

(Christ) the 'In Christ' Life

by Denny Kenaston

The In Christ Life is a personal relationship with Christ, abiding in Him and He in us, and union and communion with God.

Duration: 1:13:46

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:1

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following the example of Paul in living a life dedicated to Christ. Paul had a deep vision of Christ and understood the purpose of his life was to serve Him. The speaker also shares a personal experience of preaching to a group of young missionaries in Africa, highlighting the passion and dedication required in spreading the gospel. The sermon concludes with a reminder that Paul considered everything he had gained in life as loss compared to knowing Christ.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, good morning, brethren.

The last day of the feast, huh? I was thinking about you all this morning as I realized, okay, this is the last time that I get to talk to you all as a group. You know, what do I say? You know, I really appreciate you all. Your earnest, sincere hearts are such an encouragement to me.

I don't know if you realize it, but I'll let you in on a secret this morning. One of the secrets of the tape ministry, one of the secrets of the solid, sound, inspiring, clear, black and white preaching that goes out through the tape ministry, one of the secrets is the people who sit and listen. You may not understand what I'm saying, but I preach in places where the people aren't real excited about what I'm saying.

And it doesn't go quite as easy. But when you preach to people whose hearts are saying, whose faces are saying, whose very spirits are drawing you and saying, come on, let us have it, I'm telling you, it does something inside the preacher. It draws things out of you that you never even dreamed would come out of your mouth.

I had such a beautiful example of that just a few weeks ago as I was assigned to go over to Africa and preach to this scent team for a week. You know, these 20 young people who had been out there on the front lines for about two months and all they'd been hearing is missions for two months, and then I get to preach to them for one week. And I mean, their faces and their hearts and spirits, I mean, they were just like this, you know, come on.

I couldn't believe what I said to them. So brethren, I just want to bless you and I want to thank you. You are very much a part of everything that comes out of the mouths of the men that stand up here to minister.

You also are ministering as you sit here every day. Thank you for those open, willing, earnest, hungry hearts. Let us pray.

Lord, we do acknowledge that all of that that we just talked about is all because of you in every one of our hearts, God. We know that. We know we're nothing, Lord.

We know we don't have anything to say. Lord, if you let us by ourselves, we won't be inspired. We won't want the right things.

We won't long for the right things, God. We know it's all you. It's you working in us, God.

And we just glorify you and we honor you for who you are. You are the Lord. You're the King.

You're our Father. And we thank you today. Father, this one more time, would you minister to our hearts, Lord? Would you affirm us in the way that we are endeavoring to walk? God, I ask you for grace to be able to do that this morning.

In Jesus' name, amen. All right, this morning, the title of the last message in the series, The Incomparable Christ, a study in Christ-centered theology. We started up here and we've been moving our way down here to where we live every day.

And we are also going to come closer home this morning than even yesterday, if you can believe that we can do that. But we can. Because in a sense, we were speaking very generally yesterday.

But today we're going to be much more personal. The title of the message this morning is The In Christ Life. The In Christ Life.

That's what it's all about, isn't it, brethren? It's In Christ Jesus. Not me. We have spoken much about Christ-centered theology, and our hearts have been stirred and affirmed as we have looked at dozens of Scriptures.

But I would like to change the focus a bit this morning and just remind all of us of that which we all already know. The incomparable Christ is a person. He is not a doctrine.

He is a person. He is not a teaching. He is a person.

He is not a statement of faith. He is the faith. Amen? And there's a big gap between the two of those.

As we hear the good news that is the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we come to that place, as we so beautifully heard last evening, where we repent of our sins and believe on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. At that moment, the incomparable Christ saves us. He personally saves us.

Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus, and he was never the same. Have you met Christ on your life's road? That's a good question this morning. Thirty-five years ago, I met Christ in the front seat of my car in Omaha, Nebraska, and I can testify today, God also bearing me witness, my life has never been the same.

I met Christ in my car thirty-five years ago, and I've been running ever since. Now, I stumbled a few times, but I got up. And I lost my way a few times, but I found my way back.

