

# The Tabernacle 07 the Lampstand

by J. Henry Brown

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*The lampstand represents Christ as the light of the world, guiding us and illuminating our path.*

**Duration:** 1:01:20

**Scripture:** Exodus 27:20-21, Exodus 40:24

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Service"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a personal experience where he was reunited with old friends after 15 years. During their conversation, a little girl enters the room with dolls, but quickly leaves after seeing something. This prompts a deep reflection on the speaker's part about spiritual growth and becoming more like Christ. The speaker also discusses the slogan 'save to serve' and questions whether God saved us solely for our service. The sermon concludes with a discussion about the size and shape of the labor mentioned in the Bible, emphasizing the importance of focusing on the spiritual significance rather than the physical measurements.

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## Transcript

Again we turn to that book of Exodus, and reading in chapter twenty-five. Turning our attention this evening to the lampstand, not a candlestick. They put candles on a candlestick, they put lamps on a lampstand, so we should read about lampstand.

Exodus, Exodus chapter twenty-five, and we shall read from verse thirty-one. Exodus twenty-five, verse thirty-one. And thou shalt make a lampstand of pure gold, of beaten work shall the lampstand be made, his shaft and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers shall be of the same, all of one piece.

And six branches shall come out of the sides of it, three branches of the lampstand out of the one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. Three bowls made like unto almonds with a knop and a flower in one branch, and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch with a knop and a flower, so in the six branches that come out of the lampstand. And in the lampstand, that is in the main stem, shall be four bowls made like unto almonds with their knops and their flowers.

And there shall be a knop and the two branches of the same, and a knop and the two branches of the same, and a knop and the two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the lampstand. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same, all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. Well that is the lampstand, and now we read about the lamps which are distinct from the lampstand.

Verse thirty-seven, And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof, and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. Now I want to emphasize that little sentence there, they shall light the lamps thereof, note, that they may give light over against it, over against the lampstand. And the tongs thereof and the snuff dishes thereof shall be of pure gold, of a talent of pure gold shall he make it with all these vessels.

And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was sure thee in the mount. Well that is our reading about the lampstand and about the lamp. Now let us read a few words about the oil that was used for the lamp.

Chapter twenty-seven, and verse twenty, And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive, beaten for them light, to cause the lamp to burn always. In the tabernacle of the congregation, without the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his son shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Now that is as much as we need read this evening to get before us our subject which is the lampstand. Now we've had quite a bit of repetition and I told you it would be so, because I like to really emphasize these truths as we are moving on to get them impressed upon the mind. The Africans that were in the area of Congo and Zambia where we were, they had a proverb, and in their proverb they said, if you keep hitting in the same spot you'll raise a lump.

And I'm hoping that by repetition and hitting in the same spot I'm going to raise a lump. You're not likely to forget these talks on the tabernacle, they will last you for a long, long time. And so again this evening shall we gather it up and then we can add on what we have for this evening.

So we've followed through night by night, having seen how God came out from the throne in dealing with the tabernacle, the ark, cherubim, mercy seat. Beginning there he comes out step by step dealing with that table on the far side that we were speaking of on Sunday evening, and then about the lampstand on this side, but not a word about the altar of incense. Then he comes out and looks back at the building, moves down past the laver, not a word about that, to the altar of burnt offerings, and then looks around at the court and the gate with its blue purple scarlet, and then he decides to bring in the priesthood.

These priests were bathed, clothed with their priestly garments, and then three offerings were brought forward, sin offering, burnt offering, offering of consecration. We saw the priests identifying themselves with those all three offerings by pressing their hands upon the head of these offerings. Then we saw with regard to the sin offering that having removed from it the kidneys, the midriff, and all the fat, these were burnt in the altar, and these went up to God as a sweet savor.

But the carcass, that is the sin offering itself, with the head, the leg, the skin, the dung, that was carried through the gate, through the camp, through the camp of Judah I suppose, strangely enough, Christ came out from the tribe of Judah, and away they're going through the camp of Judah to that clean place outside the camp where the sin offering was burned to ashes. Remember, not on an altar, it was burned on the ground. I still find people coming to me and saying I didn't know there was an altar outside the camp.

No, there was no altar outside the camp. The altar was inside the court. Outside the camp there was a clean place, and on a fire in that clean place they burned the sin offering to ashes.

