

Eternity and Time 03 the Church Age

by David Clifford

The Church Age is a time of grace, not law, in which God offers salvation to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ, and Christ is building his Church through the Holy Spirit and the believers who indwell him.

Duration: 52:45

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:37, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 1:12

Topics: "Church Age", "Christ And Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the different roles and identities of David in the Bible. David starts as a captain, solving the problem of his people's debts and transforming discontentment into contentment and peace. Later, he becomes a bridegroom, symbolizing the union between Christ and the church through his death and resurrection. The speaker also highlights the role of the church in bringing many sons to glory and glorifying Christ on earth. The sermon concludes with a brief analysis of the Acts of the Apostles, emphasizing the birth of the church, its expansion through persecution, and Peter's role in leading Gentiles into the church.

Transcript

Glad that the weather is improving somewhat. I was talking to my wife in England the other day and asked her to send a little bit of the English sunshine over, so it's been nice today. The prolonged absence of the sun one August in England prompted this letter from a certain man called Peter Chapman to the London newspaper, The Times.

He said, It may interest your readers to know that on the morning of August the 2nd, I saw a small area of blue sky which became visible for a few moments over the metropolitan tabernacle part of London known as the Elephant and Castle. Several of my acquaintances were witnesses to this phenomenon and I should be interested to know whether similar sightings were made in other parts of the metropolis. Now a few days later a certain Mr. P. H. H. Moore replied with a letter to The Times as follows, The small area of blue sky that Mr. Peter Chapman saw last Friday over London is known as English summer.

It is a curious meteorological phenomenon. There is however no cause for alarm as it rarely lasts for more than a few minutes. I'm glad to be in Florida in spite of a little cool weather.

I don't know about you, well I'm sure you are too. Well nice to be with you again this evening with God's word and a new chart on the church age, the present age in which we are living. And God willing tomorrow

evening we shall have another chart on the tribulation.

Of course this isn't to scale here, you appreciate that. Only seven years the tribulation and this age is probably about two thousand as far as we're able to judge. And of course the last chart on Friday evening will be the millennium which we know is exactly one thousand years.

May we read together from God's word in Ephesians chapter one. The end of verse 19 of Ephesians 1. God's mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come. And after all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church which is his body the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

And now chapter five of the same letter. Verse 25. Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word that he might present her to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies he that loveth his wife loveth himself for no man ever yet hated his own flesh but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church we are members of his body and of his flesh and of his bones for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined unto his wife they too shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church. The Lord bless to us his precious word. Now when the Lord Jesus Christ went away following his death and resurrection he led them out as far as Bethany and it was round about the Mount of Olives area that he ascended into heaven and when he went away he promised to return.

He made this promise specifically through his angel servants at that time and we're quite sure that he has not yet fulfilled his promise to return for the angel said this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven and he hasn't come in that manner yet. We believe his coming is still future his promise is for future fulfillment and he will keep his word. All the apostles promised that the Savior would return the angels promised he would return and he said so himself.

If I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also. General Douglas MacArthur as you well know when he was leaving the Philippines he waded waist deep into the Pacific Ocean and dramatically he went towards his boat leaving the islands and said to the onlooking Filipinos I shall return. Now they waited for years they waited under oppression they were reassured however from time to time by underground pamphlets leaflets and radios and so on and then eventually the five-star general kept his word.

Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it. Faithful is he that promised he will surely keep his word. And in these treacherous days in which we live do you listen did you listen to the president today? He hadn't got a good report he told us all it was a bad one.

They are bad days difficult days. Days of economic disaster. One of our lords in Britain told us a little while ago that Britain in 1975 is facing the greatest economic disaster it's ever known in its history.

These are dreadful days in which we live. And I'm not particularly a prophet of doom I'm not that way inclined. I'm an optimist at heart of course and every Christian should be because of the glorious never

failing promise of our Saviour.

But the men who know, the military strategists, the men of might, the economic wiseacres, the statesmen of the world, the people who really know are really afraid because of the kind of days that we are living in. And in the last days there shall be distressed nations with perplexity. Men's hearts failing them for fear.

But the Saviour said let not your hearts be perplexed. You needn't suffer with that. You believe in God, believe in me, stake it all upon my promises.