Bless God, He drew me by cords of love. But I met Christ in the front seat of my car thirty-five years ago. And He saved me! Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus.

The Spirit of Christ came to dwell in him. And immediately he began to preach. Isn't that interesting? Not the point this morning, but immediately he began to preach.

Christ came to dwell in the Apostle Paul, and he became a new person, a new creation. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. All things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. How can such a statement be made? It's made because Christ comes in you. And all things do pass away.

And behold, all things become new by the resurrection power of the Christ, the Son of the living God. Yes, the incomparable Christ is a person, brethren. Paul became a new person, a new creation.

This holy operation of God through the Spirit has happened millions of times down through the ages. And for this reason, Christ died. Christ died that this beautiful spiritual operation of a transformation of heart, a regeneration of heart, an actual reality of Christ coming to dwell in a man, that's what Jesus died for.

To restore the sons of Adam, born self-centered creatures, and to make them a new race of men who are God-centered, who have God living in their breasts. That is what Jesus Christ died for. And I know I say it all the time, and maybe you get tired of hearing me say it, but Christ did not die just so that we could go to heaven.

That's a pretty shallow view when you think about it. Just so that we can go to heaven and live in a mansion on Glory Street someday. I thought about it last evening as I was brooding over this message.

Heaven is an indescribable, resurrected union with the incomparable Christ. And when you see heaven that way, all those other things just pale back into distance. I mean, streets of gold are nothing compared to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pearly gates mean nothing when you behold Him. And brethren, we're not only going to behold Him, we will be brought into a glorious, indescribable, resurrected union with that incomparable Christ. Dream on that one for a while.

I mean, who cares where I'm going to live? I'm going to be in Him. But brethren, that union must begin down here, or it will never happen up there. Mark that down.

If that union doesn't begin down here, it will never happen up there. Don't kid yourself. And that is present, continuous salvation.

And it is the only kind that will get you to glory. Christ is a person. Paul said it this way to the Galatians.

Listen to his words. He says to the Galatians who lost their way, and he as a loving father trying to pull them back into the center, he said, I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him. You see that? I marvel that you have been so soon removed from Him.

See, he didn't say from the doctrine of Christ, but from Him. Christ is a person. Turn with me to John chapter 15.

Christ said these words in John chapter 15 in verse 1. He said, I, Christ, am the true vine. I, personally, Christ, am the true vine. We know that.

We know that's what He said. But let us read on and see what else He says. And remember, if I could just remind you, that Christ is giving His disciples beautiful, powerful, deep, last-minute instructions, which He knows that in the days to come, when the Holy Spirit comes, they will understand what He is saying.

But I don't believe they grasp very well what He told them here in John chapter 15. But nevertheless, we read it knowing much more than they did when they heard it. But in John 15, starting in verse 4, He says, after telling them that He is the true vine, He personally, He says, abide in Me, and I in you.

And I want you to notice there, there's two statements that are made there, not one. You be vitally connected with Me, and let Me be flowing in you. I mean, that's the picture, right, of the branch and the vine? The branch is connected to the vine, and then because of that, then the vine and the sap from the vine runs into the branch.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me. Now, when Christ is saying that, He's talking about a personal relationship.

He's telling them, I want you to continue in a vital union with Me. Hudson Taylor called it, union and communion. Union and communion is what Hudson Taylor called or described this abiding relationship.

It is a union and a communion that takes place between God and man. In Christ, Jesus our Lord. So, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me.

I am the vine. Ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him.

Notice again, two statements there, not one. He that abideth in Me, and I in he. The same bringeth forth much fruit.

And it is interesting that he takes it 180 degrees in the other direction with the next statement. You will bear much fruit, but without Me, nothing. Much fruit, nothing.

Which one do you want? See, which one? Without Me, he said, you can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and

they are burned. And I believe that is a warning to every one of us.

That's not written to somebody who's thinking about becoming a Christian. That is written to the child of God. It is a present continuous salvation, amen? Like our brother so beautifully told us last night.

It is a believing, and an eating, and a drinking relationship. Verse 7, if he abide in Me, and My words abide in you. Now there, that time, it's actually, he's saying the same thing, but he's using words differently.

