

Him or It?

by Denny Kenaston

The sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ rather than on religious practices or doctrines.

Duration: 1:08:42

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3

Topics: "Seeking God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing Jesus Christ and making Him the focus of our lives. He encourages the listeners to fix their eyes on Jesus and follow Him personally and vibrantly. The speaker also highlights the need to raise up disciples of Jesus Christ, not just individuals who conform to societal expectations. He references the history of the church and how people have experienced transformation when they catch a glimpse of Christ, but also warns against losing sight of Him. The sermon concludes with a mention of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, who was desperate for answers and sought counsel from various preachers.

Transcript

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus Christ this morning. Blessing to be here to sing with the saints of God. Communion tonight, that's a blessing too, isn't it? So many privileges God gives us.

Oh, may he help us to never take them for granted. So many privileges we have. So man is the glory of God.

It's quite an awesome statement, you know, when you think about it. What that means is that God made man specifically to glorify him in every way. Here's God in the Garden of Eden, and he's making things.

Some of them he just speaks. But when it comes to man, gets this dirt out of the ground, and he's making something. God is making something there.

He's making a man. And when I say that, I mean mankind. He's making a man, and he has a design in mind.

God doesn't just do anything for nothing. He has something in mind. I'm going to make a man.

He's going to be in our image. He's going to glorify me. He's going to bring all the attention my way.

He is the glory of God. When he is seen, they're going to think about me. Oh, those are awesome thoughts, aren't they? As we live in these frail human bodies of ours, they're awesome thoughts.

But yet, we know it's true. We see it in the Word. So I appreciated the meditation this morning.

How can this be? How can this man, who was born with a fallen nature, glorify God? There must be a way. There must be. There has to be.

There is a way for this man to bring glory to God. There is a way. There's only one way, by the way.

There are not a lot of ways. There's only one. God graciously left us only one.

One way. We like to devise a lot of different ways, but there's only one. The Lord has laid on my heart to speak this morning a sermon that I've been working on for a year.

Very simple title, Him or It? Him or It? It comes from a little track that was written, oh, I don't know, maybe 80 years ago. I want to read you the track so you will understand where we're going. Him or It? Him or It is the essential question.

Is it Him or is it It? It is a thing. Him is a person. If we receive It, we almost invariably lose It.

90 out of every 100 that receive It, lose It. And it keeps them continually receiving and losing. And this makes the life very unsatisfactory to the gainers and the losers and almost everyone else.

The thing is not able to do the work of the person. Our sanctification is such a valuable thing. And this person is writing in light of a sanctification experience.

Our sanctification is such a valuable thing that we must watch and guard and keep it. As we have no time or room for any other work. And we become religiously selfish in our endeavors to keep It.

To keep It, we must talk, preach and write It. We must correctly pronounce It. We must associate only with those who profess It.

And denounce those who place anything in the place of It. I speak in love. This is an unknown author, by the way.

He didn't put his name on it. I have no controversy. I bear no ill feeling.

I tried the It life for many, many hard and weary and unsatisfactory years. I received It. Plainly, clearly, satisfactorily.

It was what I sought. And according to my faith, It was done. As I received, so I walked.

As I taught, so I did. I prayed. No Romanist could ever have been more punctilious in doing my duty there.

I fasted. I was faithful for this was necessary to keep It. And years of Friday fastings were mine.

Prayer and profession and fasting were not enough to keep It. For It was slippery and would slide. And I thought I would die.

Works, good works were brought into play. And I preached for nothing. And built churches.

And fed the poor. And established and maintained missions. I never read a novel.

Never caught a fish. Never snared a bird. Never shot an animal.

Never saw a play. Or a dance. Never went to a race.

Or a game. I gave my money and time and talents freely to secure It. I did not laugh.

I separated myself and ostracized and condemned others. I wore plain clothes. And lived a plain life.

I went to camp meetings. And took hundreds. Paying their way.

So that they might receive It. I held continuous meetings for years on this line day and night. In the churches of which I was a pastor.

I verily believed I was doing God's will. And that in securing the blessing of sanctification. I had all there was for me.

And to think of anything more better was a delusion and a snare. And I had better just keep what I had. Or I would lose it all.

I and they became clannish. And would only go to holiness meetings. And hear holiness preachers.

