

Christian Life

by Billy Strachan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of behavior in a Christian life and lifestyle, and how it reflects our faith in Christ, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in sealing us and guiding us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Duration: 54:01

Scripture: Matthew 3:17, Romans 11:36 - 12:1, Hebrews 10:5-7, 1 Peter 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:4-5, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of allowing God to work through us. He uses the analogy of a jacket to illustrate how we should be empty vessels for God's power and presence. The speaker highlights that Jesus, as God in human form, demonstrated this behavior perfectly. He also references Romans 12, explaining that our Christian living should be centered around the understanding that everything we need comes from God and should be done for His glory. The speaker encourages believers not to conform to the ways of the world but to allow God to shape and fill them.

Transcript

And when you talk about Christian life and Christian lifestyle, it would be better to term the whole thing behavior, in learning to behave. I think it's mothers that use the phrase more than any, why don't you learn to behave yourself? And I think, personally speaking, if the Lord was to suddenly appear in the midst of us, one of the things he would tend to say to an awful lot of Christians is, when are you going to start behaving yourself? And all of the apostles and writers in the New Testament are agreed in that respect, in that the outcome of the enjoyment of the life of Christ within a person is that they will be a behaving person. They will have a life and lifestyle that speaks of the faith you claim you have.

Now, the kind of life and lifestyle that the Bible's talking about is one that's so down to the earth and practical that you could almost say that Christianity is like a pair of cowboy boots. People seem to concentrate in the fancy leather uppers. But when it comes to living and lifestyle, it's talking about the souls that the people don't see that hit the road, the practical outworking of this Christian life of Christ within you manifesting himself through you.

And he does it in behavior. And one never need ask oneself, am I spiritual? Nor do you require to go up and challenge other people as to whether or not they are spiritual. One of the greatest means of discerning the spiritual content of any believer is just to take your eyes out of the hymn book and your

eyes off them on a morning of praise and worship and laudation and just look at their Monday to Friday behavior.

In some cases, Saturday and Sunday as well, because everybody knows how to behave for one hour on Sunday morning and get away with it. But real behaving behavior behaves throughout the entire week. And Paul, for instance, he speaks of the principle in Romans 12.

Now these verses in Romans at the beginning of Romans 12 are common knowledge to most believers. But unfortunately, because a chapter and verse division, we very often alienate 12.1 from 11.36. And 11.36 is almost putting together the Lordship lessons of the Lordship of Christ that you looked at the last two weeks. For of him, Jesus Christ and through him, Jesus Christ and to him, Jesus Christ are all things to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. So how much does that leave you to do? And the answer is very little. In fact, nothing because of often and through him and to him is everything.

Everything you ever need in the way of Christian living is of him and through him and back to him. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, because of often through him and to him are all things by the mercies of God, the opposite of what you deserve, because that's what mercy is, that you present your body. In actual fact, that is exactly what is being requested, not your spirit, your body.

The spirit person is a person as a believer that's all bound up in the heart of God. His spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God, that's settled. And there's absolutely nothing that anyone can ever do to you that could ever reach the realm of you spiritually.

The spirit of God is sealed within you. Christ is sealed within you. The Holy Ghost is sealed within you.

The father is sealed within you. Now you don't feel that seal. The sealing of the spirit of God in your life is almost intangible.

It's like a flimsy little bit of wire, but it guarantees the security of the believer in the realm of the spirit. If you've ever gone down the motorway behind some of those massive trucks, you'll see some of them with the letters TIR on the back, which means transport international response. Now that was all designed to overcome the chaos of customs and excise in bringing wagons from a long distance.

In the past, before they had that agreement between nations, if you loaded a wagon of oranges in Israel, by the time they got up to the Lebanese border, they had Lebanese customs and excises, what you got in there, and you said, oranges, and he says, get them out and let's see. You had to open the wagon and unpack the lot, and he examined every crate and counted it up, and he packed them in, locked the wagon up and drove it up through Lebanon, and you went up towards Turkey. And when you got there, they said, what's in the wagon? And you said, oranges.

They said, well, get them out and prove it, that there's no guns in there, smuggling people, dope, drugs, anything. So you unpacked the whole wagon and repacked it. Now take that right across Europe, through Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Holland to the coast.