And then having dealt with the sin offering, God deals with the burnt offering and the offering of consecration, and that establishes the priesthood. Then God went in to deal with the altar of incense and out to deal with the labor. Not dealing with the altar of incense when he dealt with the table and the lampstand, not dealing with the labor when he dealt with the altar of burnt offering.

No doubt purposely God dealt with it in this way, to show us first of all his coming out. Right out to the place of sin and the place of the sin offering. And then moving back in to the altar of incense and out to the labor, because these are vessels of approach.

And you see we are working the opposite way. God begins with the throne, comes out to the place of sin, makes preparation for us, makes provision for us there in the sin offering. We begin there where the sin offering is, and we make our way in to the very throne of God.

So that when God went in, he went in to the altar of incense first and then came out to the labor. We go to the labor first and then in to the altar of incense. So we have followed this and we have seen that that work of bringing in the priest is all typical, because Aaron the high priest was a type of Christ our great high priest, and Aaron's son types of Christians, because every Christian is a priest, man and woman.

We are all priests and able to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So then the priesthood is typical and we've been gathering up all the value of that. We have seen how they were brought in by identification with those offerings, and this is a picture of ourselves being brought in to a priesthood by means of Christ's sin offering, burnt offering, and offering of consecration.

And that was a perfect work. They stood before God there, those priests stood before God in all the value of what was done to those three offerings. And we stand before God as priests in all the value of the finished work of Christ on that cross, a sin offering, burnt offering, and offering of consecration.

Now this is something which was not repeated. It was accomplished at that particular time, and it established them as priests. They never went back to be bathed and clothed with priestly garments a second time.

They never went back again for another sin offering, another burnt offering, another offering of consecration. All that was sufficient to establish them once and for all in that priesthood. So we too, through the finished work of Christ, are brought in as priests, and we are established once and for all by one offering perfected forever.

So then now we realize that we have a priesthood which is a perpetual priesthood, and it goes on and on, whereas this priesthood of course was only for the time being, it was typical. So our priesthood is one that goes on and on, and this is all in association with the Lord Jesus Christ himself as our great high priest. Always we read Aaron's sons with him, Aaron's sons with him, and so with Christians with Christ, all Christians with Christ, associated with him, and apart from him then we have nothing, and there too apart from Aaron the high priest they had nothing.

So then this is something which we thank God for, we are established once and for all, and of course it has in view the sin offering bringing out that thought of salvation as far as we are concerned, and the need for us to know Christ in that way as sin offering, and realize that the moment we by faith pressed our hands upon his head and were there identified with him, that all the value of that work of his, the sin offering was made over to us, and we stand before God as if we had been to the cross, suffered, shed our

blood and died, that's how God sees us. Therefore the work is a finished work, a completed work, made over to us, never repeated, but we realize that the priest could be defiled because God told Moses to make a laver and to put within the laver water, not blood, the blood was down there, and that was applied to them as we realize for that particular time when they were brought into the priesthood, after that they had to make use of the laver, the water in the laver. Now remember, they did not wash in the laver, because if they did they would defile the water immediately, they always removed the water.

I remember in one place where I was talking about this, there was a man in the congregation and he kept asking somebody questions, and people were all looking to see what was going on. So after the meeting was over I went along and I said, now what was the trouble down here? They said, oh this man wanted to know the size of the laver, he wanted to know how big it was. Well I said, we're not given the measurements of it, we are not told how big it was, we're not told what shape it was, so what are we to do? Well he says, well from what I can see of what you've got there, he says, if that's anything like it was, he said, it must have been pretty high.

Well I said, supposing it was? Well he says, I want to know how they managed to get the feet in it. I said, no they're not likely to do that kind of thing. They would ladle water out of the laver and they would wash then, they probably would assist one another in washing their feet.

But they would never wash in the laver itself, they would not wash their hands in there, they would defile it. They would always pour the water upon the hands, they do that even today in countries like Greece and in Palestine, that's how they used to do it, because if you put water in a vessel and put your hands in it, then it becomes defiled, and the more you wash in it, the more defiled it becomes, not with them. So remember, they washed at the laver, and it was very important because it said, lest they die, or that they die not.

Well now we also can be defiled, but thank God we've got a laver. If we as Christians confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse, from all unrighteousness. So remember down there when we are thinking of those three offerings, we are thinking of that question of sin there outside the camp, and then that question of acceptance in the burnt offering, and then that consecration that went on day after day for seven days, we're thinking of all that as being complete and perfect, and now in that standing before God there is no condemnation, and we never go back over that, nothing can touch it, nothing can interfere with it, it hasn't got anything to do with us down here, it has to do with Christ up there, he's up there in all the value of that work of the cross, no one can move him, no one can touch him, neither can they move us or touch us, because he's there for us, he's there as us, just as he was on the cross for us and as us, and all this because of our identification with him by faith.

