

A Word of Reconciliation, Participation, Emancipation

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in living in the fullness of eternal life, and that the gospel begins with the word of reconciliation, God's gracious invitation to guilty men to come back to himself on his terms.

Duration: 44:37

Scripture: John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Philippians 2:12, Hebrews 4:2, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 Peter 1:25

Topics: "Reconciliation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing and embracing the truth. He highlights that while people may argue about untruth, they cannot argue about the truth. The preacher quotes John 8:30, where Jesus declares that those who continue in his word will know the truth and be set free. He uses the analogy of a glove to illustrate how believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and empowered to live a life that is possible through Christ. The preacher concludes by inviting the audience to receive God's forgiveness and embrace the truth through a simple prayer.

Transcript

I'd like to read you just a verse or two from the second epistle to the Corinthians. 2 Corinthians, in chapter 5, if any man be in Christ, 17th verse, he is a new creature, all things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to which that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation, now then we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us whom you know sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

You know there's an old Chinese proverb, it goes something like this, there's the man who knows not and he knows not that he knows not, he's simple, teach him, there's a man who knows not and he knows that he knows not, he's a fool, avoid him, there's a man who knows and he knows not that he knows, he's asleep, wake him, and there's the man who knows and he knows that he knows, he's a wise man, follow him, and God's concern for you and for me is that we might be just as wise as that who know and who know that we know. Writing in the fifth chapter of his epistle, John says, these things write we unto you that you may know that you have eternal life, not that you may hope or think, maybe, perhaps, wind and

weather permitting, no no, these things write we unto you that you may know that you have eternal life. The whole bible rings with certainty, speaks of the Christian life always in the superlative.

The Lord Jesus said, I'm come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly. We're to enjoy joy unspeakable and full of glory. We're to have a peace that passeth understanding, that means a peace that staggers the neighbors.

We're to know a love that passeth knowledge. We're to be more than conquerors through him that loved us and we're to reign in life by one Christ Jesus. Now this isn't just a luxury, this isn't just the monopoly of the few, this is in God's economy to be the normal experience of every redeemed forgiven sinner who knows it and who has the right to know it.

Not because he deserves it, but because grace has provided it and there's nothing more pathetic than for us to be aware of all that grace provides and not enjoy it. I wonder if you know and know that you know that you have eternal life and when I speak of eternal life I don't mean heaven one day. I mean that overflowing rich experience of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ indwelling you by his divine spirit right now here on earth on the way to heaven.

For eternal life is not something that you have to wait for. Eternal life is not a place you're going to. Eternal life is some body.

This is the record that God has given to us eternal life and this life eternal life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life. He that hath not the son of God hath not life.

The criterion is not whether you subscribe to a certain denomination or organization. The criterion is whether you possess some body or whether you don't and that some body is Jesus Christ. Now God wants you to possess Jesus Christ.

He wants you to know that you possess Jesus Christ and live in the good of it and in the fullness of it. One who was a very good friend of mine and a good friend no doubt of some of those of you who are here tonight and who's now with Christ, Captain Reginald Wallace. He, I remember, quoted a hymn on one occasion that he felt should never have been written.

Here was the verse he quoted. There is a thing I long to know. Oft it gives me anxious thought.

Do I love my Lord or no? Am I his or am I not? Can you think of anything quite so pathetic as that? He said if you were to go home to your wife, if you happen to have one, and found out where she was, she'd probably be in the kitchen engaging in her normal favorite pastime, washing up or doing the laundry. And you were to go to her and look rather languidly into her eyes, wringing your hands, you'd say, darling, that's what you say to your wife when you've got one. There is a thing I long to know.

Oft it gives me anxious thought. Do I love you dear or no? Am I yours or am I not? Well, he said she'd probably reach for the heaviest frying pan that she could find. And within a matter of moments you wouldn't be in any doubt whatever.

She'd probably say, it's not faith you need, it's just assurance. And immediately begin to administer it. Now it may well be that there are some here tonight and you are well tutored in the facts.

You know all there is to know, maybe, about the essential needed steps of salvation. And yet you've never come to the place of assurance. You're not a hundred percent certain that you're redeemed, that Christ indwells you, that you've been reborn of God's divine spirit into the family of heaven.

And I trust that tonight you may be led to that place where you can know and know that you know. For then will this not only be to the eternal comfort of your own soul, but for the first time you'll have a message for your fellow men. For the first time you will be a positive contributory factor to your own church, to your own Christian fellowship.

