

# For to Me, To Live is Christ

by Fred Tomlinson

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**Scripture:** Romans 1:1, Philipians 1:20, Colossians 1:27, Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 6:17, John 14:20

**Topics:** "Commitment to Christ", "Transformation through Faith"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Well, good morning everyone. I'm aware that there are going to be people who are spread around the nation or the nations who will be listening to me this morning. And that's a very strange feeling to have when you're in a room with a restricted number of people.

This whole thing of being on the Internet is, as many of you will know, a very new experience for me. And it's a strange experience because I know that I'm talking to people, many of whom are listening week by week, that I will very likely never meet, almost certainly never get to know, or very, very few of you. But it is a tremendous privilege.

I'm new to the Internet. I'm not new to the things of God. I'm very blessed.

I was thinking just a little earlier, it's, I don't know, over 55 years since I've been standing in front of people talking about the Bible. But it's a privilege to be able to speak to people even though I can't see them, and I don't know who you are. But I do pray, and I mean this, I pray that God will use something that you will hear today that will be the word of God to you.

And I trust that you'll find faith in your heart to respond to whatever it is that God may say to you. I'm speaking here from Western Canada, about 50 miles from Vancouver. I don't know where you are, but this

is where I am.

You can learn a little bit more about us, I suppose, by going onto our church website, which is [mckenziefellowship.com](http://mckenziefellowship.com), if you're interested. But for right now, if you have your Bible handy, let's open it, shall we, to the book of Philippians. Philippians.

I'm sure that many of you know that the writer, of course, is the Apostle Paul. And as a result of his own experience of God and his understanding of the Gospel and his commitment to preach that message, he's got himself into a lot of trouble. And certainly there have been those of his own nation that have been out to kill him.

There are those who have made a covenant together that they would not eat until they'd actually killed him. And lots of things took place that we could read about. And I hope you have read about them in the Scriptures, reading through the book of the Acts of the Apostles and seeing how everything was unfolding there and Paul's place in the unfolding story.

It was in a particular situation where he exposed the fact that he was a Roman citizen and as a result of different things that we won't pause to talk about just now, he appealed to be able to stand before Caesar. And he was taken to Rome. And at this time, as we open up this book of Philippians, Paul is actually under house arrest in Rome.

He is chained to a Roman soldier. There are soldiers who spend their shifts chained to this apostle in this house. Very different situation.

I was thinking about this yesterday. He's under arrest. He's taken to the city of Rome awaiting an audience with Caesar or whoever's going to be dealing with him.

And he's able to live in what is called in the Scriptures his own hired house. It's not quite normal by any means because, as I say, he's chained to a Roman soldier there who's with him seven days a week, 24-7 as we say. But nevertheless, that's very, very different.

There was a time in my early life when I was a police officer in Liverpool. And I know this, that there was never a case where we arrested someone and then locked them up in a rented house somewhere with a police officer there to look after them. This was different.

But there he was. And he had no idea what his future held for him, humanly speaking. He was awaiting his fate.

It could go one of two ways. He would either be discharged and released and set free. As, in fact, that actually happened in due course on this occasion.

He would spend more time in a Roman prison later on. That's another part of the story. But at this point in time, he could either be set free or, of course, he could die.

He could be executed. He didn't know which way it was going to go. And I try to imagine what it was like to be there with these soldiers.

He had various visitors, Christian brethren who came to him and ministered to him while he was there. He was writing his various letters from that prison situation. And no doubt there were many conversations that he would have.

In fact, I'm absolutely certain, and there's some statements right here before us in the first chapter that would lend credence to this, that he actually was very carefully and very deliberately preaching the gospel to those soldiers as they spent those hours with him. But I'm imagining that there would be times when one or other of these soldiers would try to find out more about this man. Who really was he? What was going on in his mind? What was he thinking about himself? And perhaps the question was poised to him sometimes.

What's going through your mind, Paul, as you're sitting here chained and waiting for a fate that is completely unknown to you? Well, if in fact that happened, we've got his answer right here and we're going to look at it for a little while this morning. I'm in the first chapter of Philippians. Let me read several verses to you and then we'll focus in on one particular phrase.

He said, There are some, in verse 15, out there who preach Christ even of envy and strife and some of goodwill. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds, but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, for I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain, but if I live in the flesh this is the fruit of my labour, yet what shall I choose? I want not, I don't know. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and having this confidence I know that I shall abide and continue with you, with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith. And I'll break away from the reading at that point.