So then now we are thinking that all that is something settled once and for all, but when we come to the labour it is not settled once and for all, they had to wash hands and feet there day in and day out, so we too defile from day to day, we must need to remember the labour. Right now when we've got all that we say well that's fine, now is that something in itself, I say no no, the priests were not brought into all that just that they might stay down there enjoying it, neither were we brought into all the value of the finished work of Christ, that we might just stay there occupied with that. We have to realize that that enables us to go on to something else, far greater in the mind of God than just standing there, and we're going on to that a little more this evening.

So then all this means to something else, and then we saw that the moment we stepped into that sanctuary, into the holy place, we left all this behind us. All that suffering, agony, bloodshedding and

death, that sprinkling of blood, pouring out of blood, that smell of burning flesh, that glittering blade doing its deadly work all the time, that's left behind, that took us to the cross, but now we're going on, that cross enables us to go on, so they went on and in, and the moment they got inside, how different, all is calm, all is peaceful and all is glory, no glittering blade doing its deadly work in there, no suffering, no bloodshedding, no death, all quiet and all calm. So now if this is Christ and him crucified, the moment we step through the door into the sanctuary, it's Christ and him glorified.

How did he get up there? How did he come to be glorified up there at the right hand of God? By way of that cross. How do we find these priests were enabled to enter into the sanctuary there, to have to do with those things that spoke of the heavenly? Well, only as they came into all the value of what is down here. How can we come to have to do with those things that are up there, to seek those things which are above, to set our affections on things above? How? Only as we come into all the value of the finished work of Christ, the one leads to the other.

So now we find we're able to enter in, when we enter in, the first object we see immediately in front of the veil there, is the altar of incense. Now we say this is Christ. There was an altar there, an altar of burnt offering.

That has to do with suffering, with death. But the moment we step inside, now we've got another altar, and that has to do with glory. Christ must first be the altar of burnt offering, before he can be the altar of incense.

First the cross, and then the crown, first the suffering, and then the glory, so it goes. So now the altar of incense is Christ, but not down here. The altar of burnt offering is Christ down here.

The altar of incense is Christ up there. There in the very presence of God is our altar of incense, is our great high priest, as the incense itself. There in the presence of God, in all the value of the finished work of the cross, remember the same fire from the altar of burnt offering used to bring out that cloud of sweet perfume.

He's there in the very presence of God, in all the value of that finished work, and he's bringing before God that cloud of sweet perfume. All the preciousness, all the excellence, all the worthiness of himself, in all the value of that work of the cross. That's why he's there before God, our great high priest, our altar of incense, our incense.

He's everything, and he's ever living to make intercession for us. Then we saw that whilst this is a way opened up to us, and we can now, because we've been brought into all the value of what is down here, and have made use of the labour, and have gone in, we can worship God in spirit and in truth. And then God says, well I want to put a table on that far side with showbread on it, and I want to put a lampstand on this side with seven lamps on it, because whilst the priests are coming in, and they stand before that altar of incense, and bring out that cloud of sweet perfume, I want them to take in the table and the showbread, and I want them to take in the lampstand and the seven lamps upon it.

So we looked at the table and we saw that that had before it the thought of fellowship and communion. But again, it isn't Christ down here, it's Christ up there. He's up there in the power of an endless life, and he's there maintaining us in that place of fellowship and communion.

He's our table. But he's also the bread. And so we went into this a little, see that having by faith identified ourselves with Christ, we have been born again, there has been imparted to us spiritual, divine, eternal life.

And I try to help you, and to save you from just stressing the fact of its duration, you know, saying it's eternal life, it's eternal life. No, no, no, don't do that. Think of it rather as being eternal life, as being a kind of life, a different kind of life, you see.

That's the thought we need to get. And as we went into that, we realized that that eternal life was really Christ himself. That when we were born again, God begat in us the Spirit of his Son, and from that moment it's Christ in me and Christ in you.

Christ liveth in me, we were singing. Now this is very true. God himself, in the power of his Spirit, has begotten the Spirit of his Son in you and in me.