There again, it's two things. If he abide in Me, and I in you, but this time, it's My words abide in you. Isn't that beautiful to know? And we all have one, don't we? Praise God.

I mean, 1270 chapters have been given to us. Such a blessed gift we have. Each one of us have it.

If he abide in Me, and My words abide in you, flow in you, come flowing out of the heart of God through the pages of this book, by the Spirit of God, into your spirit and your soul, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Gives him a little secret unanswered prayer there. And it goes on to say, Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.

So if you don't abide in Me, and you do not bear much fruit, it's going to be a question mark whether ye are My disciples. But if you want to be clear, without question, indeed His disciples, you will master this whole matter of walking with God on a daily basis. Herein is My Father glorified.

Verse 9, As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in My love. Now he's changing the words again, but he's really saying the same thing.

Do you see that? And if you don't think that's right, you go read it in 1 John chapter 4. He says it again, right in there. Same writer too. Continue ye in My love.

If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love. Still saying the same thing. Talking about abiding.

If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. Now, thank you, Lord Jesus, for that example you just gave us. And those disciples have been watching Him abiding in His Father's love, and watching Him moving by the promptings of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of His Father within His heart.

They've been watching it for three and a half years. Now He tells them, in the same way that I have, you do the same. You do the same.

If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. I was thinking again last evening about Acts chapter 2. You see, this didn't make a whole lot of sense to them right here. But when the Spirit came in Acts chapter 2, oh, then they understood what He was talking about.

Acts chapter 2, the beginning of the body of Christ. Right there in Acts 2, they were, by the Spirit of God, baptized into Christ, and the Spirit of Christ baptized them, and they were all filled with the Spirit of God. Two things happened there.

They were baptized into Christ, and they were filled with the Spirit of Christ. There's that abiding and that flowing relationship again. That's what happened to the 120 there in the upper room.

Brethren, that was union. Union took place there in Acts chapter 2. And that was Christ's prayer in John chapter 17 being answered. Make them one like we are one.

That prayer was answered in the book of Acts. And is still being answered down through the ages even today. But union took place there with those 120 believers.

There are some powerful corporate implications that I cannot cover today, but worthy for us to ponder a bit. Because you see, it's not just a relationship with Christ this way. I mean, those brethren started out together from day one.

They were a body. A powerful body. The head and the body were anointed and in union.

Acts chapter 2. And by the way, look what the anointed body of Christ did. Immediately. Immediately, the anointed body of Christ started to witness.

Amazing. That's exactly what He told them to do. That's exactly what He did while He was walking on the earth.

And now the body and the head get together and sure enough, the body starts witnessing. Did you catch that one? I've often thought about Pentecost and I've often thought what it was like the morning after Pentecost. Because brethren, let's face the fact, life was totally changed on the day after Pentecost.

I mean, those guys had a busy day, didn't they? Pentecost was a busy day. Preaching sermons, prophesying, baptizing 3,000 people, laid hands on them. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Who knows what time they went to bed, amen? But the next morning, they woke up just like we woke up this morning. You know, you kind of resurrect every morning, don't you? And they resurrected the next morning. They woke up.

And as they woke up, they knew Christ. He is with me. He said, I will come to you.

He said He would. Christ is with me. And you know, eventually they probably all started getting together.

How was your night? I slept good. How was your morning? Oh my. Life is so different.

You're right. It is for me too. And they just began to interact.

And Christ just was in their midst. And that's the church, brethren. Christ in me.

And Christ among us. That's the church. It's beautiful.

We're a long shot off though, brethren. So let us not get too tough on those guys out there. Yes, He is there in their midst.

And He is producing personal realities in each one of them. And He's also producing corporate realities in each one of them. And I think that every one of them would give this testimony if you could have been there and asked them, Jesus Christ has the highest place of glory in my life today.

He was beautiful. He inspired awe in them. He caused them to worship Him.

Their prayers ascended freely up to Him. Oh, their hearts were believing and they were eating His flesh and drinking His blood. That morning after Pentecost was one sweet and glorious morning.