For the first time you'll be a living member of the living body of Christ. You know in the epistle to the Hebrews, the writer says this in the fourth chapter in the second verse, unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them. But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. What he says of these people is this, that they were as well acquainted with the facts as I was, as you were. They knew all there was to know.

It was as plainly, lucidly, faithfully declared to them as it was declared to us. And yet all that they knew left them where it found them, never profited them. Because they didn't mix the word with that vital operative ingredient which is called faith.

Now don't confuse faith with what you believe, because faith and what you believe could be two very, very different things. Faith isn't what you believe. Faith is acting on what you believe, stepping out upon it, resting the whole weight of your ultimate destiny upon it.

I can believe there's a chair there, as I do. I recognize it by its peculiar shape. It's got four legs and a seat in the back.

And I've learned long since to recognize that as a chair. I know it isn't an omnibus. It isn't a pig.

It isn't a cabbage. It's a chair. I know it's a chair.

I believe it's a chair. And furthermore, I'm well instructed as to the purpose for which it was created. It was intended to be sat on.

It's a chair. I believe all those things. But I don't have faith in that chair.

I can't have faith in that chair, not standing up. I can't have faith in that chair, not where I am now. There's only one place I can have faith in that chair, and that's sitting on it, with my legs up in the air.

Then I've got faith in that chair because I've acted upon what I've come to know and believe about that chair. That's faith! And you can know that Jesus Christ was God's Son. You can believe that he came from heaven that first Christmas day, nineteen hundred years ago.

You can believe that he lived a sinless life and died his atoning death and rose again from the dead and ascended to be with the Father. You can believe all that, and die in your sins. If you don't do something more than believe it, you've got to act on what you believe, and come for what you are, for what he is, a guilty sinner to a sinner's savior, and appropriate by faith what grace provides.

The writer of this epistle says the word preached didn't profit them, didn't add pund wit to them, because they didn't mix it with faith. They were satisfied to have a second-hand knowledge. All they knew was hearsay.

They never released divine action by the faith that enables God to accomplish his divine aims in a man's soul. The word preached didn't profit them. What was the word preached? What's involved in the gospel? Well, the gospel involves, of course, far more than knowing that your sins are forgiven.

It's a wonderful thing to know that your sins are forgiven, but that isn't the whole of the gospel by any means. It's the beginning of the gospel, it's the first word of the gospel, but it isn't the whole of the gospel. I think we might invest our time well tonight in examining for a few moments what is involved in the word preached.

Well, let's glance at the first word of the gospel. We read the passage together from the second epistle to the Corinthians, where in the nineteenth verse Paul declares, to wit that God was in Christ, God incarnate, the word made flesh, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. That's the first word of the gospel, the word of reconciliation, to reconcile, to establish peace between two parties.

And God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, bringing guilty men back into that relationship with the holy God that establishes peace on God's terms. And the first word of the gospel is a word of reconciliation. It's God's gracious invitation to guilty men to come back to himself on his terms, and instead of being at enmity through sin, be at peace through forgiveness.

That's the first word of the gospel. That's where the Christian life begins. And if you haven't begun there yet tonight, then you haven't begun at all.

You may be a very respectable member of a very keen Christian evangelical family, but if you as a boy or a girl or a man or a woman have never personally come to Jesus Christ and begun right there, in claiming peace with God through forgiveness that has been made possible by what he accomplished on the cross, you haven't yet become a Christian. Because a Christian is a forgiven sinner. And you can call yourself anything else, but don't call yourself a Christian if you're not a forgiven sinner.

And of course, if you're not a sinner, you'll never become a Christian. Because you can't. Because a Christian is a forgiven sinner.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. That's why his name was called Jesus. You know as well as I do that it's a Hebrew word that means savior.

And the intelligent purpose for which an intelligent God gave him that intelligent name was that he saves. He saves his people from their sins. People who don't have sins don't need a savior, so they'll never become Christians.

But those who know that they're sinners and stop deluding themselves know what they need, a savior. And they come, and the Bible describes it as believing on his name. Did you ever believe on the name of Jesus Christ? It's an expression you'll constantly find in the Bible, as for instance in the fifth chapter of 1 John where it says, These things write we unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Or in John 1 12, as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. What is it to believe on his name? Simply to credit him with the office that his name implies. If you happen to be in a strange town, maybe on holiday, and you wanted to have your hair cut, what would you look around for? Well you'd probably look around for a hairdresser's.