What wonderful words. The answer to the question I've suggested, I believe we can find in a very succinct and yet very powerful way is in the 21st verse. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

In this English translation there's 12 very simple words that comprise that verse. Three particular phrases and I'd like to look at the first two of these phrases today and Lord willing when we meet next time I'd like to look at the third which is also in this verse. So first of all I hear the Apostle Paul saying for to me.

I think maybe just to add some extra context to that let me just remind you once again of the possibility that someone has asked him a question about himself and what's going on in his heart and in his mind and his emotions at this time. And here's his response, well for to me and I think with this short little phrase here you have a sense that what is about to follow will be something that's profound. Something that expresses his heart.

Something that really makes him tick as we say on the inside. Sometimes we say I wonder what makes that man tick? Well I suppose these soldiers might have wondered what makes this man tick? Why is he here? What's he thinking? He's answering them. I think with this little phrase for to me in this context I have the sense that whatever he's about to say is not going to be something that's just off the cuff.

It's not just a casual opinion. But what he is about to say would be something that was firmly and securely established in his heart and in his life. It was and would be his resolute position.

It's not going to be something which is merely the result of his present circumstances. But there's something that has been going on something that has become settled in this man's inner man for a long time. From long ago there's been this settled sense.

With that in mind I think I can safely say that to come to that kind of resolution we need to somehow disengage ourselves from others. Paul's got a lot to say about others. In this book this is a stretch of my imagination my memory rather but if I'm not mistaken I think the phrase together or something close to that is referred to I think about 25 times in this epistle.

So he's got others in his mind because he's writing to others that he loves with a passion. And we thank God for one another for those that God brings into our lives and fellowship which is so real even as I'm saying this I'm thinking of that precious phrase in the second chapter of the book of Acts speaking of the early church and these new Christians and they that believed were together. Because we know that things are happening in our society around us right now that is fragmenting us and it's separating us and that cuts against the grain truly for everyone but for a Christian or for Christians it's a big deal because we're designed for fellowship because we're all component parts of one body which is the body of Christ and so there's a sense in which that is something very very precious to Christian people and it certainly was to the Apostle Paul but there's another sense another way of looking at these things and that is that to become resolute in your deepest heart there's a sense in which you've got to isolate yourself from other opinions and from other people and other pressures where we consciously isolate ourselves from what other people are saying so that we arrive at a point where we in one way or another say well as for me this is where I stand it's a thought through determined reasoned resolute position and posture and even just saying these things reminds me of another section of Scripture way back in the Old Testament in the book of Joshua I don't know how familiar you are with that but right in the last chapter of the book of Joshua Paul is talking to the people and he's coming toward the end of his own life and they've travelled together for a long time and they've gone through lots of ups and downs and ins and outs and there have been other gods and distractions and unbelief and some faith and so on and at this point Joshua is making a statement to the crowd and basically he's saying whatever you decide whatever gods you choose that you want to serve and worship he said you can do that but I need to tell you one thing this is the way it comes down he said as for me and my house we will serve the Lord that was the kind of resolute position that I'm suggesting Paul had as he finds himself in this prison cell or in this home and if I could just digress just for a moment there'll be some people who know me well and have listened to me talking a lot more who will have heard me say this before I'm sure but many many years ago as a result of a particular set of circumstances I was taken home in Liverpool in the chauffeur driven police car which was designated for the chief we called him chief constable for the chief of police for the city of Liverpool and we arrived at my house I'm sure for those who have never heard the story you'll have a lot of questions in your mind about this but the sergeant who was driving the vehicle remained in the vehicle and the chief came with me to the front door of the house came into our house met Sheila Sheila made tea we had tea and there was some conversation sergeant still sitting out in the car outside and then as he was leaving as we approached the front door he stopped and we can both remember this very vividly he stood looking at the wall just next to the door to go out and leave because there was a text on the wall and it was these very words but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord and he was doing some deep thinking as he stood there on that occasion but that's what is prompted in my mind and memory when I read these words and I'd like to ask you a question this morning have you ever come have you ever arrived to this position where everything within you is resolute where it's not just a casual as I've mentioned already just sort of casual off the cuff statement about your Christian faith but rather where you have you have done some

