

# Spurious Believers #1

by Ernest C. Reisinger

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*The sermon explores the distinction between genuine and spurious believers, emphasizing the importance of a true heart commitment to Christ.*

**Duration:** 52:15

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 8:12, Luke 8:14, John 2:23, John 6:37, John 12:43, Acts 8:13

**Topics:** "Genuine Faith", "Spiritual Perseverance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the sower and the different types of believers. He emphasizes the importance of having a strong foundation in faith and warns against being easily swayed or falling away during times of temptation. The preacher also highlights the narrow road to heaven and the dangers of presumption and despair. He encourages believers to hold onto God's promises and follow His precepts to avoid these pitfalls. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for genuine and steadfast faith in Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

If you have your Bible tonight, I'd like you to turn to Acts chapter 8, but before I read it, may I just make a few preliminary remarks? We want to read from verse 12 to 25, because I believe it's fair to people to at least tell them what you're trying to do, and then if you're not so successful, they'll know that you weren't successful. Sometimes when I've listened to preachers, I haven't been able to recognize what they were trying to do. So I'm not going to tell you how well I'll do it, but I'm at least going to try to tell you what I'm going to try to do tonight.

I want to try this week for us to do a little sounding. Now all the sailors know what sounding is. That's when you put the old thing down in the freshwater tanks to find out how much water you have.

You sound it. Or you sound to find out whether there are rocks. They do it differently now with radar and so on.

But we might say we want to do a little title search. That's another way to look at it. You know, it's possible to have a title, to own a piece of property, and think you own it, and not have a good title.

You can have it paid for, you can pay your money, you can get the title. And those of you who bought property in Pennsylvania, if you bought property and have to get a mortgage, they'll require a title search. I

hope you don't need a mortgage, but if you do, they'll require a title, what they call a title search.

That doesn't mean that you don't have a title, but it means that they search it to see if it's a good title. Now that's the type of thing that we hope to be doing, and our motive for it is to help you. You know, in the building business, we go out to start doing some renovation work sometimes, and the women, they start hollering about the dust we make.

And if we start early in the morning, there's usually some men that have a different shift, and they, they holler about the noise we make. And then the young people go by our jobs, and they think we're tearing down the building. When actually, maybe, all we're trying to do is cut a hole in the wall to get a little light in.

Now, if it seems to you like I'm making a lot of noise, and I'm not getting about it very well, and somebody think I'm trying to tear up the church, I want you to know at the outset that it's my purpose to help God's church. It's got enough of problems without me trying to create more. I'm trying to solve some.

And just remember that I'm trying to cut a hole in that wall so a little light will get in. Now, what we want to do is not easy. Probably that's why I shied away from.

Because we want to try to set down a couple principles distinguishing real believers and spurious believers. Now, I better tell you what that word is. Most of you know, but somebody said, don't use words that we don't know what they mean.

That means not genuine, not real, something short of the real thing. And tonight I'd like to read a few passages of Scripture showing you that the Bible does talk about believers that are something short of saved people, something short of regeneration. Now, the best place, if I don't help you on this, the best place that I know you could get help to see these two kind of professors is in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

And if you'd study about six or eight of his characters, you would have all that I'm trying to say in a much better way. And that is, if you'd study Mr. Talkative, for instance, and see how well he was acquainted with the language of the Church and of the Bible and of evangelical Christianity, and find that he was spurious. If you'd study Mr. Ignorance, or Mr. Formalist.

But basically, if you'd study three characters on that side of the ledger, that is, Mr. Talkative, Mr. Ignorance, and Temporary. If you'd study those three characters, a fellow called Temporary, you'd have a real commentary on what I'm trying to say. On the other hand, we must remember, and Bunyan does such a wonderful job of it, that there is such a thing as Mr. Feeblemind, who is genuine, but not strong.

There's Mr. Ready-to-Halt. Genuine, he's a genuine believer, but he's just one of those people that aren't strong in the faith. And there's Mr. Fearing, and you'd do great to study those characters.

Now, I recognize that there's such a thing as growth and greatness. I'm not ignorant of that great truth. But it seems to me, in our day, that one of the great problems is to try to get, trying to get people to grow and graze who have not been born into the family.

