and they find him so exciting.

They can't keep quiet. And they're always witnessing for him. Now what a contrast.

Between that denominational X situation. As it was in the beginning, is now, ever shall be. Nothing changes here.

And this exciting, wonderful, tremendous thing that's going on in that tent. And I say it is going to be going on there. It even, it even hit my country.

And when anything hits Britain it makes me excited. I tell you, 60,000 people forming an open air service in Trafalgar Square in London. Marching right through London.

J-E-S-U-S, Jesus. Coming out like a thunderclap from them. Time and time again as they march.

Led by alphabets. Getting to Hyde Park, one of our main parks. And there conducting an open air service.

Then, then if you please, going to the house where the Prime Minister lives, Ted Heath. And leaving with him a protest against permissiveness. And then, more daring still, a company of them, picked company of them, going into that awful rotten show, Oh Calcutta! During a performance and protesting against it.

Now that makes all 17 of my hairs stand on end. I mean really, it turns me right on. When I see this sort of thing happening today, it's exciting.

Of course the church and the institution and the college, that is going on as it has been for the last 60 years, is absolutely finished. If they're not with it, and get moving on the ball, they're left behind. And this Christian life, if I really understand it, is the most exciting, wonderful thing.

Mind you, it's not all kicks. It's a battle. It's been introduced to us this morning as a mountainside.

I want to introduce you to it, for a moment, as a battle. It's called in these verses in Hebrews, a race. But the word is conflict really.

Let us run the race, the battle, fight the battle that is set before us. Now there are some things in these verses that really sort of open my mind to what's involved in getting really excited about the Lord Jesus. First of all, let me ask you, look, here we're compassed about with so great a crowd of witnesses.

Here's the challenge of this race that you and I have to face every day. By the way, I don't find it gets easier when you get older. Maybe you think it will do.

The situation's different, but it's just as tough. Right to the end of the journey. Compassed about with so great a crowd of witnesses.

Who are they? Well, obviously the man's referring to these fellows in Hebrews chapter 11. And you remember the sort of picture gallery there you have of crowds of men. You know, in my mind, I had these men tucked away up in little pictures, way up on the wall, living the sort of kind of life that was absolutely inaccessible to the impossible.

And then I thought about it again, and I thought, that's not it. You know, Hebrews 11 is a rogues gallery. There are a lot of scoundrels.

You look at them. There's a fellow there called Noah, and he was an alcoholic. There was a fellow Jacob, and he was the biggest cheat you can imagine.

And one called Moses, he committed murder. And one called David, he committed adultery. And one called Samson, his morals don't bear examination.

And so on, you go down the list, and it's a rogues gallery. But they had one thing in common. There was a moment in their lives when they absolutely came to the end of their rope.

Right down that rock bottom. And there, they met Jesus. You know, however, how many, many people get right there.

I was watching at home in England a TV thing one day, a sort of commentary on drugs. And a girl was being interviewed about this, and she was by a fellow who was questioning her, and said, how old are you? Oh, she said 18. And he said, have you been on drugs? Yeah, sure.

How long? Two years. Two years. He said, got any parents? She said, I don't know.

Who's your mother? No, no. I don't know. Well, who's your father? I said, you know, my mother, I believe she left me when I was two.

My father? Well, as far as I know, I've had three fathers. But I don't know any of them. I don't know much about it.

And he said, you're on drugs? Yes. You're high on drugs? Yeah. What are you going on? Heroin.

And the man said to her, aren't you afraid it'll kill you? And she said, with a look on her face, I tell you, it made me shake, I hope to God it will. And right through. Now, you see, there's someone at the end of her rope.

I could have leapt into that TV set and told her, you'll never get freedom that way. You'll never find the answer to life that way. You'll only find it in Christ himself in your heart and in your life.

But that's representative of masses of people, masses of folks today who just are searching for freedom, but never find it that way. But you meet Jesus when you're at the end of your rope. I found the times in my life when he's been most real to me is the time when I've been at rock bottom.

I don't find his blessing way up in heaven, right up there. I get it right down when I'm just at the very end, at which end corner. And that's where I meet him all over again.

Well, you see, this is a great crowd of witnesses. But, I don't think that he was altogether referring to these fellows in Hebrews chapter 11. It says this, Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.

That word really means dragged around. Well, all these men in Hebrews chapter 11 don't drag me around. But I'm compassed about and dragged around by a great cloud of witnesses every day, so are you.

Telling you who dragged you around. See, in every race, there are people who run in it, People who sit in the grandstands and watch it, And one person who judges it. They're all here today.

