

Representing Christ

by Bill McLeod

We are called to represent Christ with our lives, being a living epistle of Jesus Christ to the world, and the goal of our instruction is to produce men and women who are filled with the love of God.

Duration: 53:38

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 14:26, John 17:26, Colossians 3:16, 1 Timothy 1:19, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Witness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of Christians being rooted and grounded in the word of God. He shares a story about a family tragedy and highlights the need for Christians to be strong and steadfast in their faith. The speaker also mentions a man named John who had multiple encounters with God and experienced transformation in his life. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the goal of Christian instruction is to cultivate love in believers, just as Jesus desired for his disciples.

Transcript

Years ago, I heard a pastor say, I was a very young Christian at the time, and he said, the word Christian means little Christ. I thought, hey, that's neat. That's really neat, little Christ.

It says the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Read about that in Acts. And so we don't know how this happened, maybe because they were like Christ.

It must have been something along those lines. Little Christ. Well, I smoked a lot when I was younger, and I smoked pipes, and cigars, and cigarettes, and enjoyed it.

And my mother used to really bawl me out, you know. And I'd say, show me in the Bible. And she couldn't.

So I went on, you know. I remember one time smoking cigarette ashes dropping on the page of the Bible. Just blew them off, you know.

Kept on going. My mother would give me a joy, you know. And then after this happened, that is when I heard the guy say this.

I was sitting there smoking, and just it hit me like a thunderbolt. I'm a little Christ, and I'm smoking. What am I doing this for? Never touched tobacco again.

It was all over, just like that. Nobody talked me into it. It's just the Spirit of God, you know.

And so he does that. So we are a little Christ. And we need to remember that people don't read our Bible.

They read us, right? They don't read our Bible. But they do read us. They watch us.

And like Paul said, we are made, the Greek word there is theatron, which means theater. We are made a theater to the world, to angels, and to men. And whether we like it or not, we're being watched day and night.

Not only by people in this world, but by demons and angels, good angels, and by God Himself, of course. And so, if we're a little Christ, let's be a little Christ to the glory of God. Well, the Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul said, for as much as you are manifestly declared to be, the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Now he said they were manifestly declared to be epistles of Christ. Well, didn't the church of Corinth have a lot of problems? Yes, it did. Well, how could he say this? They were manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ.

I'm sure it means that most of the church was right. There were some people in the church that were not right. And that's true, I suppose, any period in the church's history.

Epistles of Christ. And we are that. We're supposed to be that.

We may not like the idea that we're on stage as Christian believers, but we are. It's God's way of getting the gospel around. And God is looking for people, remember, the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him.

God is looking for people that He can pour His Spirit through. Did you ever hear the story of Batai? There's a buffer state between China and India called Nepha. No missionaries were ever allowed in there.

It may be different now, but years ago, no mission has ever been in there. There's a lot of missionaries out of Sam in India, Baptists and others, and they were trying to get into Nepha. And they were not able, so they asked God to send someone out.

Then a hospital of tests were, and one day a young man showed up named Batai from Nepha, very sick. They nursed him to health. Then he found out they had a Bible college, and he wanted to go to Bible college, but he couldn't read or write.

So they let him go for three weeks, and then they gave him a diploma. And the diploma was tied to a little ribbon. All it said was, Batai has done his best.

And he's gone. Six months later, he comes back out, and he says, how do you start churches? I said, why are you asking? Oh, hundreds have been saved. What? Oh, I've been preaching everywhere.

Hundreds have been saved. He said, they're beating at my door day and night, wanting to be saved. So they showed him what to do, and he went back in again.

And sometimes, you know, those mountain streams in the north, they're kind of cold, and sometimes they have a fire burning while they're baptizing. And he baptized sometimes sixty, eight or a hundred people at one time, you know. And he'd flake out, and deacons would catch him, drag him out of the river, stick him beside the fire, warm him up, and stick him back in again, you know.

He couldn't read or write, but he had a heart that was right, and God used him. And God was looking for people like that. You don't have to have a big education.

You have to have a big heart, you know. Living epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all man. They're reading you.

They're reading me. They're watching us. And you can't get away from it, no matter what you do.

Some people try to hide it, and they're never happy. They're always unhappy when they try to hide it. I have a friend back home named John Sparks.

