

To the Church in Sardis

by John Blanchard

John Blanchard's sermon emphasizes the distinction between nominal Christianity and true faith in Jesus Christ, urging listeners to seek a genuine relationship with Him.

Duration: 56:11

Scripture: Luke 18:13, John 8:24, John 14:9, Romans 3:23

Topics: "Sardis"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses a simple illustration of a boy breaking a window to explain the concept of sin and the brokenness of the law. He emphasizes that all people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The preacher also highlights the importance of being convinced about Christ and believing in him, as Jesus himself said that those who do not believe in him will die in their sins. The sermon encourages listeners to examine their own beliefs and convictions about Christ.

Transcript

I think this is a classic case of wanting to begin by saying something good and gracious and warm. Like, good gracious it's warm in here. I really don't know what the solution to the problem is.

Maybe there is none other than that we evacuate the church and hold the meeting out of doors. That would meet with wholehearted approval from all the fans tonight. Not my fans, the fans that I can see everywhere.

I thought for a moment this was Tokyo and not Aberystwyth. I know it's Aberystwyth. The spelling is easier in Tokyo.

But I imagine that if we did move outdoors that would confuse all the arrangements and so we must stay where we are. And no apology must be made for the heat but I realize that it's distressing to you and it's no less distressing here I assure you. I'm not sure how long ago I was invited to speak at this particular service but I do know that the correspondence in preparation for tonight has been carried out meticulously and courteously by the secretary involved.

I want to read to you three things that he said in his last letter about the rally tonight. The first was that there would be a congregation of a thousand or thereabouts. Now in that I understand he's told the truth.

We have just under a thousand in the sanctuary here. The television room, the overflow room as I understand it is completely filled and for all I know there were those therefore who were actually turned away tonight. So at least we know that that part was correct.

The second thing he says is this a large proportion are usually under 30 years of age. That's the most interesting phrase when you think of it. I thought that once you reach 30 years of age you'd had it.

But apparently those here are usually under 30 years of age. Maybe it all depends what kind of meeting they want to get into and then they revert to being under 30 years of age. Maybe what he really wants to say is that a large number of people here are under 30 years of age and that obviously is true.

I want more interestingly to tell you the third thing that he says in this letter. In a congregation of a thousand there are always quite a number of nominal Christians. And so in the course of the correspondence I was very specifically mandated to bring an evangelistic thrust at this particular rally.

But let me go back to that phrase. In a congregation of a thousand there are always quite a number of nominal Christians. Let me just explain to you what that word nominal means.

It has to do with having a name. It means that there are a number who have the name of being a Christian. But the inference from the letter is that they are not.

And as soon as I read that my mind went to the letters to one of the churches in the book of Revelation where precisely that was said of one of these congregations of people. It was said that they had a name or as we have it in the New International Version you have a reputation of being alive but are dead. And it is this matter of being nominal or having a name or having a reputation of being a Christian that I want to link with that particular phrase in Revelation about the alternative which is this.

You have a name or a reputation or a label if you like that you are a Christian. But the fact of the matter is that you are dead. And in our prayer earlier in the service we were warmly reminded that that is the alternative.

That the alternative to being a Christian is not nearly to be a non-Christian. It is in fact to be spiritually dead. To be separated from God not only essentially and really now but unless there is a miracle of divine grace in the heart of the person concerned to be separated from God in hell forever.

So it is a matter of tremendous importance that we address ourselves tonight to those who according to this letter and in fact are nominal Christians. Now the gospel is a glorious thing to all the people of God. And there is therefore a sense in which the message tonight is to everyone.

It is to them in the sense that it will be preached to everyone. But there is a deeper sense in which it is for it is specifically and definitely for those among you both here live in the sanctuary there in the overflow room maybe listening to this message by tape or watching it by video who are at this very point in time even as I speak nominal Christians. You have a name that you are a Christian.

You came perhaps with a group of young people from an evangelical church. You're a member of the youth camp. You're mixing in all of these Christian activities.

You're joining in Christian devotions. You're singing Christian hymns. You're listening to the preaching from the Christian's bible.

You are surrounded by Christian words and phrases and activities. But deep in your heart where there can be no pretense you know even as I speak that there is something essential that is missing. And that is that you have the name you have the label of being a Christian.