Christ in you. So then, what we need to remember is this, that if we have got that eternal life, it is really Christ. And we shouldn't say we've got eternal life, it's a life that's everlasting, and the life we have now isn't everlasting, and it might end any day, but when it ends, thank God we've got another life, somewhere inside, and that will go on forever and ever.

No, no, no. Let's remember that this eternal life is really Christ, and Christ dwells with us in the power of the Spirit. And if we've got that eternal life, if we've got Christ within, we ought to be living Christ.

From the moment we are born again, and Christ lives in us, from that moment we should be living him. Now this is the great truth. For to me to live, says Paul.

What did he do? I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. How did that come about? Only when he went to that cross, and identified himself with Christ, and was able to say, I'm crucified with Christ. God sees me as he saw Christ, crucified, that's the end of me.

Nevertheless I live, yet not I. It's Christ that liveth in me. Now then, if this is true, and it must be true if we are really and truly the children of God, then that life, Christ's life, Christ's living in us, and Christ being seen in us, it needs support, it needs nourishment. And so the bread was there on the table, and after seven days, in the presence of God, became the food of the priest, their sustenance, their nourishment.

So with us, in order to live Christ, we must feed on Christ, we must eat of that bread which came down from heaven. This is not coming to the Lord's supper, to partake of that bread, that that bread may impart to us eternal life. No, that's a different thought.

This is the thought of Christ as our bread, and our needing it. Labour not for the bread that perisheth, but for that bread which endureth, it will strengthen us, it will help us to live that kind of life, that they endure us throughout eternal life. That's what we need.

So that's the table. Now we turn our attention to the lampstand. Now people sometimes say, oh Mr. Brandt, are you going to talk about the lampstand tomorrow night? Yes.

Ah, you're going to tell us about Christ as the light of the world? No. Well, no. Oh, I know.

You're going to tell us about, about we Christians, the light in the world, and we mustn't hide our light under the bush. No. Well, maybe you're going to tell us about the church, you know, about the lampstand.

Well, no, not quite. Well, what have you got there, Mr. Brandt? Well, now you see, we read about it. That lampstand with the seven lamps wasn't outside.

It didn't shine out in this world at all. It was within the sanctuary, and only the priests saw it, and they only saw it when they went in there. When they were inside and having to do with those things in there, then they saw the seven lamps shining upon that lampstand.

Well, now then, we have seen how that these various things bring before us the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He's the sin offering. He's the gate.

He's the way into all that display which has to do with the grace and the glory of God. Every way in which that comes out in the personal work of Christ. He's the gate.

He's the altar of burnt offering. He's the labor. He's the door.

He's the altar of incense. He's the table. He's the lampstand.

Must be. The lampstand is Christ. It was made of a talent of pure gold.

It's bringing before us Christ again up there in yonder glory. It's Christ glorified. It's a glory of God as seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

He is the lampstand. And that lampstand must have been a masterpiece. Remember when we were reading about it, there was a main stem.

And in that main stem, there was bud, flower, fruit, bud, flower, fruit, bud, flower, fruit, four times over in the main stem. Then there were three branches coming out of each side. And in each of those branches, there was bud, flower, fruit, three times over.

So in the main stem, four times over, bud, flower, fruit. In each branch, three times over, bud, flower, fruit. So that the four in the main stem takes up the three in each of those branches to make up that number seven.

And now you've got in the lampstand the thought of reproduction. Because you get first of all your bud, and then your flower, and then your fruit, and within your fruit your seed of course, and on you go again with your bud, flower, fruit. So that all over that beautiful lampstand is this thought of reproduction.

And then remember again that it was made in the form of a tree, the main stem with the branches. And it was made like unto an almond tree with this bud, flower, fruit. And it brings before us the thought that this almond tree is the first tree that awakes out of that winter sleep of death.

The first tree that awakes out of the winter sleep of death, and it hastens, and that's the word in the Hebrew, it hastens to bring forth its bud, flower, fruit. It's Christ in resurrection, the first fruit from among the dead. So now we think of this lampstand beaten out of a talent of pure gold, likened to the almond tree.

And the thought is there of Christ in resurrection, in the power of an endless life. How they did it, I don't know. But we know that God enabled Basileel and the others that were with him, he gave them the ability to do that.

