

Christ in Us

by Erlo Stegen

Christ's presence in our lives is the key to a blessed marriage, a life of purpose and meaning, and a relationship with God.

Duration: 47:12

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, Romans 8:31, 1 Corinthians 13:3, Hebrews 9:12, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "Christ In Us"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts the story of Sundar Singh, a 14-year-old boy who had a profound encounter with Jesus. Sundar had been searching for something beyond the teachings of his Christian teachers at school. One night, he prayed for God to reveal Himself, and to his surprise, Jesus appeared before him, showing him His nail-pierced hands. This encounter convinced Sundar that Jesus was the true Savior, and he experienced an overwhelming peace in his heart. The speaker emphasizes that when Christ becomes a reality in one's life, He is not a dead idol but a living God who leads us on the right path and fills us with truth and life.

Transcript

We commit this afternoon into Thy hand, and we pray, Lord, that Thou wouldst glorify Thyself. We thank Thee for having led Thy children together. Thy ways are perfect.

There is no one like Thee, our Lord and God. We worship and praise Thee for Thy ways. Thy ways are perfect, and we honor and praise Thee for that.

And we ask Thee, we invite Thee, Lord Jesus, be in our midst. Wouldst Thou be the one that will take control of this wedding day? And were Thou going to speak to us, we want to sit at Thy feet and listen to that which Thou hast to tell us, that everything which is being said and done will be to the honor and glory of Thy name. Amen.

Abba, we hope that you won't mind. Shall we pray before we start? We thank you, our God, Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that you have kept us to this time and to this day and this very hour. We thank you for the privilege of being able to gather around your holy word and this sacred moment.

We pray that you would presence yourself and touch our hearts, especially the bridal couple and all of us, so that this may be a profitable time, a memorable time, and a blessed time. To your glory we ask it.

Amen.

Good evening. I phoned Willem and asked him whether he had some verse on his heart. And he said, yes, there's a word that has kept him busy these days.

It's a word from the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 6. Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. And I asked Heidi as well.

She said, yes, she's got something on her heart as well. And that's 1 Corinthians, chapter 13. And I'll read some verses to you from that chapter.

1 Corinthians, chapter 13, from verse 3. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient. Love is kind.

It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud.

It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered.

It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. I'll try to combine these two portions of scripture. John 14, 6, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Is one of the most basic and important words and passages in scripture, the Holy Bible. It sounds a bit strange if you hear, I am the truth.

Jesus saying, I am the truth. Or saying, I am the way. I am the life.

Or one would rather say that he would say, I'm speaking the truth. I'll show you the way. But that's not what he says.

He says he is the way. He is the truth. He is the life.

I'd like to mention a man from the East, a Sadhu Sundar Singh, who became a Christian, who found Christ on one December day in 1903. Some people don't speak well of him. Some say, no, he wasn't right.

He wasn't sound. But there are things that hit the nail on the head and cast light on this verse as well. Sundar Singh was raised a member of the Sikh religion, a religion that was founded in 1500 AD.

It teaches the belief that there is only one God, and that God rejects the caste system and idolatry. Now, prior to his conversion, Sundar Singh attended a primary school run by the American Presbyterian mission. At this mission school, the New Testament was read every day.

They used it as a textbook. But Sundar Singh refused to read the Bible, even the daily lessons. When they told him about the love of God, it strangely somehow touched him and attracted him to that point.

But he still thought Christianity is false. And then his mother passed away. He was only 14 years old when his mother died.

And in the midst of this confusion in his life, he went through a crisis. We could call it a crisis of faith. What is right? What isn't right? What should he believe? What was wrong? What was the truth? And then he got hold of the Bible, and he burned it.

He hated it, didn't want to know anything of it. And he personally said, I believe that I had done a very good deed by burning the Bible. He said, I felt unhappy.

But within three days after that, he could bear his misery no longer. And then late one night in December, the month of December, 1903, he rose from his bed and prayed that God would reveal himself to him. And he says, God, if you exist, reveal yourself to me.

And he says that he said to himself, if God does not reveal himself to him, he'll throw himself in front of the train that was passing by close to his house and commit suicide. He prayed for seven hours, crying to God. Just imagine a 14-year-old boy.

And he says, Oh God, if there is a God, reveal yourself to me tonight. The train, the next train was due at five o'clock in the morning. And he says the hours passed.

And suddenly, unexpectedly, the room was filled with a glow. And a man appeared before him and spoke to him. He heard a voice saying, Sundar Singh, how long will you deny me? I died for you.

I've given my life for you. And he saw the hands that were nail pierced. He said, I wasn't looking for Jesus Christ.

I was looking for something else. I wasn't looking for Jesus. Jesus was a foreign God to me.

A God of the Christian teachers that taught me at school, amazed that his vision had taken the unexpected form of Jesus. And he said, then he was convinced. He fell on his knees before Jesus and acknowledged him as the true savior and that he was alive.

He said, and an astonishing peace flooded his heart and filled his soul. Something he had never, never felt and experienced before. The vision disappeared, but the peace and the joy never left him.