We became narrower and narrower. Until we crowded each other out. And said mean things one of another.

It was requisite so I thought to keep it. I wore out my voice. I broke down my health.

My strength and my endeavor to keep and spread it. And my life was a failure. And my efforts fruitless.

In this time of dilemma. When my heart and flesh failed me. And I was on the point of abandoning it.

As uncertain and unsatisfactory. A person came to my rescue. I was alone.

None were near. None were interested. He quieted me.

He hushed my murmurings. My complainings. And whispered to me in love.

That it could not. But he could. He communed with me.

And gently suggested that I take him. As all in all. I bowed.

And said yes to him. That is all. No new blessing.

A thousand would not meet. The blesser came. He.

Him. A person. And my life was altered.

He abides. He satisfies. My doing is now done.

I rest and rejoice. The hardness of my life is all gone. His sweetness has come in.

His gentleness has made me great. He and his are mine. I am his.

He never leaves me. He loves me. The him life.
Is a thousand times better. Than the it life. I know.
I tried both. Beloved. Receive.
Ye. Him. That's the track that inspired this message.
If we could open our Bibles to Ephesians. Just want to read a few verses here. It seems only fitting.
To me to have a sermon. Like this. On the day.
Of communion. It seems only fitting. That we.
Get our focus. In the right place. A day when we have chosen to remember him.
Who redeemed us to God by his blood. This morning I want to center on a person. And bring our attention
to the theology.
Of centering. On a person. In our Christian life.
In Ephesians. I just want to read a few verses for you. And emphasize.
A few words. In Ephesians 1. Verse 3 and 4. Blessed be the God. And father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Who hath. Blessed us. With all spiritual blessings.
In heavenly places. In. Christ.
In. Him. According as he hath chosen us.
In him. Before the foundation. Of the world.
That we should be holy. And without blame. Before him.
In love. Chapter 2. Verse 14. For he.
Is. Our. Peace.
He. Is. Our.
Peace. Who hath made both one. And hath broken down the middle wall of partition.
Between us. Chapter 2. Verse 18. For through him.
We both. Have access. By one spirit.
Unto the father. Now that we both there. And the Jews.
And the Gentiles. We both. Have access.
The same access. Unto the father. Through him.
Chapter 2. Verse 20 through 22. And are built upon the foundation. Of the apostles.

And prophets. Jesus Christ. Himself.
Being the chief cornerstone. I want you to just notice. These little words.
In each one of these. It's not speaking. About a theology.
God is speaking. About a person. Jesus Christ himself.
Is the chief cornerstone. Of the building. Not his example.
Not what he did. He is. The most lively stone.
Of all the lively stones. In the building. It is he.
Himself. Who is the chief cornerstone. Of this lively building.
Verse 21. In whom. In him.
All the building. Fitly framed together. Groweth unto a holy temple.
In the Lord. In whom. In him.
Ye also are built. Together. For inhabitation of God.
Through the spirit. Now God is saying some. Deep things in these verses.
But he is telling us this morning. That we are a building. And that this building is alive.
And that the reason why it's alive. Is because this building. Is in him.
We are alive. When we are in him. We as a congregation.
Are a lively building. When we are in him. To the degree.
That we are in him. Personally. Vibrantly.
To that degree. This building is alive. This building.
Is a holy temple. This building. Is a habitation of God.
Through the spirit. It's him. Chapter 3. Verse 17.
That Christ. May dwell. In your heart.
By faith. Christ. Him.
Dwelling in our hearts. By faith. Verse 20.
Chapter 3. Now unto him. Now unto him. That is able.
To do. Exceedingly. Abundantly.
Above all that we ask or think. According to the power. That worketh in us.

Unto him. Be glory. Chapter 4. Verse 15.

But speaking the truth. In love. May grow up.

Into him. In all things. Which is the head.

Even Christ. Chapter 4. Again in verse 20. To 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. Him.

Jesus. The truth. Is in.

Him. In Jesus Christ. And lastly.

And we could just go on. And on and on here. But I want to read yet in Colossians.

In Colossians chapter 2. In verse 6. As ye have. Therefore received. Christ Jesus the Lord.

So walk ye. In him. Rooted.

And built up. In him. And established in the faith.