One or two of you may know who he is. John was a mink rancher and a Christian, and he loved to argue predestination. Nothing pleased him better than to argue on election and predestination.

He never ever won a soul to Christ, never even tried. Didn't know he's responsible to do that. But one day on the mink ranch, and I've seen that lantern.

There was an old lantern hung on a log in one of the buildings there. It had been there for years. It was rusty, and the lamp was black.

It had never been cleaned, and there was cobwebs all over it. And he was walking by it, and the that's you. And he just stopped.

That's me. What does he mean, you know? What do you mean, Lord? You don't have any light? You aren't helping anybody? You're dead. Just then we had meetings in Winnipeg, and John attended.

People, he came forward five times to meet with God. When I saw him coming that fifth time, I thought, oh no, not again. What's going on here? But he said, you know, every time I went forward, he dealt with a certain area of my life.

There was so much rock in my life, and God couldn't do it all at once. He phoned me one night, and he said, Brother Bill, I'm lying here in pieces on the floor. Can God put me together again? I said, well, if he took you apart, he can put you together, sure.

And after the fifth trip to the altar, the next night during the sharing time, he came running up those stairs to the platform, a shining face, and he told us what had happened. He said, I'm free. I'm free.

I'm free. And he started soul winning. The church he attends, several years ago, they needed a pastor.

They asked me to take on for a while so they could find a pastor, which I did. And so I asked John to take me around to meet the people, and I'd be a home saver. How did you find Christ? And they pointed to John, you know.

How did you find the Lord? Well, John, he led me to Christ, you know. The church hired him as a full-time director of evangelism. You couldn't get him into an argument, an election, a predestination if you tried.

That's all gone, you know. He's a real saint of God. But he had to be knocked down and torn apart, and sometimes it's hard because we're tough, you know.

But I remember one gal who argued with God and did her own thing, and she said, I was a very proud, stubborn person, but I discovered that God was more stubborn than I was. And so he is, of course. Okay.

You know, we're told in Ephesians that God gave gifts to men, and then he gave gifted men to the church, and he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints and to the work of the ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Now it says over in 2 Corinthians 10, but they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. If you're not wise, you're a fool, you know.

So you're not to measure yourself by some other Christian. Billy Sonny said sometimes Christians, when they're backslidden and they want to stay that way, they find some Christians who's more backslidden than they are, and they lay this Christian on the floor, and they lay alongside him, and then they holler, hey, look, I'm taller than he is. But it's the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

That's what it's all about. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are there to perfect the saints, to bring the saints to this position, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. So if you're comparing yourself to someone else, you better quit, because God says you're just not wise.

You're not to do that. Okay. We need that help sometimes, I'm sure.

What is the goal of our instruction? 1 Timothy 1.5 says, the end of the commandment, or as one translation says, the goal of our instruction is love, rising out of a pure heart, and out of a good conscience, and out of a genuine faith, from which some, having swerved or not aiming at, have turned aside unto vain jangling, or unto a wilderness of words. And some Christians, it's all talk. And it's never about God, you know.

They just talk. I don't know if they like to hear the sound of their voice or what it is, but some of them are talking machines. They never say anything you can get anything out of, but it does, you know, fill in the silent lapses of time that sometimes occur between people.

Turned aside unto endless talk. And in the same chapter, 1 Timothy 1, it says, verse 19, holding faith in a good conscience, which some, having put away concerning faith, have run their ship on the rocks, one translation. And we keep meeting Christians who've run their ship on the rocks.

They're shipwrecked, and sometimes they never change. They never get out of it. They just stay.

They don't learn, mainly because they don't know the Bible well enough. You know, I've got over 3,000 books in my library, but I trade them all for a good copy of the Bible. And, you know, Christians today were book-wise and Bible-ignorant.

And I sometimes say too much about that, so, if I do today. Some missionaries in Mexico are telling us they have perennial revival in their churches because the people knew their Bible so well. And once a month, they had a cleanup session.

The missionaries would deal with the business, and they'd go to the back and sit and wait. And somebody would get up and walk over. Some lady would walk over to another lady and say, you was just a big gossip.

Oh, then they get it settled between them, you know, in front of the congregation. Make it right if it's true. And someone might get up and say, you was an adulterer.

