

Are You Tired?

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas explores the theme of tiredness in people and emphasizes the need for a relationship with Christ to find true purpose and fulfillment.

Duration: 1:04:58

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, John 10:11, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Timothy 1:15

Topics: "Weariness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by acknowledging the rapid growth of the world's population, with an estimated 4,000 more people being born by the time he finishes speaking. He also highlights the prevalent issue of tiredness among people in today's world. The speaker expresses his desire to bring refreshment and comfort to the tired audience. He then shares a personal story about a young girl who discovered the purpose of her existence in surrendering her entire being to Jesus Christ. Throughout the sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing God as our Creator and Redeemer, and surrendering all aspects of our lives to Him.

Transcript

Certainly a tremendous privilege for me to be back again in Adelaide. I have such happy memories of my previous visits to the city, and it's already been a great joy to renew fellowship with quite a number of folk, whom it was my great joy to meet on those previous occasions. And I'm looking forward to meeting you folk not only from this vantage point, but also as I take the opportunity at the close of the evening services and our lunch hour services to greet you at the door and shake you by the hand and engage in personal conversation.

Adelaide is a busy city this week, seem to be a lot of folk around. But you know if there's one thing more than another that impresses me as it's my privilege to travel from one country to another and one city to another, it's the impression one gets everywhere, people, so many people. Any part of the world, any direction you look, people and still more people.

Several years ago it was my privilege to participate in the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, and I'm sure one or two folk probably in the service here tonight would also have been present. And in the entrance hall of the Congress building in Berlin there was a big backboard with panels that lit up every few seconds with the faces of children from nationalities all over the world. And in the center of that backboard there was a population clock which ticked relentlessly throughout the whole of the nine days and 13 hours

that the Congress lasted.

And it didn't just register the number of babies that were born during the course of the Congress, it registered the net increase in the world population, that is to say the number of babies born less the number of people who die. So it actually represented how many more people there were alive on this planet. And at the end of the Congress we were informed that during the course of this Congress in Berlin the population of the world had increased at the rate of 2.14 every second, 128 every minute, 7704 every hour, 184,896 every day, so that by the end of the Congress, nine days, 13 hours, the world population had increased by one and three quarter million.

That's quite a lot of people. I wonder how many new church buildings you'd need to accommodate that net increase in a matter of a little over nine and a half days. As a matter of fact, before I finish talking tonight, and I'm not going to talk too long, but before I finish talking tonight, there'll be another 4,000 people alive on earth in the way when I start.

It's amazing, isn't it? It's an amazing thing to recognize the fact that since Adam was created, of all the people born into this world, since then, more than half are still alive. Did you know that? And there are three and a half billion. And by the turn of the century, there'll be more than seven billion.

And you can imagine that there'll be far more than half alive then. There'll be about two thirds of all the people that have ever been born since Adam was still alive. There are more children today in China under the age of ten than the whole population of Russia.

If the Lord Jesus Christ hasn't come back again by then, as he probably will, by the year 2000, two thirds of the world's population will be under the age of 15. Already more than 50% are under the age of 21. People, wherever you go.

But you know, if the fact of people impresses me, there's another fact about people that impresses me. And that is this. By and large, wherever you meet people, they're tired.

And probably I'm speaking to a group of tired people tonight. You've had a busy day. In fact, some of you hardly made it.

You just about pushed yourself and came. Isn't that right? Tired people. A great number of tired people in a tired world.

So I'm anticipating having the great joy during these few days of talking to some tired people. And I hope that I can bring you at least a measure of refreshing and comfort. This was written by a tired person.

Just a young person, as a matter of fact. Perfectly authentic. Let me read it to you.

I'm tired. Tired of puppets instead of people. Of crew cuts and tweed coats of pipes and Picasso buttons.

Of people who drop soliloquies carefully labeled intelligent. I'm tired of people who play the dating game like touts at the racetrack. Tired of seeing people used because it is only a game.

Of people who turn making out into a social grace. Of watching sincerity fester into smoothness. I'm tired of cynics who call themselves realists.

Tired of minds rotting in indifference. Of people bored because they're afraid to care. Of intellectual games of ring around the roses.

I'm tired of people who have to be entertained. I'm tired of people looking for kicks with a bottle in each hand. Of girls proud of knowing the score and snickering about it.

Of girls intent on learning the score. I'm tired of sophisticated slobs. Of people who tinker with sex until it's smut.

Of people whose understanding goes as deep as neat. I'm tired of people who scream they hate it, but won't leave it because they're lazy. Tired of people with nothing better to do than to glue their days together with alcohol.

I'm tired of people embarrassed at honesty. Embarrassed at love. Embarrassed at knowledge.

I'm tired. Yes, I'm very tired. What is it that makes people tired? As I was thinking about that, I thought of one or two reasons that I believe make people tired.

I think one of the things that makes people tired is trying to forgive their own sins. That's a wearisome business. And what normally happens when you get tired of trying to forgive your own sins is that you begin to justify your own wickedness.

And of course the best way to justify your own wickedness is to find somebody else to blame. And by and large, there's only one thing about which everybody in the whole wide world, no matter where you meet them, there's only one thing about which everybody is completely unanimous. And it's this, that it's everybody's fault but mine.