But this is a tremendous thing, to take a block, a talent of pure gold, and to beat it out, to beat it and beat it until it takes shape as a tree with a bud, flower, fruit. It must have been a masterpiece, priceless. And it brings before us the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the lampstand. Now God says, I want you to make seven lamps, make them of gold, fill them with oil, trim the wicks, light the lamps, and put those lamps upon those seven branches of the lampstand. If the lampstand is bringing before us Christ, what do these lamps bring before us? If we turn to the book of Revelation, we read there about seven lamps that were burning before the throne of God.

And we are not left guessing. We are told that those seven lamps burning before the throne of God are the seven spirits of God. In other words, those seven lamps are bringing before us the Holy Spirit.

And they were burning before the throne of God. And this lampstand really speaking is there before the throne of God. The only thing that is in between the lampstand and the very throne of God is the veil.

And that was there for a special reason. And tomorrow night, God willing, I'm going to tell you about the veil. And don't you stay away tomorrow night, because that veil is very, very important.

And I think you'll open your eyes wide tomorrow night and say, oh, I never thought that there was so much in that veil. So do try and get along tomorrow night, because this is a very important subject. So the veil was there, but apart from the veil, the lampstand was before that throne, the very throne of God.

So then now we see that the lampstand itself is Christ, and the lamps that were placed upon it are bringing before us the Spirit of God. And the oil, of course, in the lamp, that also is a type of the Spirit, speaks of the Spirit of God. Now you notice I emphasize those words, and they are also brought out again in the book of Numbers, that the lamps were to be placed upon the lampstand in such a way that they threw their light over against it.

You notice that? Light the lamps, and they shall throw their light over against the lampstand. In other words, the lamps were placed upon the lampstand in such a way that the light from the lamp was lighting up that beautiful workmanship in the lampstand. That bud, flower, fruit, bud, flower, fruit, repeated over and over again, that masterpiece of workmanship is being lit up, lighted up, shown up to advantage by these lamps.

And those lamps bring before us the Spirit. And so the thought is what? Well just as the lamps were lighting up the lovely workmanship in the lampstand, so the Spirit of God takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us. Now that's very simple, isn't it? But that's very precious.

You think of it. As far as we are concerned from day to day, the Spirit of God, the lamps, are lighting up that lovely workmanship in that lampstand. You know, I think anybody who could have drawn aside that door and peeked inside, the thing that would have caught the eye was that beautiful piece of workmanship, that golden lampstand, and those lights, these oil lamps, you know, showing it up to such advantage.

Lovely picture that must have been. So there it is, lamps lighting up the lovely workmanship in the lamp, the Spirit taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to us. For what reason? You see, the Lord Jesus Christ has gone up into the very presence of God to be our sanctification.

And that sanctification in him is perfect and complete. But you know it isn't perfect and complete in me. But he has gone up to be the pattern and the power of sanctification in me.

It is God's will that I should become more and more like Christ up there. How can this be? How can I possibly become more like Christ who is up there? Only as the Spirit of God takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to me. The only possible way.

I could never become like Christ in any other way. I'm absolutely dependent upon the Spirit of God to reveal to me the things of Christ. And the measure of that revelation depends a great deal upon me, as to whether I'm spiritually minded enough, as to whether I'm willing and ready that when the Spirit of God does reveal to me something concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, that I'm going to bring myself into line with it.

Otherwise, if something is revealed to me and I'm not prepared to go on with it, how much more will the Spirit of God reveal to me? So you see, so much depends upon us being willing and ready to go on with the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God can only take us on when we are willing and ready. But this is the great thing that God is out for.

This is our sanctification. You know, it's something we're afraid of. Whenever we begin talking about sanctification, people get uncomfortable.

You know, as much as to say, well, you know, that's a very dangerous kind of a subject. But sanctification is there in the Word of God. Our sanctification is Christ himself.

It's perfect and complete. But we are not. It is to what he is that we are to be brought in some measure progressively, and that can only be accomplished as the Spirit of God is able to reveal the things of Christ to us.

And he can only do that if we are in that spiritual condition in which he can do his work. Now, this is the great thing. God is out for something great in you and in me.

Tell me what it is. When God sent his only begotten Son into this world, into this place of sin, and made him there on that cross to be a sin offering, why did he do it? Well, the answer would be, for many, he did it so that I could be saved. Is that all? Oh, no.

That salvation that God has provided in Christ is not something in itself. That salvation, when it is made over to me, makes possible this great thing that God has had in his mind from way back in eternity. God purposed an eternal purpose in Christ.

A way back there in eternity, he purposed an eternal purpose in Christ. What was it? You say, well, it was the cross. No, it wasn't.