And we use all kind of names for these people who don't give any, never have given any, substantial evidence of being seethingly joined to Christ. And so tonight, I'd like to read a few texts of Scripture at random, to show you that the Bible speaks of spurious believers. And I'd like to try to give you three or four, if I get that far, distinctive things, some of the things they both look alike.

That's why Christ warned us, specifically, about the wheat and the tares grow together, to teach us that we can't go along and say, well, I'm going to pluck him out. You might have a piece of wheat, friend. That's why Christ warned us not to do this.

But he did give us marks. The Bible is not vague on what a Christian is meant to be and to do. But we're not God.

And there's two awful extremes of error in this direction. One is wiping everybody off. They're not Christians.

And the other is inclusiveness. Oh, he's a Christian, but, the lady says, my, my, my, my son's a Christian, but he doesn't go to, he's not interested in the Bible, he's not interested in the church, and he doesn't go to church, and, and when I went off to college, he's over here someplace. I say, pardon me, he's a Christian, but all this? What gives her any reason to believe her son's a Christian? The lady says, oh, my husband's a Christian, he doesn't go to church very often, doesn't read the Bible, doesn't pray, doesn't witness.

I said, what in God's name does she have any reason to believe that he's a Christian? There's some distinctive marks of a Christian. Now, before I read these scriptures, let's bow in a moment of prayer, and then we're going to look at a few scriptures, and then I'm going to try to point you out a few distinctive differences between the genuine and the spurious. Let's pray.

Our Father, we recognize that we are on a road that is a narrow edge, and while we would seek to rob those of a false hope, O Lord, that they may be savingly joined to Thee, spare us of that awful danger of robbing those who are weak in faith, but are, but who have genuine faith. Help us, we pray Thee, and for this we would rely upon Thy Spirit to do that work, and to go in those areas where we cannot go. Come, O Holy Dove, come, and assist thy people to hear, and assist this poor carpenter to preach, for Jesus' sake.

Now, I think probably the most typical example of a spurious believer is in Acts 8. And I want to tell you, not only read this scripture, but I want to tell you as I go along why it's obvious that he was a spurious believer. Anybody, any good commentary, and if they don't handle this this way, they're not good commentaries, that's a pretty bold statement, but of the good commentaries that we would respect highly, they are unanimous on this. So don't go away wondering that I've chased my shell with a few cases on this, and I'm certain enough on it tonight that I say it without any equivocation or mental reservation.

Beginning at verse 12, we find that Philip must have been having a great time preaching concerning the kingdom of God, and he's preaching Jesus Christ. And it tells us in that twelfth verse that they were, that many believed, but when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And then this fellow Simon, it says in verse 13, Simon himself believed also.

And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wandered and beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now he not only was a, this is a good text for Baptists, he was not only a believer, but he was a baptized believer. And phony is a three-dollar bill.

Verse 14, Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Philip and John, who when they were come down, prayed him that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Now they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

And when Simon saw that through the laying on of hands, the hands of the apostles, the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money. Now it's not likely that anybody that has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him is going to try to buy it. So that's a bad sign.

He's got a bad mark against him right already that he's phony, because he's trying to buy the Holy Ghost. And Peter, on no uncertain terms, takes advantage of that. And he said unto him, saying, Give me also the power that on whomsoever I lay hands, I may receive, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

But Peter said, Thy money perish with thee. So Peter thought he was going to perish, because he said his money's going to perish with him. Because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thine heart is not right in the sight of God. That's the second thing that I'd point out to show that he was a spurious believer. Because if there's anything right about a Christian, it's his heart.

He may stumble and fall and make crooked steps on the way to glory, but if he's a Christian, God has done a work in his heart. And that's one thing that's right. That's why he grieves over his own sin.

He hates his own sin. So Peter said, Your heart's not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God that perhaps the thought of thine heart may be given to him.

That ought to teach us that not only our deeds but our thoughts are brought to the bar of God. Verse 23, For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness. Doesn't sound like a Christian to me.

Thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon and said, and this is the conclusive, I think, if nothing else convinced you, this ought to convince you about his being a spurious believer, this very verse. Then Simon, then answered Simon and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me.

Now I want to call your attention to his prayer requests, because this leaves the cat out of the bag. Pray ye to the Lord for me that none of these things which you have spoken come upon me. Somebody that's bothered about sin, their prayer request is, Oh God have mercy on me for my sin, and the consequences.

They're concerned about both. But the whole essence of that prayer is, he's only concerned about the consequences of sin, and you see no reference to him crying out to God that I have mercy on him for his sin. Just the consequences.

Pray ye that none of these things, that's all he's bothered about. None of these things. No reference to crying out for mercy.

None of these things. Well, let me show you a couple other texts quickly. Will you turn your Bible to John chapter 2, because I want to show you a few texts that has, and I'm not going to say much about them, because I want to try to point out some of the differences.

John chapter 2, verse 23. Quickly, have a little Bible study now. Now when he was in Jerusalem, that is our Lord, at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed, now get this, and don't come to me afterwards and tell me this is some other Greek word.

I've already checked that out. Now I'm not trying to impress you with my Greek, because the only Greek I know makes submarine sandwiches. But I do have some friends, and I've got an Englishman's

concordance.

And you can check these things. The tense may be a little different, but this is the word that's used throughout the Bible, where it says, believe on, there's the Greek's gone, he's shaking his head yes, I'll clear it with him. The same word, to stay you, is that the word? Okay, we're all right now.

So you believe me that I checked it. So don't come to me afterwards, I want to save you all that trouble. It's the same kind of belief that you have in Acts 16, 31.

So don't say, oh they believe differently. No, you're all wrong about that. Listen to this.

They believed on him when they saw the miracles he did, but verse 24 says, but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men. And if he's never committed himself to you, you're a stranger to grace. My question tonight is not have you committed yourself to him, but has he committed himself to you? Huh? Has the Holy Ghost shown you who Christ is? All right, let's go on over to John chapter 8, where our Lord defines discipleship.

I read so many commentaries on this thing, and all those eternal securitists, they have a hot potato here, and so they do all kind of fancy exegesis to get around some of these things. But let me tell you, our Lord defines discipleship over in John 8, verse 30, 31, 32, right in that section. May I read verse 30? John 8. And I respect these words, many believed on him.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if, and don't you take that out of the Bible, if you continue in my word, then are you my disciples. And our Lord defines a disciple as someone who continues. Then are you my disciple, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

And if it's the same crowd, if you read the whole context, if that's the same crowd, those who he refers to as believed on him in verse 30, if it's the same group, and I believe it is, you'll find that in verse 41 they deny, or they deny sin, they refuse to say that we were born in sin, and Jesus tells them in verse 44 that they're the father of the devil, and if it's the same crowd to the end of the chapter, you find they took up stones and cast it him. Same crowd, they weren't continuing. Now one other verse in John, and then one in Luke.

John chapter 12, verse 42 and 43. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him. But, oh be careful for the but.

When people talk you say, you know she's a wonderful lady, but, that's when you want to be careful. That's when the big old knife comes out. He's a great fellow, but, be careful then.

Now watch it. Many believed on him, but, but, that's bad. Because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

Why? For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. A text in Luke, in passing, just back a couple chapters. Luke chapter 8, where we have that great parable, we'll probably be looking at this week once, where our Lord defines, our Lord not only gives the parable, but he gives his meaning.

And when he is explaining to the disciples at their request, because they did request it, in verse 9 of Luke 8, they said, what might this parable be? He gave them the parable of the sower. Some fell by the wayside, some fell on rocks, some among thorns, some on good ground. And then they said, what might

this parable be? And in the course of his explaining, and I want to call your attention to verse 13.

They on the rock are they which when they hear the word, when Now that ought to make you a little suspicious right off the bat, because the first workings of the Spirit of God in a man that he's about to bring under conviction of sin, as a rule, in fact as I'd say almost without exception, is not joy. It's deep humiliation, conviction, disturbed, bothered, till he cries out for mercy, then comes the joy. But there's that work of conviction.

