

# Are You Keeping Well

by Major Ian Thomas

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*Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the importance of maintaining both spiritual and physical well-being, highlighting the relationship between the body and soul.*

**Duration:** 1:13:07

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:30, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 55:21, Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 5:28, Matthew 22:37, 1 John 3:15

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the body as a means of communication with the outside world. He explains that while we can recognize others based on their physical appearance, it does not mean that we truly know them. The speaker emphasizes that the primary focus should be on those who are present in the session, although guests are also welcomed. He also mentions how God provided the vegetable kingdom as nourishment for all forms of animal life. The sermon references verses from Genesis and Proverbs to support these points.

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## Transcript

It's certainly a great joy to be back at His Hill, at home in Texas. And I'm delighted that Charles Price, too, can be with us again. As I was with him, I think, two or maybe three years ago.

Time goes so quickly. But it's good to see one or two of you as students whom I've seen before, one place or another. And certainly lovely to welcome guests who've been many times, and others may be here for the very first time.

Thought we would cover some very basic territory in this opening session. And those who are our guests will recognize that this is a Bible school. Maybe the students haven't recognized that yet, but that was what it was intended to be.

Therefore, quite frankly, the prime target must be those who are in session. Though we are delighted for those who are able as guests to join us during this Thanksgiving conference. I'm sure on some occasion you've been to a shopping center, maybe on a business trip if you're already in business.

Some of the folks are guests, or on vacation. And you've bumped into somebody that you haven't seen for a very long time. You try to get caught up on the news.

If the person is a little senior to you, you'll probably want to know, you know, how the family are keeping. And the other party will probably say, well, their oldest grandson has just graduated from high school. Youngest daughter just had twins.

Hope to save something on their income tax. And then you'll want to know, of course, how business is doing. And they'll say, well, improving.

Especially here in Texas, things weren't too good for the last year or two, but they're picking up. And then you'll want to know about the church. And they'll probably indicate to you that Sunday morning is just jammed together.

I had to bring chairs in there. Can't tell you too much about Sunday evening, because that's my favorite television show. And don't go to Bible study or prayer meeting on Wednesday.

That's Weight Watchers. And my wife and I like to go once a week and have a look at what we've been eating. So the conversation goes, and you'll want to know something about their health.

Especially if they are a little senior to you. And the other party will probably say, well, in myself I'm feeling fine. Just fine.

I mean, in myself. And then, having told you that in themselves they're feeling fine, they'll begin to enumerate all the various physical ailments from which they've been suffering over the past few days or weeks or months or years. You know, they'll tell you that when they get up in the morning, corns give them a little bit of trouble.

Have to work their fingers loose. Because they seem to seize up during the night. And they'll probably tell you that when they bend down having a bit of trouble in their back, they'll look around while they're down there to see if there's anything new, you know, before they come up again.

And they'll indicate, of course, that they even get puffed putting on their socks. And they don't hear too well, especially with the right ear. And their arm isn't quite long enough to read the newspaper.

They tried to, you know, put it on the floor, but they found they weren't even tall enough. And hair's dropping out. Teeth aren't too good.

The only one they've got left has got a cavity. But, mind you, they'd say, in myself I'm feeling fine, just fine. Well, you know, I think John had that in mind when he wrote in the third of his three epistles.

He says, Beloved, in verse two of the first and last chapters of that epistle, there is only one, Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and that your body may keep well, even as, no, your soul keeps well, prospers. In other words, it seems that John was reasonably satisfied as to the spiritual well-being of this particular gentleman, his inner health, but he was concerned that his body would give a valid expression of his inner well-being. And in this way, the Apostle John distinguishes between that which is the physical, visible, and audible part of us, which we call the body, and that which is the invisible part of us, of which there are two parts.

But he mentions only one, the soul. Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and that your body may keep well, even as, I know, your soul keeps well and prospers. And of course, John's absolutely right, there is that physical, visible, and audible part of us, as opposed to the invisible part of us, part of which is

the soul, which is more commonly described as the heart, being the behavior mechanism whereby, in common with all forms of animal life, you and I can behave.

The mind to think with, occasionally, emotions to react with, and a will to decide. That's the soul, that behavior mechanism that God gave to all forms of created life on this planet, except the vegetable king. Charlie, is this fly yours? I saw it round your nose.

Would you call it off? There's an interesting verse, the 30th verse, the first chapter of Genesis. To every beast of the earth, to every fowl of the air, to every thing that creepeth upon the earth were in those life. I have given, God says, every green herb for meat, and it was so.

In other words, for every form of animal life, creature, bird, beast, swimming, fish, insect, God gave the vegetable kingdom as nourishment. The word life there is, in the Hebrew, living soul. It's exactly the same word as is used in the 7th verse of the 2nd chapter.

The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Man became a living soul. All the way through the story of creation in the first chapter, wherever you read living creature, it's exactly the same word.

So, God said in the 21st, that first chapter, that the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life. And fowl that may fly above the earth, and God created, verse 21, great whales, every living creature. In each instance, it's living soul.

And God commanded Noah to take 2 out of every creature, 7 out of some others. He described them as living souls. In point of fact, in the German Bible, it's so translated, lebende Geselle.

And so the ark was filled with lebende Geselle. In other words, living souls. Because the fact that you and I have a soul doesn't distinguish us from the animal kingdom.

It simply means that you're not a vegetable. Which in itself is encouraging. The soul, mind, emotion, and will, is that behavior mechanism whereby you can communicate to the outside world, but only by virtue of the fact that God gave you a physical, visible, and audible body.

When I look around, I can recognize some of you because of previous acquaintance. As I've looked around in the dining hall, and as I've bumped into you once or twice, now today, casually walking across the grounds, I'm getting an idea what you look like. But that doesn't mean I know you.