Have you discovered that? Because if you can't forgive your own sins and you want to justify your own wickedness, you've got to find somebody else to blame. That's as old as Adam and Eve. When man fell into sin, God was exactly where man left him.

It wasn't God that was hiding. It was man. And when God said, why are you hiding? Man said, I'm afraid.

God said, you've never been afraid before. This is an entirely new experience. This is an emotion that you have never previously had.

If you are afraid, you've sinned. Because you see, the first child of sin is a bad conscience. And the first child of a bad conscience is fear.

All of us have known that ever since we were tiny. Ever since we heard our mother's footsteps with our fist in the plum jar. And if the first child of sin is a bad conscience and the first child of a bad conscience is fear, the first child of fear is self-justification.

So that you see, when God pointed the finger of accusation at Adam and said, you've sinned, immediately he retorted, no, you're wrong. She did it. And the moment God focused his attention upon the woman, of course, she reacted in exactly the same way and said, God, you're wrong again.

It was Satan, he did it. Everybody's fault but mine. And the world in which you and I live is a vast combination of shattered human relationships, no matter where you turn.

So the boy blames the girl whose life he's wrecked. But the girl, for her part, blames the boy whose extravagance and excess she encouraged. Parents blame their children for their own delinquencies.

And the children, of course, blame their parents for their own pig-headedness. The employer blames the employee for his own avarice. And the employee blames the employer, of course, for his own idleness.

It's everybody's fault but mine. So the Arab blames the Jew and the Jew blames the Arab and the capitalist blames the communist and the communist blames the capitalist. And the faculty blame the student, the student blame the faculty.

The government blame the people and the people blame the government. The white blames the black but the black blames the white. And, of course, the pulpit blames the pew and the pew blames the pulpit.

It's everybody's fault but mine. That's the one thing about which we're completely agreed. But if people get tired of trying to forgive their own sins, I think there's something else that makes people tired.

Trying to live a life you haven't got. Trying to live a life you haven't got because you haven't got the moral courage to be the kind of person that only God can make you. Because to be the kind of person that God made you means that you must be distinctly unique.

Because God created every boy, girl, man and woman to be filled by God himself so that he, as God the creator, might give a spontaneous expression of his own character. Personalized in terms of your personality. But there are very few people today prepared to be different.

Very few people today prepared to have the moral courage that lets God be God in terms of their humanity, no matter what may happen. And if you haven't got the courage, you see, to be what God intended you to be and so you try to live a life you haven't got, you'll end up by copying somebody else and trying to live their lives. In slavish conformity to the mass.

And if anybody did have the courage to be different and to be non-conformist, then masses of people worship their non-conformity and conform to their non-conformity. That's the world in which we live. So everybody, you see, copies somebody else's hairstyle.

And everybody else has to copy everybody else's miniskirt. Or we all go around in little white socks. There's a colorlessness about the mass of humanity that hasn't the courage to be itself.

Have you ever had the courage to be the person that God intended you to be? Or are you the victim of slavish conformity in the colorlessness of the mass? Tired of trying to forgive their own sins. Trying to live a life they haven't got. And lots and lots and lots of people are tired of trying to make life add up to something meaningful, when all the essential ingredients are missing.

And when you get tired of trying to make life make sense, you end up by trying to kill time, because you've got so much time on your hands. And when you get tired of doing that, you end up by killing yourself. And this is particularly true of young people.

In the first three months of 1967, the number of suicides in Canada increased by 25%. The biggest single cause of death among students in high school, boys and girls in the United States today, isn't alcoholism, isn't even drug addiction, it isn't even car smashes. It's self-destruction.

Suicide. Well, there are a few cheery thoughts for you, just in case you were tired. Now, here's another picture.

I had this given to me, poetry. Preachers get given an awful lot of poetry. Some of it's good, most of it isn't.

Some of it I like, most of it I don't. It's rather like the man who turned to his friend, you know, and he said, do you think there's enough fire in my poetry? And his friend said, I don't know, but I don't think there's enough of your poetry in the fire. And that was maybe a little unkind.

But I like this. Let me read it to you. Discovering daily who God really is.

Thanking him daily, he's mine and I'm his. Discovering daily God's great love for me, such mercy, forgiveness, amazingly free. Discovering daily that God really cares.

Discovering daily he does answer prayers. Discovering daily what grace really means. Unmerited favor beyond all my dreams.

Discovering daily God speaking to me. He speaks through the Bible. Once blind, now I see.

Discovering, discovering. Each day that I live, that all that I need, he freely will give. Discovering daily Christ working through me.

Accomplishing daily what never could be. Discovering daily I can't, but he can. Thanking him daily for my place in his plan.

Discovering daily how real life can be when I'm living in Christ and he's living in me. Discovering daily a song in my heart with anticipation for each day to start. Delighting and basking in love so divine, secure in the knowledge I'm his and he's mine.

Besides mere contentment, excitement I see. A daily adventure. Christ alive and living in me.

Now, that's the Christian life. I mean, that's the normal Christian life. I don't mean it's the average Christian life.