As they all began to gather together and compare notes and just begin for the first time to open up and begin to verbalize the reality that God has come to dwell inside of me. And what does that mean? And how different our life is. Here at the end of this beautiful week, can you relate a little bit how it must have been that morning? Can you, brothers? I think you can.

There was an unquestionable reality of relationship in their midst. Yes, the in Christ life had come to the early church. And they were never the same.

There also had to be the time when that relationship became a bit cloudy. We know that. But, what do you think they did when it got a little cloudy? What do you think their responses were? What was their conduct? What kind of words did they begin to share with each other when that day, that first day when all of a sudden it got cloudy and something wasn't right because of something that was said or maybe done or a wrong response to the crowds and all the stuff.

I mean, they had their hands full. There wasn't no easy thing there. Three thousand converted, five thousand converted.

Persecution begins to break out. All those things. I wonder what their response was that day when all of a sudden it got a bit cloudy.

Do you think they just left it that way for a couple of weeks? No. I don't think they did. John, the Apostle John, after sixty years of the in Christ life said it this way.

Turn there with me to 1 John chapter 2. He describes it this way to us in 1 John chapter 2 in verse 27 and 28. He says, I'll wait for you to get there. In chapter 2 verse 27 he says, But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.

And ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and be not ashamed before him at his coming. Now, what John is simply saying there is, John is saying, I'm telling you to abide in him.

But that's not new to you. The anointing which is in you is bearing witness to you and continually telling you to stay right where you are. In that beautiful, close, anointed relationship where you're abiding in him and his grace is flowing in you.

And he says, if you want to not be ashamed at his appearing, abide in him. And that's a good admonition for us, isn't it, this morning? The in Christ life requires us that we, if we're right this morning, we continue to walk in that uprightness, that sweetness, that clarity that is upon our hearts as we sit here this morning. The abiding life requires that we continue to walk in that in the days ahead.

Can you relate to these verses this morning? Turn to Ephesians for just a couple of verses I want to read to you. I don't think I'll preach about them, but I want to read them to you. But we'll see.

In Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 3, I want you to see some of these in him, in whom, in Christ, verses in the Scriptures. Ephesians 1 and verse 3, Paul says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ. See? In Christ.

Isn't that beautiful? And some would say, oh, that's a positional verse. Okay. Yeah, it's true.

It's a positional verse. But is that all it is? Oh, that's my position in Christ. Is it your reality in Christ? If it's just position, where's the all spiritual blessings in heavenly places flowing in? See, those don't just flow in because of a position or a doctrine that says, I'm in Christ.

Those flow in when I, in reality, am in Christ. Big difference, isn't there? I think the evangelicals have gotten this one mixed up. And probably we have too, amen? Chapter 2, verse 18, listen to these words.

Chapter 2, verse 18, For through Him we both, Jews and heathen, we both, Jews and heathen, have access by one Spirit unto the Father. How? Through Him. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

And ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Now notice He didn't say the doctrine of Jesus Christ. He said Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

There's a big difference between the doctrine of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ Himself. In whom, in Christ, all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together for the inhabitation of God through the Spirit. Now those are some pretty deep words, aren't they? But brethren, those words only become reality in the in Christ life.

No other way. No other way. That's how they become reality.

In Christ. Chapter 4, verse 15, But speaking the truth in love, it's talking about ministering one to another, edifying one another. Church life.

But speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him. In all things, in every area of my life, in every area of church life, in every area of my family life, in every area of my marriage, in every area of my business life, in every area of my neighborly life, in every area of my life, grow up into Him. Do you see it? Grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ.

I guess I am preaching a bit on these verses. Chapter 4, again, verse 20 and 21, But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. Person, person, person.

In every one of those. And lastly, over in Colossians, just two books over, chapter 1 and verse 26 through 29, Paul again, he's ministering to these Colossians, these Gentiles, these heathens, who have been converted. And he's telling them how that God has called him to preach the mysteries of God to the Gentiles.

And we're kind of breaking in the middle here, but we need to because of time. Verse 26 he says, Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles. See, Paul's burden was that all the glorious things that were promised to Israel down through the ages as the Messiah was promised to them, all those glorious things are also been given and should become a personal reality to all the Gentiles.