It simply means I know the shape of the house you live in. That's how we distinguish each other from each other. That's how we can distinguish between a cabbage, a cat, and a king.

Different shape, a body. The house, temporally accommodated on earth. It's the way that we shall distinguish each other throughout this week.

By our peculiar shapes. Some more peculiar than others. Not looking at anybody in particular.

The body. The body. The physical, visible, and audible part of us whereby we can communicate to the outside world that behavior that takes place within the soul.

That's where you behave. I mean, that's where you genuinely behave, within the soul. Said the Lord Jesus, if a man look upon a woman to lust after her, he is already committed adultery.

Because that's where he's behaving. John, in his epistle, says, if a man hate his brother, he's already a murderer. Because if he could, he would.

If he doesn't kill, it's only because he's afraid of the consequences. Fifty-fifth chapter, the book of the Psalms. In the twenty-first verse, the words of his mouth were smoother than butter.

That war was in his heart. Where was he behaving? In his heart. His smooth words were simply designed to camouflage his real attitude.

His words, it goes on to say, were softer than oil. Yet were they drawn swords. Ever met anybody just as smooth as that? We get the same picture given to us in the twenty-third of Proverbs, verse seven.

As he thinketh in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, saith he to thee. But his heart isn't with you.

He's putting on a facade. He's making out to disguise his true behavior patterns. That's why the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, that he, God, might show himself strong on the behalf of those whose hearts are perfect to all.

When Samuel was commanded to remember to go to Bethlehem, because God said there's a man there called Jesse, and he's got a whole bunch of kids, and he's got a lot of boys, and one of them's a king. Samuel followed his natural inclination, and saw Abijah, the oldest of the eight sons. Man, he was terrific, an all-American.

He might even have played basketball. At least his son did. And Samuel said to himself, if ever there was a man that qualifies for being king, there he is.

When he went into a room, everybody stopped talking. All the girls dropped their handkerchiefs, hoping that theirs would be the one he picked out. Humanly speaking, he was a he-man.

And God said, forget it. This isn't a fat stock show. I'm looking for somebody who's going to be king, in the place of Saul, whom I have rejected.

And he went on to tell Samuel, man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart, because that's where he's behaving. And that's where he'll be looking, in your heart, and has been, ever since you came into this world. Because the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking, looking, looking, that he, God, might demonstrate his deity, in terms of a man's available humanity.

Show himself strong, on their behalf. So it's not the outward appearance, it's not the physical, visible or audible body that you possess, that ultimately is going to be the determining factor, that isn't the criterion. Though we can be profoundly thankful that we've got bodies, otherwise we wouldn't be able to communicate.

But bear in mind that it's only a temporary accommodation. A whole bunch of folks who were driving down the highway, there in San Francisco, didn't know that the bridge was going to collapse. They dug their bodies out, but they're no longer in that accommodation on earth, that allows them to communicate to anybody else.

Nobody protests, but there are a thousand boys, girls, men and women, who are alive, right now, got up this morning, with every prospect, so far as they were concerned, of achieving their ambitions. Little boys, girls, men and women, they'll be dead this time next week. They'll be killed on the road.

That's the price all of us are willing to pay, to drive a car. Nobody protests, there are no mass gatherings, you know, to abolish cars. We've settled for the price of the convenience of driving a car.

We kill a thousand people every week, just for that privilege. Mind you, if there was one nuclear plant, whereby somebody got burned, nobody's ever yet been killed by one, there'd be hundreds of thousands of people protesting. That just shows what phonies we are.

You see, whether it's right or wrong isn't a moral issue, it's simply a matter of self-service. If I need a car, then everybody else needs a car, then we don't protest at the idea that it costs a thousand lives a week. That's the price we're prepared to pay, which is sheer hypocrisy.

But I mention that simply to remind you that the body you're in right now is temporary. And remember, if a thousand people are going to be dead by this time next week, you might be one of them. Don't underestimate its value, but it's the least important part of you.

It's an essential part of that which God called man when he created us, because they're the only means whereby we can communicate. That's what I'm doing right now, I'm using my thoracic and abdominal muscles to increase or decrease my thoracic cavity. And by means of that, I use Isabella's to produce a draft that goes across my larynx.

And by tautening or slackening my vocal cords, I can produce vibrations that vary and are precipitated then through the atmosphere. And you catch them with two cup-shaped appendages on the side of your head. And these vibrations impinge upon the outer eardrum, the outer membrane.

And it begins to vibrate in harmony with the vibrations that I'm producing in my throat. But in contact with that eardrum or outer membrane, there's a little bone, it's called the hammer. And it begins to vibrate in harmony with the eardrum, which vibrates, of course, in harmony with the vibrations I'm producing in my throat.

And that little bone, the hammer, is in contact with another little bone, it's called the anvil, just like a blacksmith's anvil. And the hammer impinges upon it in harmony with the vibrations that I'm producing in my throat. But that little bone called the anvil is in contact with another little bone called the stirrup, because it's the same shape as the stirrup you might wear if you were riding a horse.

And needless to say, the stirrup begins to vibrate in harmony with the anvil, which is vibrating in harmony with the hammer, which is vibrating in harmony with the eardrum, which is vibrating in harmony with the vibrations that are being precipitated through the atmosphere that are producing in my throat. You'd be amazed what I'm doing to you right now. Now, that final little bone called the stirrup is in contact with what's called the organ of Corti.

It's a little sack which is filled with liquid. And inevitably, of course, the sack and the liquid within it begins to vibrate in harmony with the vibrations I'm producing in my larynx. But on the inside of the organ of Corti, there are 25,000 neurons.