All of them. Some who are in it. And thank God they are, they're loving it.

Some who are spectators in the grandstands, watching. And one who judges it, the Lord Jesus himself. They're all here.

And the great crowd of witnesses are the spectators in the grandstands. You know, the chap who tries to put you off, Unconverted parents, unconverted members of your family, The folk who sort of just say, Oh, don't be so sissy to be a Christian, to run in this race. Stupid.

Crowds of people have, all the time, Masses of witnesses who are watching, Scathing, Criticizing, You know, doing everything they can to put you off. And they're all here. Well, there's a challenge of the race.

I know it every day of my life. I came from a non-Christian home, I know all about that. And perhaps you do too.

But maybe you don't have to go out of the room, Right here today, to find or to meet, Outside, to meet the person, the one person, Who does more than anybody to put you off being Christian. Everything they can to keep you from being involved. Well, there they are, great challenge.

But look, look at the course of this race. The race that is set before us. The race that is set before us.

It's an obstacle race. And God has a plan for our life that he's mapped out, And purposes for each one of us. Everyone here, he's a plan for our character, That's the same for everybody.

But he's a plan for our career, That's as different as there are people here. And if you want to know God's plan for your career, You'll never find it until you submit to God's plan for your character. His plan for your character is to conform us all to an age like Jesus.

To an age like him. That's his purpose for all of us. And he'll never show any of us his plan for our career, Unless we accept that plan for his character.

And this race, his plan for our lives, is set before us. He's mapped it out and purposes for each one of us, The best for each of us here this morning. But you see, we don't do it just by waiting for him, we've got to run.

Let us run the race that is set before us. I've got to get into it and get involved and run. And that means, as you've already heard this morning, The discipline of a Christian life.

I was telling some folks yesterday, I think, You know, when I used to play football, Do you know that before the rugby season, the rugby football season began, Every August I used to get up at five o'clock And run for ten miles round the London suburb. And then in the evening when I'd done my job, I got into a running track in southwest London and ran again ten miles. Ten miles a day, five days a week, without fail.

Having run for ten miles then, I did an hour's skipping. And then I changed into football clothes, You see, we don't wear armour plates, We just have a jersey and shorts. And I stuck one shoulder up against the brick wall and pushed.

Then I went to another corner of the wall and pushed with this shoulder. With my legs straight out behind, push, push, push, ha! My shoulders screamed. Nobody saw me but my landlady, she thought I was nuts.

But I went on push, push, push, nobody there, Pushing, pushing, pushing, until, until I, I had a couple of shoulders like concrete. I was determined when I turned out on Saturday afternoon That anybody who

tackled me would hit a lump of concrete. And wouldn't want to do it again.

And that was a hundred percent it. Oh, but my, it was hard work. Hard work.

And it cost. Oh, but I was prepared to do that, to try and get an earthly crown. To play for England, which I never made.

Got a trial, but never played, never made it. That's another story. But really, the discipline, the hard work, the training were fantastic.

And what do I do then to attain, to run in this Christian life? Listen, I never need an alarm clock in the morning. I tell the Lord the night before what time I want to wake up. And he wakens me up.

Always on time, usually a little early. But I tell you that, he doesn't get me up. I've got to do the getting up.

And the greatest problem that I have in my life, and you have in your life perhaps, is what I call blanket victory. Getting up from under them, and getting in your shower, getting cleaned up, and getting down on your knees, and your quiet time, and praying, and running in the race. And right from the start to the very end, that's the point, the focal point, whether you lose it or you win.

And right from the start to the very end, that's the point, the focal point, whether you lose it or you win. If you've forgotten that, and your quiet time is shot to bits, and your Bible doesn't mean a thing, you are losing out all the time. Oh, that's discipline.

I've got to run. He'll give me the power, he'll give me the strength, but I've got to show him that I mean business. And that means sheer rugged discipline.

Let us run the race that is set before us. And, of course, this race has a cost to run. It says, let us lay aside every weight and the sin, which doth so easily beset us.

Let us lay aside every weight and every sin. Now, there's a difference between a weight and a sin. A weight, a weight for you may not be a weight for me.

A weight for me might not be a weight for you. I'll tell you what a weight is. It's anything that hinders your running in the race.

Anything that dims your view of Christ. Anything that makes your Bible die out on you. Well, I could list a lot, but I won't.

But I'll tell you what was once a great weight in my life, and that was that chain smoking. Like anything, you know, I always thought to myself, well, it's a funny thing. God has to sit in the middle of the chimney.