serious thinking a wonderful man of God I knew many many years ago once said there's nothing like good solid thinking in the hands of the Holy Spirit and we need to do that in this crazy busy world where there are a thousand different distractions even in our own home in the front room there's so many distractions there the technology that we have available and so on and some people don't like silence but to become silent in the presence of God and with the scriptures open to seek him and ask him to speak to us and clarify to us the important things that need to be clarified I exhort you to seriously consider this it's essential for us we all must we must come to a place and position where our responses to God and to his word are resolute it doesn't mean we know everything because we do not but it means that we have set our hearts to understand him how long has it been off? have you stopped the video? keep going you know in order to come to this kind of position and to adopt this posture where we are resolute we will beyond any question be living, operating and thinking in a way that is counter to the culture in which we live at this point in time you know there's a phrase I never learned this at school but I hear it quite a bit these days and that is groupthink the sort of parallel to that from scripture might be all you like sheep have gone astray but groupthink where we're influenced greatly by the way that others are thinking and the way others are behaving and the values of others and so on but you know what I'm talking about this morning is an attitude and a behavior that is the polar opposite of groupthink it's where as an individual I isolate myself in the presence of God to hear his word to me and as the result I come to conviction and to the settled and secure place may God assist us all to engage ourselves to think independently I'm not promoting individualism I'm simply saying that we don't want to spend our lives in the slipstream of someone else even the best of people with the best help that they can possibly give to us but we don't want to spend our lives there we need to come to that personal place of understanding before God we'll benefit from the others who are teaching and preaching and helping us certainly but our relationship must be with God himself rather than knowing God vicariously through some great Bible teacher or someone that's been a great pastor to us or whatever it is and so on so here we have the first phrase in this statement as for me and the next phrase is to live for Christ to live for Christ for Paul it all really went back to that event on the Damascus Road didn't it? he had a lot of history prior to that of course which was not without significance by any means but the fact of the matter is something happened to this man who was then Saul of Tarsus as he travelled on the Damascus Road he was intercepted by the very one whose reputation he was seeking to destroy by Jesus Christ himself and nothing about his life would remain the same as the result of that encounter and as a result of what took place there he would proceed from that moment to live for nothing else but for Christ for to me to live is Christ we sing in a song here since my eyes were fixed on Jesus I've lost sight of all beside so enchained my spirit's vision looking at the crucified for the Apostle Paul Jesus Christ was the Alpha and the Omega of his entire life and he would take precedence over everything that was Paul's life everything shortly we would hear him saying in chapter 3 and verse 13 I believe he would say this one thing I do that's the kind of man he was this is the kind of man that God was producing a man who was clear he was clear about the person of Christ he was clear that there was no alternative whatsoever he was clear certainly about the message that had been committed to his trust and he was clear that he must give his all to God and this he did and then he promoted others to do the same thing as we know very well it was actually Charles Spurgeon who once said this he said if Christ is not all to you he is nothing to you he will never go into partnership as a part saviour of men if he is to be something he must be everything if he is not everything to you he is nothing to you Paul understood that very very plainly I think to find men and women in the journey of our lives who understand that concept and who are consistently surrendering themselves to the outworking of that concept are few and far between how about you? are you that kind of person? have you had such an encounter with God that has radically transformed you inwardly transformed your vision of the things