But the reality is not there. And for you Christianity is a performance and not an experience. And it is to you very particularly that I want to address this message tonight.

And I want to do so in this way. I want to ask whether there is a way in which we can as it were boil down concentrate this matter of what it is to be a Christian. Can we reduce it to a minimum number of statements so that in looking at that statements we can say this.

If these things are true of you then you are a Christian. If these things are not true of you then you are not a Christian whatever else you may be. And I've thought about that a very great deal.

And I've come to the conclusion that we can reduce this matter of being or not being a Christian to this irreducible minimum which I'm going to give you in the way of tests if you like. They're not tests of ability or of mental agility or of performance or of morality. But they are nevertheless tests.

And if we hold with that word test for a moment but don't use the word pass we may say this. As these tests are applied to you I want you to answer yes or no to the questions that are stated in them. And here is the first.

They are all of course connected with the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I put them for a moment in the form of a statement and then in the form of a question you'll see exactly what I mean. In the first place a Christian must be convinced about Christ.

He must be convinced about Christ. You see Christianity is based not on philosophy, not on a collection of religious ideas. Christianity is based not on philosophy but upon history.

Not on ideas but upon events. And those events centered in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we survey all the billions of people if we could conceive of doing that who have ever lived on planet earth and then had before us the person and the work of this man Jesus Christ we would have to come to this conclusion that in all the vast parade and cavalcade of humanity this man Jesus was unique.

Now there is a sense in which grammatically we must not add any other word to that. You cannot have very unique or especially unique or particularly unique. Unique is unique.

One only. No other like him in the whole of history. Let me mention some areas in which he was unique.

He was unique in his conception. Not incidentally in his birth. As a matter of shorthand we speak about the virgin birth but as a matter of fact as far as we understand it from the scriptures the birth of Jesus was no different essentially from yours and mine.

He was ejected from his mother's womb by exactly the same biological and muscular processes as you and I were. Let me put it to you this way. What makes Jesus unique is not how he came from the womb but how he entered it.

And Jesus entered his mother's womb not by any human sexual activity not even by an activity properly conducted within the bounds of marriage. Jesus entered the womb of the Virgin Mary as the result of a

miraculous operation of God the Holy Spirit. The power of the Most High overshadowed that beautiful young woman and the thing that was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost.

He was unique in his conception. He was unique in his life and in so many areas of his life. In his words for instance in a nation that was spilling over with rabbis and gurus and teachers of religious faith in one degree or another there were those who having heard Jesus speak said this no one ever spoke like this man.

And on another occasion this man spoke as one who had authority. He had authority. He was not like one of the other teachers of the law with derived authority and the very best that they could do would be to thumb around religious documents and come up with statements and seek to expound them.

Jesus spoke as one who had authority. Indeed he was even to take the Old Testament in his hand and the interpretation given by religious leaders in the other and to say this now you have heard it said but I say unto you and the inference was clear. It really doesn't matter who the teacher was what his interpretation was what his school of thought was what his own ideas were.

You have heard it said but I am telling you what the word of God means. I have authority to do so. He was unique in his miracles.

Of course there were miracles before Jesus came. There were miracles in the Old Testament. There were miracles before and after Jesus in the New Testament.

But the difference the difference when we come to the miracles of Jesus is this that there was in the life in the miracles of Jesus a wholesale onslaught on the forces of evil and that onslaught carried out in his own strength by his own will in his own name when he chose to do so. It seemed that the working of the miracle was a matter of his decision of his choice of his volition and of his power. He was unique in his character.

There is no one else in the whole of humanity of whom this could be said. He was tempted in every way just as we are yet was without sin. Now that is an axiomatic statement of the Christian faith.

Of course it's one thing to say that a person is sinless. It's another thing to prove it. It's one thing to claim that one's hero is without sin.

It's quite another thing to produce the evidence. Now what is the evidence for the sinlessness the perfection of the man called Jesus? Let me give you just four pieces of evidence and they're all very remarkable. In the first place his enemies admitted it.

Those who statedly or by their own lifestyles or actions showed themselves to be the enemies of Jesus Christ in the few hours surrounding his death were unanimous in substantiating his own claim to be sinless. The judge Pontius Pilate said I find no fault in this man. The judge's wife said have nothing to do with that just man.