This would go on, you know, until the whole place was cleaned up once a month. They did that because, you know, what the Bible says, it says, exhort one another daily, well, it's called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Have you ever exhorted another Christian? Most Christians never done that.

We preachers do it, but then sometimes we do it professionally, but not in other cases where it ought to be done. Exhort one another daily. And you've never done that? Hey, wait a minute, how come? If you don't, people will be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin and the church will get cold.

This kind of ministry is needed. Exhort, I say again, one another, Hebrews chapter 3. Exhort one another daily. And it says it again in Hebrews chapter 10.

Now ask the congregation, 400 people, how many have exhorted another Christian in the last month? Another hand goes up, you know. In the last six months, you might get a couple of hands, you know. Why is that? We just don't take the Bible seriously.

And people are not writing books about things like exhorting one another daily. So we don't get it. Do you know among Muslims, by the time a Muslim is 10 years old, he knows the whole Quran off by heart.

I've read the Quran, made notes on it. I don't know how they can do it. But they can do that.

But the average Christian, if you offered him \$10,000, he could not accurately quote 100 verses from the Bible. I'm talking about the average Christian. We know it so poorly.

We love it, but we ignore it. And we need to do something about that. The goal of our instruction is love, rising out of... I used to say to myself, boy, you know, it would be possible to be projected back in time and just show up at one of those sessions of Jesus with the Twelve, just to sit in and listen.

And then in John 17, the Lord said, well, you can do that. Here's what it said. Christ said, and I have declared unto them, the Twelve, your name, and will declare that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

So the goal of his instruction to the Twelve was to produce 12 men who were filled with the love of God. And Paul is picking up, and it's an echo. The goal of our instruction is love, rising out of a pure heart, and out of a good conscience, and out of a genuine faith.

A lady once dragged her husband down the aisle, and he was an unwilling captive, and I could see that. And she got him to the front, and she says to me, talk to him, he's backslidden. So I began talking to him.

He said, preacher, look, he said, I appreciate your kindness, but he said, I'm only here to keep her from tearing me apart. He said, if I hadn't come when we got home, she'd spend a couple hours just tearing me apart. And he said, I just want to keep peace, you know, I'm not ready for this.

So I turned to her, and I said, are you a Christian? Of course I'm a Christian. Are you filled with the Spirit? Of course I'm filled with the Spirit. How do you know you're filled with the Spirit? I speak in tongues 30 minutes every day.

I said, I asked you how you knew you were filled with the Spirit. That doesn't tell me you're filled with the Spirit. It does so, she said.

I said, it does not. And finally, she said, well, I have a couple of problems. The husband was going like this, you know.

I said, tell me about your little problems. Well, she said, I have a terrible temper, and she said, sometimes I lose my temper, and I even curse sometimes when I lose my temper. Oh, I said, what other little problems do you have? And she said, I'm insanely jealous of my husband.

And he was shaking his head, yeah. And I said, you're not really filled with the Spirit. You're full of self.

Why don't you do something about it? She dropped on her knees and really wept her way through to God, you know. I don't know what happened to him. Nothing happened to him at that moment, you know.

I was talking to a Pentecostal preacher one time, and I said, I can prove that you're not a Pentecostal. We're good friends, you know. He said, you can't do that.

I said, yes, I can. From the Bible. So I said, when you speak in tongues, do you speak in tongues according to 1 Corinthians 14 or according to Acts chapter 2? And I knew what the answer would be.

He said, I speak in tongues according to 1 Corinthians 14. I said, then you're a Corinthian, not a Pentecostal. Because you see, in the day of Pentecost, they spoke in tongues that people could understand.

But in 1 Corinthians 14, that's not how it is. You speak in an unknown tongue, you speak not unto men, but unto God. But in Acts 2, they were speaking unto men.

So he wasn't a Pentecostal, he was a Corinthian. He got a big laugh out of that. He'd never heard this before.

Anyway, the goal of our instruction is love. Rooted and grounded in love, it says in Ephesians chapter 3, if you remember. And we as Christians are supposed to be that kind of person.

Blanche Johnson, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. Her husband was a doctor. And there's one or two of you here know the family.