God never purposed the cross. Think it. Think it over.

The cross was planned in eternity, yes. And it was planned because it had to meet a state of emergency. Something had become impossible, and God planned that cross to make possible that which had become impossible.

But he never purposed the cross. If we are going to say God purposed the cross, we are going to say that he intended to have that cross. And if he purposed the cross, how could he purpose it without sin? So if he

purposed the cross, then he purposed sin.

If he purposed the cross, then he purposed the fall of man. Are we going to challenge God with that? Oh, no. So God, a way back in eternity, purposed an eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

It wasn't the cross. What was it then? He purposed this, that those who would accept his beloved son as saviour, he purposed that they should be conformed to the image of his son. That's why God brought in the cross.

Because man in that sinful condition, God could never accomplish his purpose. He could never secure that purpose in sinful man. He must bring in that cross, that cross must meet that state of emergency, that state of sin, and make possible what? The eternal purpose that he purposed a way back in eternity.

That we should be conformed to the image of his son. Predestinated, yes, according to the full knowledge of God, to be saved. No.

Only a day or two ago a lady said to me, of course, God knew who was going to be saved, and he knew who was going to be lost, you know. You see, he predestinated certain ones to be saved, and certain ones to be lost. I said, excuse me, God never purposed certain people to be saved, and certain people to be lost.

Oh no. He purposed that certain people would be conformed to the image of his son. And he predestinated those according to his full knowledge.

He knew that in a day to come that gospel would be proclaimed to all the world. And God knew that when that gospel would be preached, this one would accept it, and this one would reject it. And for knowing that this one would accept it, he predestinated him to be conformed to the image of his son.

He didn't predestinate him to be saved. Salvation was to whosoever, and whosoever will may. God doesn't make him say yes, and he doesn't make him say no.

But God knew who would say yes. And he predestinated those who would say yes to be conformed to the image of his son. This is the great thing that God is out for, and has been out for from way back in eternity.

This is the purposey purpose. That he would have a race of people conformed to the image of his beloved son. How's he going to do it? There it is in the lampstand.

The lamps lighting up the lovely workmanship. The Spirit taking the things of Christ and revealing them to us. But we may be conformed to his image.

Progressively becoming more and more like that one who is up there. That's it. Now you know, I used to hear a slogan, and it rather worried me.

I heard this slogan here and there, and people seemed to lay hold of it. It was a great thing. They were working it hard, you know.

And this slogan says, safe to serve. Safe to serve, you know. And this was coming out right left and centre.

And I was worried about this, you know. And I said, now just a minute, just a minute. Safe to serve, yes.

Well are you trying to tell me that the reason God saved me was that he might have my service? Yes, of course. Never. You mean to say that God said, now don't forget, my being saved has to do with Christ going to that cross, being made sin, enduring the wrath of the Holy God, that I might be saved.

Do you mean to tell me that God did that so that he would have my miserable bit of service? So that he would have me moving about here and there, preaching and teaching. You reckon that's why God did all that? For my service? Never. Why then did God save me? For nothing less than this, that I should be conformed to the image of his Son.

One day I shall be like him. But God doesn't want me to wait until then. Here and now, from day to day, he wants me to be more and more like him.

And the Spirit of God is working to that end. But you see, we get taken up with this. Service.

Service. The great thing is service. Saved to serve.

That's a big thing. No, it isn't. The big thing is that I shall become more and more like Christ.

Oh, you say, well, what about service? You needn't worry about that. Once you adjust yourself to this purpose of God's purpose from way back in eternity, that you should be conformed to the image of his Son, and you are there ready and willing for the Spirit of God to reveal more and more of Christ, and you are coming on, he's bringing you on, then you'll find there's service. You'll never say you were saved to serve.

You'll realize you were saved that you might be like him. And once that's going on, then there's going to be service. Oh yes.

Do you know what I find as I move around? I find some people who are so busy serving Christ that they haven't got any time for Christ himself. Now think that over. Morning, noon and night.

So busy serving Christ, they've no time for him. In one place it said, Mr. Brown, would you mind going and visiting a brother? He's been in bed now for years and years, never been able to get out to meet him, never will be. Would you like to go and see him? I said, yes, I'd like to go and see him.

So I went along to the house, knocked at the door, and I don't think his wife ever got to meetings either because she thought this was her life's work, looking after her husband. I knocked at the door and she came and said, well, Mr. Brown, I said, yes, come in. So I went in, she said, my husband's upstairs in bed.