If I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself. Now there is enough theonuclear explosive material stockpiled in the world today to equal twelve one-ton bombs for every acre of land there is on earth according to Linus Pauling, one of your men not one of mine. And that's a dreadful thought and it would be dreadful for the child of God were he not looking forward with joyful anticipation for the coming of Christ to take him home.

Now when he went away he made the promise to return but sometime before he promised that he would send the Holy Spirit. Upon his return to glory he would send the Holy Spirit to his own. And thank God that promise has been fulfilled.

As a matter of fact when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost that was the sign that Christ had ascended on high as our great high priest. He said I will send him from the Father unto you. He promised the Holy Spirit would come and he said it's going to be a good thing that I go away so that he can come.

He was saying very straightforwardly and directly that it was going to be better for God's people in this age, this church age, this age of grace, if he were not here and the Holy Spirit was here. And I think if you consider it for a moment you'll see why. Now he said the Holy Spirit will not only be with you but he will be in you.

And he was really suggesting this, now I'm with you, I'm alongside you, I am a comforter by your side to help you, parakletos. But another comforter will come who will be in you and that's going to be a lot better for you. And there are some Christians today who do not appreciate that the third person of the Trinity has come and that he indwells their hearts and their lives.

And there are 14 straightforward scriptures in the New Testament to say that every believer possesses the Spirit of Christ. He who has not the Spirit of Christ is not a Christian. One of my friends was, some years ago, an ordinand of the Church of England in London University.

And when the English New Testament came out he bought a copy, took it back to the university and started to read it. And he only read as far as Romans chapter 8 and verse 9. He got really convicted. He said to himself, Tony, you don't have the Spirit of Christ.

Oh not. So he owned up to himself and he was under real conviction for two weeks, went on reading the New English Bible and after two weeks he was really born again through faith in Christ. And he found out a few things in the English New Testament that were quite new to him, quite different to what he was learning in his course, in theology.

So we went to the dean and told him about this and had a little debate with him on some of these things. And then he said, you know sir, he said, I've been converted through reading the New English Bible. We told him all about Romans 8 and verse 9. And he said, well, Lewin, he said, Mr Lewin, he said, I'm quite

sure you had a remarkable experience but it'll soon pass, don't worry, it'll soon pass.

Now you know it didn't pass, never did pass. He gave up the course in London, he came to Moreland, did a very, very fine course with us. He was quite a specialist in classical Greek and after taking our degree that we had offered, he stayed on for a couple of years to teach New Testament Greek which he learned while he was with us.

And this is the thing that affected him. He appreciated the fact that the Holy Spirit was come and that he indwelt him in the believer and he was not indwelling him and he got right with God and the Spirit came into his life and into his heart. He said, it's good that I go away, said the Saviour, if I don't he will not come and you need him to be in you.

You see, and I can only be with you people at one time, what about those others who want to love and trust and follow me? When he comes he can be with and in them too. So there's a second benefit and blessing. And he can be everywhere at the same time because he is omnipresent.

Whereas bodily the Lord Jesus was only in one place at one time, but in spirit he was omnipresent, which may be a mystery to us, but according to the scripture that is true. And not only will he be with you, but he said, now I am only here temporally. I'm going away, can't stay with you long, but he will stay with you forever.

All the while that you and all the people in my church are on the earth, the Holy Spirit will abide with you all that time. I'm quite sure he's saying that because I was discussing this with somebody today or yesterday. I don't think I found any scripture to show that the Holy Spirit does any special work for the believer after the rapture, or in the millennium, or in the eternal state.

I think there is a list of things in Romans chapter 8 that the Holy Spirit does for the believer. And his last final act is changing his body, transforming his body at the coming of Christ into a body of glory like unto his Lord's. But he said, he will abide with you forever.

That is all the time you're on the earth, and that's the time, this is the time that we need him. And thank God as we acknowledge his presence, and depend upon his sufficiency, and yield to his impulses, he's going to have his way with us, and bless us, and make us to be a great blessing. Now it was when the Holy Spirit came, of course, that the church commenced.

We've got it here, the church's commencement, the church's continuance, and the church's completion and rapture. For there will be no rapture of the church until it is complete, and the final living stone is built into that mystic building, the church of God on earth. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

So the church was born a Pentecost, because the church is a habitation of God by the Spirit. We were reading in Ephesians chapter 2, actually we weren't reading that, but I'll read it to you now. The household of God is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded to God for a habitation of God through or by the Spirit.