And they were on holidays in Japan or in China. And they left their four children with her parents. And one day her parents took their children out for a walk near North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

And a drunk teenager ran into them. The grandma died instantly. The grandpa died the next day.

None of the kids were hurt. They were on the ditch side. They weren't hit.

Then they had an awful time finding the parents in China. They got them back. And one of my son-in-laws had the funeral.

I knew the family. I knew the grandpa well. He'd been in some of our meetings.

I remember him running to the altar one time. Anyway, when it was all over, Blanche, whose mother had been killed and who loved her mother dearly, found out where this teenager, he was in jail. And she went to see him.

She told him who she was. And she said, you killed my mom. And I miss my mom greatly.

But I just want you to know that I forgive you with all my heart. And I'd like to tell you how to become a Christian. And that teenager got on his knees and got saved that day.

Now, how could she do that? Well, she could do that because she knew what 1 Timothy 1-5 said, what Ephesians 3 was saying, was supposed to be rooted and grounded in the love of God. So no matter what happens, love takes over. Be not overcome of evil, the Bible says, but overcome evil with good.

Often we get snowed under, you know, because of what happens, things people do or don't do and should do, or whatever. Or they criticize us, and we sort of give up. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.

Okay. Holding faith in a good conscience, the goal of God's instruction. Let's line up with God's purposes, then.

Are you filled with the love of God? Are you having a hard time in your home situation, maybe? Or in your church situation? You don't know how to handle it? There's only one way to handle life, and that's by being filled with the love of God. Christ, when he was reviled, did not revile again. When he suffered, he didn't threaten.

But he committed himself, he committed his cause to God, and we have to do the same. And be patient and walk with God. Colossians 3, there's a verse that says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom.

I don't like those Bibles that have the sayings of Christ in green or red. I never recommend them, I don't like them. Maybe you have one, don't feel badly what I'm saying, but I'll tell you why I don't like them.

Because it's sort of saying that, it's indicating that the only things Christ said are what's in green or in red. And that's not true. It says in 1 Peter chapter 1 that the Spirit of Jesus Christ was in all the Old Testament prophets, so when Moses spoke, Christ was speaking.

So when somebody says to you, you know, Jesus never said anything against homosexuality, you can correct him. He said it through the Old Testament prophets. The Spirit of Christ was in those Old Testament prophets.

When Moses wrote against homosexuality, that was Christ speaking to us. The word of Christ was Genesis to Revelation then. It's not even just the New Testament.

It's more than that. And we need to know it. We need to know it well.

Study to show yourself approved unto God. Not your husband or your wife or your kids or your parents or your pastor, but approved unto God. Is God happy with the time you spend with his word? That's the big question you see.

I remember speaking to a bunch of pastors, 40 pastors, set up at a very short notice, and they were having dinner and they said you have to speak while you're reading. It was a little different, but I managed okay. And afterwards a pastor came up and he said, you know Bill, he said two weeks ago, I threw my Bible on the floor.

I haven't read it since. I haven't prayed since. I really need help.

And he did need help. And it was, I think if I remember rightly, it was because of some problems in the church. He couldn't handle them.

He was just giving up on the whole thing, you know. Never give up because if you're giving up, you're giving up on God. You can't handle it? Great.

I know someone who can. God can. And people, he knows how to do it.

Psalm 37, 5. Commit your way, whatever your way is, good or bad, commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. One translation says, He shall do it.

We've seen it again and again and again. Preachers in trouble, maybe with their wife. One preacher friend of mine, he struggled for 11 years because his wife didn't think he should be in the ministry.

And I kept saying Psalm 37, 5, Psalm 37, 5. He never got it, you know. But finally he got it. And he committed his life to God, and three weeks later, I was there when it happened.

That gal, God just, He tore her apart. I mean, He broke her, absolutely broke her. Several years later, he said, Brother Bill, that was something only God could do.

He said, she goes so well with me now, you know. That really changed. Now, I think I mentioned before, did I? Maybe not, but a brother of mine, pastoring in Vancouver, and he had this Jehovah Witnesses congregation.

Did I mention that? Maybe not. Anyway, he came to me after a meeting and he said, How do you get a Jehovah Witness converter? All my kids and my wife are red hot JWs. And if I say something, they tell me I'm an agent of the devil.