And by the time you got to Dover and the customs officer said, what's in there? He said, orange juice. Man, those things had been bashed about that much, there wasn't just pulp left. So they agreed on a wonderful system, and that is where the customs officer watches the wagon being loaded, checks the

manifest that that's all that's gone into the empty wagon, and when they shut it and put the locks on, he goes then, he goes forward with a thin bit of wire, almost like fuse wire, you could break it in your fingers.

But that's not the important thing. And he'll feed it through the lock and through the chain and gather the two ends together inside a little lead pellet, and with a special customs official pliers with a hallmark on it, he squeezes the lead pellets together around the wire and leaves his mark on it. Now there's the little flap that goes over it, and as they come to the border, they don't have to enter the wagon, he just goes around the back, lifts the flap, shines his torch, even if it's night time, shines his torch, just to see if the little bit of wire is still intact and hasn't been tampered.

I mean, the wire wouldn't stop anybody from going in, you could just open it, but it means the seal has been broken. Flimsy, but guaranteeing nothing's been tampered with and secure. Now the very spirit of God within you, Christ coming into your heart as you ask him in to be your personal saviour, at that moment you are sealed with the spirit of promise to the day of redemption.

It's like feeding a little bit of wire around the realm of your spirit life and sealing it with the spirit of God. And from there until you get into the presence of the Almighty, God just checks up that the wire's not broken. That area can't be tampered with, it's secure.

God's the one that does the sealing, the Holy Spirit's the seal, and the Holy Spirit is there within you, the one who's sealed within. So the realm of the spirit's never touched. And that's why I'm always amazed that people over-occupied in trying to prove the spiritual when the word declares it.

That you are a spiritual house, Christ does live in you by the Holy Spirit that's sealed in. But here it's not asking for the presentation of spirit activity, here it's asking for a body. Because it so happens that Jesus Christ wants to reproduce through you what he did at one time as God in a body on the earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

No man had ever seen God at any time. So how are they going to know what God behaves like and what God is like in his life and lifestyle as a person? So Jesus came into the world and he said in Hebrews 10, a body hast thou prepared me to do thy will oh God. Here's the body, you do what you like.

And the father says thank you at last I have someone in whom I am well pleased. Now maybe you'll understand what he was meaning when God cried at the baptism of Christ. This is my beloved son in whom, not with whom, but in whom I am well pleased.

At last I've got a body on the earth through whom I can behave. So everything he said wasn't him saying it, it was the father expressing it through Jesus. That's why he could constantly and confidently say to people the words that I speak are not mine.

It's the father speaking through me. When you see me open the eyes of the blind, it's not me opening the eyes of the blind for God, it's God the father happening to use my body as a means of opening the eyes of the blind. He's doing the works through me.

I can do nothing of myself. I've given him my body that God can live in me and through me. And Philip said to him show us the father and we'll be satisfied.

He says how long have you seen me and you haven't seen the father. Don't you know that whoever sees me behaving sees the father behaving because all I am is a suit of clothes for God to wear. God the father

in me is looking at people through my eyes, listening to people through my ears, speaking to people through my lips, going to people with my hands to help them, going to people with my feet to be near them, giving them the human compassion, touch, caring, love, everything they ever need.

Now that was Jesus confined to one body, God confined to one body on the earth, but he says look we'll never get this job done if I've got to be just God in one body in the earth. Imagine having bodies all over the earth in whom the same system can be reproduced. The behavior of the Lord manifests in the bodies of believers.

So that just as God clothed himself with the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus wants to clothe himself with you. But what he doesn't need is for you to behave for him, but to give him your body that he might behave through you by faith. And it produces a behavior that everybody that notices it says, that has to be God in that person, couldn't be them.

Humans don't live like that. You can't take the battering and the suffering, the kicking that that human being's getting down at the church and come through it just on a human level. That would have broken me.

This person, I don't know quite what it is, but there's something that person had and what they're observing is the behavior of God through a human body. Maintaining them, giving them as their days, so is their strength, so that they will fulfill his will. He says present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service for the only thing you can do.