And so you ought to be a little suspicious. When they say, oh I got saved last night, went forward in a meeting, where are they tonight? Well some of them are still around, thank God they did. This is an outruling, this is an outruling immediate conversion.

I think it's the exception to the rule, but we won't go into that tonight. But I want you to see this. They received the word with joy.

Now note it. But these have no root, which for a while believed, and in the time of temptation they fall away. No root, no fruit, no continuing.

That's what they lacked, three things. No root, no fruit, no continuing. And that's why you've got to be careful with your children, to keep telling them they're Christians, when they don't act like Christians.

But don't go to the extreme and discourage them every time they stomp their toe. You know my dear, maybe I won't get to the message, I don't know, but the road to heaven is narrow. Jesus said it's a narrow straight road, and a narrow gate.

The road to heaven is narrow. And worse than that, there are two ditches, one on either side. It's a narrow road, but worse still, there's two awful ditches.

The ditch of presumption on one side, and the ditch of despair on the other. But bless God, hear me. Don't miss this, I got, I wouldn't want to stop there by telling you just how narrow the road was, and about these awful ditches.

I got other news for you, and that's this. In front of those two awful ditches, there are two hedgerows. And in front of the hedgerow of despair, is a hedgerow of God's promises to lay hold of, so you don't despair.

And in front of the ditch of presumption, is a hedgerow of God's precepts, that keeps you from being presumptuous. Well, so much for the spurious believers. Now, we'll at least start tonight, and maybe finish tomorrow night.

What are some of the differences? Now, I have no other gospel than this. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. But the question is, are you, and I'm talking to you young people, are you in this category over here, I don't doubt that almost everyone, if not every person, within the sound of my voice, would call themselves some kind of a believer.

This morning, if I stood outside of any liberal church here in this city this morning, and asked people, are you a believer, they would say, I just went over the creed, I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth. But the question is, have they believed efficaciously? Have they believed savingly to the changing of their state? Is there the evidence that that belief is a result of the Holy Ghost in regeneration? Is it that, or is it just some nominal belief of all shades and shapes? Now, what are some of

the differences? One, the false believer, the spurious believer, the phony believer, they want Christ, but not without exception. You get that? That's one of the differences.

The true believer wants Christ without exception. But the false believer says, yes, I want Christ, but I want my other lovers. Young people say, I want Christ, oh, I want to be a Christian, but I'm gonna, I'm gonna, I'm gonna.

But, but, but, but. No, no, you're not. They say, I want Christ if I can, if I can, if I can.

No, if. They say, I want Christ and a thousand other things. No, no.

The true believer says, I want Christ. There comes that time in his life, he may have some hits and ends and bruts. I'm not saying he won't have problems.

But he has to be that place where he sees Christ as the pearl of great price. He says, I want Christ without exception. No exception.

I just want Christ. And I'll tell you, when somebody gets like that, something's happened before that. The work of the spirits.

Because the evangelist can't do it by tricks and gadgets and gimmicks. But if the Holy Ghost ever shows you two things, you will be in that category. If the Holy Ghost ever shows you who you are and what you are, not what you've done, you don't need the Holy Ghost to know what you've done.

That's easy. Just look at your record. It takes the Holy Ghost to show a man what he is.

If the Holy Ghost ever shows you who you are and what you are, it takes the Holy Ghost to show you who Christ is. You'll never see Christ apart from the Holy Ghost in a saving way. When those two things happen, you won't say, I want Christ but, I want Christ if, I want Christ and my other No, you say, I want him without exception.

You see, there are those who says, all he asks, I want his grace. But I'll have nothing to do with his government. I don't want his government.

That's the spirit's belief, you see. They say, oh, I want the benefits of the cross. They love to hear us tell about how he died for them on the cross.

I want the benefits of the cross, but I don't want to bow to that crown. I'm not bound to that crown. You'll never know him.

Because you'll never know saving me the benefits of his cross apart from bowing to his crown. So they're inseparable. You don't separate that.

We got a generation of church people that can string the changes on the benefits of the cross, but know nothing about bowing to his crown. And we're still trying to say they're saved, but, but they don't do this. But, but, but, but, but.