They're receptor cells. And each of those receptor cells, called neurons, will respond to one frequency. And you and I can produce with our throats anything up to 20,000 vibrations per second frequencies.

Now, the neuron which responds to that particular frequency that I'm producing with my throat will then generate a little current of electricity that is communicated by the nervous system to a certain area of the

brain. We can produce, by combining those frequencies, anything up to 300,000 tones. 256 frequency per second is common sense.

And you see, as we produce those frequencies and the neurons, the receptor cells, convert into an electric impulse. Finally, a message is received in your brain. Which is there, unscrambled, and then you know exactly what I'm talking about.

You don't hear anything with the organ. Nothing, absolutely nothing. All you do is receive vibrations which are converted into an electrical impulse that's then unscrambled in a certain area of your brain because you've learned that certain words mean certain things.

Fearfully, wonderfully me. But I can only communicate what is in my mind, which is invisible, to your minds, equally invisible, if existent, and by use of that physical apparatus that God built into us so that we could communicate. Marvelous.

So we need a body, and we need a soul. A mind to think with, a motion to react with, and a will to decide. Whoever controls your mind, whoever controls your emotions, finally directs your will, and whoever directs your will governs your behavior.

Now, we are not unique in that we have souls, as I've indicated. Every form of animal life on this planet has a soul. A mind to think with, a motion to react with, a will to decide.

And it behaves in the soul just precisely as you and I behave in the soul. It has a body that will communicate also in precisely the same way that our bodies communicate. Physical, visible, audible body.

You might be disinclined to believe that animals have souls, that that's how they function, but there's plenty of evidence to that effect. A very useful experiment, too late to do it now unless you wait for the spring or go to some other climb, is to take a stick, find a wasp's nest, and poke it. I mean stir it really hard.

And then hang around for a bit. And what you'll discover is that those wasps will fly out of their nest, livid with rage, white with anger. You look them straight in the eye.

And you can see just how angry they are. You see, they are capable of an emotional reaction. But they not only have a capacity to react emotionally, they have a mind whereby they can determine who did it.

And reacting emotionally with their emotions and reacting mentally with their minds and discovering who did it, they have a very strong volitional capacity to wreak vengeance on the culprit. And you will soon be retreating with a few smarting reminders on the back of the neck that a wasp has the kind of soul that you've got. It can be emotionally aroused, it can be intellectually aware of who did it and volitionally compelled to wreak vengeance on the end.

I have good reason to know that, as John Steinmetz also has good reason to know, because he was with me when I was in Japan. And we were speaking at a Christian life convention and we were staying together in one of the cabins that was vacated at that time by the missionary who owned it. They went at the conference.

And they hadn't been there for some time and so we cleaned out the water tank because the water supply was the rain that fell on the roof. And it had got a little murky and dead leaves and things, so we cleaned all that out and then hoped that it would rain again before next we were home, and it did. But there were

still a few leaves and so I cleaned those off and put my hand down the side just to put the leaves down between the tank and the side of the cabin.

And unwittingly disturbed a number of Japanese bees, which are very large, about three quarters of an inch, brown, and pretty fierce. And they didn't like being disturbed that Sunday afternoon. I wasn't too aware of what happened except that it was sort of fluttering around my hand and I didn't feel just a light sting, not much.

So I just brushed it off and didn't think about it. But then I thought I'd have a little rest and my room was downstairs and John had a little, very stuffy little room upstairs, so he brought his mattress down. He was in the sort of living room, the kitchen.

And suddenly I found myself itching all over and my tongue and lips began to get dry and I wasn't feeling too well. When I got back and found that the tank was almost three quarters full of water again, still the tap didn't run, so I thought it was an airlock and I'd sucked until I got it going, being that kind of a sucker. And so I thought, well, there must have been something about that tap, you know, that upset me.

So I thought I'd go and wash my mouth out. And I just murmured to John he was doing push-ups on his mattress. I said, I'm not feeling too well, John, but I think it's something I've got off that tap.

So I rinsed my mouth out and began to stagger back, but before I could get there I was unconscious. Courtesy of a few Japanese beasts. John had a bit of a start.

Of course, he thought I'd had a nervous breakdown or a heart attack, but I had neither, although I've worked for them all my life and deserve them. But he left me unconscious on the ground, expecting, you know, to attend the funeral, and rushed to one of the other cabins and got some help, but by that time I'd just about come round. They thought I'd had a heart attack, too, and couldn't find a doctor, but they told him what to do, which didn't help very much.

But I noticed I'd come out in bright scarlet blotches all over, and I knew that I was allergic to fire ants, the miserable species that you have in this country, because I've tried it. And so I knew exactly what had happened. But I have a very healthy respect now for Japanese bees, as I do for fire ants, because I know they don't like being disturbed.

I was in Louisiana when I had my first encounter with fire ants. We were going fishing, and I stood on a whole nest of them, and they didn't like it. And I came out with the same bright red blotches and the same nausea, and almost went unconscious then.

But you see, wasps don't like being disturbed, and they can react emotionally, and know mentally who did it, and volitionally will wreak vengeance on the country. Ever been to a home where there is a dog between you and the door, and you've never been there before? And now you can't read the dog's mind. Have you ever tried to read the dog's mind? You can't.

It's invisible. It's the invisible part of the dog. It's got a physical, visible, and audible part through which you can communicate what is behaving, of course, within the soul.

But you can't read its mind. You can't read its soul. You don't know whether it's benevolent or hostile.

And if I see a dog like that, then I pause. Now, if it's one of those fluffy little things with one ear up and one ear down, and it comes wiggling in my direction, finally rubs itself up and down my leg, I'm encouraged. But if, on the other hand, it gets back on its haunches, and its ears go back, and its teeth are bared, and it makes rumbling noise on the inside, I get the message.