It's all he's ever asked you to do because of him and through him and to him is everything, so he doesn't need your help, he just needs your body. And just as I wear a suit, the suit has life, but it's totally dependent upon me. If I take the jacket off and I just simply say, all right jacket, live, come on live, wiggle your arm about.

And even though beforehand it might have boasted, I've driven a car, down the motorway you know. Have you really? Yeah. Been all up and down England I have.

Really? Yeah. I've even been overseas, didn't you know that? Flown all over the world I have. Have you really? Yeah.

Well demonstrate some of this miraculous ability you've got. You find the jacket just sits there doing nothing. You get a jacket on, just move your arm.

Oh just a minute, hey here, here. I want you to watch this example. Move your arm.

Now you see how that man did that? Did you see that arm going up and down? That was a sleeve, see just like this. Got it? Now you do the same. Now come on, I'm showing you an example.

Try hard. The only thing that'll happen is the jacket will get frustrated. It's no use showing them an example.

You can't run around showing jackets examples of other jackets that are living, moving, have substance, have body in them. Because of themselves they can do nothing. The only reason his jacket arm is moving is because he is blending his life, body, substance and arm to the empty sleeve.

Now if I put my Clint Eastwood type of physique into this jacket here, you'll find that the jacket now takes on that body, that substance and it can now move and have movement and life. But it's only allowing me to fill it with my life. And if somehow or other we could see ourselves as empty suits that Christ wants to behave through, it would make such a tremendous difference.

He says, and be not conformed to this world, as another translation puts it, and don't let this world squeeze you into its own mold. You see, it's useless for me to give this jacket to some other person because they'll discover that we're not the same shape. It's made to fit me.

And it wouldn't really be at home in another person. It's custom built for me. And it's no use me running around wearing everybody else's suit or them wearing my suit and thinking that that will make them a good Christian.

No, that doesn't work. Be not conformed to this world. Don't let this world squeeze you into its suit, its own mold.

You are a unique person with God in you, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, by the renewing of your mind. Constantly teach yourself this new principle. It's not me going out to try to be good for God.

It is allowing God to be good in and through me. It's not me trying to go out and love the neighbors to say, God, am I becoming loving? But it's letting God love the neighbors through me. Because if you go out to love neighbors, you usually pick the neighbors you want to love.

But if God loves neighbors through you, he picks the ones you've hated. That usually makes a difference. Because even then you're just as surprised as they are that you achieved it.

But you'll know it's not me achieving it, it's God achieving it in and through me. And that makes such a tremendous difference. That you may approve what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Everybody's always looking for the will of God. Well, there it is. Hand over your body and say, now, Lord, would you mind having a good time behaving through me and flexing? Just imagine the effect you could have on your family, your community, if Jesus Christ was allowed the right of access to your body since he's in you to control it and behave himself through you.

And you see, that is actually how you praise God. Now, most people presume that praising God is standing in a meeting saying, hallelujah. They think that's praising God.

They say that to stand up and say, oh, bless your name. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Glory be to the Lord. That's praise. Yes, it may be verbal praise, but there's an actual behavioral praise that actually convinces the world you possess God.

In Peter's first epistle in the second chapter, he puts it this way. Having shown you in the first chapter that you possess Christ, laying aside all malice, he goes on to the inside of a life and all guile and hypocrisies, pretense, envies in all evil speakings as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. You also as lively stones, you're living stones, not bricks, but stones are built up a spiritual household, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices

acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

And Paul says the sacrifice is your body and acceptable thing. Verse nine, but you're a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people to what end that you should show forth or demonstrate the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now, please note that the ultimate outcome of being saved, having Christ in your heart by the Holy Spirit, being made a special person, a royal person, a holy person is in order, not that you might sit in your church and say, I'm spiritual, how about you? But that you might be used as a means of showing forth or being a means of communicating or demonstrating the praises of him who called you out of darkness to his light.

Now, how do you show forth praises in a practical Christian life and lifestyle day to day in your daily living? Well, he tells us in verse 11, dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from freshly lusts that war against your soul, against your mind, will and emotion. Do you know one of the things that will make it very evident that you have a Christian lifestyle that stems from Christ giving out his life in you to show forth the praises of him that called you out of darkness to light, and that is that you will have the capacity without struggle to abstain from the things of the earth that war against your own mind, will and emotion. It's very practical.

