

For Me to Live Is Christ

by Harold Wildish

The sermon emphasizes that true life is found in Christ, who transforms our existence into a meaningful journey of faith and purpose.

Duration: 38:30

Scripture: Psalm 42:1-2, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:2, Philippians 1:20, James 1:22

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by recounting a story of a man on a sports field attempting to run a four-minute mile. The speaker then transitions to discussing the importance of understanding that God sent his son Jesus into the world out of love. The speaker shares a story of a tribe and how a little girl was the one who asked about the messengers of the great spirit. The speaker emphasizes that if one desires a deeper understanding of God, this week could be transformative and provide the secrets found in the Bible to become a strong and beautiful Christian.

Transcript

I would like to turn to Philippians chapter 1, and when you've found it, I want you to let it lie open in front of you, and when you've found it, just bow your head over it for a moment of prayer. Philippians chapter 1, we are going to read in a moment at verse 20. Shall we bow our heads over the Word of God? Loving Lord Jesus, we expect thee to be here with us.

We long to hear thy voice and feel thy touch upon our spirits. Help us largely to forget each other. Help us to forget times.

Take away all fret and worry and give us hungry hearts. To learn the secrets that thou dost want to teach us. We know you'll care for us because you died for us.

We believe that thou dost have a great care over our spiritual life, that we might grow to be the strong and beautiful Christians that thou hast planned. We ask thee that from this beginning day of this convention, thy deepening gracious work may go on in all our hearts for our good, and for thy glory, for thy dear name's sake. Amen.

Verse 20 Philippians chapter 1. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, there is 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 labor.

Yet what I shall choose I want not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart to be with Christ which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

Tonight I want to bring to you the testimony of a victorious missionary. He sums it up in 12 words. He looks into our faces and he says I can't talk about you and your spiritual experience, and in verse 21 it brings out this personal testimony.

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Now, there are two experiences that the children of Adam have that they didn't ask for. Living and dying, and if the one of Adam's race, then bless our Lord, comes back very soon as he may, face living, face dying.

I didn't consult with anybody, I didn't ask anybody, could I live? I arrived. I'm so glad God gave me the gift of life. I look back over 60, 63, nearly 64 years now, and I thank God for the gift of life.

I've enjoyed it. It's been full of rich experiences. I'm glad he gave me a life to live.

As the shadow lengthens and I see many of my contemporaries in the sixties slipping away, out of time into eternity, I know that if the Lord doesn't come, one will pass through the valley and taste that experience's death. As I walked down Main Street and I met a hundred different people, and I said look, I'm asking you could you give me one word for to me to live is what? In North America, I could get a hundred different answers on Main Street in an hour. Mr. Politician would say, for to me to live is politics.

Mr. Sportsman would say, for to me to live is sports. The business man would say, for to me to live is business. There were people who'd say, for to me to live is money, pleasure.

Some might use the word religious, home, science. There might be many greater words. For to me to live is gambling, or sex, or drunken.

There's a man who stands amongst men and he says, for to me to live is Christ. Then he says, to die is game. But I think of the hundred other answers.

The politician must leave his politics behind, and the businessman must leave his business behind, and the fair lady must leave her lost home behind. All these things will be left behind, and to die is? Here's a man who could stand amongst men and say, to die is game. You see, you can't go wrong by being a Christian.

If you've got Christ as you know Him by faith, He becomes everything to you in life. Then death is just a gateway, faith giving way to Christ. The one who having not seen, you've learned to know and love.

You see Him face to face, and a great future begins. So, can you honestly say, for to me, to live is Christ? You know, down into our old, sobbing, sinning world, there came the Son of God, and standing amongst us, He told us He was sent for the Father, and He said, I haven't come to condemn you. I come that ye might have life, that ye might have it more abundantly.

He didn't come with life in His hands and say, look I've brought it. The wages of your sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, and I've brought this wonderful eternal life down to you. Will you come and take it out of my hands? No! He looked into our faces, and He said, I am the life, and a voice behind Him said, He

that hath the Son hath life.