I don't know if they're saved, neither do you. Why don't you quit saying they're saved? I don't know. I do know this, that you cannot, cannot, cannot have the benefits of his cross without bowing to his crown.

That I'm sure of. Because he's not separated in the gospel like we separate him, and I hope to show you that before this night's over. That's why I brought my catechism along, barred, barred the preachers.

I forgot mine. I'll show you that in a minute. They say, oh, yes, we want heaven.

There isn't anybody here that doesn't want heaven. That's why you're here. We want heaven, but I don't want that narrow road that leads there.

And we say, oh, we want to give you the free gift. They say, that's for me. Give me the free gift.

And we've been telling that for about 50 years, how free it is. But what we haven't told them is this, that that free gift must be received with empty hands. That's the difference.

Sure it's free, bless God, I wouldn't be here. Sure it's free, but let me tell you with all the power of my little voice and strength, that you cannot receive that free gift except with empty hands. That's why the gate's narrow, because you can't take a whole load of stuff through with you.

It's bowing. Well, that's the first difference. A true believer says, yes, I'm with Christ without exception.

I want to come to him, sure, by the way of the cradle, by the way of the cross, but bowing to his crown. We don't want to eliminate the virgin birth. We don't eliminate the vicarious suffering.

But we don't want to eliminate that victorious crown either. You don't divide up Christ. He's not offered that way in the gospel.

Now the second difference, and that brings me almost to the second point, and that's this. Second difference. True believers want to close with Christ as he's offered in the gospel.

Now you hear me tonight on this point. I might stop here, if you're lucky. I might stop.

You hear me on this point. I say, as, get this, I said true believers want to close with Christ as he's offered in the gospel. Now how is that? Suppose I was offering to you tonight Mary Baker Eddy's Christ.

She has a Christ, Mary Baker Grover Patterson Eddy. She has a Christ. But it's not the Christ of the Bible, is it? Oh, you'd be sure of that, wouldn't you? Nobody'd stumble on that one.

Suppose tonight I was offering you the Jehovah Witnesses Christ. My Jehovah Witness friends have a Christ. They have a Christ.

But it's not the Christ of the New Testament. But they got a Christ. The liberals tonight have a Christ, but it's not the Christ of the New Testament.

Although he has some of the characteristics of the Christ of the New Testament. There's something of the Christ of the New Testament. It's not a foreign altogether as they offer him.

They get some of the characteristics of the Christ and offer. Mary Baker Eddy, she's got that, some of the things from the New Testament about her Christ. So do our Jehovah Witness friends.

So do the liberals. They have some kind of a Christ, some of which is from the scriptures. Ah, you're resting pretty good.

Wait a minute. I want to ask you about the Christ that fundamentalism offers people when they say trust Jesus as your personal Savior, whatever that is. It's not in the Bible.

Now I know it's going to shock you, but it's not in the Bible. And you couldn't find those terms if you go back the past 100 years. Now almost 90% of our tracts, that's about the essence of them.

Now I don't want to be misunderstood on this point. It's a very fine line. There's nothing wrong with you speaking of Christ as your Savior.

There's nothing wrong with you speaking of him as your personal Savior or singing about him that way either, because he is that. But it would be just as proper if I'd start out a new cult saying Christ is my personal mediator, because he is that. Or my personal advocate.

He is that. These, my dear, are his offices. And we are not saved by one of Christ's offices.

He that hath a son hath life. And when you have the Son, you have him in all of his offices. That's why the Catechism, that's why the Catechism has questions like this.

Why was Christ called, why was our mediator called Christ? Our mediator, this is question 42, our mediator was called Christ because he was anointed of the Holy Ghost above measure, and so set apart and fully furnished with all authority and ability, bless God for that, set apart with all authority and ability to execute the office, get this, prophet, priest, and king of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and his exaltation. Next question. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? Well, what did the Old Testament prophet do? He was to interpret the will of God to people, and instruct and guide and counsel them.

Question, how does Christ execute the office of a prophet? Christ executed the office of a prophet in revealing to his church in all ages by his spirit and word, in diverse ways of administration, the whole will of God in all things concerning their edification and salvation. That was the office of the prophet. To interpret, you want to know, you say, I want Christ, but I don't want to know much about his will.