You don't blow up the bookshop because they sell a rotten book. You go in there and you say, Lord, how about you choosing the reading? See that hand, see these eyes, you're in me. Would you mind being my life and lifestyle with regard to my reading material? And you know perfectly well where the magazines are that you used to look at.

You know, in every shop that you can go in and look at the stamp magazine, knowing they're just up there, but you're making sure nobody's around before you have a wee look up, you know, and you know they're there. But this time it's no struggle because you have a Lord that you've heard about the last two weeks and you allow him to be master of your choice and say, would you mind using my hand to choose a book? And I've never known the Lord yet to choose a rotten book. His hand always goes out and picks up Donald Duck, Tom and Jerry, some wholesome story.

It never goes straight to the junk, straight to the dirt because Christ never reads dirty books, only clean stuff. You don't shut the shops. You just simply allow his life to control you and he always chooses a good book.

When you go to a movie or turn on your television, there's no problem there. You don't have to start praying, blow up the studio, kill the actors with bubonic plague, oh let the curse of the black plague fall on them for that rotten program. No, you just simply say, Lord, would you take care through my body of this issue? And he says, yes, there's a switch down there that says off and he uses your hand.

You see, everybody wants the big miracle to blow up the studio. He says, no, I just want the right to use the same fingers just to switch it off or change the channel too, to turn to another program and if none of them are good, switch it off, go read a book. There's other things you can always do.

You could always even let me use your body to go and see a lonely person instead of polluting your mind with that stuff. Abstain. You have the power to.

Christians can actually say no. They can actually say, I discovered after 50 years that I could say no to sugar. Do you know it took me 50 years to do it? But it's just this last year while I was in Norway, up in the

mountains, mountaineering and speaking to a group of students in the mountains that the first day I was there, I said, what's this? They said, coffee.

I said, where's the sugar? They said, what's that? And I thought, oh, oh, I'll never survive till tea time. But do you know, I came down out the mountains a week later, a lot fitter. And do you know, I got home and I just never touched it again.

And I sit in my office and I say, isn't it remarkable that after 50, you can actually still say no sugar, thank you. Something you haven't done for 50 years. And I praise God for the capacity and the ability still to change my mind at this age, instead of wallowing in the good old pity party that says, oh, well, I'm too set in my ways.

At my stage in life, you couldn't alter, you couldn't change now. Oh yes, you can. All the way to heaven you can.

So not only do you show forth the praises of him that called you out of darkness to marvelous light and demonstrate his power in life and lifestyle in the community by abstaining from all the rot that destroys you physically, mentally, emotionally. But you'll notice here in verse 12, it says having your behavior honest amongst the pagans. Now that's a great place to show forth the praises of Christ amongst pagans.

Imagine being honest among the pagans. I mean, it'd be great if Christians could be honest amongst Christians for a start. I mean, that's always a good place to start is being honest amongst Christians.

But I find there's so much dishonesty amongst Christians that it's no surprise to me that we can't start amongst the pagans to be honest. But I'll tell you something, honesty amongst pagans is really appreciated. And they'll even test you as a Christian to see if you are honest.

And if they find out that your test that they gave you to find out if you were honest backfired and you proved you were dishonest, they'll never listen to your preaching, your testimony or read your tracts. And I've had it tested. I've had people actually put me to the test to see.

I can remember on one occasion being given a job to do and I did it rather badly as a projectionist and me taking care of a film. And the one thing you never do is misrepair a film so that it breaks in the middle of the show. That is the unpardonable sin of cinema projection is that the movie should break the illusion in the middle by a white screen in an oops, pardon, wait till we rethread it.

The public hate that, especially the pain for it. And I had prepared that film and there was a weak joint at one of the parts of the film and in the afternoon while I was showing it, it broke. I quickly rethreaded and got it going.

And as soon as the show was finished, I remember clearing out and clearing off down the street because I knew that in the in-between performance, the chief projectionist would arrive. And I wanted to be able to walk in and pretend that I hadn't even noticed. And I marched in that night and came up to the projection booth and they said, did you hear there was a break this afternoon? Now I could easily have said, well, I wasn't here chief, it must have been one of the other guys and just lied my way out of it.