I just get nowhere with them. What do you do? I said, Psalm 37, 5. What's that? So we went through it. He'd never seen that before.

So we knelt together, and he committed. And I said, Listen, when you commit your family to God, it may get worse. Don't panic.

Maybe it has to get worse before it gets better. But remember, you've given this problem to God now. You're not worrying about it anymore.

You're concerned, but you're believing. You're trusting now. Trust.

Always join Psalm 37, 5 with Proverbs 3, 5, and 6, you know, because the first one says, Commit and trust. The second one says, Commit with all or trust with all your heart and don't lean to your own understanding. Now, it doesn't normally happen this quickly, but he walked into his home that night after the meeting, and one of his kids came and said, Daddy, you know, I'd like to be a Christian like you are.

He about fell over in a day at St. He couldn't believe it, that God could work that quickly, you know. I heard a testimony down in Minneapolis. This lady gave her testimony one night in some meetings we were holding, and she told us how she had four sons.

Her husband died when her sons were small. She had to get a job, and she'd managed to get them all through school and all of this, and she said, but, you know, not one of them became a Christian, and so one night I had it out with God. They were all away from the home.

None of them saved, and I said, God, you failed. You took my husband from me, and I had to struggle and struggle, as you know how I struggle to make enough money to take care of them, and you didn't seem to care. She said, you failed, and she said, you know, that's when the action started, and God showed me that I'd never ever believed him to save her children, you know.

I'd squawked and hollered about it many, many times, but I'd never believed God for it, and she said he directed me to Psalm 37 5, and she said that night I committed my four sons and their wives to God for salvation, that was two years ago. She said they're all saved now, all eight of them, and she said the minute I did that, God began to work, but you see, when you make this kind of a commitment, dear people, you have to believe God. Thank God.

You keep thanking God. You don't stop praying. You start thanking God that he's got the problem.

He's got it now. You don't have it now. It's his problem, and he'll take care of it.

People, I've seen it happen within a day, within two days, within three days, three weeks, three months, four years. In my mother's case, see, I came from a broken home, and my parents didn't get along. They loved us for four kids, but they didn't love each other, and so they split when I was a kid, maybe eight years of age, and then we had to eat a lot of cabbage soup because my dad wasn't a cook, and we didn't know what went on.

There was a court case, and mother was gone, and dad had us, and so it was, you know, but in retrospect, looking back was all of God because my dad became a Christian when he was 75. My mother, one day my dad said, your mother's coming back, but you don't have to listen to her religious talk. I don't know what that meant.

She got saved, you see. Dad didn't like that, but he was glad to have her home because she was a good cook, you know. So, she told us later on what she did.

She got home, and the first thing she did, she said, I committed you four and dad to Christ for salvation, Psalm 37 5. And you know what happened? Nothing for 14 years. Nothing for 14 years. She said, one day the devil climbed on her back.

Said, see, it doesn't work. Discommitting self and trusting God, that doesn't work. You see, Don was 23, my older brother.

I was 20, and my next brother, they were below me, and none of us were saved. None of us showing any interest in things of God. She said, the devil almost got me that day, but not quite.

She said, I threw him off my back before the sun went down, and I said, I'm just going to keep on believing God. And one day, Don came home and said, Mom, I heard Dr. Schaffer at Elim Chapel, and I got saved.

Wow.

And then a couple years later, I was reading a book by the Reverend Clarence Larkin on the second coming of Christ. I didn't know anything about his second coming, hardly much about his first coming, but I read this booklet through. And at the end of the booklet, about 80 pages, it said, dear Reed, that was me.

Can you say you're ready for his coming? And my answer, of course, had to be no. If your answer is no, here's what to do. And I did it.

In the basement of my parents' home, Craig Street, 452 Craig Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, there's a two-by-four nail-to-the-floor joist. It was about eight inches from the floor of the basement floor, and I don't know what it was there for, but it was my altar. And I put both hands on that thing, and I cried to God and got saved.

I went up the stairs about 14 at a time to tell my brother and my mother what had happened. Now there was three of us in the home, see. And my brother, Bob, woke up one day.

He was sleeping with my brother, Don, and he was shaking so bad. Don woke, and my brother was afraid he was going to die and go to hell, and so Don led him to Christ. And then my youngest brother, Keith, when he and his wife, when they got married, they promised each other when they were alone that they would never, ever become Christians.