God used him as he toured the world in later years and testified of Christ as his savior and of what he had experienced. When he got to England, he was shocked to the core of his being. When he saw the Europeans, the whites, so-called whites, the non-white races have got the idea that every white person is a Christian.

That's inbred in them. It's their religion. Every white is a Christian.

And he says he was shocked to the core of his being when he saw the whites. He says, these people have got the Bible for centuries and they look like this and they live like this. They call us heathen and they are more heathen than what we are.

They serve their own God and they themselves are their God. They know all about electricity, flying through the skies. And they have the Bible for years, but when we look at them, we see the opposite of what the Bible teaches.

I was too much for him. And he said, oh God, I can understand that when Christ was born, you sent three men from the East and not from the West. That's not for us to think.

For us, it's the Bible. And who lives for us? And who makes us live for us? He says, they call us heathen. But we in our heathenism and those people in their heathenism are more sincere and take it much more earnest with their religion than the Christian with his Christianity.

He couldn't get over the shock. He had to get used to it. And it should shake every white person.

I don't know how we are going to stand before the judgment throne one day, claiming for centuries that we are Christians, that the Bible is God's word. And what an effect has it had on our lives? Poor whites on the day of judgment. If we don't adhere and we don't obey the word of God.

He spoke to many bishops and archbishops. One day he spoke to a professor. And the professor said, dear Mr. Singh, Sadhu Singh, why did you leave your religion and become a Christian? He said, sir, it's because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, yes, of course. But don't you think that the Christian teaching, that Christian doctrine is better than what your own religion was? He said, no, sir. I didn't become a Christian because of that.

I became a Christian because of Jesus. And the professor said, I understand, Sadhu Singh, I understand. But let's be practical.

Don't you think that the Christian teaching is on a higher plane and standard than your, the religions, the religion of your ancestors? And he said, no, sir. I'm a Christian because of Christ. The professor said he understood, but he didn't understand.

He didn't know what it meant. And it's a pity that there are many people that call themselves Christian in the world and they don't know what it means. To be a Christian.

I just like to quote one more thing that is very precious to me that Sundar Singh said. He said, salt, when dissolved in water, may disappear, but it doesn't cease to exist. We can be sure of its presence by tasting the water.

Okay. Likewise, the indwelling Christ, though unseen, will be made evident to others from the love which he imparts to us. Isn't that marvelous? There we've got now the connection between these words.

The bride and the bridegroom. Their words which they had on their hearts. Jesus says he is the way.

He is the truth. If you've got him, you've got the truth. If you've got him, you've got life, an abundant life.

If he, if you've got him, you're on the right road. If Christ is real in our lives. The Bible, the New Testament speaks of him being the hope of glory.

The hope of glory amongst the nations, which is Christ in us. So easily said, but what a great truth that Christ, the everlasting, true man, true God, maker and creator of the whole universe, the human race, the almighty, the first and the last, who said after his resurrection, all power is given unto me, that he should be in us, that he should be in you. Watchman Ni, a Chinese Christian, whom God greatly used in China, was on his regular ways from one place to the other, one city to the other, very often he walked.

And on between two places there was a house, which he used very often as a halfway house. He'd stay there overnight. The lady of the house was a Christian.

The husband was a hard, cruel sinner and an alcoholic. He didn't want to know anything about this way, truth, life, you couldn't speak to him. His wife was a woman who was very saintly.

It's strange that women, when they've got a tough time, they're good people. But when it's the opposite, it's the opposite. So, one day, as Watchman Ni arrived, the man was at home and he spoke to him.

And he says, why don't you open the door of your heart to Christ, to Jesus? And God gave him grace that this Chinese man opened his heart to the Lord and accepted Christ. So, after that, Watchman Ni got a little moment where he whispered to that woman, your husband has become a Christian. He accepted Christ into his life.

You see, that's what makes a man or a woman a Christian. When Jesus comes into the heart, even if he's a white man and calls himself a Christian, if he hasn't accepted Christ, you must know with all truth that the devil is in him. A Christian with a devil in his heart.

That is why you find anger, bitterness, grudges, unforgiveness, all those things. Christ isn't real to him. And the wife was overjoyed when she heard that her husband had become a Christian.

She says, at last, that's the end of alcohol in my house. Every meal, the bottle of alcohol had to be on the table. If it wasn't there, hell would be let loose.

So when they sat at the table, dinner table, he said to his wife, where's the bottle? And you know, ladies are quick to speak and she wanted to say, but aren't you a Christian? She said, but, and then she controlled herself, shut her mouth. And he said for the second time, where is the bottle? And she felt he's going to take that food together with a plate and throw it to the ground onto the floor. So she jumped up and quickly brought the bottle.

She hadn't put it there because she thought, well, he's accepted Christ. He's a Christian now, he won't drink. And she saw him, how he took the bottle, opened it and filled his glass.

She didn't look directly at him, but through the corner of her eye. And he took that glass close to his mouth and put it back. Then he took that wine glass the second time and put it again back and for the third time.

And then he said, the boss inside says, no. That was the end of the battle, battle. Never again did he want that bottle on the table.

So when Christ is a reality to you, when he is in you, he is not a dead God, an idol made by human hands. He's the living God. He's alive and you'll be alive.