And I said to him, yes, I did. I made the break. I forgot to examine that joint the last time I rewound it.

And it was my carelessness. To my surprise, instead of firing me, he said that's okay. And later he told me he'd already been speaking to the doorman who had already told him who was on duty.

And he already knew I had been in and he deliberately asked me to see if I would lie my way out of the mistake to save my neck or whether I'd be honest. And when I decided to be honest, he ended up saying, you keep your job. It's still yours.

And thanks for being honest. And I'll tell you something, non-Christians appreciate honesty. They appreciate it.

I've even had honesty tested by Christians, an accidental amount turning up in your wage packet. And the easiest thing would have to conclude that, Hey, I must have got a rise, but I didn't. I went straight through to the treasurer and said, do you make a mistake in my wages this week? Why? There's extra money in there.

Was there a rise? No, there wasn't. Sorry. It was a mistake and took it out.

That happened two weeks running, two weeks running. I took it back. And then the third week I discovered I was being entrusted with the accounts.

I was being tested to see if I would be an honest Christian. Because it's one thing to stand in a meeting and sing praises and play a guitar and have a great time. But are you going to be honest? And you see, when Jesus Christ is in control of a life, you don't have to listen to the gift of tongues.

You don't have to listen to people running around yelling and shouting. Just examine their honesty. And if you find there is an appreciation of the pagans and the community of a Christian, because of the Christian's honesty and reputation for being honest, that is showing forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness to light.

Because there's so few people that are honest, that when they meet an honest person, they really appreciate it. That whereas they speak evil against you as if evildoers, they might criticize you. They won't want to lose face in front of you, but they may buy your good works which they shall behold.

Oh, but father, I was living a good life in front of the neighbor, but they never noticed. No, they're not going to tell you. You don't think for a minute any non-Christian that you're showing forth the praises of Jesus to by your honest and good behavior in life is going to turn around and tell you that you're communicating, you're getting through.

No, they won't. But they'll go home at night and cry themselves to sleep because your life and lifestyle has spoken to them of a different quality of living. And they'll see it.

They're not going to let you win. They'll even do their best to pull you down. Even as a very young Christian, sitting in my room in the air force, reading my Bible for the first time, and the door would open, and then would walk a bunch of wags, and they'd sit down, and they'd put the whiskey bottle in front of me.

Now, if it'd been any whiskey, it wouldn't have mattered, but it was vat 69. Oh, it was like a door to a treasure room. The corksneiff would have been enough, and they would open it, and a clean glass, and they'd let me hear it going in.

Oh, you know, you could just, oh, you could almost taste it shutting your eyes. And they'd sit it in front of me and shove it across to me, fold their arms and look at me, and say, go on, have it on us. We are paying, and that's music to a Scotsman.

You know, and they would do it night after night, week after week, when I first got converted, to try to get me to take a drink again. And I just used to always say, excuse me while I check it up with my Lord. Lord, shall I have this or shall I not? And every time I opened my eyes after a prayer like that, they'd gone.

So'd the corks, so'd the glass, so'd the bottle. But you know, they never gave up. They tried everything every day to see if they could trap you.

But the amazing thing is, the minute they were in trouble, did you know they never went to see the chaplain? They came to see the Christian. They'd knock on your door and say, I'm having problems, my granny's not well, do you think you could say a wee prayer for me? And I'd say, why me? Why come to the Christians to do that? Well, I don't know about you, but no matter what we do to you, even if it's rotten, you never give in. You still stick to your faith.

We've never broken you. And they appreciate that. And they sense that you've got something there that they don't have.

They see it in your behavior, and whenever trouble hits their door, they come for the Christian, even if it's just to get you to listen, because that's the day they're getting a visit of God. Did you ever realize that that's their day of visitation, God is visiting them? If every time you people realized that when you do a house-to-house visitation for the church, and somebody in the community opens the door, and you say you represent St. John's, you know, come in and speak to you for a minute or two, and they say yes, you know, in a minute you cross that threshold, God is visiting that home. He just happens to be using your suit and your body, happens to be using your dress, your face, your kindness.