So he says that the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, and then he gives the mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. See? That's the in Christ life. And brethren, Christ in you personally is your hope of glory.

Whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The New Testament is filled with references about this in Christ relationship. We could take a whole five days on it.

We can't do that here this morning. Paul said it this way, I live in Christ and Christ liveth in me. What a powerful statement! And you look at that man's life and you think, how can he be what he is? How can he live like he lives? How can he go through all that he's going through? Oh, don't worry.

I live in Christ and Christ liveth in me. That explains it all. Remember, we were back there in Philippians chapter 2 way back there on Monday and we stopped on that word wherefore.

We want to come back to that word wherefore here this morning. Because that wherefore is there in light of the revelation that we had read in the previous verses. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

And there we looked at the great kenosis, the seven steps downward, the great self-emptying of Christ, how He laid aside His glory and how He took upon Himself. And how through that great act of humiliation, wherefore God also had highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name and made Him the exalted Christ and poured out on His head the anointing of the Holy Spirit and that Holy Spirit falls down upon the church of Jesus Christ and every person who comes to Christ is baptized into that body of Christ and filled with that Spirit of Christ. Wherefore, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Why, Paul? For it is God which worketh in you both the will and to do of His good pleasure. What is Paul saying? Paul is saying, God has come to live inside of you. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Let God have His way inside of you. Do not frustrate the grace of God like Paul says there in Galatians chapter 2. I do not frustrate the grace of God. Sometimes I think we frustrate the grace of God.

God is inside of us. God wants to live a Christ-like life in us, through us. God wants to use us.

It is God who is working in you. And what is He doing? He is producing the will and the power to do His will, the desire and the power to do His will. That is how it happens.

It is Christ in me that creates the desire. And I have got to yield. Yes, I have got to yield.

But when I yield, guess what? He gives me the power. Hallelujah! You know what? He does not give you the power until you are willing to step in the water, brother. I mean, I learned long ago.

That is just the way it is. You know, human nature says, park the water and I will go over. God says, step in the water and I will park the water.

I am afraid many of us are just standing there waiting, just standing there waiting, and God is saying, come on, boy, come on. Do not frustrate the grace of God. God is in you, desiring to live out the same kind of life that we just read there in those verses in chapter 2. And let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

So, yes, it is very practical. This Christ life, this Christ-centered theology is not just something floating around up here to thrill our hearts, even though we have been thrilled by it. But it is way more than that.

The reward of His suffering is a race of men that are filled with God and live like God because God is inside of them. That is the reward of His suffering. Turn over to Romans for a moment.

Romans chapter 8. Paul described this in Christ's life, in Romans chapter 8, as a walk in the Spirit. These are synonymous terms. Abide in me.

Walk in the Spirit. Walk in the anointing. These are synonymous words.

In Romans chapter 8, in verse 1 through 4, he says these words to us. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. There it is again.

In Christ Jesus. But I want us to notice something here. He defines what in Christ Jesus is.

And sad to say, many of the modern translations of the Bible don't even have those words. The ones that follow. All you'll find in there is, there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

End of verse. Now that's a nice, convenient place to stop. But God doesn't stop.

God defines what in Christ Jesus is in the rest of the verse. Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. See, the reality of the in Christ life is a walk after the Spirit, not after the flesh.

That's the in Christ life. Paul goes on to say, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. And the law of sin and death Paul was talking about in Romans chapter 7. And we're not going to run there or I'll get off.

But he's talking about the law of sin and death in chapter 7. Stumping, working in his members, working up desires to do wrong and all of that. And Paul says, look, don't worry about the law of sin and death. That thing is powerless.

There's a new law that has come. It's a higher law. It's a more powerful law.

It's a transforming law. It's the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And dear brethren, there is life in Christ Jesus.

But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is, I must walk after the promptings of the Spirit of God. That's the law. That beautiful law of the Spirit-filled life has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Isn't that good news? Praise God! Then he goes on to say, For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. Why? That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. In who? Oh, you're going to define it again? Yes, we're going to define it again.