He that hath not the Son hath not life, for also God abideth on Him, and Christ is life, for to me, Christ, for to live is Christ, and to this little missionary, Christ was all, and all was in Christ. This was the secret of His victory. So, that's a wonderful thing.

I wonder if I could take you up into the, let's see now, the great big Rockies, and up on the top of the Rocky Mountains, I can see in the wind a little tiny tree waving in the wind, and all of a sudden the tree opens its mouth, and it says, Mountain, I'm greater than you are. You're only made up of rock and soil. You're inanimate.

I'm a living thing. I've got life, and it has, and a tree, a little baby plant can talk to a mountain and say, I'm greater than you are. It's got vegetable life.

I go up to Yosemite, and up on the ridge above Yosemite, I see those great big red trees. You can drive a car right through the tree trunk. They took a thousand years to grow, or more.

Out in the top branches is a little insect, and the little insect is talking, and it says, Tree, I'm greater than you are. You're only a piece of vegetable matter. I've got organic life.

I've got nervous life. I've got little pulsing organs. I'm a living creature, and it has every right to talk like that.

I go to Chicago Zoo, and I see a great big animal called an elephant, and they're putting up a little junior on its back for a ride round the ground, and the cheeky little fellow looks down and says, Jumbo, I'm greater than you are. You're only an animal. I'm a human being.

I've got mental life, and even though he's cheeky, he has every right to talk like that, because there's a gulf between the highest animal and the lowest man that they can't reach, even though they try pretty hard with their theories. I move now into a lovely office, and I see a scientist in his white coat, and he's working. He's got all the degrees.

He's been to the university. He's brilliant, but he's a natural man. There's never been that amazing something in his dead spirit that brought new creation, a new birth, a new life, and now he's busy with his test tube.

A boy comes in. He's only 16. He couldn't get through his high school.

He's taken a menial job. He's a message boy, but listen, he came under the sound of the gospel, and he heard the story of God's unspeakable gift. He came to Calvary in true repentance, and received the living Savior into his heart, and a miracle took place.

He was born from above. God did a new creation work in his dead spirit. I wouldn't advise young Christian boys to talk to professors like this, but he stepped through and he said, Professor, I've got a greater life than you have.

I've been born again. And he has every right to do that. There is a doubt between the most brilliant natural man and the humblest newborn child with eternal life in God's hands.

Now, very cautiously, I approach it. Is it possible for one Christian to look into the face of another Christian and say, you have life, but I have life more abundant? Is it a misuse of scripture to talk such language? I would be very suspicious of any Christian who ever looked into the face of another Christian and talked like that. I'm simply asking you to face the fact.

I come, said Jesus, that ye might have life, that ye might have it more abundantly. Is there a difference between life and abundant life? Then come with me. Let's go to a hospital, and lying on the bed is a poor fellow who's dreadfully sick.

I go to his bedside, and I say, friend, uh, I've got a question to ask you. Are you alive? And rearing himself up from the sheets, he uses the last bit of strength he's got. He says, yes, I am, and so exhausted by the effort, he falls back on his clothes.

He's alive, poor fellow, just. I leave the hospital, and I go out to the sports field, and I can see a fellow in running shorts and spiked shoes and his vest. I see him getting down to his marks on the pistol tracks.

He's trying to do under four minute mile. I see him going round, and as he comes round, I've been watching my little ticker, and I notice he did it in fifty-nine and a half seconds. He's moving into his second lap, and then his third lap.

If he goes on like this and has a burst of speed, he's going to do it in under four minutes, and as he comes round on the last lap, I lift up my voice, and I say, Father, are you alive? And I'm the fool for asking the question. For three and a half minutes, I've watched a magnificent piece of young man who's giving his best. I've seen the movement of his limbs.

I've seen the rhyme of his body. He's alive. He's got abundant life, physically.

And if I ask you if there's any difference between the person on the bed, who we will call an invalid, and the person out on the sports field, who we will call an athlete, you can give me an honest answer. I come that he might have life, that he might have it more abundantly. He spoke of a healthy spiritual life that portrayed the strength and beauty of his own life.