And they are aware of the fact this person's different. They're being visited by God. And you'll notice in verse 13, another way of demonstrating a good Christian life and lifestyle, and that you're under the control of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, is you'll submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it's to the King of Supreme, or to governors, or unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

You'll actually obey local law. How are you getting on with the local law? Do people realize, well that's a Christian down at St. John's. Why? They always obey the local law.

They don't circumvent their taxes. They don't cheat the government. They're always at the right place at the right time to vote.

They're taking an active part in community affairs. And whatever the law is, they submit to it. Now I usually find Christians grouting about the laws these governments pass.

The funny thing is I never find the Christians galloping down to offer to go into politics to sit in the government and bring in other kind of laws. And personally, if you won't go down there and become a member of parliament, quit grouting. If you don't like the laws they're passing, go become a parliamentarian and get in there and bring in your vote, bring in your voice, bring in your Christian opinion.

They do start the government with prayers every morning. It would be nice if a Christian did it, instead of it being tradition. Oh yes, submit.

Giving in, I once took a whole bunch of kids to Germany. I couldn't believe it in the way back. They'd listen to me preaching for 14 days on Christian life and lifestyle.

And I'm standing on the deck of the boat, looking at the up and coming White Cliffs of Dover, and suddenly became conscious of some of them talking along the rail as the ship neared the coast. And I couldn't believe the conversation. Well, I've stuffed it down the stocking.

Have you really? Yeah, I don't think he'll ever look there. And you know, I was listening to Christians discussing and planning with each other how to get things through the customs without paying duty. And I looked at them and I thought, yeah, and that was the group that sang the loudest.

It's always the same. Always the same. And you know, people would know that and see that.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing, you may shut up the ignorance of foolish men. Do you know how to shut up the critics of Christianity and flinging? By doing good. Do you know there is no answer for good behavior? There's no criticism for good behavior.

Nobody yet has ever thought of bringing in a law to stop these people that are being good down our street. Everybody, even if they never say thank you, appreciates a Christian life and lifestyle in a street that's always good. As free, but not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness.

Yes, at liberty in Christ to do what? To serve. At liberty to serve. Even Paul agreed with that in Galatians.

Use not your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness. Use it to serve one another. You're actually free in Christ to let him as Lord take a control of your body so that your daily Christian life and lifestyle is occupied with other people serving other people.

Yeah, but what am I going to get out of it? Nothing. Oh, I was in this Christian bit for something. I thought I was going to get something.

What do you get? You don't get anything you give. It's a great obsession. Giving.

Honor all men. You mean not just the pastor? Not all of them? Even that neighbor? Have you seen the neighbor I've got? Boy, if he puts that stereo on just once more tonight and the floorboards move and my bed goes across the floor again, I'm going to be knicked out. I'll honor him alright.

I'll honor him alright. I'll crown him. Yes.

Isn't it amazing? Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Yes.

Honor the king. Fear God. Servants.

And here's a tough one. Be subject to your masters with all due respect. Honor your bosses.

Not only the good and gentle, but the awkward beggars. That's a tough one. Do you know how to manifest the praises of him that calls you out of darkness to his marvelous light? Honor an awkward boss.

Honor an awkward boss. That is really putting it on the line. You see, this is where you've got to come to the conclusion, Lord, you're going to have to do that for me.

I could gladly wring his neck. It'll have to be off him and through him and to him are all things because I couldn't. And he says, well, I could.

I could. There was one last that wanted more than anything in one work to go to the last night of a Billy Graham crusade and she had an awkward boss and the girls in the office knew that it was a night off and she was planning to bring in her clothes, tidy up and have a wee nibble to eat in the kitchen and in the office and then hightail to get to the last meeting and suddenly at the last minute that afternoon, he opened his office door and said, you come in here and bring your pad and pencil. And you know, she got up and looked at the clock and went in and he sat there and he dictated letters that weren't even important.

They could have waited a month and he just kept at it and at it and at it. Never even looked at her and she kept taking it down and he looked at the clock and he made sure he dictated till it was impossible for her to get to the rally. And then he stopped and said, that'll be all.

And she went out, she went to the washroom and she had a good cry. Thoroughly disappointed. And she went back to her desk and started typing.