Judas Iscariot who betrayed him said I've sinned I have betrayed innocent blood. The Roman centurion in charge of the execution squad says this was a righteous man. The dying thief admitting his own guilt and accepting what the law had to say about that told his fellow criminal we receive the due reward of our sins but this man has done nothing amiss.

His enemies admitted it. His followers believed it. People like Saul of Tarsus who at one stage went around with authority given to him from the ruling religious powers.

Authority to find Christians wherever he could to root them out of their homes to fling them into prison and if necessary into the grave for naming the name of Christ. This man Saul of whom someone has said that he packed one of the keenest human brains ever to exist on the human earth into his skull. This man Saul of Tarsus was eventually so arrested by the evidence that he was able to write he did no sin and followers who were to pay with their own lives because of their adherence to Christ were prepared to die rather than to change their minds about him on the evidence that lay before them and on the experience that they had had of him.

His closest friends noticed it and if to get evidence of goodness and certainly of perfection from your enemies is an extraordinary source of such evidence then to get the same evidence from your closest friends is even more remarkable. If you meet someone casually and for a brief moment or so a day or so perhaps a holiday acquaintance one can at times feel that one has met someone so beautiful and lovely and I choose those words carefully or handsome or intelligent or all of those things together if the sun gets really warm and you feel that you've met someone of such surpassing beauty and wonder and loveliness and intelligence and handsomeness and all the rest of it that you fondly imagine there can't be anything possibly wrong with them and it's only when you've celebrated your 25th wedding anniversary with them you find out. You see it's the people that we live with and spend time with who know most about us and the very people who lived and moved and walked and talked and worked and rested with Jesus who saw him in the time of popularity who saw him under oppression and opposition who saw him when he was lonely and alone who saw him when he was surrounded by the adoring crowds these very people said we have never found a single fault in him.

Peter says he did no sin now that's really enough you can't add anything to that but Peter does. Peter says he did no sin neither was there guile found in his mouth. Now why did Peter add that? We're not told.

Can I give a sanctified guess?

It is because the tongue is so ready to trip us up it is with the tongue that we so easily make a mistake there are people of whom we might say well their actions basically are just fine they behave so well but just occasionally there's a word a slip of the tongue a slight exaggeration a half truth and Peter nails that one and says before you say I'm sure he said something wrong just once not even with his mouth his closest friends noticed it if that's a remarkable piece of evidence the last piece is even more remarkable he himself claimed it he himself claimed it I don't know how much Christian biography or autobiography you've read but if you've read a great deal I'm sure you will have discovered this that the godlier a person appears to be the less godly they claim to be I remember

passing a church on one occasion and seeing one of these wayside pulpits outside some of them are very clever some of them are abysmal this was about halfway between the two this is what it said great men never think they're great small men never think they're small and I drove along there having an identity crisis in the car let me add something to that godly men never think they're godly godly men never think they're godly and it doesn't matter which part of the Christian church you read if you read Thomas Akempis on the one hand or John Wesley on the other George Whitfield you would find them all saying the same thing I feel so wretched and miserable and soaked in sin and we would hold them up I choose the word carefully we would hold them up as holy men of God I know of only one

exception in the whole of autobiographical comment among religious men in the experience of humanity and it's Jesus of Nazareth he lifted his eyes to his father in heaven and said I do always those things that please my father always I always do what pleases God there's nothing I ever do with which God is not totally and completely satisfied I have the smile of God upon every thought that passes through my mind every action that occupies my body every word that I speak I do always those things that please my father do you know of anyone who could say that he looked at the world around him and said which of you convinces me of sin which of you convicts me of sin now you are a religious people and you read the scriptures and you have some conception of the holiness of God and you can sniff

a sin out a mile away particularly someone else's now which of you has found a fault in me nobody said a word and then as it were he peered down into the depths of hell and said the prince of this world has no effect on me the devil has no effect on me all of his blandishments all of his temptations all of his allurements all of his attacks they don't have any effect on me none whatever they haven't left a single stain on my character or my conscience my friends let me ask you do you know of anyone who could look up to God and say everything I do pleases God who could look around his contemporaries and say which of you can find a single fault in me and can peer over and look into the face of the devil and say and you have no effect on me whatever the man we are speaking of is Jesus of