As ye have been taught. Abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware.

Lest any man spoil you. Through philosophy. And vain deceit.

After the tradition of men. After the rudiments of the world. And not after Christ.

After him. His person. For in him.

Dwelleth all the fullness. Of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete.

In him. Which is the head of all principality. And power.

All right. That's enough verses for us to read. Him.

Is a person. It. Is a thing.

The person needs no definition. We know now. Who that person is.

But the question. Still comes to us this morning. Is it him? Or is it it? Now the it.

Needs some definition. You can put a lot of different things. After that little word.

It. The little tract that I read. Was speaking.

The man was speaking. About an experience. Of sanctification.

And he made an it. Out of that. Not realizing that Jesus.

Is. Our sanctification. That's what the Bible says.
But he. Made an it. Out of an experience.
That somebody had. And got up and told him about it. And he pursued it.
And he pursued that it. As we could see. With everything that was in him.
It. Can be repentance. We can make an it.
Out of repentance. And feel like. When we've come to that place.
Where we're all broken to pieces. At an altar somewhere. That we've gotten it.
We've gotten what so and so had. But if we make an it. Out of repentance.
We're going to find out. That it. Does not last.
We can make an it. Out of experience. Maybe that you had.
At a confession meeting somewhere. We can make an it. Out of a doctrine.
Or a set of doctrines. That means something. Very special to us.
People do it. All the time. And all of a sudden their focus.
Is on an it. Instead of him. Oh so many doctrines.
Have been carried to the place. Of heresies. Because.
An individual saw something in the word of God. That transformed their life. And from there.
It became an it. That everybody else needed to see. And hear.
Some have done it with. Prophecies. Premillennialism.
Omnillennialism. All the other isms there. We can take a doctrine.
Or a set of doctrines. Or a certain way. Of looking at things.
And make an it out of it. But it doesn't last. It.
Can be a standard. Or a set of standards. It's right to have standards.
In our lives. Godly standards. But we can take.
Godly standards. And make an it out of it. And pursue it.
And preach it. And write about it. And give it to everybody.
And make that our meat. And that our drink. And many have done that.
But the question is this morning. Is it him? Or is it it? The question is. What does our heart pursue? Even
in the good things.

Even in the right things. What does our heart pursue? Is it him? Or is it it? It can be. Good and godly goals.
It can be. Pursuing. A life's ministry.
But if that. Becomes the focus. Of our heart and our life.
It's not him. It's it. It.
Can have all kinds. Of definitions this morning. It.
Can be an organization. However important it is. To have organization.
It. Can be an organization. Where our heart goes that way.
And we begin to support. The organization. And what the organization thinks.
And say what the organization. Would want us to say. It can be a Pentecostal.
Experience. That many have sought. Because someone made an it.
Out of some experience. That they had. And got up and started preaching it.
To the people. And said to them. You can receive it also.
Just come down here. To the front. It.
Can be a church. It. Can be a church.
And take our focus. Off of him. Who is the head.
Of the church. How foolish. To focus and pour our lives.
And energies. Into the body. But forget about the head.
Who makes the body function. It. Can even be the Bible.
It can even be the Bible. There have been. Movements.
Among the people of God. Where there was a liberal trend. And some of the concerned people.
Begin to realize. Things aren't going right here. We are going the wrong direction.
And they rose up and said. We are going back to the Bible. It's the Bible.
We are going to do what the Bible says. And everyone rallied to their challenge. And everyone got on the bandwagon.
And they made an it out of the Bible. And were getting back to the Bible. But they didn't go far enough.
Because if you are going to get back to the Bible. You are going to have to go further than the Bible. If you are going to get back into God's will.
And find Him. Beyond the sacred page. It's Him.

Even the Bible can be an it. It's not the Bible. It's Him.

It can be a lifestyle. Many fall into that snare. Out of an overreaction.

To a weak. Spineless. Protestant world.

Who doesn't seem to have. Much substance to their Christianity. Some swing in an opposite direction.

Have an overreaction. And begin to set their heart. On lifestyle.

But lifestyle is not Him. Now I want to quickly say. None of these things are wrong in themselves.

They are all good and right. We believe in doctrines. We believe in having holy standards.

We believe in the Bible. We believe the Bible is the word of God. We believe you ought to be sanctified.