They shook hands, Robert. And he wound up a preacher. Yeah, I remember how that happened.

You know, we committed Keith to God, and one day his wife phoned and said, you better come and talk to your brother. He's got some trouble. So I went to see him, and he's sitting on the floor.

And I said, what's the trouble, Keith? And he said, I'm so low down, there's no way out but up. So she said, I'll take the kids so you can talk. So she took the kids away, and he got saved.

When she came back in, I started talking to her. It just wasn't the right time, you know. Boy, she lost her cool, and she was kicking the wall with her feet and beating on it with her fists and screaming, and it just wasn't the time.

But two years later, she found the Lord as her Savior. But I think of my dear mom. Fourteen years, and she hung in there.

And some of you have given up after a year, you know. Come on, now. He is faithful, the promise.

Faithful. Hang in there no matter what, no matter where your kids are. Believe God.

We need to do that. It's part of the Christian life. Okay, let the Word of Christ do unto you rich in all wisdom.

The kings of Israel were, according to Deuteronomy 17, they were supposed to write out a copy of the law of Moses. And I suppose that meant the first five books of the Bible, although sometimes the word law included all of the Old Testament. I don't think it meant that, but I do think it meant the law of Moses, which is almost as long as the New Testament is.

And they didn't have typewriters or computers. They were supposed to handwrite a copy of the law of God. Why? Because they're supposed to read in it day and night to keep their hearts from being lifted up above their brethren, it says.

And some other things are mentioned there in Deuteronomy chapter 17. You know, I read that years ago, and I was really challenged. And I thought, hey, I'm going to write my own copy of the New Testament.

And I did. It took me two years because I only did it when I was at home and I was on the road quite a bit. And so I didn't.

You know, I found something. It really helped me. Because when you write it out, you have to be careful how you write it word by word.

You get it right, you know. And it helps tremendously. It helps to remember it.

I also did Isaiah and Jeremiah and Proverbs and the Psalms. I haven't completed the Old Testament, and maybe someday I will. But I found it's such a help, dear people.

It's in the Bible, right? Aren't you a king and a priest? Yes, you are, the Bible says. So maybe you ought to do the same thing. It's a healthy, helpful exercise.

So, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, and all wisdom. I mentioned having over 3,000 books. When my eyes get tired reading the Bible, I read a book for a few minutes until my eyes get rested and then go back to the Bible again.

I try to study 12 chapters of the Bible every day. And not this Bible, but one I have with me. It's not here, but I have it with me.

But you know, I make my own cross-references. There are thousands of cross-references in your Bible to begin with. Make your own cross-references and see what happens.

I decided one time to go back and just count and see how many cross-references I'd made in this other Bible I had. And I'd made close to 16,000 cross-references of my own. I decided one day to just see.

Now, it worked out to about eight cross-references every time I studied 12 chapters of the Bible. One day it was 85. Now, it was very unusual.

But I just have the time of my life, you know, studying the Bible and doing this kind of thing. It's fun, and it's wonderful, and it's helpful. And the devil hates it.

And someone else loves it. The Lord, of course, you know. Doesn't it say, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly? Study to show yourself approved unto God.

A workman needs not to be ashamed. People have told me the reason they don't witness for Christ is because they don't know the Bible well enough. They might get asked a question they can't answer and be embarrassed, so they just don't do it.

That's not the way to handle it. If you don't know it well, get to know it well. Well, people tell me, but I can't remember.

Well, I couldn't remember either when I started off, you know. And then I came across that verse that says the Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance whatever I said to you. I thought, if he could do it, then he can do it today.

So I asked him to give me a good memory for the Bible, and he did. But I have a rotten memory for other things. One time I took my wife to the store.

She was about six months pregnant. Went to the store, and I was sitting in the car, and I had to go to Kenora, Ontario, and forgot about my wife in the store and drove to Kenora, Ontario. And she comes home with her arms loaded up with groceries, and I'm not there, you know.

And I got home several days later, and it was very frosted, the atmosphere. I said, what's up? She said, what's up? She said, you left me standing with my arms full of groceries. I had to get a taxi to get home.