Now this, of course, was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus, in anticipating the coming of the Holy Spirit, he said, not many days hence you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. And of course he was referring to Pentecost, which came to pass a few days afterwards.

And that's when they were not only filled with the Holy Spirit, but by the Holy Spirit, baptized into one body in the Lord. Now in referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, always look in the context for the subject of the body, because it is always there. And the sphere is always the body, and never is the sphere into which we are baptized the Spirit.

But he is the one who baptizes us into the body. Now historically this, of course, happened at Pentecost. We come into the blessing of this when we come into the Church, when we become members of that body.

And in one sense we at conversion are baptized by the Spirit into the body because the Corinthian believers were not of Pentecost. And the Apostle says to them, and they were unholy to a great degree, we've all been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and they were included in that blessing. Now in the Acts of the Apostles we see the origin of the Church, therefore, and the nature of the Church, and the function of the Church.

The origin of the Church, of course, is by the Son himself, I will build my Church. Now one great reason why he sent the Holy Spirit was not just simply to be with his own and help them, but to build his own Church, and to indwell that Church, and to operate as his agent, the one who is head of the Church. The nature of the Church in the world, in this dispensation, is to be the Lord's instrument, God's representatives, the members of the Church, representatives on earth.

Now Israel in the Old Testament was called to be God's witness and representative in the world, but Israel miserably failed. Then the function of the Church we see as well, that the idea is, the purpose is, to bring many sons to glory. Those who trust in Christ have been left on the earth to glorify Christ in their bodies and spirits which are his by the enabling of the indwelling Spirit to complete the Church and bring many sons to glory.

I think it's good in connection with the Church and the age of the Church in which we are living, to just look at a very brief analysis of the Acts of the Apostles. In chapters 1 to 5, Pentecost we see leads to the birth of the Church. Chapter 6 to 9, persecution leads to an expansion of the Church.

They were scattered abroad. And chapters 9 to 12, Peter leads the Gentiles into the Church. Even against his will at the first, he was called to do it.

And chapter 12 to 16, I think we have it here that Paul goes to the Gentiles. Chapters 12 to 16, Paul leads the missionary work of the Antioch Church. And then 16 to 19, progress leads to the establishment of a European Church.

And finally, chapters 20 to 28, the prison experiences lead to continued expansive blessing of the Church. Now, of course, the theme of the letter from which we have been reading this evening is not the Church. I know you'd all disagree with me about that.

But I want to say this quite categorically. The theme of Ephesians is not the Church. The theme is the Church and her union with her Lord.

The subject is the body and the union of the body with the head. Twenty times in the first two chapters you get a phrase like this. In the Lord, in the Beloved, in Whom, in Him, in Christ Jesus.

Twenty times. Well, if it all stood done, what is the use of the body without the head? We see here the Church in the New Testament is seen as a body, a building. And a bride.

But you'll notice this body here. My friend Mr. Timmis has drawn this for me exactly as I wanted it. And a thousand times better than I could have drawn it myself.

He's got the body there, you see. But there's no head. But where the space for the head would be, it has got, the head is Christ.

Ephesians chapter one and verse twelve. So the theme is the union of the believer with the Lord, the union of the body with the head, the union of the Church with the head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And I think that's important to notice.

This present age of grace, for that's what the Church age is, God coming out now, not offering us a new law, not a new covenant of law, but another covenant of grace. Not just to Jews, but to all mankind. The word here is, whosoever believeth.

The word there is, Paul goes to the Gentiles. God comes out in this dispensation in grace to all mankind, whosoever will may come. Now grace, of course, for a definition would be love in action to the unlovely and undeserving.

God is calling out from this world, from the Gentile nation. And at the beginning there were quite a lot of Jewish believers too, a people for His name. And this is the Church of Jesus Christ on earth, this mystical building, the Church.

Now this present Church age was not altogether entirely hidden in the Old Testament, you know, although some of our preachers might say so. It is really, the Church is no mystery. The mystery, as revealed in Ephesians chapter 3, is that Gentiles now can come into the blessing that God has for those who trust His Son.

The Gentiles can get equal standing with Jews believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the mystery now revealed. The mystery in the New Testament is a sacred secret now revealed and made known to those who believe.