concerning God transformed your value system transformed your heart in every way if he is not everything to you he is nothing to you well the Apostle Paul said for to me to live is Christ the Apostle Paul introduces himself to the Romans in his letters to the Roman church in this way he says Paul a slave of Jesus Christ or of Christ Jesus called an Apostle separated unto the Gospel of God Paul a slave he said the same thing here in the first verse he says Paul and Timothy the translation here is servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons you know translators with all of their skills face many challenges changing words from one language into a different language and there is inevitably a degree of interpretation that comes in sometimes in greater degrees than others because it doesn't always work to get word for word literally in every case so translators will take into consideration the context of the very people that the new translation is going to be reaching and so on the fact is that the word that Paul is using that is in the Greek language is dualist and it means slave it doesn't mean servant it doesn't mean bond servant as another translation puts it it means slave and sometimes in the course of preaching I don't know if I'm guilty of this maybe I have been but we've gone back to Exodus chapter 21 and we've thought of the situation there where a slave having served his time has come to the conclusion perhaps he came to it a long time before this that he loves his master and he doesn't wish to go free and so he goes to the door and then all this pierced through his ear and so on and there's a lot of sermons been preached about that I'm sure and some songs about it as well but that was to be done to a debt slave someone who had a debt and as the result of not being able to pay the debt they would spend their period of years serving and on occasion that may terminate in the way that's described in Exodus chapter 21 but I think so often there's a desire to take away and remove anything that's too harsh and the idea of a bond slave and coming and having our ear pierced has some merit to it I'll agree but the fact of the matter is that the word that Paul is using is the common word for a common slave it's nothing more in other words he's referring to himself as being base and the whole concept of being a slave to the Hebrews back then it was a completely degrading institution and yet here Paul he chooses it readily seeing it to be fully applicable to him he's seeing himself as being bought on the slave market bought with a price even the precious blood of Christ another apostle would add but he saw himself like that and his whole life now was locked in with the one who purchased him and he understood clearly that as a common slave he had no independence anymore he had no freedom anymore he had no rights anymore he'd been bought with a price and he, Paul, would remind those that he writes to about this to the Corinthians on two occasions in 1st Corinthians he reminds them that they have been bought with a price in other words he's wanting to impart to them this same mind that he had just the other day I was speaking here and talked about us being like a rusty can that's thrown into the Pacific Ocean with the ocean swilling through our lives and I was applying that to a text in the book of Ephesians but Paul he wasn't trying to elevate himself or make himself out to be something quite the opposite he realized that he was the subject of the mercy of God and the grace of God was extended to him that he had no claim of right to whatsoever on another occasion he would say though I be nothing and he was unashamed to say we live in a time and in a culture where people want to elevate themselves and even within the context of what we call Christian ministry we want to be a somebody and have a title for ourselves and so on I once heard someone preaching who was referring to this in a slightly different way but they were referring to the Apostle Paul and they were imagining that he had submitted his resume to a modern church here and if he listed down all of his credentials there would be no way whatsoever he would be employed by the average church in our culture today but Paul was unashamed he readily embraced this fact that he was nothing that Christ was everything and glory to God and he knew as I have already read to you from Romans chapter 1 and verse 1 that he had been chosen by God to be as a slave with a view to preaching the gospel he was set apart unto the gospel of God we read in that verse of Scripture and he knew what the gospel was he didn't learn

it in a bible school he didn't have all the credentials framed on his wall or on his sideboard or anything he had had an encounter with the living Christ of God and his life would never be the same again and God revealed to him by revelation he would say himself writing to the Galatians I wasn't taught this no one taught me he said I received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ and he knew what it was he knew that there was no equal for the Christian gospel the message which had been committed to his trust had no equal whatsoever and this burned like a fire in his heart he carried this truth like a priceless treasure he was jealous over it that it should not be in any way altered at all he knew that this message carried and communicated the very power of God for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek he would write and so on he knew that this power of God through the gospel had the power to transform men and women to utterly transform them to transform them from spiritual death to spiritual life from spiritual bondage to spiritual liberty he knew there was nothing more important than it he preached it he taught it he wrote it he defended it and supremely he lived it Amen and he promoted this idea consistently that this message that he had received must never be permitted to be corrupted it must never be varnished over in some way to make it more acceptable it must never be altered because he would say immediately we start to meddle with it and change it and alter it and make it more acceptable we in fact destroy it and it's stripped of its life transforming power and yet sad to say of course this is exactly what's going on in all too many cases today where we're allowing our culture the world to mould the message and mould the way we produce it and the gospel has been reduced to a commodity and the message has been stripped of its supernatural feature and has been secularized and even our worship of God has been transformed transformed into something that creates a living for people making it what it never was intended to be at all but this slave this common slave of the Lord Jesus Christ would serve God like a soldier I'm wondering how you feel your life is matching up to his he was fully aware of the fact that there was an enemy he would write about the enemy in various ways well very aware of the way he described the enemy in the last chapter of the book of Ephesians with great terms which remind us of the sinister nature of the enemy that we all face and so on, but he was also conscious of the enemy within himself and the enemy that would be in the self-life of those to whom he was preaching he knew beyond any doubt and would preach that the secret to victory over that enemy was the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, the cross which must be continually surrendered to by every believer the flesh, the self-life must be mastered we must never become normal in that sense, or nominal I think it would be true to say that if we were engaged as a soldier and we decide that we want to behave in a nominal way we will commit ourselves nominally to the various features of warfare, it would be like taking a death wish but this very fact, it seems, is a bridge too far for so many professing believers in Jesus where we are ready to forfeit all of our rights and understand that we no longer have a private life Paul would say you know that whose I am and whom I serve he who would speak so boldly and say for to me, to live is Christ in other words, there's nothing else at all he separated himself from other people's opinions he separated himself from the way the world thinks and the policies of the world and the values of the world and from every other direction and he gave himself entirely to Jesus Christ and that to fulfill his calling which was to minister and preach the gospel but to live for Christ as he puts it not only suggests to us living to serve him but it has a deeper significance, a much deeper significance than that a significance which is really the keystone of the very gospel itself it's what Paul himself will refer to as the mystery there are glimmers of this mystery in the Old Testament to be found if you want to turn to some scriptures I'm going to read a few verses to you I'm looking in the book of Romans in the last chapter of Romans, which is a kind of a doxology, chapter 16 and I read in verse 25 unto him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but is now made