When I smoked so much, and I smoked day, ounce a day, or two or three packets a day. And one day, going down to business, I was a Christian, had only been so for a few years. I was in a train, and I felt in my pocket for my New Testament.

I thought I'd, rather, I felt in my pocket for my tobacco patch. And I pulled it out. No, I didn't.

I pulled out my New Testament. And I was such a silly, scared sort of fellow, that I went red all over, because I thought everybody would see me. But something said to me, those two don't go together.

Those two don't go together. Oh, and I put it away, and felt very embarrassed. And I fought a little battle with God about that for two or three days.

Of course, the harm, it doesn't do me any harm. And besides, I needed a little relaxation, and takes the tensions off if I smoke every time. Well, my Bible began to die out, and my prayer life went to pieces.

And I said, all right, Lord, okay. And I had a wonderful bonfire a few days later, tobacco patch, cigarettes, and all the rest went up in smoke. I'm not saying that it's wrong for a Christian to smoke.

But I'm saying that God said to me many years ago now, that if you want to speak in my name, you've got to speak out of a clean mouth. Now, that may not be a way for you, but it was to me. There's something, somewhere in your life, not necessarily a sin, but it's a weight.

And it's something which dims your view of Christ, dims your view of Jesus, dims your view of the Bible, and takes first place in your life. A weight. And a weight soon becomes a sin if you don't get rid of it.

Let us lay aside every weight. A fellow came up to me sometime, a young, young chap, and he said to him, Say, is it wrong for me to go to the theater? Funny that the chap should ask that. I never said a word to him about it.

He said, does it matter if I go to the theater every now and again? I looked at him, I said, well, I said, he'd actually just won the mile race at his college, at the sports day. I said, didn't you win the mile race last Sunday? He said, yeah, I did. I said, did you run with your overcoat on? He said, don't be so stupid, of course I didn't.

Well, I said, all right, go home and think that out. Let us lay aside every weight. You've got to run this race light.

Throwing aside every weight and every sin. Oh, boy, that's an impossibility. There's one man in the Bible who terrifies me, even a thing to him.

His name was Herod. You remember him, king, puppet king. And one day, John the Baptist came into his home and said, you've no right to be living with that woman.

And Herod, for that, locked him up. And he was ultimately beheaded. One day he met Jesus.

And this was the only man in the Bible to whom Christ had nothing to say. Herod asked him many questions, reasoned him without many things, but Jesus answered him nothing. Only a few hours later, he would hang on a cross.

His last opportunity to say something to somebody, but he didn't. He had nothing to say to a man who'd sinned away his opportunity. Let us lay aside every sin.

Can't, in my own strength, impossible. Oh, but there's someone who can give me power to do it. May I use an illustration? See this pen? When I bought it in New York, the thing had an advertisement.

Sorry, slipped back into the authorisation. An advertisement, and it said about this pen, this pen will write on butter or in your bath. Well, I found that very interesting, because I don't remember when I wrote in my bath, and I certainly have never written on butter.

But I'm very grateful for times when it writes on paper. Now, look, if you won't, please don't copy me, don't copy me, or else we'll all be having a free-for-all under our seats. Put that pen on the palm of my hand, and now I want to make it stand up.

How can I do that? The more I, no, I could cheat and do that, but no, supposing I keep it on the palm of my hand. Could you make a pen? No, I'll drop it. You couldn't either.

There's only one way I can make that pen stand up. It's by bringing another hand, and getting hold of the tablet, and then it stands. See? And it's steady.

This hand, which was sweating it all out, is relaxing. This hand is holding. Let us lay aside every weight and the sin.

Ah, that's the answer. As long as I think with my hand I can do a thing about it, I sweat it out, and I go down. But, but, when I cry out to the Lord Jesus, He brings another hand, and He takes control, and He makes me steady, and makes me stand.

Let us lay aside every weight and the sin, which doth so easily beset us. Yes? Jesus does that. Don't you think you need that right now? Can't you think of a situation where you just need very much to call in reinforcements from heaven? We're at the end of Europe.

Let us lay aside every weight and the sin. Just one more thing. Notice this.

The conquest in the race. Looking unto Jesus. The author, I'm finished with, oh that's great.

Looking unto Jesus. You know, when I was here last, and I'm very sorry to find that gone, there used to be a household on the campus which had a marvelous, a beautiful, Irish setter dog. I don't know who it was.

I don't know where the dog's gone. But I can't find it now. In fact, you know.