And if you saw a hairdresser, you'd go and sit down, expect them to cut your hair. Wouldn't you? You'd be very surprised if he started taking one of your teeth out. You'd say, pardon me, I thought you were a hairdresser.

Well he says, I am. That's why I'm taking your teeth out. And you'd look at him in blank amazement.

You'd say, but you're not as good as your name. You're not being true to your name. If you were hungry and you wanted to buy bread, you'd look for a baker.

And you'd go and expect him to buy bread. He might say, I'm terribly sorry we don't sell bread, we only sell cabbages. Well then you'd say, you're not as good as your name.

Thou shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin. I wouldn't give tuppence for a savior who didn't save, would you? But you see he is as great and as good as his name to those who come to him for what he is, because of what they are, sinners who need a savior. Did you ever do that? This is where the gospel begins.

For he, verse 21 of 2 Corinthians 5, for he, that is God, hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Those are God's terms. Don't delude yourself, don't kid yourself, and in Christ's name don't allow anybody else to delude you.

These are God's terms. He was wounded for our transgressions, and he was bruised for our iniquities, and the cost of our peace with God was laid upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. God made him to be sin for us.

He credited to Jesus Christ all your guilt, all your sin, all your shame, and mine, and because 1,900 years ago there was credited to Jesus Christ in his sinlessness, all your sinfulness, God today is prepared for his dear sake to credit you with all his sinlessness. Because your sinfulness was laid on him, you may be clothed with his sinlessness. You're clothed with his righteousness.

That's called imputed righteousness. It's the picture that the Lord Jesus used in the parable of the wedding garment. It is placed over what you are, and God sees the righteousness of Christ because you're hid in him.

That's the meaning of the cross. He took your place, and your guilt was sentenced in the person of another and executed. Christ died for you.

Nothing sentimental about that. It was stern business when Christ died upon the cross. God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, and because he paid the price, God is prepared to receive you as a forgiven sinner on his terms, that you come and believe on his name, accept him for what he came to be because of what you are, a sinner's savior for the sinner.

Did you ever mix that with faith? I'm sure you have become aware of the facts, but did you step out on those facts? Do you know that you have received Christ? Are you thanking him now that you're redeemed? You don't deserve to be redeemed, nor do I, but we have the right to be redeemed in spite of the fact that we don't deserve it, because God has invited us to be redeemed through his son. Wouldn't it be a sad thing to know the facts without being redeemed? Did you ever mix that with faith? You can't begin anywhere else. Don't please try to be a Christian without beginning there, because you may impress yourself, and you may impress a few other people, but you won't impress God, because there's nowhere else to begin.

There was a small boy once, I don't know what he did wrong at home, but he had displeased his mother, and the atmosphere was pretty tense. Diplomatic relations had been severed between himself and his mother, a cold war had come into existence, and he was beginning to feel the pressure of the situation, and so he thought he ought to take certain steps towards appeasement. So he went up to his mother, and he said, Mom, shall I mow the lawn? No, thank you.

Oh. It was about 20 minutes later before he dared to come back, and he said, Mom, any messages you want down the village? No, thank you. Progress was not what one would describe as sensational.

Twenty minutes later he came again, Mom, shall I sweep the kitchen? Even at that unusual suggestion, no thaw in the Cold War. No, thank you. It was about half an hour before he came again, just the suspicion of a tear in his eye.

He stepped up to his mother's side, and he said, Mom, I'm sorry. And for the first time, there was a smile on his mother's face. She said, Bill, that's all I've been waiting for.

Now you can sweep the kitchen. You see, he didn't get out of that, but he had to begin at the right place. And you'll find that there are lots of lawns to mow, and lots of messages down the village to run, and lots of kitchens to sweep once you've come to Jesus Christ.

But you cannot begin anywhere but there, beneath the shadow of that cross upon which God's incarnate Son, in all his sinlessness, paid the price of your redemption and mine. To this end, said the Lord, Jesus was I born, to lay down my life, a ransom for many. I must go to Jerusalem, and there I will be delivered into the hands of wicked men, be crucified.

But the third day, I will be raised again from the dead. And that wasn't a sentimental gesture. It was the means whereby God's righteousness could be satisfied, and he could receive you back to himself as a forgiven sinner, without doing violence to the righteousness of a holy God.