Nazareth his life was unique his death was unique it was unique because it was a voluntary death Jesus is the only person in all of history to have volunteered to die you say now wait a moment that's just slightly exaggerated uh because for instance the the soldier who goes to war volunteers to die the person who commits suicide you may say volunteers to die but you're wrong the suicide doesn't volunteer to die he chooses the day the date the time the place the method but he doesn't choose to die he doesn't have that choice you and I don't have the choice to die though we may take the law into our own hands and choose the day and the method and the time but we cannot choose to die we have many choices to make in life so many young people here tonight with many of the major choices yet to

make but one of the choices that you do not have to make because it is not yours to make is the choice whether to die or not to die you don't have the liberty of weighing up all the evidence and saying well I've heard so many things about dying and it seems to be so painful and so harrowing and it hurts so many people I think I'll opt against that and choose not to die you don't have that liberty but Jesus the scripture says became obedient unto death he said on another occasion no man takes my life from me I have power and the word means authority I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again but no man takes it from me I am specifically volunteering to die here's the second thing that made his death unique it was not only voluntary it was vicarious if I can put it in

a startling way Jesus was a vicar because the word means one who acts in the place of others the bible teaches us that death is the result the inevitable result of sin that it was by one man that sin came into the world and death by sin before sin came into the world there was no such experience as human death when sin came into the world there could be no other human experience except death death is the inevitable result of sin but here we have a conundrum here is a man without sin here is a man without that cause of death if you like when I left school I went to work in the registrar general's office in the channel island of Guernsey place where they recorded all the births marriages and deaths on the island it was a wonderful place to work it saved you buying a newspaper you knew

everybody's business and I can still remember at this long range the very first time and the hundreds of times afterwards that I wrote a death certificate it was an unnerving experience it really was so much so

that how many years afterwards for 30 years afterwards and more I can remember I can remember the words that I wrote in that column cause of death the certificate began with the serial number then the name that the then the date of death then the name of the person then the age of the person then the parents of that person their home address and then that awful awful column cause of death and I can still remember it I can remember some of those long complicated medical terms all of those years ago arteriosclerotic degeneration of the myocardium I can remember that as if I wrote it

today and a strange sensation went through me when I wrote that because although here was a human being someone who two or three days ago was alive maybe not as fit as I am but was alive maybe able to speak and converse and now they're dead and the thing that has brought them from there to there is this but there is a deeper sense in which the thing that brought them from there to there was not that long medical term but a much shorter biblical one and that is sin because at the end of it all it was sin that brought into the human frame disease and decay and deterioration and ultimately and inevitably death but here was a man with no sin and yet here is that same man experiencing all the horror of death both physical death and spiritual death that is to say separation from God so that

there upon the cross he can cry my God my God why have you forsaken me what a conundrum impossible of solution that the man without sin bears all the consequences of sin impossible of solution except for this tremendous biblical statement Christ died for our sin he was unique in his death he was unique in his resurrection now there were those who were raised from the dead in the old testament and there were many in the new both before and after the resurrection of Jesus I've sometimes bemused by the statement that says and I paraphrase that the bodies of many Christians who were in the graves arose after Jesus's resurrection and went into the city and having been in Jerusalem many times I must say that my imagination runs riot at the thought of people coming out of the Damascus gate on a

Monday morning and being met by crowds of people that they buried in the previous 10 years and apparently that is the sort of thing that happened then what is unique about the resurrection of Jesus let me give you one example of a resurrection before his the widow of Nain's son here he is being carried to the cemetery and Jesus comes stops the procession speaks the word the man is raised to life now listen what is the very first thing that young man or that man does what's the first thing he does let me tell you he begins to die all over again can I try to illustrate this here he is perhaps in the fullness of life and he totters and dies and he's being carried along to the cemetery Jesus speaks and he rises up and is alive again and begins to die I don't mean he keels over straight away

or that he died 10 minutes later or the next day or the next month or the next year we're not told but one thing is absolutely certain there is now a grave in Israel containing the body of that man who was raised from the dead he was alive he died he was raised from the dead and he promptly died all over again and that is true of everyone who was raised from the dead except one and he being raised from the dead dies no more death has no more dominion over him he's alive he's alive and we are here not in the name of someone who lived 2,000 years ago and is dead we are here in the name of someone who died 2,000 years ago and is alive he's alive he's alive and we are here not in the name of someone who lived 2,000 years ago and is dead we are here in the name of someone who died 2,000 years