A minute or two later, his office door opened and he said, could you come back in? And she went in. He says, sit down. She sat down.

He says, you wanted to go and hear Billy Graham tonight, didn't you? She says, yes, I would have liked to have done that. He says, why didn't you complain when I called you in to do letters? Especially when you saw that what I was doing was unimportant. She says, you are my boss and it's my duty as a Christian to obey my boss.

He says, even if you're awkward like me? She says, even if you're awkward like you. He says, well, do you know what I want you to do tonight? She says, what's that? He says, would you mind telling me about your savior? And she looked down and said, pardon? He says, I've been watching you for months. I've been deliberately being awkward to you because I wanted to see if it was real.

I wanted to see what you're made of. And he says, you know something? You're the most real person I've ever come across. And I think if anybody's ever earned the right to preach to me, you have.

Now you have my undivided attention. Go ahead. And she talked to her boss that night about Jesus Christ and how to come to know him as his personal savior.

I'd love to make it romantic and say, and he fell to his knees and became a Christian, but I don't even know the outcome. That's not the issue. Here was a simple Christian girl that could have had nothing but absolute hatred and bitterness for that man.

But she was yielded to a Lord, a living sacrifice to show forth the praises of him in her daily lifestyle, to the extent that she would be respectful and obedient, even to an awkward boss. And notice what it says in verse 19, for this is thankworthy, thankworthy. Do you want to do something that's really thankworthy? For this is thankworthy of a man for conscience toward God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory is it if when you're punished for the mistakes you make, you take that patiently? Well, anybody would. You'd say I deserve it. But if when you do good and you suffer for that and take it patiently, did you know that this is acceptable to God? For even here unto where ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in his steps.

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously, who his own self bear our sins and his own body on the tree that we being dead to sin should live unto the righteousness by whose stripes we are healed. And finishing where we began tonight in Romans 12, Paul confirms the same closing thought of a Christian life and lifestyle.

There is a behaviorism on the earth that shuts the mouths of ignorant people, is a visitation of God to them when you meet them and convinces them God is in you living his life through you. In verse 16 of Romans 12, be of the same mind one toward another, mind not the high things, but condescend to men of low estate and don't be wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Two entirely different apostles, but agreeing on the outcome of Christian life and lifestyle and behaviorism in the world. And if it be possible as much as life in you, live peaceably with all men.

Oh dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath. For it's written, vengeance is mine. I'll repay, said the Lord.

There's not one person going to smack you in your teeth, but I'll note it. And what they've sowed, they'll reap. Therefore, if your enemy hunger, feed him.

If he thirst, give him drink. For in so doing there shall heap coals of fire on his head. Don't be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

You know, I used to think, and with this I'll close, I used to think Christian living was doing right from wrong. And it was a way back in 1958 in America that I learned that text in its full import about behavior. I happened to be staying in a home where they invited me every evening to speak after dinner to the entire household of students and people who lived there.

And I was speaking the very first night about Jesus Christ's life being my life. And that I in myself don't have patience, but he's my patience. I don't have goodness, but he's my goodness.

I don't have self-control, but he is my self-control. And I laid my life on the line. I said it.

And when I finished, the girl who'd been serving the meals suddenly came forward and everybody sort of looked at her. She was earning her money to go through college by being a sort of maid in this house where people lived and lodged. And she said to me, excuse me, but can I ask you a question? I looked up at her and I said, certainly.

She said, do you really mean that? That Jesus Christ is your Christian life and lifestyle and controller of your behavior and he's your patience and your durability and your long-suffering and your goodness and self-control? And I said, yes. She said, that must be wonderful. And she picked up a jug of milk and she just poured it all over me.

Now, in those days I was living on a shoestring. I was living on scents, praying every scent in and unable to work. I was on a student visa and without soliciting, not even sending out prayer letters in my room, kneeling down, I had to look to the Lord for provision and I didn't have a lot of clothes.

And she just poured this milk all over my hair and all down my clothes. Well, I gritted my teeth and did the right evangelical thing and not the wrong evangelical thing. And I thought, I'll show her.