I know so many who are Christians and have bowed at the cross and said, Lord, could you ever forgive my sins and save my poor soul? It seems to go on year after year without that tremendous secret of tasting and experiencing in every battleground the life abundant. Well, you say it's not for me, sir. All right, you will go on in your defeat.

If there's no hunger and thirst for it, you will drift in and out of the meetings. You will listen and compare speaker and sermon with sermon. But, if there's an honest desire in your heart, this week could have a transforming effect upon your life, and this week you could learn the secrets that are very plain in this precious book, that could make you a strong and beautiful Christian with the strength of your written Lord, and the beauty of your written Lord, seen seven days a week in every battleground that you are called to face.

Do you want it or not? This is what we have to say at the beginning, as the days go by, one in a hundred, one in twenty, one here and one there will have the hungering and the thirst of the Spirit of God revealed the truth, and will be drawn to pay the price of entering into the provisions that your written Lord has made for you to be a conquering Christian. Spiritual health with the beauty and strength of the Lord upon your life. Now, under four simple headings, will you follow me carefully? For to me, cries the missionary, and

he's speaking of a living experience, to live is Christ.

First on the list, and he ever keeps it to the front in all his ministry, is this. Christ died for me, to be my Savior. May I speak a word of warning, and I speak to you as a simple missionary coming to the favored homeland.

You cannot be a victorious Christian if you bypass that cross. There is no secret of victorious Christian living, steadfast victorious living, unless you're willing to bow as a child of Adam in all your sin, in true repentance, and gaze at that amazing sight, the just one dying for me, the unjust, to bring me to God. The personal note he was wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquity.

Now, I ask you, and I must lay a foundation. Can you remember an amazing and happy day when Jesus washed your sins away? There's only one thing that speaks before the divine throne for the cleansing of a child of Adam. It is the precious blood of Christ.

If you're going to be a Christian, you've got to be a redeemed man, not bought with silver or gold, but with precious blood, and alone that precious blood can whisper peace to your heart. That blood that speaks ever before the throne of God. God has found His satisfaction in what His darling Son did for you on the cross.

You come trembling in all your need, and you rest in that finished work, and precious blood, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. Have you met Him at the cross? You know, across your natural brave land of Switzerland, the wonderful story they tell. They tell how in those days when the snow is falling on the Alps, they send out the snow dogs to save people who get lost and buried in the snow.

There was a dear fellow who had left his little chalet and gone down to visit his old mother, and coming back, as the darkness came, the blizzard came on. Soon he was going in circles and lost, until at last, tired and weary, he flopped down in the snow to sleep the sleep of death. And if it hadn't been for Barry, the brave St. Bernard snow dog who found him, he would have died.

But these trained dogs, they know how to work. He scratched away the snow, he began to lift the man's face, he dug his teeth into his leather jacket and pulled him out of the drift. He was working on him when all of a sudden the man came back to consciousness, and as he came back to consciousness, he felt the sharp teeth of an animal scratching his skin, and opening his eyes, he saw the white teeth of an animal leaning over him and felt something on his cheek.

Thinking it was some savage animal or wolf or something, he thought of the knife that was down here on his belt. He waited his opportunity and loosed his knife, and as he regained consciousness, he gathered his strength and all of a sudden struck a blow, and as he staggered to his feet, he saw his knife buried in Barry, the brave snow dog, and the red blood pumping out of its thigh. Realizing the dreadful mistake he had made, that he had actually struck a blow against someone who was giving it very life and desire and strength to save him.

Realizing the awful attitude and mistake, he went down to try and get that knife out and stop that pumping red blood, but he couldn't. When he staggered down into the village, all he could say was, dog, dog, and the apologist would step up and found Barry lying dead in the snow with the red blood patted all over the snow. You can see the memorial to Barry in Switzerland in the high alps.