And God is not prepared to waive his terms. God has never changed his mind. This is the first word of the gospel.

Did you ever mix it with faith? It's a word of reconciliation. It was fulfilled in the person of the living word, who said in John 14 verse 6, I am the way. Are you a sinner who knows it, who needs forgiveness, and you're trying to find the way back to God, and the Lord Jesus says, come to me.

I'm the way. See my hands and my feet. Handle me, and see that it is I myself.

I'm the way. In James' epistle, in the first chapter, 17th and 18th verses, we read this. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness,

neither shadow of turning.

God the Father, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, he never changes. He never changes his mind. He never changes his viewpoint.

What he thought about sin when Adam first fell, he thinks about sin today. And what God thought in the eternal ages of the past, when he agreed with the Son, how sinners should be redeemed in the land, when he is slain from the foundation of the world, is exactly what God thinks about the remedy for sin today. He never changes his mind.

In him there is no shadow of turning. There is no variableness at all. Why not? Because God is truth.

And truth doesn't change. There are no degrees of truth. There are degrees of untruth, but there are no degrees of truth.

You can't discuss truth. You can discuss untruth, but you can't discuss truth. Truth never changes.

Truth is unshakable. Truth is like rock beneath your feet. And God has never changed his mind because he is truth.

And the next verse goes on to say this, in the 18th verse of James 1, God begets us to himself with a word that never changes. God's theology about redemption never changes. With every decade, or every whim of some passing professor who'll be dead tomorrow, God's theology never changes.

Man's does, but God doesn't. His is a word of truth. Wouldn't it be a sad thing if what I tell you was the truth today from God's word were to cease to be the truth in ten years' time? Wouldn't it be a terrible shame if the people who believed the truth fifty years ago believed what isn't the truth today? Can you imagine anything more stupid than that? Truth never changes.

That's why in the first chapter of his epistle, Peter goes on to say this. Verse 23 of chapter 1 of 1 Peter, Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God. This is the incorruptible seed by which you are born again, the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

Verse 25, the last verse of the first chapter of 1 Peter, The word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you, and it is gospel truth! It never changes. It's the word of reconciliation, that's the first word of the gospel, it's the word of truth, that's the second word of the gospel.

Because it is an utterance of something that never changes. That's why I don't have to make any suggestions tonight. I don't just offer you my opinions.

They wouldn't be worth offering. A preacher of the gospel is neither asked to offer suggestions nor offer opinions. He declares truth, and it is the eternal truth of the eternal God that never changes, that sets men free.

We might have a very vigorous argument, as a matter of fact, about what the time is. You might look at your watch and say, by my watch it's a quarter past nine. I'd say, I'm afraid you're slow, by my watch it's twenty-two minutes past.

No, says somebody else, my watch says seven, ten minutes past. And we could have a wonderful to-do about what the time was, because you can always discuss untruth! You can always argue about untruth, but you can never argue about truth. And in the midst of our argument, somebody turns on the radio, and you hear the time signal.

We stop arguing. The truth sets you free. You listen to this man, you listen to that man, you listen to this hypothesis, you read the other book, you join this school of thought, and you'll be bewildered until you're buried in your sins.

Come to Christ. He says, I'm the way, I am the truth. And in John's Gospel, chapter eight, the thirtieth verse, the Lord Jesus said, as he spake these words, and many believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Listen to what I have to say, says the Lord Jesus, and you'll know the truth. And the truth that you come to know will set you free.

And if the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you'll be free indeed. He was very confident about what he had to say, wasn't he? Where did the Lord Jesus get his doctrine from? Was it his own? Where did he learn his theology? How could he be so certain two thousand years ago that his theology, which was valid then, would be valid today? How could he dare say that what he had to say was valid for all eternity, would set men free? It would be a word of emancipation! Because he tells us in John 7, verse 16, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. It comes from God.

And when we get our doctrine from God instead of getting our doctrine from men, we can be very confident. Of course, the Lord Jesus was God. The Bible leaves us in absolutely no doubt about that.

But he came to be man. And although he was God, he behaved as man, and became the human vehicle, the expression of the divine truth. That's why in John 12, and in the 47th verse, he says this, If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not.

For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Because the word that I declare is the eternal truth of an eternal God, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. And what I say today, said Jesus Christ, will be valid in eternity. It will be valid in the day of judgment.