He's the truth. He'll lead you into all the truths. He's the way.

And he'll lead you on the right way. If he is real and a reality in your life. That's the wonderful, wonderful thing about Christianity.

I'm a Christian because Christ has come into my life. And he's living within me and he leads and guides me. So Willem and Heidi, if Christ is a reality to you, it will be like Sundar Singh said, like salt in the water.

Won't be seen, may disappear, but you taste it. And everybody who tastes it will get the taste of Christ. And he said through his love.

Now, I just like to touch on that portion of scripture again. That I may give all my possession. I may give my life, everything.

My body to be burnt in flames. But if I have not love, it's worth nothing. Love is patient.

You don't get impatient. Love can't get impatient. And by the way, Jesus is not only.

The way, forgive me, pardon if I say only. The way, the truth, the life is love as well. And if he is in your life.

You can't but feel it and experience it. Love is kind. Love is kind, freundlich.

In German, it says, Lasst eure freundlichheit kund werden allen Menschen. That's it in the Swiss translation of the Bible. Let your kindness be visible and be felt to all men.

All men. Has it been like that in the past? If not in the future, it should be like that. Very often, we are unkind to those who are the most close to us.

Love is not easily angered. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking.

It keeps no record of wrongs. Interesting, isn't it? It keeps no record of wrongs. We can keep records of wrongs.

So-and-so did this and did that. We can't forget. We had a French farmer on the north coast.

He said, friends, I forgive but I don't forget. I don't call that forgiveness. When God forgives, he forgets.

And then he justifies us. And if he justifies us, it is as if we never committed that sin. Love does not delight in evil.

It rejoices with the truth. It rejoices with the truth. And we know who the truth is.

Apart from him, there is no truth. Apart from him, from a person, there is no way and there's no life. Love never fails.

Now, Heidi, if this love is in your life, it will go well. You'll never fail because love never fails. And the same with you, Willem.

There was a man who was very rude. He called himself a Christian. He went to church.

He prayed. Oh, but if he spoke, sometimes you felt as if you could hide. How can he be so rude? How can he be so unkind? And then one man said to him.

The next week in the morning, when you get up, go on your knees and read 1 Corinthians 13. These words which we just read, read. In the evening, you do the same.

And they say after one week, seven days, his whole life was revolutionized, was completely changed. He was a sanctified man because of the words that had reached his heart. Love can't be unkind.

Love can't be rude. But if we are like that, dear friends, let's face the fact. If there is not this divine love, it's a token that Christ is not real to you.

You've got theology. You've got teaching in your head. But Christ is not a reality in your heart.

And if he's there, he says, my sheep, they hear my voice. Now we've got the best teacher. We've got the best preacher.

If Christ is a reality in our life. And dear friends, Christ is the way to blessing. Christ is the way to heaven.

It says nobody will get to the Father but by me. But by me. He himself entered the most holy place because of his precious blood.

And through him, we can have peace with the holy God. Through him, we can get right with God. And what a thing, if he would, how marvelous, lives in our hearts.

And if it's a reality, not just a teaching, not something that we've learned. But what we've experienced. And remember this, in closing, I would like to say this.

One day, a Canaanite woman came to Jesus. Jesus, who's the way, the truth, and the life. If you'd like to read it at home, you read Matthew 15.

Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from the vicinity came to him. Lord, son of David, have mercy on me.

My daughter is suffering terribly because of demon possession. Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, send her away.

For she keeps crying, crying out after us. Then he answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. The woman came, knelt before him.

Lord, help me. She said, he replied, it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Just imagine, if I would have been that woman, if you would have been that woman.

What, how would we have reacted? This is very unkind. He calls me a dog. Is that life? Is that truth? Is that the way? We read it so easily, so glibly and superficially.

But if you think, if this would have happened to you, if you would have been that woman, maybe you would have turned away. And you would have known what to say for the rest of your life. Beware of that man.

How wrong he is. And how did she react? Yes, Lord. But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.

Then Jesus answered, woman, you have great faith. Your request is granted. And a daughter was healed from that very hour.

How many of us may lose the blessing which God has got in store for us? Just because of one step more. And then we are disappointed. We feel sorry for ourselves.

We are touchy. Resentment. Grudges.

We count the wrong. And then all goes wrong. May God grant by his grace.

That you'll always will be close to him. So close. That he will be in you.

That you will hear his voice. That he can lead and guide you. And your marriage will be a blessed marriage.

You remember when he turned the water into wine. Now to have him always in your life. Will be something great.

And only because of that your lives will be worth something. You'll be a blessing to each other. You'll be a blessing to others.

Even if they don't see Christ in form in you. But like the salt in the water. If they taste that water.

They'll know. Christ is a reality to these people. And he lives within them.

He'll keep you on the right way. You'll be alive in this world. And in the world to come.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus we thank you. That you came into this world.

You became man. Just to reach us. So that we may have life.

An abundant life. That we may experience the truth. And be on the way.

On the highway. God's highway. The highway of holiness.

And may your love flood their hearts. And overflow. And grow stronger.

For all to taste. To see. To feel.

So that your name will be glorified because of it. Amen.

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