They say that he saved 42 lives from the snow and died saving the 43rd. If you ever met that man in one of the Swiss inns and you said to him, I say, are you the fellow who killed Barry? A strange look would sweep over his face and he would say, oh, I didn't know. A deep distress came to his spirit.

One day the proud religious Saul of Tarsus realized that the one who he was persecuting, the one he despised, Jesus of Nazareth, who died on the lonely cross with the risen Christ, he felled on the Damascus road and he said, who art thou, Lord of glory? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, and every blow is against me. From the depth of his being came one word. He owned the risen Jesus as Lord.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And from that moment, it was a life belonging to the risen living Christ. As much as in me is, every inch of me, every ounce of me, every fibre of me will be devoted to the task of making known the fame of my lovely Lord Jesus. If you read through his writings and you will find, he said, I determine to know nothing amongst men with all their intellectualism.

Say, Jesus Christ and him crucified, and as I preach to a perishing world, I bring them to a lonely cross and I tell them to bow in true repentance and find pardon and cleansing and peace and reconciliation there. For to me to live is Christ. Christ died for me to be my Saviour, but that's only the beginning of the good demise.

As Paul goes on and it's woven into all his teaching, he says, for to me to live is Christ. Christ died for me to be my Saviour, but second, Christ lives in me to be my Lord. This tremendous mystery.

The living and personal Christ can come to each one of us and be made real by the Holy Spirit, that his life can be our life, that we can look out upon the battles of life and say, Christ liveth in me. The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me, who gave himself for me. Oh friends, have you seen this? Remember in the days when I was down in the Amazon jungle, in the early days of missionary service, we'd make friends with a savage tribe who used to go out hunting with them, fishing with them to their secret plantations, spend the evenings around the fireside in their camps.

Somehow they were always thinking of monkey, or enemies, or fish, or birds, or material things, and when we talked of the Great Spirit Tupana, a dull look came over their faces. They were whipped up to a frenzy sometimes to worship the evil spirits of nature around them. They believed that these tormenting spirits had to be reconciled, make friends with them.

But we talked of Tupana, the Great Spirit, and they said, he doesn't bother us much, why bother about him? And as we told the story of Jesus and his love, we wondered when they would understand that God sent his Son into the world for them. You know, one day, we saw the first precious footage of a tribe. Strangely enough, it wasn't Warringah, the chief of the village, it wasn't Pierre Cotuy, the great brave, who was such a brave fighter.

It was a little girl, a little red-skinned girl of 13. She used to sit with her hands cupped round her chins at the campfire, and they asked their questions. Who sent you to us, the Great Spirit? We're his messengers, we come with a message.

How many bows and arrows has he got? Oh, he doesn't use bows and arrows. He speaks, and you hear the thunder, and you see the lightning. Christians coming and going across the campfires, and slowly the story of God's gift in Jesus came, and the little girl is listening.

And one day, we realized that that amazing, transforming miracle had taken place. Into a young heart and life, Jesus had come by the Holy Spirit to be a reality, and somehow had brought a newness of life that was capturing her soul. She was thinking about him, and feeling toward him, and bowing her will to him.

A newness of life that began to peep out of her eyes, and talk to her lips, and love to her heart, and walk to her hands, until we saw the first of a growing number of redskins who showed the transforming power that Christ had come in newness of life to their dead spirits, to live his new life in them, and through them. One day, her father, a savage, got hold of her and asked her to do some wrong thing, and she said she couldn't. And taken by surprise, he said, why not? And she said, what you asked me to do is rubbish, is muck, is filth.

Jesus came to remove that from my life, to fit me for his wonderful home, those happy hunting grounds. I can't do it. He tried to make her do it, and then getting angry, he beat her, beat an almost naked little girl, till she was bruised and bleeding.

Still from those lips came the words, Jesus, the son of the great spirit, came to cleanse away my muck. He dwells in my heart and life. I can't do it.

He sent her out into the forest to spend the night, away from the campfires, away from the companionship of the camp, in the big darkness of the forest where dangers lurk. I remember we spent our night on our knees in prayer for that little soul, that child of God. In the morning, our mother went out into the forest, calling for Manapai.