manifest and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith he speaks there about the mystery the revelation of the mystery which has been hidden in God writing to the Ephesians Paul says this in the third chapter and in verse 8 he says unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord and then I am in Colossians and in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 26 he is saying the same thing do you see the theme he is speaking about a mystery which has been hidden in God and this once again is the keynote and the keystone more particularly of the very gospel that he is preaching he is saying that there is that which has been hidden in God's heart and in God's mind from the beginning but is now being made known that is what we have picked up from the two readings but when he writes to the Colossians he is more specific and he says this in verse 25 whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God even the mystery which has been hid from ages and generations but now is made manifest to his saints to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you the hope of glory Paul would add to this I won't take you through some other scriptures but Paul would expand on this very same thing he would say to the Colossians in chapter 3 in verse 4 when Christ who is our life Christ who is our life and so on he would speak about the fact that God had a plan to reveal his son in me because this takes us back to the words of Jesus, Jesus was certainly alluding to this when he talked to his disciples when he said I am with you but I shall be in you so that when I hear the apostle Paul writing here in his epistles of the Philippians for to me to live is Christ yes indeed there's a sense in which he's referring to the fact that he was called as a slave as a servant and as a servant he fulfilled his duty as a soldier as I've suggested nothing half-hearted about him at all he understood that he lived to preach and minister the precious gospel of Christ with his lips and speak out the word but there is this deeper significance that I'm referring to which is alluded to and described in these verses I've read to you and that is this great truth that under this new covenant this new arrangement that God has ordained and purchased for us it's no longer God who is a far off it's no longer even that he walks with me and he talks with me as I walk the narrow way as we sing on one of our songs but Jesus prophesied didn't he? He said I am with you but I shall be in you and he knew in order to fulfill that word he would need to go to the cross and pay the ultimate price which he did and he in shedding his blood he purchased redemption he redeemed us from the slave market he purchased our freedom and then by the giving of the Holy Spirit of God he would come so that men and women could receive the very Spirit of Christ Paul would say if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his and all this that we're looking at here when I read these words Christ in you Christ in you this is the this is the pivot away from what is more commonplace and more an accepted message that we're doing our best Paul did not say nor did he ever suggest that we should as for me for to me the calling is to try and live like Christ he didn't say that he said for to me to live is Christ how can that be only because of a miracle the miracle of the impartation of the very life of God into human vessels so much so that our bodies become the very temple of the Holy Spirit of God Paul understood this and he taught this consistently he understood that there was a mystic blending of the divine and the redeemed humanity of men and women it's not any longer Christ near to me it's not it's not that Christ is even in me but separate from me the Bible doesn't teach that it teaches a union it's his life blended with my life for to me to live is Christ Paul is saying here Paul would write to the Corinthians on one occasion chapter 6 of 1st Corinthians he said he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit think of it a