For instance, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. This was the beginning of this Church age. And Peter says, Joel saw this age.

And again Peter said, all the prophets from Samuel announced these days. All the prophets from Samuel, said Peter. So they were, they had the Church age in their vision because that was the age when Peter spoke.

And then again David in Psalm 110 prophetically said, concerning the Saviour, it's a Messianic Psalm, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. That's exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ is doing today. He is seated in the glory.

That's the sign of a finished work. And David saw this day. And one of these days he's going to rise up from his seated position.

Probably all metaphorical, figurative language. He's going to rise up and the master of the house will come and shut to the door when he opens the door of glory for his own, he will shut the door of grace. But the

present age, as David said, the Lord Jesus is seated at God's right hand in glory.

And so the Church today is the body of Christ and no such thing ever existed before Pentecost and before the coming of the Holy Spirit. Now the Lord Jesus himself is the builder of the Church. He said, I will build my Church.

I used to be in the architectural profession years ago and I used to go around the jobs once a week and see what the builders were building. And I saw all kinds of builders building all kinds of things, buildings and so on. I never saw a dead builder building anything.

And our Lord Jesus Christ is alive by the power of an endless life, fulfilling his promise and building his Church. There are a number of things that Christ does in his present session and the list of which I'm not giving you now. But one of the most important things is this.

He is doing what he said he would do and he himself is building his Church. He's doing it by the Holy Spirit and by the Holy Spirit in and through the believers whose lives and hearts he indwells. The Lord Jesus is the builder of the Church.

The Lord Jesus is the head of his body, the Church, as Colossians 1 plainly says, speaking there of his preeminence, not only in creation and not only in the resurrection, but his preeminence in the Church because he is the head of the Church. And he is the universal head according to Ephesians 1.22. We were reading it earlier on. And God has put all things under his feet.

In the sight of God, in the reckoning of God, Christ is above all and the home of the universe is under his feet. When you say, what's happening in the world then? Well now, it is Christ's right to reign on the earth and to control all that he does control in the mind of God. But it's not his time yet.

But his time to do so, we believe, is very, very near. Not only so, the Lord Jesus is the head of the whole Church according to the passage we read in chapter 5 of Ephesians and verse 23. This is the whole Church around the world and similarly is the head of the local expression of the Church.

I'm quite sure everybody in the Church, the local expression of the Church universal that meets at Park of the Palms Gospel Chapel, all bow to the leadership and the headship and the control by his Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 27, we are all members of his body and we're in this local expression of it. And he is the head of every man as well.

So in every sense the Lord Jesus is the head. This is 1 Corinthians 11.23, the head of every man. Every man in Christ, that is, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why, as God has given him the preeminence, we in our lives give him the preeminence, make him number one in everything too. Now these, you see, are just figures. The Church is seen as a body and as a building and as a bride.

We've discussed the body very briefly and the head, which is Christ. And the body is union with the head. And union with Christ is the greatest doctrinal theme in the New Testament.

And out of it every other doctrine proceeds and flows. Whatever you try to think of--adoption, justification, regeneration, sanctification, glorification-- everything, everyone comes out of this starting point, which is basic. That the believer is one with his Lord, that the Church is a body and the head of the body is Christ.

And we are united. Now in speaking of a building, you know I tried to keep away from a building here and show that the Church was really people born again. But the artist here has put a building.

Because the Church is known as the temple of God, dwelling place of the Spirit, Don't you know, said the Apostle Paul, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Your body becomes a temple not because of it, because of him who indwells it. So also the Church becomes the temple of God because of the one who indwells it, the Holy Spirit. And the Apostle in talking about a building, the Church as a building as well as a body, in Ephesians chapter 2, he says it's a holy temple and it's a holy temple growing.

Buildings don't normally grow, but this is a living building you see and its affinity is with the Lord, a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are building together as a habitation of God by the Spirit. Its foundation is on Christ, its formation is together, its function is growth in holiness and its feature is a habitation of God by his Spirit. And I'm quite sure in writing to the Ephesians about the Church being a building, the Apostle Paul had in mind the great temple of Diana of the Ephesians because he was writing to the Ephesians.

And they always had that in their minds because it was one of the great wonders of the world and everybody that lived around there was very, very proud of it, as well they might be. The believers of course are much more proud in a spiritual sense of this glorious building, the temple of God, the Church of God on earth because we are not just in it but we are part of it. And the Holy Spirit being in us indwells it, or her, the Church as well.