Well, you don't know him. Because one of the offices of the, one of the offices, one of the chief offices, three chief offices, prophet, priest, and king. And years ago you could never find any other kind of a Christ.

Let me go on. How does Christ execute the office of a priest? Christ executed the office of a priest in his want. What did the priest do in the Old Testament? Well, he sacrificed for the people.

He took the sacrifice in for the people, and he interceded for the people. Now, listen, how does Christ execute the office of a priest? Christ executed the office of a priest in his offering himself a sacrifice, without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people, and in making continual, thank the Lord, continual intercession for them. Next question.

How does Christ execute the office of a king? Prophet, priest, and king. Christ executed the office of a king in calling out of the world of people to himself, because he has ability and authority. Calling out of people of the world to himself, and giving them offices, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them, in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, correcting them for their sins, preserving them and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory and their goods, and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God and obey not the gospel.

How is Christ offered in the gospel? Prophet, priest, and king. No other way. What office do you suppose the spurious believer wants? Huh? What office do you suppose the spurious believer wants? He says, I don't mind that Christ who's my priest to sacrifice for me and pray for me, that's a pretty good deal.

That's easy. I don't mind that. Fine, good bargain.

Don't go to hell. Somebody sacrifice for me, somebody prays for me, live as a priest, I will. Yeah? Well you're just deceived as the devil himself.

That's what I'm about to tell you. Let me tell you something. I personally believe, I stand corrected, wisdom didn't end with me, but I personally believe that on this very point evangelicals so-called have been offering that is not the Christ of the Bible.

And people think they've embraced him, but are strangers to a Christ who guides and controls and instructs and counsels them. And they're strangers to a Christ who is a prince and a king to rule over them. That's the second office.

That's the second difference. The true believer says, I want Christ that he's offered in the gospel. Prophet, priest, and king.

The spurious believer says, I don't mind having a priest, but don't give that, don't give me that king stuff. I'm running this show. I'll go to the school I want to.

I'll marry the fellow I want to. I'll marry the boy I want to. I'll marry the girl I want to.

I'll have the kind of a job I want. I'll have the car I want, the home I want. That song we sang tonight, I thought of it as Harry was leading it.

It was the attitude of a Christian, thy will be done. A Christian is somebody who says, well maybe the Lord wants me to go to this school. Maybe, maybe, just possibly the Lord wants me not to marry this fellow.

Maybe the Lord wants me in this job. Maybe the Lord's calling me to preach the gospel. Oh, it may not come in a little cloud floating down on a little card or something, his will.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the attitude of the heart trying to discern the will of God. I'm talking about the attitude of the heart.

When the Holy Ghost's done a work in the heart, my dear friends, there's something happens. And this is not some after-work. And this is why we have all these things.

I was talking to my dear sister-in-law about this the other day, so she doesn't think I'm preaching at her. But this is why we have all these extra things. You see, they've depreciated salvation so you can get really saved and live like the devil, almost.

But you can get saved without much happening. But then when you get this, and it goes by a thousand names, whenever you get hit, that's when you surrender. That's when you get the power.

That's when something happens. That's when something happens over here. And at the same time, they're appreciating, they're appreciating all these.

Some call it, let me give you a couple examples. Some call it the deeper life, the higher life. Some call it, well, now you've taken Jesus as your Savior, now you want him as your Lord.

And when you, nothing happened when you took him as your Savior, Mark, just a little bit, you know, just I kind of go to church once in a while now. But nothing really happened. But when you take him as your Lord, that's when it really happens.

And so some have that system, and some have a higher life, some have this, and some have that, and some have the third and fourth and sixth blessing, and all that. But it's all over here. Now what's amiss? And all dear saint tonight, you who labor in the gospel, and you who are interested in souls, listen to me.

In all efforts to build these second things up, whatever they may be called, whatever name they have, I don't care. At the same time, we're depreciating salvation. And I'm here to tell you tonight, when a man gets saved, something happens.