So I smiled and excused myself from the table, went upstairs and shut my bedroom door. And then I thrashed around in there with myself, got the clothes off and said the usual evangelical phraseology. Washed and got myself dried and I had to go and get the clothes clean.

And I borrowed other clothes from a guy that came up to see how I was getting on. And I came back down and sat at the table and she marched forward and she says, you did that quite well, didn't you? And I looked up and I says, it was the Lord. She says, oh, well, if you did it once, you can do it again.

And she poured water on me. Water. And that finished it that night.

I left and didn't come back down again. Do you know that, listen, listen, that was Monday. Do you know that Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, she did the same every night.

I would come into the dining room and as quick as the door opened, I was met with a deluge of water before I'd even sat at the table. Now I'll tell you by Saturday, I did not want to eat. And I remember kneeling at my bedside in my room saying, Lord, I've done everything right.

I haven't given into wrath. I haven't given into punching her, kick it for her. God, I've done everything right.

I haven't done wrong. I haven't been losing my temper. I've done all I can to display the Lord and my behavior in front of her.

And you know, he just broke through to me with those scriptures and made it plain to me, Billy, you're not safe to do right from wrong. You're safe to do what I would do in this situation. And you just haven't poured any coals of fire on their head by being good.

And you know, it even sounded ridiculous, but I got a bucket and I filled it with water and I marched into the dining room and she was standing there with a jug of water in her hand and everybody looked at my bucket and they looked at her water jug and they thought, well, that's justice. He's got about Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday in there. And I marched up to her and she was sweating.

And I said, Ruth, I want to apologize to you. I said, for some unknown reason, that's only known to yourself, you've seen fit to deluge me with either milk or water night after night. And I've been rude enough to make you supply your own water to throw at me.

And until you have come to a conclusion of this experimentation, that's only known to you while you're doing it, I'm sorry I've made you supply your own water and I brought you enough for tonight and for the next week. She sat down and cried. And I said to the others, could you leave us alone? And they left the room and I said, now, what is it? And she says, well, all my life as a Christian girl, I have struggled with sin and I've struggled to live the Christian life.

And every time I've gone to pastors, Sunday school teachers, I've gone to different big quote unquote speakers. They've all told me to try better, try harder next time, do better next time. If you had a better

prayer life, a better Bible reading life, a longer quiet time, it would make such a difference to your life.

And she says, I went, I listened to every new program people gave me, went out and tried it and it never worked. And last week I heard you talk for the first time. It's the first time in my life I ever heard somebody tell me that you didn't have to do the living or the trying, but present your body a sacrifice to Christ that he might live his goodness, self-control through you.

And I thought it sounds new. It's something I've never tried, but this time I'm going to test it first before I try it. And I just happened to be the lame duck in the middle.

Do you know that that girl is a missionary in India today and she's never come home? She even married an Indian, went to India and has stayed there as a missionary to Indians. And the whole turnaround in their life was when she had a visitation of God, because for once in my life, I did the ridiculous thing. I avenged not myself, but I rendered good instead of evil, but it was hard to do it.

It cost a lot of money cleaning clothes, but what a result. She's now a missionary. Hey, sometimes there's no other way to learn the lesson, but the hard way, but I wouldn't have missed it for all the tea in China.

And it's marvelous to see what God can do. And you can actually live a different kind of behavior in the world that will astound people and it will bring them to Christ far faster than a lot of meetings. Behavior.

Well, I'll stop there. And before we hand back, any questions on that tonight that you would like to ask me? Well, it's very plain from scripture. You can have all the knowledge.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13, yea, though I have all knowledge, all prophecy, all utterance, all the gifts of the spirit and have not a practical outworking manifestation in love one for another. He said, you're just nothing. It profits nothing.

And there are people who do come to places of worship and they're always taking in the theories. They're taking in the heavenly messages. They're able to repeat them.

They know them. They tell you, I've heard all this before. You're not telling me anything new, brother stack, and I've got it before.

But the one thing they've never done is go out and actually do it. And it's the doing of it all the way through the Bible. James agrees.

He that's a hearer, not a doer is a waste of time, deceives his own heart. And all of the apostles agree with that. But it's not enough to have a head knowledge.

There has to be the transmission into practice. And when that's done, people see the difference and it makes a difference. Any other thing back to you.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net