Really? That's awful, isn't it? Well, let me tell you something never happened twice. But listen, no matter how bad your memory is, God can make it good. The Holy Spirit can do that for you.

That's why it's in the Bible. He will bring to your remembrance whatever I said. So believe him for that.

You'll be surprised at what happens when you do that. Above all else, we people as Christians need to know our Bibles well. We face a very cunning, and sly, and powerful, and knowledgeable enemy.

And there's all kinds of people out there. You remember that gal in the States, Madame O'Hara, I think her name, she was an atheist, and she liked debating preachers, and she was a very sharp-witted person, and all of that. But you know, one day she got completely floored.

You know how they did it? They brought a little Italian Christian woman who didn't know anything but the Bible, completely ignorant of everything else but the Bible. And she kept saying to this Madame O'Hara, you know, dearie, you ought to know Jesus. He's so wonderful.

Oh, he's so wonderful. He'll forgive all your sins. And then this gal tries to unload some big theological thing on her and didn't even register.

She had no idea what she was talking about. She just kept talking about how wonderful Jesus was, you know. She said it was the only time that Madame O'Hara didn't have anything to say.

Okay, dear people, I'm urging you, get into it. Get to know it. Make time for it.

Make time for it. And God will bless you as you do. Well, the Bible says, you are complete in Him, Colossians 2.10. You are complete.

The word complete means you are made full in Him, complete. There's a song written about that, complete in Christ. I don't know who wrote it, but it's a great thought.

Complete, made full in Christ. Colossians 3.11 says, Christ is all and in all. He is everything you'll ever need.

He is all and in all. And no matter what kind of situation you get yourself into, He can get you out. He can answer your problems and help you and bless you.

And He's waiting to do it. But you know, many times our praying is not praying. It's just complaining.

We're just hollering because we're angry things haven't turned out right, instead of humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God. That's something we need to do every day, dear people. There's no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.

You're not the only one going through the kind of problem you're going through. Don't ever think that. That's the devil's lie.

It's common. Man is born into trouble as the sparks fly upward. Man is born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble.

The Bible says that over in Joel, you know. So make up your mind to it. There'll be problems, trials, but God will be with us.

It says, it speaks about salvation, 1 Peter 1, and says, wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. So you're not always on the mountaintop. There are times when you're full of heaviness.

That's to be expected at times. That's what it says. That the trial of your faith be much more precious than of gold to parishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Wonderful to know that he's always, always with us. Well, the Bible says we're not to walk as other Gentiles walk. Make up your mind to that.

We're so afraid of being thought different. We don't want to be different because then people might think we're religious, queer, fanatic or something. The problem is not fanaticism, it's coldness.

That's the real problem today. You're not to walk as other Gentiles walk, okay? We're to walk circumspectly, it says, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. And that's just before it says be filled with the spirit.

To walk circumspectly really means looking all around, remembering you're being watched. Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, making the most of time to the glory of God. Okay, don't walk as others walk, do walk circumspectly.

Then the Bible says we're to walk in love in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 2. Walk in love as Christ also loved us. So it's a way of life. I remember a couple telling me one time they were having some relatives come unannounced, not unannounced but not uninvited.

They just invited themselves. They're going to come and stay a weekend with them and they didn't like these relatives and so they didn't know how they're going to handle this and so they decided they would practice smiling in front of the mirror. And so every day they were smiling at each other and smiling in the mirror getting ready for the advent of this couple they didn't like.

I mean that's stupid. You know a better word I don't. Walk in love.

Maybe God sent it for a purpose. You get your plans knocked awry. You know, before I knew better, when we're thinking about holidays, my wife and I would check the weather map, you know, what's it doing in Ontario? It's raining, we won't go east, we'll go west.

And if it's raining in the west, we'll go east. You know, I always had it figured I'd go to some place where the sun is shining, you know. After we knew what the truth was about walking with God, we'd say, Lord, where do you want us to go? And the first time we did this to us, we wanted to go to Kamloops, we had a daughter living there with seven kids.

And you know, when you're in the house, they're out pulling your nose and your ears at three o'clock in the morning, Grandpa, Grandpa, get up, you know, this kind of stuff. See somebody else going like this? I just want to go there. Okay, God will go.

So we went. Then what happened? We had an afterglow one night. And so people met with God.