That the law might be, the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. In who? In those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Now what Paul is simply saying there is, the righteousness of the law, the moral law, the beautiful, holy, moral law, the character of God that you see in the Old Testament revealed, even in those laws, that character, that moral code, is fulfilled in us.

See? The law couldn't do that. The law couldn't produce that because of the weakness of the flesh. But now Christ has come to dwell in man.

And the flesh has been put down and put to death by the Spirit of God. And now the righteousness of the law can be fulfilled in us. Isn't that good news? We are dead unto sin and alive unto the promptings of the Spirit of God.

We are dead unto sin and alive unto the promptings of the Spirit of God. Someone has said already, the Bible says I'm dead unto sin, but I don't seem like I'm dead unto sin. Let me ask you, are you alive unto the promptings of the Spirit of God? Maybe that's where you're missing it.

And because you're not alive unto those promptings of the Spirit of God, yeah, then the flesh is going to have His way. I mean, that's just how it is. This beautiful walk produces an abundant, fruitful, blessed life.

Just like Jesus said, I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I've come to die that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. Alright, brother says he's going to skip lunch today.

Look at verse 9 and 10 in Romans 8. Paul says, But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if it so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, he's not making a theological statement there. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

And if Christ be in you, note what he says here, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. And I wrote it here in my Bible, living in a dead body. Living in a dead body.

Did you know that you're living in a dead body? You are living in a dead body. If Christ dwells in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. And you are now living in a dead body.

Why are you letting that dead body tell you so many things what you ought to do? Why are you letting that dead body control you? Why are you letting that dead body lust after women? Why are you letting that dead body run your life? Come on! You're living in a dead body. That's what Paul said. Brethren, the only way this Christ-like life gets worked out in shoe leather, in everyday life, is through this walk in the Spirit of God.

It will never happen any other way. Your wives, your children, your brethren, witnessing humility, our tongues, the disciplines, and on and on and on we can go. We can look at dozens and dozens of the beautiful principles in the Word of God, and I believe in them, and I would love to spend the whole week preaching all of those to you, but brethren, if you get this, you'll get all of them.

I mean, you know you're supposed to love your wife, but it's because you don't walk in the Spirit of God that you don't have the grace to love her at those times when she doesn't maybe do things all the way you want to. The only way this Christ-like life gets worked out in shoe leather, in everyday life, is through this abiding vital union. It is the in Christ life.

An abiding vital union with the Christ, the Son of the living God. God open our eyes. Question this morning.

Does Jesus Christ have the highest place of glory in your life? Or are there other things that are there instead? John said it this way in 1 John chapter 5. We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true and we are in Him that is true. Even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. He finishes.

Do you think that John the Apostle was talking about one of these kind of idols? How many of you think he was talking about an image? You're right. He wasn't talking about an image. He was talking about anything that has that highest place when He is the true God living in you.

Does Jesus Christ have the highest place of glory in your life? It will cost you everything, every moment, every day. Brethren, this is the way that God makes man righteous. This is the bottom line.

Yes. We come to that place so beautifully described last evening there where we come to the foot of the cross and we look and the burden falls off of our back and we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But from that moment we begin to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

We begin to feed off of Him. We begin to build a relationship. It flows and His grace comes into us and as that relationship grows into a steady, solid, abiding relationship, God makes man righteous.

I mean righteous here in this life. That's the only way God makes man righteous. It will never come any other way.

You can try all you want. You can wear yourself down for ten years, but you'll never come to it until you come to that place where you just simply rest in the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He's done and yield your life up to Him and let His Spirit take control of you and yield to Him moment by moment and He will make you humble. He will make you holy.

He's your sanctification. He's your wisdom. He's your righteousness.

He's your redemption. He's your humility. He's your patience.

He's your grace. He is your everything. He is all in all, brothers.

All in all. And oh how He longs for us to grasp that in our own hearts that our hearts would thrill, that our hearts would rise up with worship and adoration as we realize He is my everything and I want nothing else but Him. That is where God is going, brothers.