And I wait until the owner has come, caught off the dog, before I go through the door. In other words, I fix my attention not on the door, because I'm reasonably satisfied as to how it's going to behave. It'll swim its hinges.

What I'm preoccupied with is how the dog's going to behave, which end of its anatomy is going to react, its teeth or its tail, because it's got a soul. And it's evaluating me as I come into the yard. And I have no means whatever of knowing how it has evaluated me until I've seen its body in action.

So, God gave us bodies for a very good reason, to communicate to the outside world that behavior that is taking place within the soul, the invisible part of us. Most of you have got dogs, at least, maybe some of you. And they recognize you.

They'll know that you're around the corner before you arrive by your footfall. Knows exactly your footfall as opposed to anybody else's. Doesn't flatter you, but they know what you smell like too.

And all that is impinging upon their mental capacity to recognize. Even if you come by car, they'll know the purr of your engine as opposed to anybody else's. When they recognize that you are its master or its mistress, of course, it, by mental recognition, will then evidence its emotional response.

Wag its tail, jump up and down, especially if it's a wet day, put its dirty paws all down your clean dress or suit, just to let you know how glad it is to see you. Of course, you throw a ball or give it some food or it's been lonely all day. You see, all that's going on in the emotional capacity of a dog.

Recognize you with its mind, and it reacts emotionally and expresses its happiness to see you by motivating its body. It wags its tail, barks and jumps and springs. If the door is shut in the front, the dog knows there's a door at the back and goes around.

It can think just the same way as you and I think. If somebody gets through the bathroom window at three o'clock in the morning, the dog is alerted, thinks to itself, my master doesn't usually come in through the bathroom window at three in the morning. At least, not often.

I'd better go and investigate. And when the dog discovers that it neither recognizes the smell or the shape, it begins to react, not with its tail, but with its teeth, and the intruder disappears in a hurry with less pants on when he arrives than when he arrives. Now, all this is going on, you see, in the behavior patterns of a dog, a dog communicates to the outside world by the behavior of its physical body.

But, of course, man didn't... God didn't create man simply... I wish that fly could hear what I'm thinking about. God didn't create man just to be an animal. He gave to man a unique... function, an office.

You see, the body in itself is simply designed to give a physical, visible, and audible expression of an invisible self called the soul. That's true of the animal kingdoms and man. But when God created man, he created man differently.

The animal kingdom, as we may have opportunity to discuss more fully, by the divine logic, was designed to be governed by a built-in computerized program which, for convenience's sake, we call instinct. And by virtue of this built-in computerized program, its behavior patterns are predictable and repetitive. Mating seasons, building skills, migratory paths, feeding habits, all of which are characteristic of that particular species within the animal kingdom, a bird, fish, insect, or beast, doesn't have to learn to do those things.

You can recognize the species of bird by the nest it builds. It's built into it. And that's why its behavior patterns are predictable and repetitive.

That's why the fisherman knows when to get his best catch. That's how the huntsman goes to find his quarry. Though they don't always recognize what they're trying to shoot, as opposed to a human being, Charles just tells me two have already been shot in Wisconsin, the last one or two days.

There are a million hunters. Can you imagine that? All shooting at each other. Glad I'm not a hunter.

Not in Wisconsin. The bird watcher knows when to expect that particular bird to arrive back in the summer from its winter haven. It's my migratory path.

It's predetermined. Quite incredible. But when God created man, he didn't design him to be governed by instinct.

God created man to provide for all creation God's perfect image. To advertise deity. When God first made man, he said, Let us make man in our image and in our likeness.

And in the likeness of God made he him. That doesn't mean in God's physical image. God has a form, but we don't know what that form is.

Philippians tells us in the second chapter that the Lord Jesus, being in the form of God, whatever that form may be, being in the form of God, not thinking it to be robbery to claim total equality with God in that form, emptied himself, made himself nothing, made himself of no reputation, humbled himself and was born a human being. And the father was pleased, fashioned in the borrowed womb of the virgin girl to provide for the Lord Jesus a physical, visible and audible body in which he could give a physical, visible and audible expression of his own invisible self. But more than that, he fulfilled that function for which he as the creator made man the creature.

For you see, when God created man, he gave him a body and a soul that because of the unique function for which he was created, he built into man what he did not give to any other form of animal life on this planet which distinguishes man from the animal kingdom, a human spirit. That unique capacity that allows God the creator actually to take up residence and share his presence and his life with the creature. He made it that way.

And when the Lord Jesus came into this world, he too assumed your humanity in mine. He behaved him in all points to be like under his breath. He assumed our flesh and blood.

And for 33 years he demonstrated in his person exactly and precisely that for which he as our creator made you and me. Because man possessing a human spirit to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit was of his own free volition the exercise of a moral option to allow the Holy Spirit from within the human spirit to have unchallenged access to the human soul. So that God himself within the man, the Holy Spirit within the human spirit gaining access to the human soul, the behavior mechanism, mind, emotion and will might

play that role in man's soul that instinct plays in the animal.

You see, if a kid says to his mum, Dad, how does that spider know how to spin? What school did it go to? Mum says, don't be stupid Jimmy, that little spider never went to school. But it knows how to spin. Instinct.

Now, neither she nor the child understands what instinct is or how it works. But that's the convenient way, of course, in which we describe it. Instinct.

In other words, the only explanation for the behavior of that spider or for that matter this salmon or that bird is what we call instinct. It's the authorship within the animal kingdom, what it does. Now, God created you and me so that the authorship of what man in normality does and says and is shall be God himself.