Come up, Mr. Brown. So I followed upstairs, and she opened the bedroom door, and she did so. I saw this man lying propped upon pillows in bed, and he was thin, just skin and bone, and as white, his face as white as the pillow.

And I thought, oh, this man's been a sufferer for years and years. And as he walked into the room, she went straight up to him, she got him by the arm and pulled him up and got the pillows and shook the pillows and put them back and pushed him back, and then said, now that's more comfortable, isn't it? Well, if it had been me, I said, no, it isn't. I'm most uncomfortable now.

But he was more gracious than I am, and he said, I'm all right. So she said, well, is there anything else you want? No, he said, Mr. Brown's going to have a talk with me. But she said, is there anything you want? Now, can I get you anything? No, I'm not.

She said, are those pillows quite all right? He said, all right, all right. She said, well, now, tell me if you want anything, and out through the room she went. So I thought, well, now, I can have a little talk, you see.

So I said, well, brother, and she came in. And she came in with a dustpan and a little handbrush, and she started going round the room, clapper, clapper, clapper, clapper, clapper, clapper, clapper, clapper, brushing up all and complaining, where does all this dust come from? I never saw a place like this, dust everywhere. So I looked at him and he looked at me and I thought, well, what can you do? Just wait.

So we waited and waited till last she'd finished. She came up with the dustpan and I looked in it, there wasn't a speck of dust in it. And she said to him, shall I shake your pillows up? No, no, no, no, he said, no, I'm all right, all right.

Now, are you quite sure? Is there anything else you want? No, no, he said, Mr. Brown's going to have a talk with me. All right, so out through the room she went. So I said, well, now, now we can have a little talk.

So I said, well, she came back in and there was a vase there with flowers in it, you see. And she said, look at that little lot. She says, I can never get flowers to look nice.

Look at them. Oh, dear me. So out they came.

Then she started putting them in, complaining all the time. So I looked at them and I thought, well, we just have to wait, I suppose. And at last she said, there, now, I said, yeah, well, they didn't look bad before, but you made them look a fine mess now, you know.

So I said, well, I thought, now, then she said, and that lot, oh, I thought, no, not, not a lot. Yes, there's another vase over there. So she, all those came out and she complained about flowers.

And so I thought, well, yeah. So I said, now, shall I shake those pillars up for you? He said, I'm all right. So then she said, now, is there anything you want? No, no, I don't want anything.

He said, Mr. Brown's just going to have a talk with me. And she said, well, now, let me know if you want anything. And I think he was thinking to himself, well, she'll be out and in again for something else in a minute or two.

So she got by the door, he said, James, yes, you want something? He said, yes. What do you want? He said, I want you. Me? Yes.

What do you want me for? He said, I want you to come and sit here by me. Come and sit here on the bed. And Mr. Brown's going to have a talk with her.

Me sit there? I've got too much to do to sit there. What do you think I am? That's it. Now, everything that woman was doing, she was doing for him.

Oh, she was thinking about him all the time. Waking on him hand and foot. Yes.

Keeping the place spotlessly clean, in other words. Yes. For him.

But the moment he said, come and sit by my side for a food. Oh, I've got too much to do. So busy serving Christ, you haven't got any time for him.

Is that what God wants? That's what we feel like. You know, the more we serve, the more we can serve. You know, morning, noon and night, that's the big thing.

Is it? And all the time, the Spirit of God is waiting for you to sit quiet, so that he can take of the things of Christ and reveal them to you. And then in some measure, you can be transformed into the same image. It's a big thing.

Yes. And so because of this, because we haven't seen or glimpsed what God really is out for in each one of us, there is not the spiritual growth that there should be. Isn't that a tremendous thing? As I go around today in many places, I look at my congregation and I say to myself, well, I reckon we've got quite a lot of old-aged infants here.

Old-aged in the face. They've been saved 40, 50 years. And you know, really speaking, they have not grown.

They haven't made any progress. I say to one of them, I tell me, brother, what do you know? What do I know? Oh, he said, I know the Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior. Oh, yes, he was on that cross for me.

He suffered there and died, that I might live. Tell me something, brother. Oh, well, he says, you know, he was raised again from among the dead and he's ascended up.

He's up there, he said. Yeah, he's in the presence of God, living to make intercession. Tell me something else, brother.

Oh, he's coming again. And we're going to meet him and he's going to take us up. Tell me something else, brother.