Clean. Pure. Made clean by the blood.

Through repentance. All of these things are good and right. But if our focus.

Gets on them. Instead of Him. It won't come out right.

Paul said it this way. To the church at Galatia. Awesome words.

In light of. The truth of this message this morning. Listen to what Paul said.

To the Galatians. As he was correcting them. There it.

Became the Jewish law. Because Judaizers came. And began to promote.

Jewish law. After Paul. Had preached Christ to them.

The Judaizers came. And promoted Jewish laws. And said it's Christ.

Plus. Jewish laws. Look what Paul said when he wrote a letter.

To correct them. About the wrong focus. That they were on.

He said in chapter one verse six. I marvel. That ye are so soon.

Removed from. Him. That called you.

Into the grace of Christ. Unto another gospel. So soon.

Removed. From him. In the book of.

First John. Which was written to correct. And give direction.

Because there were those. In John's day. In the churches.

Claiming. Supernatural experiences. Over and above.

What everybody else had. We've got something. That you don't have.

They said. We've had an experience. With God.
That you haven't had. They said. Very interesting to see.
How John corrected. The error there. Thirty times.
In first John. He speaks about him. Thirty times.
He speaks about him. And gives definition. To that.
Him or it. Is the question this morning. Him or it.
And there may be many applications. To this message. You may be here today.
And. You're just beginning. To focus.
On it. Or it may just be. That God wants to confirm.
And affirm our theology. Our theology. Being.
That our lives should be centered. On a person. The Lord Jesus Christ.
Not on all the other things. Which come out of Christ. But that our lives should be focused.
On the Lord Jesus Christ. That's theology. As I look down through history.
It is very clear. That those who had an impact. On their generation.
Were those. Who were Christ. Centered men and women.
Were those. Who saw him. And their lives were changed.
And they saw him. And they got up and said. What they saw.
And thus bringing the focus. Of those. Who followed them.
Back on him. In a sense. It's exciting.
But in another sense. It's not very exciting. To see.
What happened. Time after time. It's as if.
You can look down through church history. And you can see. These little mountain tops.
Where a people. Got a glimpse. Of the Christ.
The son of the living God. It changed their life. It changed their focus.
It changed their priorities. It changed their motivations. And all of that.
Then. As time goes on. They begin to lose sight.
Of him. And it's like. It goes down like this.

Then. Someone again sees. And a people begin to see.
And their lives come up. And we read about them. And they're written in the annals of history.
Because they're examples of him. And what he can do. And you just look down through church history.
And you see that happening. Over and over again. It's beautiful.
But it's also awesome. Because we stand here today. Being responsible.
For our generation. We do. Just like they did.
So we don't look back on them. With hard criticism. But rather we want to learn.
From what they did. That we will not also. Do the same thing.
My mind was brought. To the testimony of George Fox. Who was the founder.
Of the Quakers. Now I don't know how much you know. About the Quakers.
They were not. What they are today. George Fox.
Was a desperate man. He didn't know. Which way to go.
He had a need in his life. And he couldn't seem to find answers. He went to every preacher that he knew.
And they gave him all kinds of different counsel. The Catholics. Told him to do penance.
And pray the rosary. And some of the nonconformist. Preachers told him to chew tobacco.
That would calm his nerves. And they gave him all kinds of things. That he could do.
But finally when he came to the bottom. Of all of that. And he came to the end of himself.
And he had nowhere to look. He heard the voice of God saying to him. That still small voice.
You know that speaks in the heart. Look to me. George.
I am Christ Jesus. I can meet your every need. I will answer.
Your every problem. Look to me. Give me your life.
Yield everything. And I will answer. Your every problem.
George Fox. Did that day. Yield his life.
To the Lord Jesus Christ. And it just totally changed him. Just like it did the Apostle Paul.
On the road to Damascus. And for years. There were those who were called Quakers.
Who followed George Fox. Who followed the Lord Jesus. They were a vibrant people.
They were a simple people. They were a plain people. But they were a vibrant people.