And I'm not a Methodist and don't agree with John Wesley's theology, but I'll agree with his definition of salvation. He said when a man gets saved, regeneration is something that happens on the inside that manifests itself on the outside. And I, and stop hiding behind some false, phony profession.

I'm not scolding you. It's my heart's desire to get people saved. I'm not here to hurt the Church.

That's why men aren't interested in gospel work. That's why they're not interested in Christ Church, or the mission program, or souls. This is one of the reasons.

Somehow they kind of got in here and supposed to be saved and nothing happened. That's right. And I'm not talking about liberal churches.

I'm talking about bankrupt, fundamental churches. That's why they fight the Lordship of Christ. That's why they fight real salvation.

Listen, could I get a lesser definition of salvation than 2nd Corinthians 5:17? Oh, we've worn it smooth. The verse, we've worn it smooth. We've rattled it on so much we've worn it smooth.

But the verse still says, therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Not he ought to be. Not some people are.

Some aren't. He is a new creature. Now, that doesn't, verse doesn't stop there.

Shortest definition of a Christian in the Bible. The real essence of true religion, therefore of any man be in Christ. That's the essence of true religion.

If I could only ask and try to determine one question from the next, that's what I'd want to know. Not how many times you've been to the altar, not how many times you raised your hand, not how many catechism questions you know, not how many churches you've joined and left. The essence of true religion is, therefore, if any man be, two words, in Christ.

The effects of it? He is a new creation. That's the effect of regeneration. And regeneration is only known in its effects.

And there are two basic effects, and that is repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, inseparable. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. That's the effects of Bible religion.

One more thing, the evidence of it, is right in the same verse. All things pass away. Behold, all things become new.

That's the evidence of Bible faith. The essence? In Christ. The effects? New creation.

The evidence, or the issue, that which issues from it? All things pass away. Behold, all things become new. I better stop.

But I don't want to stop on a bad note. Let me just, you say to me, well, what do we tell sinners? You see, saving faith, dear friends, is saving belief, is receiving Christ as he's offered in the gospel. And I say to you tonight, dear soul, if you're destitute of a covering to keep you from God's wrath, true faith goes out and embraces Christ as the fine raiment to cover that soul to keep it from the storm of God's wrath.

To the soul that's hungry and thirsty for something that will everlastingly satisfy, true faith goes out after Christ and secures you as that which will everlastingly satisfy. True faith will go and buy bread and milk and wine without money, without price. To the soul pressed down tonight by guilt, true faith sees Christ as the city of refuge.

The only reason we try to take false hopes from people, so they might have a right hope in the Son of God our Savior. And true faith goes out to him. The soul that's pressed down tonight by guilt, true faith, sees Christ as the city of refuge.

And whatever way he offers himself in the Bible, true faith will point to him. If he offers himself as a bridegroom, faith takes the place of a bride. If he offers himself as a father, faith takes the place of a child.

That is true faith. If he offers himself as a shepherd, faith pleads itself to be sheep. He's offered as a stone, though rejected by many, true faith says he's precious to them.

You say, well, what do you tell sinners, Mr. Riesinger? Well, there's a couple things I don't tell them. I don't tell them Christ is down here. He's not down here anymore, he's back there.

That's one thing I don't tell them. Another thing I tell them is coming to Christ is not something you do with your feet. You got to do it down here, honey.

You got to do it down here. There's a lot of people going with their feet, but they haven't gone down here. And true faith, you got to go down here, dear.

That's the question. Have you gone down there? You say, what do you tell them? Well, let me tell you what old Pilgrim tells me. You don't mind me using my patience, do you? I just want to close, and I don't want to butcher this up, so I want to read it verbatim if I can see.

There's so much in Pilgrim's progress, but let me tell you, and I'll close with this, because this is my directions to you. You say, don't leave it hanging there, tell us what to do. Well, I'm going to tell you what faithful, who was a martyr, he died in Vanity Fair for his faith.

And it was through the death of faithful that hopeful became a Christian. And later on, when Christian and hopeful were in Enchanted Ground, a bad place to be. You seminary students, Enchanted Ground, a bad

place to be.