And I don't have to judge you now. I don't have to condemn you now. The truth that I declare, which comes from my Father in heaven, will be as true then as it is today, and it will judge you.

That's why I don't have to judge you if I'm a preacher. I don't have to condemn you if I'm a preacher. All I have to do, as God helps me, is declare the same truth that he declared 2,000 years ago, knowing this, that it will be as valid in eternity as it was then and as it is now.

And the truth that you hear will judge you. For I have not spoken of myself, said the Lord Jesus, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting, whatsoever I speak.

Therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak, says Jesus Christ, the eternal God, yet now in common as man on earth, 1,900 years ago, he says, every word I say to you is spoken by command of my Father in heaven. And it is valid for eternity. Jesus Christ said, I am the way.

I am the truth. I am the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

Did you ever mix that with faith? Has the truth ever set you free from all your fears and doubts and insecurities? Have you ceased being a dried up leaf blown around by every wind of doctrine? Blown this way, blown that way. Did you ever get rock under your feet? Did you ever obey the gospel, mix it with faith, and find that Jesus is not only the word of reconciliation, but the word of emancipation? He sets you free. Here's the last word of the gospel.

It's found in Philippians chapter two. Philippians chapter two, the apostle writes, verse 12, Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. What does he mean by that? Roll up your sleeves and do your best to get to heaven.

No, of course he doesn't mean that. You know he doesn't mean that. He goes on to say exactly what he means.

Verse 13, For it is God, not Paul the apostle, who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. What he was saying to these new believers in Philippi was this. Don't be little satellites around Paul the apostle.

Please don't be swayed simply by my personality. Don't be swept along by what I am. Everything that God gave to Paul the apostle when he was redeemed as a guilty sinner, he's given to you.

The same Lord Jesus Christ who rose again from the dead and lives in me is the same Lord Jesus Christ who being risen from the dead lives in you. Work out your own salvation. God made you as wealthy as he made me in the day that he redeemed you.

It is God himself who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. By the exceeding great and precious promises, as Peter tells us in the fourth verse of his first chapter of the second epistle, by the exceeding great and precious promises, we have been made partakers of the divine nature. Jesus Christ himself on the day of Pentecost came to indwell the redeemed sinners, the redeemed humanity of forgiven sinners, to impart to them his divine nature.

Jesus Christ living again on earth today clothed with you and clothed with me. That's what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians. 220, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet.

Not I, Christ liveth in me. I possess the very life of the Lord Jesus. And that is exactly what the Lord Jesus meant when he said I am the way.

A word of reconciliation. I am the truth. A word of emancipation.

I am the life. A word of participation. Listen, fellow, girl tonight, when you come to Jesus Christ and claim forgiveness through his precious blood, and you're cleansed and reconciled to God, a very wonderful thing happens.

He himself by his Holy Spirit comes and lives in you and imparts to you his divine nature. Everything that is possible to him becomes possible to you. You can say to me to live is Christ.

I can do all things through Christ, who is my strength. What a wonderful thing. Sure, you've seen this illustration before.

Supposing I were to say to a glove, glove, pick up that Bible. Well, it would be a very stupid thing to say, wouldn't it? Because I've never told it how. And how could a glove ever pick up a Bible without being adequately instructed? So I say, glove, I beg your pardon.

I was unjust. I demanded too much of you. I asked you to do something I haven't taught you how to do.

Now I want you to watch very carefully. You stick your thumb on top and you put your fingers underneath and you squeeze tight and then you lift, see? Now maybe you didn't see the first time. Thumb on top, fingers underneath, squeeze tight and lift.

Now I've given you a perfect example of what to do. Now do it. And it doesn't.

But it's got a thumb and it's got fingers. It's got the shape and the form of a hand. Why doesn't it? Well, because it doesn't have the life that makes it possible.

And yet I've got a glove that has picked that Bible up dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of times. But never once, never once before I put my hand in it. But just as soon as I put my hand in that glove, that glove became as strong as my hand.

Everything possible to my hand became possible to that glove. It was indwelt by my life. And all the glove had to do to enjoy my strength was to close my activity.

Now that's exactly what happens when you're born again. For the Lord Jesus, by his indwelling Holy Spirit, clothes himself with your redeemed humanity. Your hands become his hands.

Your lips become his lips. Your mind his to think with. Your heart his to love with.