Who loved Jesus. And they were a persecuted people. Some few years after.
George died. The persecutions. Begin to settle.
As they do from time to time. And when the persecutions. Begin to settle.
The people begin to make compromises. And when the people. Begin to make compromises.
Having gotten their eyes. Off of him. Which is how compromises come.
Mark it down. That's the way it happens. First the relationship is lost.
Then the compromises are made. Well. The leaders.
Looked at the compromises. That were being made. And decided.
We're going to stop this compromise. We're going to make rules. We're going to make laws.
You can't do this. You can't do that. You can't wear this.
You can't wear that. And so the laws came. And as the laws came.
The focus changed. And the focus turned. To the laws.
And the people were thinking. We're doing right. Because we're doing.
What the leaders say. And so they followed. The laws of the leaders.
And saw less and less. Of him. And you know.
The rest of the story. I think of the Scottish. Covenanters this morning.
Who lived in the 1600s. In Scotland. Who were challenged.
Because England said. The King of England. Is the head of the church.
And the Scottish Covenanters said. Christ is the head of the church. The King of England.
Is not the head of the church. And England said. The King of England is the head of the church.
And if you don't submit to that. You'll lose your head. And they said.
Then we'll lose our head. Because Christ is the head of the church. And out of a. Vibrant love.
For the Lord Jesus. Hundreds and hundreds. Of them died.
Beautiful testimonies. Of godly people. We've spoken already.
In times past. About the Moravian people. But I want us to note today.
That they had. A glimpse of Christ. That gave him a central place.
In their lives. And because he was. That central figure.

In their lives. The modern missionary movement. Was born.
I thought about a few different men. Ones that we're more. Familiar with.
Those of you that read. You consider with me. Andrew Murray.
Who is Andrew Murray? Well if you've read him at all. You know. He has only one theme.
And it's the theme. Is Jesus Christ. Over and over again.
That's what he says. Now we wouldn't agree. With the theology.
Of his denomination. But he didn't write. The theology of his denomination.
He wrote about Christ. Book. After book.
After book he wrote. And today. And for the last 100 years.
Plus. The people of God. Keep reading.
Andrew Murray. Oswald. Chambers.
Many of us know that name. Wrote that devotional. My utmost.
For his highest. And the motivation. Of the whole devotional is.
That I will give my utmost. For his highest. How many ever read that devotional book? Let me see your hands.
Good. Most of you. If you've read it.
You know. What I'm talking about. It seems.
He found 365. Different ways. To speak about Christ.
All kinds of different subjects. But every one of them. Steer you right back.
To the same place. How is your relationship. With Jesus Christ.
Though he talks about separation. Though he talks about motivation. For ministry.
Though he talks about fasting. Though he talks about prayer. Though he talks about all kinds of subjects.
And this book is full of them. Yet it seems that every time. He steers you right back.
To the central theme. Of the Christian life. Which is Jesus Christ.
And a personal relationship. With him. It was not by human promotion.
That millions of people read. Those books. Still today.
It's because. He speaks of him. And it.
Feeds the soul. And so. Just like the bee.

Keeps going back to the flower. To gather more pollen. To make honey.
The people of God. Just keep going back. To drink again.
And to drink again. A.W. Tozer. Is another of the same kind of men.
Who spoke. Of Christ. In a multitude.
Of different ways. Yet if you read his writings. He's always.
Focusing. On Christ Jesus. So God's people come to drink.
Again and again and again. At the fountains of those. Who met Christ.
And walked with him. All of their days. Recently.
I read a book. About the Anabaptists. Written by Peter Hoover.
We know Peter Hoover. He preached here. How many of you are aware.
That he wrote a book. Let me see your hands. Good.
Did you read it? Let me see your hands. Not too many. He wrote a book.
About the Anabaptists. Beautiful book. I can't agree.
With everything that I found. In that book. But there's one thing that was so clear.
That came out in that book. This young man wrote. After charting.
The historical direction. Of the Anabaptist people. And many of us.
Hold the Anabaptist people. In high esteem. I do.
And many of us here do. But he charted. The direction of these Anabaptist people.
Through this book. I feel. With a very open, forthright.
Honest approach. To the facts of history. About the Anabaptist people.
Has some good things. And some bad things in it. But I think we can learn.
From the good things. And we can learn from the bad things. But the thing that stood out to me.
So clearly as he was writing. Chapter after chapter. About these dear people.
Called the Anabaptists. In their beginnings. They were in love with Jesus Christ.
It was so clear. As we began to look. Into some of their writings.
In the book he brought it out there. They were in love. With the Lord Jesus Christ.
To them. Discipleship. Meant to follow Christ.