We saw her being brought back, she was washed down and made comfortable, and we thought that was the end of the story, but it wasn't. Wretched man got hold of her and began to ask her to do this wrong thing again, and she wouldn't, and again the testimony came, Jesus, the son of Jupana, came to cleanse my life from sin. What you asked me to do is muck, rubbish.

I won't let it come back, and again she was beaten. I want to tell you a young missionary felt so ashamed of himself. Like David of old, he talked to his own soul.

He said, Harold, you were born in a Christian land, and you had a Christian mommy and daddy, and you had a Christian training, and you gave your heart to Jesus when you were a school boy. Have you ever loved Jesus like that? Have you ever stood up for the Lord Jesus like that? Have you ever resisted sin, striding to blood against it like that? I was ashamed. Do you know God may have to, early this week, make you ashamed of your Christian life and witness? It is not sufficient to bow at his cross and take a ticket of pardon and say, I'm not going to hell, he saved me.

God has planned that this magnificent risen Christ shall live his life in you and through you seven days a week, a life that you can never live by yourself. Christ lives in me, and the life that I vouch, I live by faith in the Son of God. Back on the lonely cross loved me, gave himself for me.

But, you know, it's even more wonderful, Rebecca. Now, Paul says, for to me to live is Christ. Christ died for me to be my Savior.

Christ lives in me to be my Lord. Christ walks with me to be my friend. Do you know one of those transforming things today in the Christian world is the Christian who, by faith, enters into what Christ promised.

He said, I will never leave thee. I will never forsake thee. So that we can boldly say the Lord is my helper.

Do you realize that the Lord is just as much with you in the bedroom when every light is out as he is at the communion table when all the lights are on and you've gathered in his name and presence to break the bread and drink the wine? Do you realize that he listens to every conversation when you tear people's character pieces? Do you realize that he looks over your shoulder at every business transaction and figure you put on that tax office paper? Do you realize, Christian, that you cannot watertight your Christian life and say, I'll spend an hour or two with him on Sunday, and goodbye for the rest of the week. I will never leave you. Do you know what would transform your life if faith laid hold of him? Walking with Jesus day by day.

Walking with Jesus in the narrow way. Traveling along together day by day. Walking in the king's highway.

Never saddle down, he's with you, as he was with all the men and women of old. What a difference it might make! I wonder if at the end of this week God will have brought near these great truths in such a way that you will take that love's hand and say, Lord, every inch of the way, in the nursery, in the kitchen, in the business, on the sports field, in the college, nothing will pass. I'm going to practice the presence of the Lord who said, I will never leave you.

You know, it's even more wonderful than that. Christ died for me, he cries, to be my savior. Christ lives in me, to be my Lord.

Christ walks with me, to be my friend. And Christ works through me, to be my master. Dying, hobbling world around us is waiting for Christians to let the Lord Jesus master their lives and make them instruments in his service.

Do you know those men, dear? Big, strong, gallant men. And they draw up, I don't know how many times every month, to get the fill-up of their car. And the man comes and cleans their front and fills their tank with gas.

And they've never bothered to give him a gospel of John or a tract. And he's an unsaved man in your city, and yet you put out your check for forty dollars to keep your missionaries in Haiti and Vietnam. Shame on you.

Christ's waiting for some of you to do something for him. The great crash, trains met head-on, and in all the tangle of that dreadful happening, a doctor tells his story how shaken and bruised and battered he was all right. When at last he was able to fight his way out of the crash, he found that the ambulances and doctors and nurses and helpers were coming in with their cranes and searchlights.

And with his skill, he went down to see if he could help, and he heard a noise. He heard a cry of a suffering man. Help! Help! He went and he saw a man, and the man was pinned by his foot to the ground between his leg and his ankle.

Tons of heavy iron were pressing his leg right down into the dirt and crushing it. This skilled surgeon saw the situation in a moment, and he described his reaction. He tells how his hands went to his head to hold his throbbing head.