But it was a beautiful, somewhat of a pup, and I loved it. You know, because when I was younger, I used to breed and show and train Irish setters. Do you know what an Irish setter is? A dog with a lovely red coat and a beautiful sentimental eyes, red, big, brown eyes, and with a tail that has a sort of little thing, hanging thing on it, and when it's pointing, pointing toward a game, it's discovered it's got one foot in the air, its head is straight out in front of it, and its tail straight out behind, and it's waiting, and it's sensing out a game.

An Irish setter works with a team of dogs. They go into a field, and they spread out, pan out, and run through a field, and then when one of them stops, sense game, it stops. Sense a pheasant, perhaps, and it'll stop.

And all the other dogs stop too. And as they stand, they're absolutely stationary. One of them, one of them has sensed it.

Perhaps the other hasn't. But one has, and none of them run on for the case of disturbing it. And as he stands absolutely steady, he's looking straight at where he knows that bird is.

He's waiting for the fellows with a gun to get near enough. Ah, it's thrilling to train an Irish setter. You know, I tell you, I bought two of them a boy and a girl.

I was going to have them rear a, what do you call a family? And I bought it a boy and a girl. And strange enough, I went to, I bought them in Ireland. Thought it was an obvious place to get an Irish setter.

And I had two of them. And they had a pedigree like nothing on earth. Oh my, champions and all the rest, isn't it? And then I didn't know much about them, so I got a book on how to train Irish setters.

And by the time I'd done all that, I hadn't a cent left. I was broke, absolutely broke. I'd paid everything to get these dogs, and I'd just enough money to buy those books to tell me what to do with them.

And the book said, now never whip it. You must never whip it. You must train firmly with a toning device, but never whip it.

If you whip it, it's so sensitive and nervous, you finish it. Never whip it. So, and the book said, leave it till they're about six months old, and then start.

So, I left them having a good time till they were six months old, enjoying themselves. And then, when they were six months old, I took them out, and I lived at the time just way up in the north of England by the boundary of the Roman Empire. And we went up there, and I took these dogs out.

And they romped all over the place, you see. And then we came to a farmyard. And, you know, instinct was in them.

Immediately they came there, they're snatched. Gone. Gone.

And they wagged their tails like fits, and everything wagged all over them. And they went towards this farmyard, and we opened the gate, and there, there, they saw for the first time in their lives the contents of a farmyard. Hens and chickens and all that.

And I said, Come here. They looked at me. Then they looked at the hen.

And I said, You dare. Come here. They looked at me.

They looked at the hen. They looked at each other. And I said, Come here.

They looked at me. Looked at the hen. And the hen won.

And in less time than it takes to tell you, Oh, there was a hen that would never lay again. The remains of it. And I was having a very difficult argument with the farmer.

And later on, a worse argument with my own father, who had to pay for this wretched hen. Of course, it was his prize hen, it would be. But, you know, when I got those two dogs home, back into their kennel, I got hold of them.

And I gave them such a talking to. I wanted to give them a thrashing, but my book said don't do it, so I didn't. I got hold of them by the scuff of the neck, and I said, Now look here.

What do you think you're doing chasing hens? I didn't get you for that. I didn't buy you for that. Look here, don't do that.

You've not to do it. I talked to them for half an hour. By the time I'd finished with them, they were nearly weeping.

If it does, good week. And they knew they'd done wrong, and they said, It's all very well, but how on earth do we stop doing it? I said, Look here, next time we go into that farmyard, instead of looking at the hens, look at me. It may be painful, but look at me.

And keep looking at me, and I'll keep looking at you. And we'll never take our eyes off each other, and we'll win. Well, I haven't time to tell the whole thing, but it took about 14 days to end back, back to the same place.

There were no more casualties, the ones who near escaped, but no more casualties. Until the 14th day. Oh, I was so thrilled.

As we approached the farmyard, the tails began to wag. And instead of going to the gate, they stopped. And one paw went up in the air.

The head went straight out the front, the smell, and the tails straight out behind them. And they went up to where I caught up with them. And as I caught up with them, without saying a thing, as I walked along the road, caught up with them, they walked in beside me, one heather side.

And we walked, opened the gate, walked through the farmyard. And that day, there was a hen there, which had a dozen day-old chicks beside her. And wasn't it mean of me? We walked right in amongst them.

Right in amongst them. And stopped. Right where they were.

And those two dogs, they were shaking and trembling. But they were looking up, looking at me, and I was looking down at them. Just for one moment, I think it was the girl took her eyes, looked at the hen, and said, come here, come here, look back.

And she looked back. Sorry, she said, sorry. And she looked back.

Oh, yes, yes, she did, you know. The new, the new dog. Iris said, let's talk, actually.