Personally in their life. Each and every day. It wasn't simply to agree.

With his teachings. It wasn't simply to agree. With what he did 2000 years ago.

But to them discipleship. Was to follow personally. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Each and every day. And that cost them their life. That cost them their houses.

That cost them the spoiling of their goods. It cost them much persecution. It cost them divisions in their homes.

It cost some of those men. The loss of their wife. And some of those wives.

The loss of their husbands. But oh what a beautiful people they were. As I looked through the pages of this book.

And I read about the Anabaptists many times. But what a beautiful people they were. They were in love with Jesus.

Nothing else mattered to them but Christ. And being a follower of Christ. Nothing else mattered.

He was the focus of their hearts. And because of that. There were some things that they couldn't do.

That the Protestants were doing. They went further. Than the Protestants did.

Back in the 1500s. They wouldn't baptize a baby. But the Protestants were baptizing babies.

They would not join the state church. But the Protestants were making state churches. And the church and the state was married together.

In Switzerland. In France. In Germany.

And other places. But because the Anabaptists had an understanding of Christ. That being a Christian means you follow Christ.

Intimately. Sweetly. Personally.

Each and every day. They couldn't do those things. They couldn't pick up arms.

And go to war. And join with everyone else. In the land that they lived in.

And fight. They couldn't do that. Because they were disciples of the Lord Jesus.

And because of those things. Persecution came upon them. Oh my.

Such persecution came upon them. But that persecution that came upon them. Fell on them like dew drops from heaven.

Making a beautiful people. Making a vibrant people. Making a Christ like people.

And oh. Listen. We want to see the secret of their strength.

And the secret of their strength was this vibrant relationship that they had with Jesus Christ. It wasn't the doctrines they stood for. However good and right they are.

It wasn't the doctrines they stood for. It was the Christ they walked with. That caused them not to compromise.

What a beautiful people they were. He was the secret of their strength. He was what they drank that made them different.

Remember when brother Mose read that little thing about drinking this little vial here a few weeks ago? Well he got that in that book. Christ was what they drank that made them so different that they wouldn't compromise. That they would rather die than compromise.

It was Christ. He was the vial they drank. Oh but alas.

In 50 or 60 years persecutions begin to slow. And prosperity begin to set in. And the people's focus, their vibrant focus on Christ begin to wane.

And compromises were made. Started buying little nicer things. Clothes started changing.

Some of them started working with the government. And just little compromises were made one after another. And the leaders, oh they were concerned about this because they remembered what it was like.

And so they decided we're going to make some laws here. We're going to draw up some laws that we're going to stand for. And we're not going to budge on these.

And so they did. They started writing them. And the people's focus started little by little focusing on those laws.

What we're going to do. What we're going to stand for. And what we're not going to do.

And little by little their hearts were turned away again from the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And today, you know as well as I, the fact of the whole matter is that the Anabaptist people are very different than those of 450 years ago. Though they stand and say they stand for the faith of their fathers, they are very different than those dear brothers and sisters who gave their lives.

How does all of this apply to us? Well, we have the same challenge at our hands. We have the same challenge. Each one of us.

I think that it should foster in our own hearts a lowly attitude. Because we are also far from where those dear Anabaptists were. We are far from there.

We're a long ways off. So we shouldn't be high minded. Consider the dangers of the ditches this morning.

Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount, it's a straight and narrow way. It is a straight and a narrow way. And lots of people have a lot of ideas about what the straight and narrow way is.

But I want to tell you this morning what the straight and narrow way is. It's Him. It's Him.

You can fall off a ditch on either side. And people do. If we say we are slipping, things are changing, let us make rules to stop this drift.

If we begin to focus in that direction, we will fall in the ditch on that side. If we say, as many have, don't make rules, don't make rules, we don't need rules. You will fall in the ditch on the other side.

And you can fall in either one of them. They're both ditches. And you're in the same place whether you're on this one or this one.

You're off the straight and narrow road. The straight and narrow road is Jesus Christ. The straight and narrow road is a life of absolute surrender to Him.