And Jesus Christ lives on earth again in you. So he not only died for what you've done, a word of reconciliation. He rose again to take the place of what you are.

A word of participation. And this is the truth. A word of emancipation that sets you free.

Now this is the gospel. I say, did you ever mix that with faith? Have you said, thank you Lord Jesus for redeeming me through your death? Thank you Lord Jesus for putting rock under my feet. Because now I know the word of God is eternal.

It'll never pass away. Nothing will ever change your mind about your attitude to me now because of Jesus. Who died for me and who rose again.

And thank you Lord Jesus, not only for dying for me, but for the glorious fact that being risen you've come to live in me. And now you live through me. And all that I could never do apart from you, I can do now because of you.

You're the answer not only to my guilt, but you're the answer to my bankruptcy. You're my strength, you're my victory, you're my peace, you're my joy, you're my future. You living your life through me is the will of

God for me forever.

This is salvation. But the word preached did not profit them because it wasn't mixed with faith. They never acted intelligently upon what they knew.

They remained spectators. They sat up in the gallery and they looked, but they never acted as though they wanted. What grace provides.

May I assume tonight that your very presence here this evening indicates that you're concerned to have nothing less than what God is prepared to give. And that it was never clear before and it has in God's mercy become clear to you tonight. You're willing to receive what God is willing to give.

Well then will you? You say I'm not quite sure how to mix with faith. Well maybe I could help you. I was only 12 years of age when I mixed with faith.

I didn't know anything about the gospel till then. But that night in the boys camp I came to realize that the Lord Jesus loved me, died for me, wanted to save me. And all I did in my heart was say thank you.

And I took it. And maybe I could help you pray a very simple prayer. Which will change the whole course of your life as it changed the whole course of mine then.

And I was never the same again. I didn't sprout wings. I don't mean that.

I mean that I found somebody that night who came to live within me who has never left me since. And he's the only reason why it's my privilege and my joy to be here tonight. To tell you about it.

I'm going to suggest this. The vast bulk of those of us who are here tonight, I'm quite sure, can look back to the day when they received Christ. Mix the word with faith.

And I'm going to enlist their help for your sake. I'm going to ask them to help me help you. And I'm going to lead you in prayer.

Very simply, sentence by sentence. In the simplest language possible. But the language that I believe that God will honor.

As you humbly receive what grace provides. And as I pray sentence by sentence. And you mean it.

I'm going to ask Christian friends to pray after me. Just aloud. Not for themselves, but for you.

Using the language that I use. And then you can mix your voice with ours. As though nobody else were here but just you and Christ.

Mingle your voice with ours. Shout out every other thought. But Christ.

And as you mingle your voice with ours. Echoing these words in your heart. Just take.

What God gives. Because Christ paid. Now let's bow our heads and pray.

I'm going to pray sentence by sentence. And that boy here, that girl. Young man or woman.

You've been very sincere and earnest. Maybe you've come to several of these meetings. You've attended your church regularly.

You've been listening intelligently. And if you've never been sure. And I'm going to invite you tonight to.

Be sure. To know. To know that you know.

And as I pray sentence by sentence. Christian folk will pray just distinctly and audibly after me. In the very same words.

And you can add your voice to ours. In talking to him. Will you do that? Now let's pray.

Dear Lord Jesus Christ. I know that I am a sinner. That sin cuts me off from God.

By nature. By birth. I am spiritually dead.

But thou didst die for me. Thy blood was shed for me. To cleanse my heart from all sin.

And I thank thee now. Gladly as never before. I receive thee personally.

As my own savior. At thy invitation. And because thou hast promised.

I know now. I am redeemed. For thou hast saved me.

And thy word is enough. Thou hast come to live in my heart. Never to depart.

By thy divine spirit. Thy life has become my life. The hand in the glove.

Forever. And for thy name's sake. Amen.

And Lord Jesus we thank thee tonight. Because thou art as good and as great. As thy name.

And to every boy or girl. Or man or woman tonight. Who for the first time has prayed those words.

And meant them. We thank thee that thou wilt not disappoint them. By thy divine spirit.

Thou wilt bear witness to their spirits. That a very wonderful. Wonderful thing has happened.

They have been redeemed. Forgiven. And thy holy spirit has come to dwell within them.

To bear witness to their spirits. That they are now the children of God. Saved by grace.

Alone. We give thee thanks. For thy name's sake.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26509.mp3>

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