That's what God wants to do in every one of our hearts. And oh, if He ever gets a hold of all of us, a bunch of men like this, I'm telling you we'll turn the world upside down again. I'll tell you something else that will happen.

Persecution will come. It will come. You won't have to go to China to get it.

It will come. It will come. Let's look at Paul's life just briefly.

He's the apostle of the in Christ life, isn't he? So I think it's only fitting that we just take a little quick glimpse into how this in Christ man lived out this in Christ life. Philippians chapter 3. Paul had two passions which drove his life continually and they're actually one, but we're going to divide them just so that we can look at

both of them here this morning. He had two passions in his life which drove him.

And maybe it would be good for me to give a definition of the word passion because that word has become a slang word. It's one of those words that people just flip around, you know. You know, I have a passion for pizza.

You know, I've got a passion for this. And I've got a passion. No, you don't.

You're not using the word right. Passion is what you are willing to suffer for. That's what passion is.

That's why it says after his passion there in Acts chapter 1. After his passion. That's one of those words that have been brought way, way down. Kind of like awesome, you know.

Awesome. Awesome pizza. That word belongs to God and God only.

Not to pizza. How about absolute? Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Oh, absolutely.

Oh, that's another one of those quick words we flip around. Absolute. That belongs to God.

How about terrible? How do you feel today? Oh, I feel terrible. No, you don't. You don't know what terrible means.

But passion is one of those words. Passion is what you are willing to suffer for. And there are things which are not godly that people have a passion.

Things they are willing to suffer for. See? I mean like somebody gets his heart set on a gold medal, it becomes his passion. And he is and does suffer for his passion.

Amen? Football players have a passion to play the game. And they'll break their legs and break their necks and be bruised themselves up and go through all kinds of crazy things because they have a passion for the game. Missionaries have a passion also.

That which they are willing to suffer for and what you have a passion for, you suffer joyfully. You don't even care. You're a fool for it.

And Paul had a passion. And he didn't care. What were his two passions? To know Him more and more.

And to make Him known more and more. That was Paul's passion. I mean, think about it.

Look at this example. Just to give you one illustration. I think it was at Derby where they stoned him.

You know? Took him outside the city, you know, and started throwing stones at him. And boom! One after another in the head, in his back, another one in his face, down his back. And they get all finished.

And there's Paul laying in a big lump on the ground with a whole bunch of rocks on top. And I don't know. Maybe the brethren even thought, well, I guess he's gone.

All of a sudden, them old rocks started moving around. Watch that! And Paul shook himself up and stood up out of all those rocks and went back into the city and washed off his blood and went to the next city and went right to the synagogue and preached again. That's passion, brethren! That's passion! He loved it! He didn't care.

Because it was his passion. He loved the game. And he's a good example of the in Christ life to us.

Amen? Oh, I love Paul. Amen. But what does Paul say in chapter 3? Verse 7 he says, But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ personally.

Christ personally. Everything that I had, I counted all lost for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for my Paul, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

I don't care about anything else. I've gotten a vision of the Christ, the Son of the living God, and I don't care about anything else. He is my passion, and I will gladly suffer anything for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

That's where He was. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but done. Look at that! I've suffered the loss of everything, and Christ is so much my passion.

I looked at all those things and said, Just a pile of manure, that's all it is. Just an old rust bucket, amen? I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them done. Why Paul? That I might win Christ.

You mean you haven't won Him? You mean you don't know Him? Yes, I know Him. And yes, I've won Him. But I'm winning Him every day.

I'm pursuing Him with all of my heart every day. I want to know Him more and more. I want to win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is by the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith of Jesus Christ.

You know what he's saying? My whole life is wrapped up in abiding in this Christ. I want to be found in Him. In Him.

Not having my own righteousness. I want a righteousness which is flowing out of that in Him relationship. That's what he was after.

Every day. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. There's ten sermons in those verses that I just read you.

We're going to go on. That's his first passion, to know Him more and more. But his second passion was to make Him known more and more.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after. There's something that I'm pursuing. What are you pursuing, Paul? That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

I am out to apprehend something, Paul says. Christ Jesus apprehended me on the road to Damascus and said, Paul, I want you to go preach the unsearchable riches of the incomparable Christ to the Gentiles. And Paul said, my whole life is made up of apprehending that which Christ apprehended me for.