The straight and narrow road is a life of discipleship, of following Christ personally, daily, as we walk down life's road. That's the straight and narrow road. Yes, there are things that Christ will ask us to do.

Yes, there are times when we will not compromise. But listen, the straight and narrow road is Christ. Stay there.

What can you do? What part can you play? How can you help? Some of you would say, and I agree. It seems, it seems like we're drifting. It seems like we're drifting.

And things are changing little by little. That's true. That's true.

Now, what are we going to do about it? We need to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ. We need to take our place on the straight and narrow road. We need to raise up disciples of Jesus Christ in our home.

Not just somebody who does what they're supposed to do and looks the way they're supposed to look and doesn't go where they're not supposed to go. That won't reach. We must raise up disciples of Jesus Christ who follow Him personally, vibrantly.

You know, we think about our dear young people and it's something that a church has to continually face because there's always more young people coming up. And you see needs among the young people. Sure, there are needs.

They're there. They're young people. They're coming up.

They're growing. They're growing. What are we going to do? A little drift here.

A little drift there. What's the answer? Oh, the answer is a hot atmosphere in this place. The answer is a hot atmosphere in your home.

Yes, there are other answers. I don't want to disannul that. I just want to keep the horse and the cart in the right place this morning.

That Christ is the horse in the analogy. There are many other things behind that that we need to do. But hey, it's not going to work if all we do is get a cart when we're done with our children.

If that's all they are is a cart. And they're not hooked up to the horse. It'll look right, but it won't go anywhere.

It won't go anywhere. The challenge of every generation is the challenge of every one of us in this room. Whether we're going to stay fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the challenge of every generation. Many people attempt in many ways to affect that. But the challenge is a personal one to every one of us.

That's the bottom line challenge. Whether we are in the faith or not. And whether we pass that on then to our children.

That's the challenge of every generation. What do we need? We need continuous revival. We need continuous revival.

That's what the Anabaptists had. They were hot. And more so, because we don't have any persecution.

We don't have any. Oh, we get a little here and there. You know, every now and then somebody scorns us.

Somebody looks down on us. Maybe they laugh at us. Someone criticizes us.

So, you know, we get a few little drops here and there of persecution. But we don't have any persecution. There's no Sunday that we come here and somebody's missing.

And we wonder where he is. And someone stands and says, he's in jail today. And we come the next Sunday and someone else is gone.

We don't have that. And we don't have the effect of that. We need continuous revival.

I know it seems too simplistic to say we can solve such great problems so simply. But I do believe that history would tell us over and over again that the greatest problems are solved when Christ is an ever present reality in the midst of His people. History would tell us that over and over again.

I want to read another testimony to you to affirm what I've been saying here. The testimony of A.B. Simpson. I won't read it all for time.

But I want to read some of it to you. Just to see, show you again a man who saw Christ. A.B. Simpson was the founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance.

It was not a denomination when he founded it. It was simply an alliance of people who were burdened about world missions. It wasn't a denomination.

It is now. But it wasn't then. This is what he wrote about his own testimony.

I wish to speak to you about Jesus. And Jesus only. I often hear people say I wish I could get a hold of divine healing.

But I cannot. Sometimes they say I have got it. And I ask them what have you got? The answer is sometimes I have got the blessing.

Sometimes they say I have got the theory. Sometimes they say I have got the healing. And other times they say I have got the sanctification.

But I thank God we have been taught that it is not the blessing. It is not the healing. It is not the sanctification.

It is not the thing. It is not the it that you want. But it is something better.

It is the Christ. It is Himself. How often that comes out in His word.

Himself took our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. It is the person of Jesus Christ that we want.

I prayed a long time to get sanctified. And sometimes I thought I had it. On one occasion I felt something.

And I held on with desperate grip for fear that I should lose it. I kept awake the whole night fearing it would go away. And of course it went with the next sensation and the next mood.

Of course I lost it. Because I did not hold on to Him. I had been taking a little water from the reservoir when I might have all the time received from Him fullness through the open channels.

I went to meetings and heard people speak of joy. I even thought I had the joy. But I did not keep it.

Because I had not Himself as my joy. At last He said to me, oh so tenderly, my child, just take me and let me be in you. The constant supply of all that is myself.