And then it got bigger and bigger. We'd have missed all that if we'd have gone to Ontario, you know. We had a wonderful time.

And then my brother in Penticton phone wanted me to come down there. I went down there and had some afterglows in his house and had a wonderful time. One of the best holidays we ever had in all our life, you know.

So God, where do you want me to go? Ask that, pray that, and then go where he sends you, but expect there's going to be some blessing, you know. You have to ask people questions. Are you a Christian? Oh, you're a Christian.

Are you rejoicing in God? You're walking with the Lord? I've asked people that. And one guy, he stood there just bald and he said, I was just hoping somebody would ask me. And nobody had, you know.

And I happened to ask him. And then we prayed together and he met with God, you know. People, we're supposed to be kind of a doctor, spiritual doctor, you know, looking for people we can bless and help.

And it doesn't matter who you are. You can be a blessing if you'll trust God. He isn't looking for big, smart people.

I heard a man say one time, we made the major mistake of assuming that God is looking for clever people when he's really looking for clean people. So we have to learn to walk in love. And the Bible says, walk in the light.

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. Walking in love, that's your relationship with people.

Walking in the light is your relationship to the Word of God. And the more you know it, the happier you become if you walk in its light, if we walk in the light. And just think, we've got the light in Christ and his light in the Bible.

Nobody else is blessed the way we are. We've got exactly what's needed to have life properly. I remember hearing a nurse one time, who'd been nursing for many years, and she said, one of the things I notice is this, that Christians die well.

They die well. And non-Christians don't. Then the Bible says, walk in the Spirit, Galatians 5, 16.

That's my relationship with God. Walk in the Spirit, and you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

And these are contrary, the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would. In the same chapter, it says, if we live in the Spirit, let's also walk in the Spirit. What's the difference between living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit? You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you.

So, living in the Spirit is being born again. But you may be born again, but not walking in the Spirit. So if we live in the Spirit, let's also walk in the Spirit.

And there's a difference between the two. There's thousands of Christians living in the Spirit, and few walking in the Spirit. And the context is in verse 24, they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts.

There's a time in my life when I couldn't live without a two-week canoe trip every summer. That was everything to me, you know, a two-week canoe trip off in the wilderness, you know. When I became a Christian, I choose myself, I thought, well, you know, I'll be out in God's country, you know.

That's how I got around it. And then the Lord began to deal with me about that and some other things. It's not wrong to have a canoe trip.

It's a wonderful experience, by the way. And I really mean that. But it's not always the way God wants it to be.

And we need to find out what God has in mind for me when it comes to holidays. I mentioned that before. But just to let God order my life, not keep doing what I want to do, living for Jesus a life that is true, striving in all things to please him and all that I do.

That's the Christian life. Let me lose my life and find it, Lord, in thee. May all self be slain, my friends see only thee.

Though it cost me grief and pain, I shall find my life again. If I lose my life, I'll find it, Lord, in thee. And there's nothing, dear people, so sweet as losing your life in Christ and for Christ and walking in love and walking in light and walking in the Spirit of God.

And then your life becomes a blessing. You don't have to try. It just happens because you're in fellowship with God.

My wife and I were down in South America one time. You know, down in South America, they don't worry so much about getting from point A to point B on time. They know this another day, you know.

So we get to one place and the plane had already left. And there was about 30, 40 tourists, mostly Americans, and they were chewing out the agent there, giving him a real hard time. My wife and I just sat there and we were praising the Lord, you know.

We knew we'd have a place to stay that night. We weren't starving or anything, you know. And the guy walks up and he says, are you with this crowd here? I said, yeah, we're with that crowd.

Well, you weren't concerned. No, no, we're not concerned. Why should we be concerned? And so he wasn't a Christian.

We had a chance to let him know, you know, why we weren't concerned. It's all in the plan of God, you know. Every day, all things work together for good to them that love God.

Because we're called, it says, according to his purpose. So don't try and make God's plans for God. Try and find out his plans for you.

That's the way you people ought to be. The goal of our instruction, then, is love rising out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of a genuine faith from which some, having swerved, have turned aside onto empty talk, onto a wilderness of words. Let's not be that kind of person.

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. Swift to hear, slow to speak.

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