You and I are so created that the presence of the creator within the creature is indispensable to our humanity. So that man in normality, when he is behaving as God intended man to behave, man in normality is to be distinguished from the animal kingdom by a quality of life and behavior that allows of no possible explanation but God himself. So the presence of God is indispensable to a man's humanity.

It takes God to be a man. As, of course, it takes instinct for any part of the animal kingdom to fulfill the function for which it was created, whereby it becomes functionally satisfying to its maker. Now, God could have created a man, of course, who would be functionally satisfying to God, governed by instinct.

It would save God an awful lot of trouble. He could have built into us an instinctive thrust which would have compelled us as meticulously as instinct compels the animal, insect, bird and fish kingdom to behave the way it should for its preservation and fulfill its function. God could have built a man governed by instinct and he would have functioned.

But he never would have been morally satisfying to God. Because it wouldn't depend upon the exercise of a moral option. See, God is love and the only thing that satisfies love is to be loved.

The only thing that satisfies friendship is to be befriended. That's the one thing you want of somebody you like, is that they like you back. But you can't compel love, nor friendship.

You can't make a person like you. And God, when he created man to love him back, to reciprocate to God that love that God showed to man, he couldn't compel him. Otherwise he'd destroy his humanity.

So he built into him the capacity to be inhabited by his maker, but made it abundantly clear that he would only enjoy that quality of life that would have its origin in God, dwelling within the man, the creator within the creature. He would only continue to enjoy that quality of life that would have its origin in God himself, so long as he maintained a moral disposition towards his maker, whereby, recognizing that he was created to be inhabited by his maker, he would be utterly dependent upon God, and that the only evidence of his dependence upon God would be his obedience to God, and only in that way could he express his love for God. That's the threefold moral relationship that is to govern man's relationship to God and God's relationship to man that allows God as the creator within man, the creature, to behave.

To God's satisfaction. This is a rigid interlock between the animal instinctive thrust and the animal soul. Bird, instinct, beast, whatever it may be, cannot escape from that.

Protective, rigid interlock between the instinctive thrust and the animal soul. But God didn't make it that way. There was not to be a rigid interlock between the Holy Spirit and the human soul.

There was to be moral interlock. Love for him, reciprocating God's love for man, as evidence of his love for him, wanting to function as God intended, dependent on him, and thereby as the only possibility of being dependent on, yielding and questioning obedience to. Now, it was at that point, of course, that man's relationship to God was shattered when the devil came and persuaded man that he could be man without God.

And he embarked upon the mad experiment of human self-sufficiency. Stuck his chest out, was invaded at that time as the Holy Spirit withdrew from his human spirit, invaded by a sin principle of satanic origin, can only abuse, misuse, and prostitute a man's humanity, producing all down the centuries the ugly list of those things which are called the works of the flesh. Greed, lust, pride, drunkenness, promiscuous sex, dishonesty, lying, envy, jealousy, murder, hate, all these things that have left mankind bleeding all down the centuries.

Because he stepped out of that relationship that allowed God himself to be the origin of God's own image in the man, the source of God's own activity, exclusively in the man, origin of his own image, source of his own activity, dynamic of his own demands, and cause of his own effect. So that when a man behaves in such a way that others in him know what God is like, there's only one person to be congratulated, God himself. Now, the Lord Jesus demonstrated, of course, that principle when he was here on earth, who said, without my father I can do nothing.

Because although he never ever repudiated the attributes that make God God, he deliberately limited himself and forwent the exercise of those attributes of deity that would have been incompatible with his humanity. He submitted himself. He was born a human being.

And therefore, out of his love for the Father, in utter absolute dependence on the Father, he yielded unquestioning obedience to the Father. And the threefold relationship that allowed God to be God in the man was perfectly exhibited in the person of God's Incarnate Son. Well, God made it that way.

So that he in us, dwelling by the Holy Spirit within the human spirit, gaining access by our moral choice, might from within the soul teach our minds, control our emotions, so direct our wills that he governs our behavior. Now tell me this. If God teaches your mind and has a monopoly of your thinking, if God alone, by his Holy Spirit, shed abroad in your heart, if God alone, in his perfect love, controls your emotions, and your will is exercised unto a mind God taught, emotions God controlled, who will direct your will? Well, God.

A world where everybody is battling for your mind, battling for your emotions, because through mind and emotion they're finally going to control your will. You see, the advertisement in the newspaper, the commercial on the television is calculated to manipulate you. Capture your mind, so stir your emotions, usually a pretty girl in the background, half naked, to attract your attention so that finally they'll govern your will.

And on polling day, you'll vote for their party. When you go to the store, you'll buy their product. That's why, of course, the kind of stuff you read, the kind of pictures you look at, the kind of conversations you hear are going to color the physical, visible, and audible expression of your behavior patterns that have been developed within your invisible soul, by the input from the world outside.

But when God created man to be inhabited by himself, the Holy Spirit within the human spirit, given in his innocency by Adam, total access, unquestioned, to his soul, so that God became the author of all he did,

said, and was, the origin of the act, and the source of the activity, and the dynamic of the demand, and the cause of the effect. All creation, looking at man, of course, would know what God was like, because man would be functionally and morally satisfying to God. He would be clothing with a physical, visible, and audible body, an invisible self, intimately identified now, and monopolized by an invisible God.

And the incredible, unique privilege that was given to man when he was created was to make an invisible God visible. Amazing. So if you and I were normal, from God's point of view, not man's point of view, but from God's point of view, on his terms of reference, if you and I were normal, who would others, or all creation, be aware of in your presence and mine? Well, God, of course.

That's normality. I mean, if I gave you the opportunity right now, would you be prepared to stand up and say, Ladies and gentlemen, ever since I was born into this world, I've given a perfect, unsullied, unblemished expression of God's absolute likeness. Ladies and gentlemen, if you really want to know what God is like, look at me.