ago and is alive his resurrection is unique his claims were unique I am the light of the world he who follows me will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life I am the way the truth and the life no man comes to the father except by me I am the water of life I am the bread of life who else could make claims like that and above all there was this stupendous claim when someone came to him and said show us the father

and that will be sufficient for us can I just fill in a tiny bit of background I'm sure in that questioner's mind was this you've spoken about the kingdom of God and the love of God and the power of God and the law of God and the beauty of God and the wonder of God but you see we're practical people if you could show us God that would clinch it and Jesus said have I

been with you for so long and you don't know who I am if you've seen me you've seen the father now what do I mean by saying you must be convinced about Christ Jesus said if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be you will indeed die in your sins my dear friend I want to ask you tonight are you convinced about Christ let me read you this statement by C.S.

Lewis you can shut him up that is Jesus for a fool you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God but let us not have any of this patronizing nonsense about him being just a great human teacher he has not left that open to us he did not intend to let me ask you before I go on to the second statement much more briefly are you convinced about Christ not merely that he was born of the Virgin Mary that he lived a perfect life that he repulsed all the attacks of the enemy that he died in the place of sinners on the cross that he rose again from the dead but are you convinced that Jesus Christ is king of kings and Lord of lords not only as fully man as if he were not God but as fully God as if he were never man are you convinced about Christ if

you are not then you are not a Christian and if you are you're one-third of the way to being one let me say a second thing very much more briefly you must be convinced by Christ you must be convinced about him forgive me you must be convicted by him you see the biography at which we've looked not only tells us something about the life of Jesus it says something about your life and mine and essentially what it says is told us in a verse that perhaps everyone in the auditorium knows tonight and it's this all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God I used to think that this phrase about the glory of God was a very very nebulous kind of phrase very difficult to pin down what does the glory of God really mean well I believe that in this connection and in this context we can take a

biblical phrase and say this that the glory of God is revealed to us in the face of Christ that is in the life of Jesus and that as we've read of that sinless and perfect life we are seeing the glory of God manifested in a human being and scripture's verdict is all of us have sinned and do continue to fall short of the glory of God that we see revealed here in the face of Christ let me say three simple things about that statement it's a very sweeping statement it says all have sinned there are no exceptions to it it doesn't say we've all sinned in the same way it doesn't say we've all sinned to the same degree it doesn't say we've all sinned with the same amount of knowledge the same understanding of what we were doing but it does say that all of us have sinned that none of us can plead

not guilty to breaking the law of God even if we feel that there are parts that we're not conscious of breaking or of breaking to such an extent I want you to imagine that tonight in fact it would have been easier to give the illustration of arriving here because I've driven nearly 300 miles today and just a few minutes late in getting here and I screamed into the main street of Aberystwyth wherever that might be at about 50 miles an hour and I met at the end of the street by a charming looking gentleman in a lovely dark blue uniform with silver buttons down the front who stops me and says name and address please and when I ask why he says because I'm going to book you and I said what for he said well you were speeding the speed limit here is 20 or 30 or whatever it is and I said well now

before you say another word would you allow me to say something I happen to have worked in legal circles for many years and I have a copy of the road traffic act in front of me and I'd like to point out some of the provisions to you first of all it says that I have to have a valid driving license and maybe you'd like to sit not at the back just the front please and there it is uh please don't look at what's written on the back some friends in Swansea have added something just a bit on the front just a bit on the front I have a valid driving license clause number two says I've got to have an insurance certificate would you like to see that I've got it here it's all paid up number three says I've got to have two white lights on the front of the car would you like to check and two red ones

on the back would you like to have a look at that and that the tread on the tires number six says the tread on the tires has to be a certain would you like to look at that and now let's imagine that there are 100 clauses and I go through 96 97 98 99 and I've kept all of those now sir you're a reasonable man you're not going to book me for breaking one miserable little clause in the road traffic act when I've kept 99 do you know what he'd say well goodness oh boy oh I'd never thought of that so that's fine you must be the best driver in England just and in Wales just go home and forget about it of course he would he would say sir if you finished I am not interested in how many parts of the law you have kept I'm interested in the one you have broken and in breaking that part of the law the