And then of course in chapter 5 I was reading to you the other figure, not only a body, a building, but a bride. And he gave himself for her, says Revelation 21. And there she is, a bride adorned for her bridegroom.

And the Lord Jesus now is our heavenly bridegroom. It isn't that he will be in a coming day, he is now. We are joined to Jesus now.

It is true we have to wait a little while for the marriage supper of the Lamb. You know David was a shepherd and it was while he was a shepherd that he led the flock, cared for the flock, protected the flock, slew the lion, slew the bear and slew the giant while he was a shepherd. Christ has done all that for us as the shepherd.

But then David became a captain, you remember, over the 400 men that joined him in the camp, in the cave of Dullam. And it was while he was a captain that he solved the problem of their debts and he changed discontentment and bitterness to contentment and peace and power and they became his mighty men. But then a little later on, a few chapters later on, David becomes a bridegroom, a shepherd, a captain, a bridegroom.

And when Abigail's husband Nabal, that wicked fool, died, then she could be joined to David. And we were joined to another. But now through the death of Christ and our union with Him in His death, we can be joined to the risen Christ who is our head and the head of the church into which we are built.

So being joined to Him in that way, we become His bride and He is the heavenly bridegroom. Now, if the Lord Jesus is the shepherd and we are the sheep, what does the shepherd do? He leads His own and He provides pastures for His own. That's what Christ does for us.

What do the sheep do? They follow where the shepherd leads. If the Lord Jesus is the captain, what does the captain do with His men? He commands them. What do the men do? They obey His commands.

And whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. And if the Lord Jesus is the bridegroom and we are the bride, what does the bridegroom do? He loves His bride. What does the bride do? She loves the bridegroom.

And this, therefore, is our highest duty and responsibility to follow in this age of grace where He, our gracious shepherd, leads. To obey His injunctions and commands at every turn of the corner. Obey the promptings of His indwelling Spirit always, every day.

And then, of course, supremely to love Him and to love Him supremely with all the heart. For He is now our heavenly bridegroom. Now, you'll notice that this is a bit different from what you've seen before on certain charts.

I haven't spread these seven churches, these seven lampstands, representing the seven churches right across this age of grace because I don't believe it. You see, I don't like giving interpretations or applications in a definite way on a chart. But only interpretations must be portrayed like that.

And if an application is given from the Word, it must not only be stated to be not the interpretation but the application, but also in connection with it, there must be another scripture somewhere found to support the application and show that the application is a scriptural injunction. That's very important. Now, there was nothing prophetic in these messages to the seven churches.

The prophecy doesn't start to Revelation 4. There were messages given to the churches, the seven churches, as they existed toward the end of the first century AD. They were there then. They were living in that kind of way then.

The Laodicean church was in AD 90, not AD 1975. Now, I don't mind if you want to apply that to 1975, but you must say it's an application. This is the interpretation.

It's got to be. Read it for yourself. Well, I won't burden you with that point, but I thought I ought to take a moment to get it over because, you know, lots of preachers today are preaching applications as though it's the interpretation of God's Holy Word and the Word of God to people, when it's not an application.

It's not the Word of God. Only interpretation according to the text of Scripture in the Hebrew and the Greek can be the Word of God to the people. What a solemn responsibility we have as servants of God to understand a little bit about hermeneutics and the principles underlying interpretation, so that when we say this is the Word of God, then it is actually the Word of God we're giving to the people and not just our own application in some spiritualizing way.

So, these were seven local churches then in the first century as we read of them in Revelation 2 and 3 actually existing. The Revelation itself, you know, was in, or is in, three parts. Very easily understood.

I mean, the parts are, I know the text of the Scripture isn't so easily understood in some parts of Revelation. But the things that thou hast seen, part one, what did he see? A vision of Christ. Write it down, and he did.

And the things which are, what was existing at that time, the condition of these seven churches, the things which are, that's the second section. And the third section is prophetic, not the second. The third section is prophetic, the things which shall be hereafter.

However, I'll give you this, that each message to the churches contains instructions for all time and all the church in every age and all local expressions of the church as well. Now, of course, the next event in God's timetable is an unprecedented meeting in the air. What a gathering and a greeting and a meeting that will be when the Lord Jesus fulfills his promise to come again.