There's a danger going to sweep. You know, you get drowsy. There's lots of dangers in Enchanted Ground.

And so to overcome some of the dangers of Enchanted Ground, Christian says to hopeful, tell me how you got to be a Christian, not in those words. And so what I'm going to give you tonight is hopeful recounting his testimony, or his Christian experience, how faithful dealt with him. Now I do this tonight because you Sunday school teachers and personal workers, and thank God for you that you're interested in souls.

But we can learn a lesson how to deal with a seeking sinner. And if you're here tonight, you say, Mr. Riesinger, I kind of wind up on that spurious believer side. I don't want to leave you there.

My dear heart, my whole purpose of that is that you might seek Christ. And I want to give it to you, just what he told him to do. So I'll read it verbatim.

Christian. And what said faithful to you then? Well, I better go back a little. Hopeful.

I made my objections, that is to becoming a Christian, against believing. For I thought that he was not willing to save me, that is Christ. That's what hopeful said to faithful.

Then Christian says, and what said faithful to you then? Hopeful. He bid me go to him and see. Then I said it was presumption.

But he said, no, I was invited to come. Matthew 11, 28. Then he gave me a book of Jesus, indicting me, encouraging me to more freely come.

And he said, concerning the book, that every jot and every tittle would stand firmer than heaven and earth. Then I asked him, what must I do when I come? And he told me I must entreat him on my knees with my whole heart and soul. Entreat the Father to reveal him to me.

Notice the difference. Entreat the Father to reveal him to me. Notice he was placing himself at God's disposal.

That's God-centered. That's not man-centered. He's praying that God would reveal Christ to him.

Not you do this and you do that. When we tell sinners that, we inflate their flesh. You do this and you do that and you do the other thing.

And I come along and say, you can't do a thing. You better fall where you are and pray that he'll do something for you. That's the difference.

And that's just what's right here. Pray that, you see, it was God-centered. Here, faithful was telling him to place himself at God's disposal and God's mercy.

Now listen. Then I asked him further, how must I make my supplication to him? And he said, go and thou shalt find him on a mercy seat. And dear heart, tonight, from my own experience, I say to you, go and you'll find him on a mercy seat, where he sits all year long to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come.

And I told him that I knew not what to say when I came. And if you don't know, listen to this. This will give you some suggestive thoughts anyhow.

I told him I knew not what to say when I came. And he bid me to say to this effect, God be merciful to me a sinner and make me to know and believe in Jesus Christ. For I see that if his righteousness had not been, or I had not faith in that righteousness, I am utterly cast away.

Lord, I have heard that thou art a merciful God, and hast obtained and hast ordained that thy Son Jesus Christ should be a Savior of the world. And moreover thou art, that thou art willing to bestow him upon such poor sinners as I am. And I am a poor sinner indeed.

Lord, now listen to this, Lord take therefore this opportunity and magnify thy grace in the salvation of my soul through thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen. Christian, and did you do as you were bidden? Hopeful.

Yes. Over. This doesn't sound like today, does it? Yes.

Over and over and over. Christian, and did the Father reveal the Son to you? Hopeful. No, not at the first, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth, nor the fifth, no, nor the sixth time neither.

So I continued praying until the Father showed me the Son. It might be the first time. I don't know, I'm not God.

But if you go, I read a verse this morning where Jesus said, I will have mercy. I have a Bible that tells me he that cometh to me, I better give the first half of verse two. All that the, I used to just use the second half, all that the Father giveth me shall come to me.

And he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. But sinner, it's got to be the one of this book, not one you fabricated with your mind, not one the evangelist is betrayed that'll save you from hell and leave you wandering in sin. That's not the one.

This one saves people from sin and the consequences. Matthew 121. He shall save his people from their sin.

For our Father send your spirit to help men to discern if they are in thy covenant or strangers to thy grace. Hear our prayer that you'd send your spirit for those who are the ark of safety. Send thy spirit to make them more miserable, more uncomfortable, disturb them, distress them, that they might be comforted by the sweet comfort of the gospel.

And by thy sweet grace and mercy, oh send your spirit to do that great work. We ask it in your dear name. Amen.

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