And all that I do, all that I say, all that I've ever said, done, or been, just look at me and you'll know what God is like. Would you be prepared to bear your testament? If you couldn't right now stand up and say, Look at me and know what God is like, what are you admitting? Well, you're saying I'm subhuman. You're saying I'm an abnormality.

What you're saying is I'm an aberration from what God had in mind when first he made Adam and his innocence. Of course, you're right. Any one of us, truly normal from God's point of view, would have been able to bear testimony straight away, as the Lord Jesus did in demonstrating the innocence of a pre-fallen Adam.

He that has seen me has seen my Father. Because the Lord Jesus was able equally to say and equally true, without my Father I can do nothing. The Father who lives in me, he does the work.

My humanity, body, soul, spirit, mind, emotion, and will is wholly available to my Father, so that with this, my physical, visible, and audible body, I can give a physical, visible, and audible expression of my own invisible self, but utterly monopolized, unexceptionally, by an invisible God. That's normality. Are you normal? It's only when you understand that, of course, when you understand evangelism.

You see, the cheap and shoddy evangelism with which we are familiar today is simply getting people to raise their hands, walk to the front, or make a decision, so that instead of going to hell, they'll go to heaven. That isn't evangelism. That completely bypasses the purpose of God in sending his dear Son into this world to assume your humanity and mine, but in the innocency of a pre-fallen Adam, so that as such, he could pay the price of our redemption, reconcile us to a holy God, not to get us out of hell and into heaven, not to change our destination, but to get God back out of heaven into us.

So that we, re-inhabited by the Holy Spirit, might gladly then, as forgiven sinners, present our bodies to the Lord Jesus, living within us now, as once, two thousand years ago, the Father lived in him then, so that with our hands he can behave, as with his hands the Father could behave, so that with our feet he can walk, Christ, as with his feet the Father then could walk, so that with our lips Christ can speak, as once, then, through his lips the Father spoke. That's why Jesus came to this world. It behoved the Father, of whom and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons back to glory.

That's not heaven. That's image, likeness, character. God in action.

It behoved him, of whom and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect, through sufferings. In other words, the Lord Jesus had to come and accomplish the reconciling act, die upon a cross, shed his precious blood, not to get us out of hell and into heaven, but so that he, risen from the dead, might re-invade our humanity and become in us the authorship of what we say, do and are, as for thirty-three years he had allowed the Father in him to be the author of all he did, said and won. And only when our objective is to introduce boys, girls, men and women to that relationship to the Lord Jesus, whereby they are actually prepared again to allow him to be God in their lives, have we fulfilled our office in evangelism.

You see, you can evangelize within the area of the soul, mind, emotion and will, and leave a person either mentally fascinated, you can challenge their wills and so they flex their muscles and do something, or send them on an emotional high, but it won't raise them from the dead. Soulful religion, that's why we have soul music, it's a substitute for the power, work and office of God the Holy Ghost, because people have been taught that as long as they get excited enough about religion in one form or another, that's the same as being saved, because nothing is farther from the truth. Regeneration is the restoration of God the Holy Spirit to the human spirit, so that God can clothe his deity with a man's humanity, so that the creator, once more within the creature, can enable the creature to fulfill the function for which the creature was created.

In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Logos, the one who spoke and the things that are were created of things that are not. Jesus, he was in the beginning with God, he was God, by him all things were made, he was the creative deity, and without him was not anything made that was made, and in him exclusively is that life, which switches a man on, the light of men, that enables man morally to implement the purpose for which he was created. Christ himself is the creator within the creature, the sole origin of what man does, says and is, producing what we're told in Philippians chapter 1, 11 are the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.

They don't come by rules and regulations, they don't come by some new sequence of concepts. You can't master mind into righteousness, you can't legislate righteousness. Righteousness is God behaving, and the fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ, who presences himself within the redeemed sinner as the Father presenced himself then within the Son, the Holy Spirit within the human spirit.

Of course, in Old Testament times, as in New Testament times, the only way they could produce light in a lamp was to put oil in it. And oil, as you know, anywhere in the Bible, Old or New Testament, speaks of the person working office of God the Holy Ghost. That's why Proverbs chapter 20, verse 27, says the spirit of man, the human spirit, the inner man, the innermost being, the spirit of man is the candle, or more literally translated there in that chapter, Proverbs 20, 27, the spirit of man is the lamp of God.

Beautifully, fearfully, and wonderfully made, it won't shine unless it's got oil in it. It won't be functional unless it's got oil in it. And what Adam lost when he fell was the oil of God's presence.

And you and I can be restored to image, rise and shine, and be radiant with the glory of the Lord only when that which was lost in Adam is restored at the moment of spiritual new birth, regeneration, which is the renewing of God the Holy Ghost, not by any works of righteousness, which we have done, Titus 3, 5, and 6, but according to God's mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration, the renewing of God the Holy Ghost, whom He gives only to those who are prepared to recognize Jesus as the Savior, who died on the cross, not to get us out of hell and into heaven, but to get God back out of heaven into us. For the

simple reason that you and I, since Adam fell, have been born not in the image of the God who created us to reveal His glory, but in the image, Genesis chapter 5, of a fallen Adam, dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God, empty of that divine content for which man was made. But amidst all the shambles, all the pain, all the bloodshed, all the tears, all the heartbreak, that has been the inevitable consequence of man's folly in the day that he believed the devil's lie and stepped out of Christ and into Adam.