hymn we sing says life immortal heaven descending to my heart the spirit shrine God and man in oneness blending oh what fellowship is mine or Charles Wesley would say he leads into this but then comes this statement my second real and living life I then began to live can you see how far this is from to me to live is to try and be like Christ that is not the gospel of the New Testament the gospel of the New Testament presents something which is utterly and profoundly impossible apart from the spirit of God within our hearts when Paul talked about preaching Christ or living for Christ or his life being for Christ he wasn't thinking of standing on some podium and spouting out words he did that but he saw this deeper truth this vital truth this truth which alone creates a genuine Christian man or Christian woman the Apostle John would say writing in his gospel no man has seen God at any time and then he goes on the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father he has declared him we talk about billboards here strewn along the highway side in England we call them or we used to call them placards the idea is he the Lord Jesus in the context of what John is saying he Jesus he's placarded God he's declared God no man has seen him at any time but this son who dwells in the bosom of his father has come here and he has made him known he's demonstrated him he's declared him he's placarded him Amen and in the very same way Paul is speaking here about having that same spirit of God within him that same life of God within him and he understood that the goal of his life this resolute goal was that he that his whole being could manifest the life that God had planted within him and blended in his heart with his own spirit and his passion was that this life be manifested do you see that I read it to you earlier when he said my earnest expectation this is Philippians 1 verse 20 my earnest expectation and hope is that in nothing I shall be ashamed but that with all boldness as always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or by death magnified magnified he didn't say I shall magnify him he said because of the supply of the spirit do you see in the end of verse 19 because of the supply of the spirit of Jesus he by his own Holy Spirit would enable my life to actually magnify Jesus to magnify to make something which is small larger to make something which is distant closer he's talking about his life so he's saying to this Roman soldier or whoever it is this is the commitment of my whole being he said whether I live or whether I die I've only got one purpose and that is that Christ shall be magnified made known made clearer brought nearer to you through my life it being expressed through my body which was seriously damaged as the result of what he'd been subjected to and so on one thing is certain if a person has this life within them there is that about it which will be a spontaneous distinctive element that sets the true men and women of God apart there'll be that that Paul refers to on another occasion as the aroma of Christ just the aroma of Christ and Paul wanted this life with its unique distinctive aroma to be manifested to flow freely through his person whatever his circumstances would be as I close let me just draw your attention to something Paul says in the first chapter of Galatians he's writing there to the Galatian church and he uses a very riveting illustration and makes a riveting statement really certainly we understand this there was something something about Paul's appearance that was offensive and there's been so many different speculations as to what that was and so on I mean apart from people say well it was his eyes and so on maybe it was but the fact of the matter is he'd recently been stoned to such an extent that those who stoned him left him for dead that's going to leave some pretty serious marks on your person for that to be the case certainly but whatever it was Paul writes here to the Galatians I'm actually in the wrong chapter chapter 4 he's talking to these brethren in the Galatian church and he says in verse 13 you know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first and my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not nor rejected but you received me you received me as an angel of God you received me even as Christ I said this is a riveting statement it's a thought provoking statement that a man would speak so confidently and so boldly he knew it wasn't of himself he wasn't praising himself he wasn't elevating himself no he saw himself as a common slave of the Lord Jesus Christ he had no merit to claim his appearance evidently

was offensive in one way or another there was nothing about him he knew that whatever it would be that could emanate the radiance of Christ or spread the aroma of Christ's life it would be of the spirit of God it would not be of himself at all but here he's able to make this statement when I came among you you didn't reject me you didn't turn away from me you weren't embarrassed or you didn't take any notice of what other people may consider to be a stigma about my person or my appearance but you received me as though I was Jesus Christ coming among you I wonder if you can say with the apostle today as we have seen here for to me to live is Christ I'll leave the last part of the verse for another time but let me just close with these words of Francis Ridley Abigail they're timeless words it was a hymn I guess that she wrote but this is one of the verses live out thy life within me oh Jesus king of kings be thou thyself the answer to all my questionings live out thy life within me in all things have thy way I the transparent medium thy glory to display let's pray our father we pray that even through my faltering words here this morning that you by your Holy Spirit will arrest the minds and hearts of men and women wherever they are Lord we thank you that you have established a standard for your people that is humanly impossible to reach but Lord through the miracle of redemption you have made something possible which was it wasn't even in our hope because we would never even have imagined what you had silently planned in your love for us and made available to us now by your grace we pray Lord as we search the scriptures again and see the standard lifted high that you will wet the appetites the inward spiritual appetites of many people Lord create a holy dissatisfaction with everything that would be less than this and quicken faith within hearts Lord and work in the areas of many minds and allow them Lord to be stirred and quickened to grasp hold of the great truth of scripture the wonder and the glory of this mystery which was hidden from the ages but now is made known to us Christ in us the hope of glory so we praise you and commit one another to you in Jesus name Amen

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/9zCe34FMDJ0.mp4>

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