law stands broken briefly one other simple illustration school playground ball goes through the window the headmaster forbids any further football to be played uh in the playground maybe we ought to say any further cricket to be played we don't play that anyway so that's probably a good kind of illustration and uh one little boy just can't resist it and a couple of weeks later he brings the ball into the playground goes straight through the headmaster's window lovely new window boy brought before the headmaster and the headmaster says do you know what the law said yes I do do you know how much it's going to cost to repair that window no sir I don't it's going to cost 100 pounds and will you please go and tell your father 100 pounds to repair that window and the boy says can I just say

something the hole in that window measures about two inches by three I've not even touched all of that part of the window I make it about 57p including vat would he get away with that of course he wouldn't and you may feel tonight well there are things I haven't done I've not committed murder I've not committed adultery I've not robbed people I've not been violent I've not done so many things I've not been antisocial in my behavior do you remember the reading earlier in the service of a man who felt just like that marched up and down in front of the temple and said God I want to thank you that I'm not like other men they're robbers evildoers adulterers or even this this tax collector and while I'm about it let me tell you all the good things I do I fast twice a week I don't really have to

do that that's beyond the call of duty religiously and I give 10 percent of all of my income to religious work I'm such a good person and all of these bad things I have not done and that man was rejected from the kingdom of God but the man who was accepted was the man who was convicted by the law of God who would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast and said God be merciful to me the sinner you see it's a very sweeping statement it's a very simple statement all have sinned there is only one definition of sin in the bible and it's this sin is lawlessness that's the only definition of sin in the bible it's lawlessness it is a spirit that says I want to do these things there is no law in this country that says you must steal you must rob you must be you must

be impure you must be envious you must be jealous you must lie you must be dishonest there's no law that says we have to do those things we do those things because we want to do those things because

there is a spirit of lawlessness and rebellion and godlessness in our hearts by nature that is the kind of people we are if I were to single you out tonight and say to you my young friend maybe one of the older folk here are you ungodly you'd probably be mortally offended then what would you do if I were to say well in that case presumably you're godly now what would you say now what would you say you immediately protest and say no no no no I'm not I wouldn't call myself godly my friends unless words have totally lost their meaning if you're not godly you're ungodly and that is exactly what

the bible says now as we draw toward a close as you look at the person of christ as you look at his glory his wonder his purity his love his meekness his perfection are you convicted by him are you convicted by him do you stand in his presence tonight and say I am a sinner lost guilty helpless and falling short of the glory of god if you will not admit that then you can never be a christian why do I say that because jesus said and we picked it up in one of our earlier hymns that he had not come to call the righteous but sinners you see there are actually people jesus did not come to say and there are people jesus will not say and hold your breath there are people jesus cannot say he cannot save the self-righteous jesus cannot save the man who goes to his grave saying I will trust in my

own self-righteousness to get me to heaven I say it reverently and with the bible open before me jesus cannot save that man because he is trusting in himself that he is righteous and not until we abandon our self-righteousness and are convicted before the righteousness of christ can we hope to come to him for salvation the doctor the best doctor in the world the most brilliant physician in the world cannot lift a finger cannot lift a finger to cure the tiniest disease unless the patient comes or calls for the doctor admits their condition and places themselves in his hands have you ever done that admitted your condition been convicted by christ and called and come to him for forgiveness and cleanse and finally you must be converted to christ you must not only be convinced about christ and

convicted by him you must be converted to him jesus said so unless you're converted and become as little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven and that word converted is so misunderstood and yet very simply its meaning can be put into these two words to be converted consists of repentance and faith and both of those words are misunderstood the word repentance for instance is often is often understood as meaning feeling sorry for sin or uncomfortable as the result of sin feeling guilty about sin but that's not repentance there was a story years ago in the reader's digest of a man who had been cheating on his income tax and he finally decided that he ought to send some conscience money in to her majesty's bloods i mean her majesty's inland revenue i was going to say bloodsuckers