In spite of all that, there came a day to be celebrated by all of us within a week or two, when a little baby was born at Bethlehem. Because when God said to Samuel, I've got a king, he was looking beyond that little shepherd boy, David, of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of Jesse, born in Bethlehem then. He was looking way beyond that to the time when a virgin girl, introduced to the incredible proposition that God provided for her on the lips of the angel Gabriel, said, Be it unto me according to your word, you said it, you did it, you do it and God did it.

Little baby was born, Jesus. David's greater son, whose kingdom shall have no end. Christ came.

You see, the first covenant that God made with fallen man was comprehended in the rebuke he gave to Satan in the day that man fell. It wasn't something God thought up as an emergency measure at the last moment. For the Lord Jesus, Revelation 13, was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

Peter took him a long time to find out, but finally said, Redeem not with such corruptible things as silver and gold, with the precious blood of God's dear son, as of a lamb without blemish, verily foreordained, before ever the world was. So it isn't that God thought up something to meet the emergency, he simply made it public for the first time when man fell and needed what God had already prepared for his redemption. Rebuking the devil, he said, I'll put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and hers.

He'd eat the seed of that woman, Jesus, yet to be born of Mary, four thousand years later. That seed, born of a woman, is going to bruise your head, he'll destroy you, but in the process you'll bruise his heel, he'll hang on a row and gather. And so there was foreshadowed the reconciling act that would precipitate that regenerative purpose that would allow God to restore to forgiven sinners, for his dear sake, who died in their place, that life that man lost in the day that Adam fell, believing the devil's lie.

That a lamp can stay lit without oil, that a man can beat man without God. But into all the shambles that was wrought by man's folly, that little baby boy was born. And as a little child in his mother's arms, nursed as helpless as then he was, as a little kid romping in the street, as an apprentice learning his trade at the bench, as a carpenter, coming into the home and mending the door that got jammed.

In all his relationships on earth, as a child, a son, a brother, a neighbor, a citizen, the Father God in heaven, for the first time in all history since Adam fell, could say, good, very good, my beloved son, in whom I'm well pleased. For the first time in all human history since Adam fell, the Father God in heaven had a man on earth who was prepared to let God be God in the man, who would be prepared to say, humbling himself, emptying himself, making himself of no reputation, making himself all that he knew man to be apart from God, nothing. Without my Father, I can do nothing.

The Father who lives within me, he does the work. He's the author of all I do, say, and am. Don't congratulate me, congratulate him.

Jesus was born. And in the sinlessness of that humanity, at the age of 33, dead on schedule, according to plan, he said, Father, I've come to do your will. All that has been written of me in the volume of the book Old Testament.

For the story was already written. And the Father now had given the body to his Son in which that plan, that story was to be told. Thank you, said he, Hebrews 10 and verse 5, thank you for the body that you prepared for me to offer.

Father, I've come to do your will, O God. All that has been written of me in the volume of the book, here is this body that you fashioned for me in the borrowed womb of that virgin girl so that may now be implemented the plan upon which you, Father, I and the Holy Ghost agreed upon in the eternal age of the past. And on the cross he died.

Obedient. Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He didn't drift to death as a noble idealist who was too progressive before his day and age.

He wasn't a martyr. He didn't ask for anybody's pity. He didn't come to solicit from you and me our sympathy.

He said, Don't shed any tears. It was to this end I came and for this cause I came to the world to lay down my life a ransom for me. Stern business.

And he accomplished the redemptive act. And then he rose again from the dead. For forty days he showed his disciples his hands and feet and reminded them of all the things to which they had been listening and of which they had heard nothing.

Because when the crunch came they all ran away like a bunch of frightened sheep. He didn't shock the Lord Jesus. He told them what happened before it occurred.

They were all very offended because he hadn't, they thought, taken them seriously, challenged their integrity. The lovely thing about the Lord Jesus is that he knows the worst about you and loves you just the same. There's not one single person here who's been a bigger failure than God expects him to be.

And that is encouraging. Because he expects nothing of us apart from all that for which you and I were made. Himself.

And that's exactly what man lost when he fell. Himself. God.

That's why those who've never turned to Jesus are without hope, without Christ, and still forever without God in this world and the next. Morally, spiritually, intellectually bankrupt. For man, incredibly clever, hasn't got the moral capacity now to use intelligently the child of his own genius.

Instead, he vests everything in his self-praise and self-interest. And man rushes on madly at an ever-accelerating pace to his own self-destruct. The inevitable consequence of a human society that has lost what it takes to be a man.

Jesus died. Rose again from the dead. Went to be with his father.

Seated at the father's right hand, giving a name just above every name. That one day, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. And every tongue confess Jesus Christ.

So now he had no feet to walk with, no hands to work with, no lips to speak with, no eyes to see with, no ears to hear with, no hearts to love with, no minds to think with. He'd gone. But, the lovely thing is, is that he never intended that we should be Christians on earth to perpetuate the ideology of somebody now dead.

Nor perpetuate simply the memory of somebody now gone. The incredible thing is that the whole purpose of the redemptive act was a spiritual regeneration so that you could live in the present tense in the power of who he is. Somebody who comes now to inhabit our humanity, as he then allowed the Father to inhabit his.

To us has been restored in Christ the incredible privilege of being a physical, visible, and audible body to give to the world around us a physical, visible, and audible expression of our own invisible selves, but intimately identified with an enthroned and invisible God. Christ himself, the creator within the creature, given by you and me, the place of preeminence so that as once, through the Holy Spirit, the Father lived in him, he now, through the Holy Spirit, can live in us. So that as he was motivated by the indwelling Father, so you and I might be motivated by the indwelling Son.

Added to the Lord, members of his body. You see, when on the day of Pentecost he came in the person of the Holy Spirit to reinvade the redeemed humanity of 120 who at last understood why it was necessary that he should die for them so that he could live in them. The church was born.