They talked by the way they looked at you. You can know what they're saying by their eyes. And you know, we stood there.

And we went right through the whole thing, and they never went anywhere near the hen. And we won. Oh, and wherever I showed those dogs, they won prizes.

They were great. Looking unto Jesus. Listen.

Listen. He paid, if I spoke to you as an accountant for a moment, I'd say this. Heaven became bankrupt.

Heaven had a cent left, no reserve fund. When it gave Jesus, it emptied itself of all it had to save you. What do you think it saved you for? To see His hand? To go around pulling around like that? No, it didn't.

He saved you to make you like Himself. And as I look unto Jesus, as I get my eyes fixed upon Him, He makes me triumph and gets me through in victory. And what do you think it means to look to Jesus? What's the outcome of that? May I tell you this? As I myself... Last September, I was flying from Johannesburg to London in one of these 747 jets.

I don't like them. I don't like flying. I had to know an awful lot of it.

I don't like it. I'm not frightened, but I'm very prayerful. If you can understand the difference.

And you know, that day, this plane was packed. I think that meant there were about 380 people or something in it. And I just didn't like the look of it at all.

And... I'll tell you what I do. I'm letting myself down. I'm giving myself away.

What I do is, the moment the thing begins to make a noise with all the engines going and starts along the runway, I watch. I look at my watch and count to seconds. Because I know how long it should take a Boeing jet fully loaded with passengers and guests weighing... 500,000 pounds.

Wow. How long it should take it to get off the tarmac. 46 seconds.

And so, that day, I was watching. I got my watch and... it began to go. And I count.

Got up to 42. And then I felt it hesitate. Just a little.

But it went on. 43. 45.

47. It was still on the ground. 50.

And I was saying, Oh Lord, how long is this runway? 50. 55. 58.

60. 61. And on the 62nd second, it went up.

Up. Up. Up.

Until it got to 30,000 feet. And I said, Oh, thank the Lord for that. But just a few moments later, the pilot, captain, came along with a voice on the intercom.

He was desperately English. And he said, Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. He said, I'm afraid I have bad news for you.

I have lost an engine. My first instinct was to suggest that I might jump out and find it for him, but I realized that wouldn't be any good. He was simply telling me that he'd lost the power.

And he said, I'm very sorry, but we could go on with three. But he said, I think the only alternative is, as we will not have another stop for each Nairobi, would be to turn back and get another engine. So, uh, we were back in Nairobi, and turned him in.

John was there, and turned him in. Now listen. This is it.

This is exciting. This thrills me down to my back teeth. I still have them.

Look, you know, that plane, how heavy was it? 500,000 pounds. Swat away. It went along that runway, held down, and mastered by the law of gravity.

A law which made it impossible for it to ride. But when it reached 145 knots, the pilot pulled a stick. That's very amateurish language, but that's what he does.

And turns the nose up in the air. And as that nose is turned up in the air, suddenly, suddenly, another law begins to operate. And that airplane is mastered by a law of aerodynamics, which lifts it up above the

clouds, and above all the weight of the law of gravity, and enables it to fly at 35,000 feet.

Have you got me? You know, it ought to make me hit the roof. It's sheer thrill, doesn't it? The law of the spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin. Conquest in the race, looking unto Jesus, and the moment I trust him, I tell you, I tell you, something happens.

My life is under a new law. That plane just overcame the law of gravity by the sheer thrust of three jet engines inside it. The law of gravity didn't cease to operate.

If we'd had one other engine go, we'd have found that. We didn't. The law of gravity was still there, but it was under the control of a new law.

Thank the Lord. When my life is looking unto Jesus, and I'm under the control of the law of the Holy Spirit, he sets me free, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our days. Isn't that great? Well, that's it.

The Lord bless you. You're going to get in the race. Say, by the way, just a sec.

Hold it. Hold it. How are you spectators getting on? They forgot about you.

What about you folks sitting on the sidelines? What about you folks hopping around wishing the thing was over and waiting, oh, you know, they wait until the week's ended. What about you, you folks, who just want to get out of it all, rebellious, clear out, want to be out of this? I won't toe the line. I won't conform.

Just like those folks in that church up in California. Ah, I want you not only to get, I want you to get hooked on Jesus, turned unto Christ, and find in Him the sheer thrill, the reality, not the religion, not the show, not the performance, not that, but the reality of the indwelling Christ who sets me free. You can find Him today, and you'll make this discovery, and you'll take this through your life with you.

You're only free when you're not free to be free of Him. You can work that out in your mind. You're only free when you're not free to be free of Him.

Let's pray.

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