He tells how a cry rose up within him. Oh God, if I had my instruments, I could save that man's life. He was thinking of a little bag of instruments that a surgeon would use to amputate a leg and to save a life, but this

little bag of instruments was not in his hands.

It was back in his office. It was far away, and I wonder sometimes how the waking Lord looks down and says, if I had my instruments, if only I could get that precious young lady's smile. If only I could get that young boy or young man's muscle.

If only I could begin to use that man's lips. If only I could pour my love through that woman's heart. If I had my instruments waiting for you.

Some of you have never brought your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God, your intelligent servant. Some of you have never on the way looked into his face and said, I want to prove thy will, and I want you to take this mind, and these eyes, and these lips, and I want you to take this face, and this personality, and these hands, and these muscles, and these teeth, and I want you to take me, Lord, and take me an instrument. You know, if you did that, your life would turn into a great adventure, and you would wake in the morning and look about of every new day as an adventure with battlegrounds and new opportunities, and you would whisper, lead me to some soul today.

Oh, teach me, Lord, just what to say. Face it, young man, he hasn't got you yet. Face it, big, strong businessman in Dallas, he hasn't got you yet.

Face it, lady, he can't use you as an instrument yet. He's waiting for this. Nakeded meat doesn't lead you to do business with the risen Christ and deals what you have to him so that you can be an instrument.

It has failed. It is merely a piccaninny of meetings, a nice time of sweet meat fellowship. It doesn't do business in your soul and send you out into the adventure to be the instrument in the Lord's hand.

The weakest thing, do you want this or not? Would you honestly like to be able to say with Paul, Paul, you're not alone, Paul, you risen lady. We too want to voice it, for to me, to me is Christ, a Savior, Lord, and friend, and master. And then, as the shadows lengthen, should we be called to die, if he doesn't come, escape.

Faith will give way to sight, and one well done from his lips will make it all worthwhile. It is Christian to have spoken out, who could be ashamed before him at his coming, who could suffer loss and be saved so as to follow. But the selfishness of the wood and hay and stubble building is seen.

It's burnt up when we meet them after his coming. Do you know Catech week is a solemn week, and I lay it as an obligation upon you. Would you try to come each day and listen to the developing message? Would you lay off the week and say, Lord, I'm coming to do business with thee.

I'm coming not just to joke and fun and fellowship with others, I'm coming to meet with thee. I'm coming with the Bible to listen to thy voice. I'm coming to go right through with thee.

Oh, I know the rivers of blessing that could flow from this hallowed spot if God's people are willing to do it. Do you want to or not? Some of you will bow your heads and dismiss it, go out into the night perhaps to forget. Some of you will bow in his presence and say, Lord, I'm hungry and thirsty for the very best that you have provided for your Jews, and I'm going back to the still night watches, to a bedside to kneel, to ponder these truths, to tell me that I am willing this week to listen for thy voice and to prove thee, and to enter into that good and acceptable and perfect will of God for my life.

Now you've looked into a preacher's face. I ask you in a solemn closing moment to look into the face of the written Christ and tell him whether you want that testimony from a living experience of himself or not. I come, he said, that you might have life, that you might have it more abundantly, the healthy radiant life that shows the beauty and strength of the Lord.

Shall we bow together? Lord, we've come to the end of a lovely, solemn day of worship and fellowship, gathering together one with another in thy presence. Now we are about to have this closing meeting dismissed. O God, if it can please thee, we may look by faith into thy face, the one who soon we will meet and give an account to.

Tell thee in this quiet moment, if we really want to be able to join with Paul of old and say, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gay. Let nothing take away the good seed of thy word and keep the hush upon our hearts as this meeting is dismissed. May no voices be raised, may there be a quiet gripping of each other's hands, a quietness of prayer.

If any would like to stay bowed in thy presence to go on talking with thee about these things, give them the courage to do this. Let nothing scatter from us the blessing that thou art so wanting to give to every waiting heart. We ask this for thy dear name.

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