As he went away, so also, likewise, will he return. He went away with clouds. A cloud received him out of their sight.

A cloud probably of Shekinah glory obscured their view as he ascended in it on high. Maybe again it will be the clouds of Shekinah glory will descend with Christ in them and we shall rise to meet him. But on the other hand, it may be, and I'm not sure about the interpretation here, it may be that the clouds are referring to companies of the Lord's people arising from different parts of the world to meet our Lord in the air.

After all is said and done, in the Hebrews it speaks of a company of people being a cloud. So great a cloud, a company of witnesses. And so my artist friend here has got some arrows.

You won't be able to see them where you are. You can come and see them afterwards if you like. Coming from different parts of the world and I've got a shrewd idea that there's some coming from this area.

A cloud from Florida rises up to meet the Lord and from New York and from North Africa there, a small cloud I fear, and from the Middle East and from the Far East and from Germany and the clouds from London and other parts of Britain. And we shall arise in clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Now personally, just before I close, may I say, I'm inclined to the view expressed by, recently in a new book by Dr. Schuyler English in relation to 2 Timothy, I beg your pardon, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Well it says that they must come and before the day of the Lord there must come a departure.

And in my opinion and I hold to Schuyler English's view very closely now, having looked into it deeply, that the departure is not a departure from the faith there, but it is a departure or the departure. And the definite article is used and it suggests by using the definite article that he's referred to this departure before and he certainly did. And in the first epistle he did.

And this is the departure of the church. And the day of the Lord when he comes later in power and great glory with his saints will not come before the day of Christ and the departure of the church. More about that perhaps tomorrow evening.

But I'm not looking for the tribulation. I believe that Christ is our deliverer from the wrath to come. We are not of the night, we are of the day.

And he is coming to complete our salvation. And so shall we ever be with the Lord when we depart this earth. And the Holy Spirit goes with us.

He transforms our bodies on the way and we shall have bodies of glory like unto his glorious body of glory. Now John was ten and he was blind. And he lived near London.

He was born blind. And his dad came home one day with news that he'd heard that there was a surgeon in London who was doing some wonderful work with people who had been born blind and was giving to some their sight. So they looked into it and they eventually arranged to take him down to see the surgeon one day.

Now the surgeon made no promises on this occasion but he said if you'd like to leave the boy with me I'll do what I can. And I look into his eyes closely and study the case and if I feel it's the right thing to do I will operate if you will sign on the dotted line before you go. So his parents did.

After some days the surgeon operated and then his eyes, John's eyes were heavily bandaged. And after a few days they sent for the parents because they were going to undo the bandages to see if John could see. And they wanted them to be there.

So the parents were ushered into this room where John was on a kind of table arrangement in a darkened room. And there were two nurses there and they started the operation of taking the bandages off. They did it very slowly, very carefully.

Nobody said a word. Everybody was on the tiptoe of excitement. And when they got the last piece off John tried to open his eyes and he wasn't able to do so.

So the nurse came round and bathed his eyes and tried to help him to open his eyes. He eventually did. And they stood back and they didn't say a word and it seemed as though he might see something.

He was looking at the darkened windows. Then he turned and he saw his mother. He actually saw his mother for the first time in his life.

And then he saw his dad. Then his mother again. Then he looked at the nurses.

He looked at the ceiling. He looked at the darkened windows. And he kept looking.

He was looking at everything and everybody and nobody said a word. It seemed for ages. And then eventually one of the nurses said What do you want to see now John? He said I want to see the man that opened my eyes.

So they ran down the passage and they brought in the surgeon. And then the boy was satisfied when he saw the man that had opened his eyes. There's a man in yonder glory I've loved for many years.

He's cleared my guilty conscience. He's banished all my fears. He's coming in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.

No time will be allotted him to utter one goodbye. The man in the glory has opened my sin blinded eyes and made me see. And I shall see him.

I will awake with his likeness. And I see the man that opened. Satisfaction is before us all.

Satisfaction complete when the failure in his faithfulness fulfills his glorious promise. It may be today. Even so Lord Jesus come and until that glorious and greatest of days may thy grace and the love of God and the enabling of the indwelling spirit be with us all this night especially and always until our Lord returns.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9956.mp3>

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