What do you want to know? Tell me how much you've grown. Tell me how much you've become like him. Tell me that.

Oh, no, I haven't got that. Oh, no, no, service, you see. That's it.

Doing this and doing that. Being occupied, that's it. But to be like him.

Tell me how much spiritual progress you've made. I stayed in Scotland up near Aberdeen. And the man was, he had forests, you know, and a lot of timber being sawn down.

And he used to bring all these nice logs, pine logs and what have you. And he had a big fireplace and there was about six inches of snow outside. And we came home from a meeting, which was cold, you know, and put the logs on.

We seen a big fire there, you know, sparks going up the timber. And we sat around, two sons there, and his wife, and he and his wife, and I sat there. And I hadn't seen them for about 15 years.

So, of course, we were talking about, you know, last time we were together and all these things were coming up. And while we were talking, a door opened, a side door, and a little girl came running in with a doll under each arm, you know, she looked to be a girl about eight years of age, come dashing into the room and then stopped, had one look at me, and then back out through the door as if she'd seen something. And as she went out through the door, I saw the man put his head down, and I saw his wife put her head down, and I saw the boys occupied with a wife.

And it was dead silence. And then the father looked at me and he said, did you see her? I said, yes, I saw her. He said, what do you think about her? I didn't know what to say.

I saw that little girl 15 years before this, a little girl with a doll under each arm, 15 years before this. She looked to be a girl of eight years of age. And running through that, just the same.

She hasn't grown, hasn't made any progress at all. They've done everything they can think of, trying to help her. She just hasn't grown.

And she was the burden of her parents' heart. And her brothers too. All of them, dreadfully upset.

They could not do. And only a little while ago, I received a letter from that middle-aged woman there. I received a letter, it was heartbreaking.

He couldn't put a letter, he couldn't put a sentence together. I met a brother about 10 years later in London who said, how's your father and mother? Well, he said, getting on in years, Mr. Brown, and don't get out very much now, you know. I said, how's your sister? Oh, well, you know, just the same.

Well, when you last saw her, I said, yes, well, just the same, Mr. Brown. Just the same. Just the same today.

No growth. I said to myself, I wonder what the Lord thinks about some of us. What does he think about some of us? Not how much have you done, how much have you served him, no.

How much have you become like Christ? That's a big thing. But we seem to have lost it. We seem to have lost sight of it.

Maybe some of us are not quite ready for it. Making a big demand upon us, isn't it? To be ready and willing for the Spirit of God to reveal to us the things of Christ. And then for us to be changed into the same image.

An old man came to me and said, brother, if I had known that 60 years ago, he said, I'm 80 years of age now. If I'd known that 60 years ago, brother, it would have made a big difference in my life. Do you know, I've always thought, until today, that what the Lord wanted of me was my service.

He wanted me to do this and do that and do the other. He said, and that's been my life for 60 years. And now he said, you've shown me that that isn't what he's really wanting.

He wanted me. And wanted me to be conformed to the image of his Son. That's what he's been after.

But I didn't know that. Well, if we have glimpsed it tonight, I trust the Lord will help us that we may be willing and ready to bring ourselves into line with that eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus, that he predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son. That we shall line ourselves up and say, Lord, we're ready.

You reveal to us by the Spirit that which concerns Christ, and we're going to be like him. But we depend upon thee to enable us by the Spirit. Because in the energy of the natural man, in the energy of the flesh, we'll never be able to accomplish that.

Only as we have that revealed to us, this revelation, and only as we're enabled to be by the Spirit, only then will we ever come into line with this eternal purpose. I trust, then, that the Lord will bless these thoughts to us this evening, and get glory to his name through it. Shall we pray? Our Father, we again thank thee for these wonderful truths that come out of these pipes that were brought in by thee so long ago.

It's all written for our learning. And we are able to look into these things and have the light of the New Testament upon them. And we find these truths so precious.

This lampstand, those seven lamps, O God, we pray thee, impress upon our minds that thought. May we never forget. This is the great thing that thou art out for in each one of us, out to secure in us that which is likeness to thy beloved Son.

Only that will please thee. And once we're in line with this, and in some measure that is being secured, we shall find there is much for us to do. We shall find there is service.

That service may be altogether different, but it will all be for thy glory, and it will be all for our eternal good. So then, Lord, help us and grant us thy blessing, and we ask this as we give our thanks to thee in the name of thy beloved Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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