What is his passion? To make Him known more and more and more. To make Him known more and more and more. This was his passion.

He didn't care. He didn't care what he'd go through. He didn't care what he'd suffer.

He didn't care. It was his passion. I want to apprehend that which I was apprehended for.

Brethren, you were also apprehended, were you not? Are you apprehending that for which you were apprehended for? Huh? Did God apprehend you so you could be a mechanic? Huh? Or a farmer? Or a carpenter? No. He didn't apprehend you for that. I mean, Paul may dance, but that isn't what Christ apprehended Paul for.

He just had to make a little money so he could apprehend that which he was apprehended for. Are we apprehending that which we were apprehended for? Has God ever arrested your heart and your life and helped you to see why you're here? Because there's a reason why you're here, brother. And it's way beyond what you might think it is.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended but this one thing I do. Amen, Paul. One thing I do for getting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

I press, I agonize. It's the picture of a runner running a race, and he's just a few feet away from the finishing line, and he's agonizing to reach to the end. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Oh, then look what he says in verse 15. Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded. Oh, Paul, you mean we're supposed to live like that too? Yes, we are.

Let us as many as be perfect be thus minded. And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, if this is your heart, God will reveal it unto you. Nobody else will have to come alongside you and say, Hey, what's the deal with this, or what's the deal with that? I notice your life is all caught up in doing this.

Oh, if your heart is like this, God will reveal it to you. He'll take care of it. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.

Let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me. This is the way I live, Paul says.

Be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us. For an example, when you find a man who lives like this, mark that man in your mind and follow his example. That's what Paul is saying.

Paul was filled with a vision of Christ, of the Christ. And he was filled with a vision of the purpose of the Christ. His whole life was consumed with that.

In closing, yes, Christ is the straight gate. And Christ is the narrow way that leadeth unto life. And I didn't just give you a theology.

In closing, I want to read. I have enough time. I want to read this little message which was broadcasted in England in 1960 over BBC.

That's British Broadcasting Corporation. It's the main radio station in all of Britain. It was aired over the radio in 1960.

There is no name on it, which doesn't matter. But it so beautifully sums up everything that I've been saying for these five days. Listen with me.

What was the secret of the early church's power? It was the centrality of Jesus Christ. They had been with Jesus was the comment of the outsiders. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me was the glowing testimony of the church members.

They went everywhere preaching Jesus. In all the life and witness of the church, Christ was preeminent. He was the living center of all of its activity.

That radiant, dynamic, commanding presence receded in the medieval church long before then. Receded in the medieval church, the historian says of John Wycliffe. More and more he found the Christ he was seeking in the Gospels and missed Him in the church.

Today, that is the missing factor in Western Christianity. The real presence of the living Christ in the church. Christ is outside the door of its lukewarm church knocking for admission.

If we are unaware of this, others are not. Four officials of the communist government in China, including Premier Cao In Lei, were educated in this country and in France. This country being Britain.

And all were converted, not to Christianity, but to communism. Why? I asked one of them. He replied, The Christians in your country are not like Jesus.

These Asian and African friends come here and they are not impressed with our cozy Christianity. They miss the revolutionary power of the Christ of the Gospels. That is our deepest need.

A rediscovery of Christianity as a vital relationship with the living Christ. That is what we need. For it is not the building or the organization or the creed, but the real presence of the ever-living Christ which constitutes the church.

He is its indispensable center. I rest my case. Let's pray.

O Lord, these words convict us this morning, Father. But Lord, we are not just rebelliously going our own way. We want, we desire, Lord.

We long for this Christ to be more and more known in our midst. And more and more known in the world around us. O Father, we all pray.

Keep on working in us. Please don't stop, Lord. Please do not pass us by.

Please, dear Father, send revivals to our struggling, hurting churches, God. Send the Christ, the Son of the living God, to be in our midst in mighty ways like He did in days gone by. We ask it in His holy name.

Amen.

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