The new corporate body of Christ to which he still exclusively is the head. That's what it means to be a Christian. You're a member of his body.

The moment you dared to say I have been cleansed in his blood, in that moment of time he sealed that transaction by the gift to you of his Holy Spirit so that he could clothe himself with your flesh and blood. You're a member of his body. He has no other body.

Only that which the Father gave him then on the day of Pentecost for the very first time, 120 to whom were added before nightfall 3,000 others and then daily such as were being saved and so all down the centuries and before we sleep tonight all over the world out of every nation, kindred, tribe, tongue, race, creed, class and colour, there will be boys, girls, men and women who, cleansed in his blood indwelt by his Spirit have been added to that body and are members of his Church on earth. So the moment you dare to say I'm a Christian you're saying I'm a member of the body of Christ. That isn't just a fancy sort of sentimental religious description of a man-made organisational entity some denominational group theological persuasion it's precisely and exactly what God intended.

That he should have on earth a corporate body to be inhabited by the same Lord Jesus who lived in that body that was born and birthed to him. Except that instead of being one body in which the Lord Jesus said how am I constrained? He could have a corporate body. That's why the Lord Jesus said when I'm gone and I send the Holy Spirit you will do greater works than these not qualitatively but simply quantitatively because he'll have feet all over the world hands all over the world and lips all over the world and minds and eyes and hearts all over the world through whom he can continue to do his work in his own ancient way.

You're a member of his body. The only hands he's got the only feet he's got the only lips he's got are those who, cleansed in his blood reconciled to God and dwelt by Christ himself through the gift to them of his Holy Spirit. So the obvious question to ask is this how's he keeping? Is he keeping well? Could you

imagine at the very outset of this Thanksgiving conference we could write a letter to the Lord Jesus and say Lord Jesus we want to express our appreciation for all that you had in mind when you came to this world for being willing to step out of eternity into all the dirt and muck of a fallen race of human beings with all the greed and lust and hate they spat in your face thanks we appreciate your willingness to come.

We thank you for what you did upon the cross. Thank you that you rose again from the dead and thanks for your promise that you've gone to prepare a place for us. You said if it were not so you would have told us in your father's house are many mansions and if you go to prepare a place Lord Jesus you promise to come back that where you are we might be also we want to express our appreciation.

Thank you. Oh and the many other blessings that you bestow so lavishly upon and by the way Lord Jesus how are you keeping? Are you keeping well? Maybe before the end of this week we could get his reply in spite of the fact the post office is shut at Thanksgiving. Special delivery.

And he says folks there at His Hill thanks for your letter I was delighted to hear from you. I'm glad that you appreciate what I had in mind when I came to this earth two thousand years ago. I want you to know how happy I was though it hurt to take your place in death that you might be forgiven.

Oh it's nice of you nice of you to ask after my health as a matter of fact together with my father and the Holy Spirit in myself I'm feeling fine just fine just really fine but I'm having trouble with my body on earth. I've got hands that are crippled I've got feet that are wayward I want to go in one direction those feet belonging to a redeemed sinner who boasts to the world he's saved and heaven bound they go in the other direction. I've got lips that say things that make me shudder I've got minds of redeemed sinners so still polluted that sometimes I'm almost tempted to wonder whether it was worth it.

I've got members of my body on earth don't even talk to each other but they all strut around calling themselves members of my body mind you in myself together with the Father and the Holy Spirit we're feeling just fine in ourselves but we are having trouble with our body on earth. You remember of his body do you claim to be a Christian? Do you dare to say to the world around you as you have no doubt on many occasions borne testimony taught at Sunday school preached and tell the world that Jesus has cleansed you from your sin that you've been added to the Lord that you're a member of his body on earth. Is he in trouble? Is he in trouble? Let's pray.

We do want to express our thanks Lord Jesus to you for being willing to come. So often it becomes alas no more than a historical event which we tuck away into the past we drag it out at Christmas we drag it out at Easter some places they drag it out at Whitson or Pentecost but to the vast vast bulk of mankind totally unmeaningful a lot of people are looking forward Lord Jesus to celebrating your birth they'll get drunk they'll have their wild parties they'll wear paper hats they'll bring out the tinsel and give away presents hoping somebody will give them a bigger one for themselves and the whole thing is a charade must break your heart that this celebration of your birth should be nothing more than a drunken orgy but there are some of us Lord Jesus who want to tell you that we appreciate we're so thankful that you were willing to be made nothing you were willing though the God creator to be born a human being to empty yourself make yourself of no reputation we realize Lord Jesus had you never even been God as sinless man you need never have died you could have lived forever it's only the wage of sin which is death but we want to thank you that having lived on earth in the sinlessness of that humanity in which there was declared the perfection of deity you were willing to pay the price of our redemption and that you rose again from the dead so that having suffered a death like ours we could live daily sharing a resurrection like yours alive

again re-inhabited by a maker but Lord Jesus thankful as we are there are those of us here all of us who have to admit that if you're the head of that body which we are the members you're in trouble you do have hands that are paralytic or dirty you do have feet in us that are wayward eyes that gloat upon things for which you died upon the cross thoughts that do violence to your holiness and Lord Jesus we pray that in these few days that we spend together we may know something of your healing touch we want to be restored as healthy members of your body we want you to go on doing that that you began in us when first we were redeemed and that for which you died restore the image restore the likeness restore us to our true humanity that at last in your presence we may stand unashamed and that seeing as you are we will once more at last be like you and you will be able to look at us and see again what once you saw when you created Adam in his innocence yourself perfectly reflected forever none of us deserve it but Lord Jesus you never said we did but we want to thank you that you delight to give us what we don't deserve because you richly do and in your own dear and precious name Amen

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