And when at last I got my eyes off my sanctification and my experience and just placed them on Christ, I found instead of an experience, the Christ larger than the moment's need. The Christ that had all that I should ever need who was given to me all at once and forever. And when I thus saw it was such rest, it was all right, it was right forever.

For I had not only what I could hold that little hour, but also in Him all that I should need the next and the next and so on. Sometimes I get a glimpse of what it will be a million years afterwards. And so I thought that healing would be in it too.

And the Lord would take me like the old run-down clock, wind me up and set me going like a machine. It is not thus at all. I found it was Himself coming instead and giving me what I need at the moment.

I wanted to have a great stock so that I could feel rich. A great store laid up for many years so that I would not be dependent. But He never gave me such a store.

I never had more holiness or healing at one time than I needed for that hour. He said, My child, you must come to Me for the next breath, because I love you so dearly. I want you to come all the time.

I want you to come all the time. If I gave you a great supply, you would do without Me and would not come to Me so often. Now you have to come to Me every moment and lie on My breast every moment.

He gave Me a great fortune, placed thousands and millions at My credit, but gave Me a checkbook with this one condition. You never can draw more than you need at the time. Every time a check was wanted, however, there was the name of Jesus upon it.

And so it brought more glory to Him, kept His name before the heavenly world. I was dependent, and God's Son was glorified. He wrote this song.

I want you to notice the words. It so clearly describes what I'm trying to say this morning. This is His testimony.

Once it was the blessing. Now it is the Lord. Once it was the feeling.

Now it is His word. Once His gifts I wanted. Now the giver own.

Once I sought for healing. Now Himself alone. Once was painful trying.

Now it is perfect trust. Once I have salvation. Now the uttermost.

Once it was ceaseless holding. Now He holds me fast. There is a rest to the people of God.

Once it was constant drifting. Now my anchors cast. Once it was busy planning.

Now it is trustful prayer. Once it was anxious caring. Now He has the care.

Once it was what I wanted. Now what Jesus says. Once it was constant asking.

Now it is ceaseless praise. Once it was my working. His it hence shall be.

Once I tried to use Him. Now He uses me. Once the power I wanted.

Now the mighty one I have. Once for self I labored. Now for Him alone.

Once I hoped in Jesus. Now I know He's mine. Once my lamps were dying.

Now they brightly shine. Once for death I waited. Now His coming hail.

And my hopes are anchored. Safe within the veil. And I think the course goes something like all and all forever.

Jesus will I see. Everything in Jesus and Jesus is everything. What a beautiful answer to our present needs.

As we sit here this morning so many different varied needs. So many different things we're pursuing. What a beautiful answer to our present needs today.

Not only is it a beautiful answer to our present need but it's sound theology for an ongoing Christian life. Jeremiah 9 says and we'll close. Thus saith the Lord.

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. Neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches but him but let him that gloryeth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me that I am the Lord which exercises loving kindness judgment and righteousness in the earth for in these things I delight saith God let him glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me.

You remember when Jesus came and walked upon the earth and he sent his disciples out, gave them power over all the enemy and they came back afterwards so excited about all their success. You remember what he said to them? He cautioned them there because I believe he saw that their focus was being changed by the success they were having and told them don't you rejoice that the devils are subject unto you though that's an awesome thing that the devils would be subject to the people of God but Jesus said don't you rejoice in those things you rejoice that your name is written in heaven you rejoice that you can know me the only true God for this is eternal life though that sounds very simplistic that can be a life changer for you today this is present tense eternal life that you know me that you know me let's kneel

together in prayer Our Father in heaven as we bow to you this morning as we think about the service coming this evening as we think about our lives as we think about our families as we think about our church we know this simplistic answer is the answer we know that it will cost us everything but we know that it's the answer Oh Father I pray open our eyes open the eyes of our understanding we may see the answers of eternity in Jesus Christ's name Amen Hello this is Brother Denny Welcome to Charity Gospel Tape Ministry Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this tape This message is not copyrighted and is not to be bought or sold You're welcome to make copies for your friends and neighbors If you would like additional cassettes or a catalog of other tapes call 1-800-227-7902 1-800-227-7902 or write to Charity Gospel Tape Ministries 59 South Groffdale Road, Leola, Pennsylvania 17540 These tapes 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

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