but i won't say that and so he wrote a letter to them and said for years i've been cheating on my income tax and it's just been getting to me so much i can't even sleep at night and so i'm sending you some money of course not a check and here's some money to to deal with that situation p.s if i still can't sleep i'll send the rest now that was not repentance that was not sorrow for sin that was not a turning from sin repentance is not merely the change of mind about sin the change of an opinion about what sin is repentance involves turning from sin and god has nowhere promised to forgive the sin that a person is not willing to forsake and if you will not forsake then god will not forgive but if you are willing to forsake and to turn from your evil ways and to turn unto the lord then he

will graciously forgive you and faith well that's misunderstood too so often thought of as agreeing that jesus was and is the son of god was born of a virgin lived a perfect life died on the cross rose from the dead is coming again yes i believe in jesus it often seems to me that the very way we've translated the bible words for believing can be misleading and that they would be better almost exclusively to be

translated something like this to believe on or into or upon the lord jesus christ to cast ourselves upon him let me give an illustration that i used and i'll tell you why in just a moment or the postscript to it at a meeting in scotland a few months ago i spend a great deal of time traveling in various countries of the world by plane and i want you to imagine that i go to gatwick

airport as i often do and i'm going to be flying to the united states and i wait for the flight to be called and i don't rush for the plane as most people do all the people who rush for the plane are on their first plane trip those others of us who know we're going to be on there for nine hours and we really don't want nine and three quarter hours we just sit and wait but on this occasion i wait even longer until there's only me left in the departure lounge and they announce the final boarding call and i stay there and eventually a man comes along and says excuse me but are you mr blanchard yes i am are you due on this flight to atlanta georgia yes i am sir would you like to get on board the plane we're leaving right now and i say just sit down for a minute i want to tell you something

there are people who don't believe in airplanes they're scared of them wouldn't fly anywhere but i have flown literally thousands of times and i watched your plane come in wonderful plane and i want you to know that i believe in american airlines and that looks like a pretty new plane to me and i saw the new crew going on board and they look very fresh and i saw the food that's what you call it going on board and that looks wonderful and i saw the luggage going on board i saw the fuel being poured in and i want you to know that i believe in everything to do with your whole operation i think it's but i do find the flight boring so what i've decided to do is to sit here and be a believer and get to atlanta without getting on the plane he'd say sir you spend too long in wales or something

like that see he would say that's ridiculous you will never get where you want to be unless you actually place yourself on board that plane and when you do that then you will get there it's not enough to say but i believe in it i think it's great i think it's wonderful i know where it's going i've got written evidence about it the price has been paid my name is written there and i'm just sitting here being a believer why isn't that good enough it's absurd i used that illustration in a meeting in scotland young man came to it who had no business to be at the meeting i won't stop to explain that it was an internal meeting for christians and he just wandered in sat and listened was very struck by the illustration the next night he came i wasn't speaking the next night he came and joined in

and listened and went away and came and joined him listen and went away by about the thursday night someone said to me i believe that that young man young married man has become a christian or is about to become and is on the brink of becoming a christian and i went and had a word with him and he told me about this illustration and as i listened i felt constrained to say this to to ask him this i want to ask you a very simple question i'm not going to ask it theologically or in a sense biblically using biblical words i'm going to ask it in terms of the illustration and the question is this are you on board the play and he looked at me very thoughtfully and then with great joy in his face he said i am i am i had a letter from him just a little while ago rejoicing in his faith some months

later my young friend as i close tonight other folk too let me ask you the question and ask it so simply ask it in terms of the illustration there's no need for me to repeat myself you'll know what i mean the question is this are you on the play are you on board the play have you come to christ said in the word of top ladies him nothing in my hand i bring simply to thy cross i claim naked come to thee for dress helpless look to thee for grace foul eye to the fountain fly wash me savior or i die you done that and if you never had when you came into this service tonight will you do it now there's no need to get up out of your seat walk an aisle

shake an evangelist hand sign a card i'm asking you not to come to the evangelist i'm asking you to come to christ who shed his blood and at the

cross get right with god will you do that now if you are convinced about christ and convicted by christ then will you tonight be converted to christ turn from your sin here and now sitting right where you are there in the television room turn from your sin abandon it tell christ of your loathing for it and your longing to leave it and fling yourself upon him as the only savior for sinners come to jesus and do it now

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