I mean, so far as God is concerned, that's the normal Christian life, which is unfortunately far less than average. It's a daily, a daily adventure. Not just every now and again, not at moments of peak experience, but the glorious unfolding of a timeless purpose that God relentlessly implements in terms of your yielded humanity as you discover the sheer dynamic thrill of being intimately, indivisibly identified with the living God.

That's normality. That's what the gospel is all about. The gospel is designed, you see, to bring a man back to normality, as some of us began to discuss in our lunch hour.

Not primarily to change a man's destination, heaven instead of hell, it's designed primarily to change a man's destiny. You see, God created man for himself. If I were to say to you, why does that lamp need electricity? The answer is very simple.

It was made that way. You can detach that lamp from electricity, it'll still be a lamp, but it won't behave like one. That's all.

Have you tried that? You may say, why does a car need petrol? Well, the answer is equally simple. It was made that way. You can detach a car from petrol, and you'll push it.

You've tried that, I'm sure. I have, when I've run out of gas. But it's a wearisome business.

Why does a man need God? The answer is equally simple. He was made that way. You can detach a man from God, and you'll still have a man, but he won't behave like one.

He won't even behave like an animal. He'll behave worse than an animal. Because God didn't create man to be an animal, nor to behave like one.

He created man to be a man and behave like a man, and it takes God to be a man, for no better reason than God happened to make him that way. And because it takes God to be a man, that's precisely why it takes nothing less than Christ to be a Christian. I don't mean Christianity.

You can have Christianity without Christ, and when you've got that, you've got a dead religion hanging around your neck, and it'll throttle you. Christianity without Christ is a dead religion. Godliness without God is a legalistic straitjacket.

And spirituality, apart from the Holy Spirit, is an orciating flaw. It takes God to be a man, and that's exactly why it takes the person, the Lord Jesus, himself, Christ, to be a Christian, because Christ, in the Christian, puts God back into the man. That's what the gospel's all about.

By and large, the Bible only has two things to say to us from Genesis to the Revelation. The first is, this Christ died to redeem you. Let him.

The second is, Christ rose again from the dead to share his life with you, communicate that life through you. Let him. Those two things.

If I want to talk about becoming a Christian, I can only talk about the death of Christ, because there's no option. If I want to talk about being the Christian you have become, I can only talk about the life of Christ, because it takes the life of Christ in you to be what the death of Christ for you enables you to become. And there's no option about that either.

You can no more be a Christian without the life of Christ in you than you can become a Christian without the death of Christ for you. Both are indivisibly imperative to the process of becoming and being. But I like this not only because of the sentiment it expresses, I like it because I know the girl who wrote it, Bonnie Haines.

She wrote it about five and a half years ago. Some three months before she wrote that, her husband called a friend of mine who was pastor of a church in her city. Not that she went to that church, because with her husband she went to no church.

But her husband called my friend and said, would you come and see us? It's an emergency. So he called round to their home and he discovered that this girl's husband had arrived home early that evening when she thought he was going to be late. And when he got home, he found her in the bathtub with both her wrists slit bleeding to death.

Tired, very tired. So tired it wasn't worth living. She left a note on the kitchen table saying she did it in the bathtub so he wouldn't have to clean up the mess, which was nice.

At least it was thoughtful. In the goodness of God he got home just in time to save her life. She was whipped off to hospital, and then in the waiting room, waiting for the ambulance that would take her back to her home, there was a television.

And it was the hour of decision. And they watched Billy Gray. She nor he were converted.

But in the goodness of God, the spirit of God began to bear witness to the truth that Jesus is alive. So that instead, as had been originally planned, arranging for her to be admitted into a mental home, her husband called my friend Bob Hobson. And when he came round, he led them both to Christ.

And when I say that, I mean exactly what I mean. He led them to Christ. I don't mean he made them Baptists, or Methodists, or Presbyterian, or even Plymouth Brethren.

He led them to Christ. He introduced them to a working relationship with somebody who, upon the cross, paid the price of their redemption, who rose again from the dead in the person of his gracious Holy Spirit to re-inhabit their redeemed humanity and clothe his divine activity from that time on with their flesh and blood. And from that moment on, life became the most supreme, marvellous, magnificent adventure.

And three months later, she wrote that for the morning broadcast. She writes one every morning for the daily broadcast in that particular church. They'd simply discovered normality.

That God created man for himself. And that there's no other purpose for our being here than that our totality, body, soul, spirit, mind, emotion, every area of our personality should be made available to the Lord Jesus, who was our Creator God, having first made us, then died to redeem us, and rose again to inhabit us. So that you and I as individual members of his corporate body may be caught up into the eternal, timeless, relentless purpose of a God who knows exactly where he's going, has all that it takes to get there, and is sure to arrive.

And that's fun. Real fun. And heaven too.

But if I like this little poem because I know the girl who wrote it, I like it also because I know the man who led her to Christ, because I actually met him some 15 years ago. In one of my earlier visits to the United States, I had been invited to speak at a series of meetings in a church in Rochester, Minnesota, where the famous Mayo Clinic is. But just before I arrived to conduct this series of a week's meetings, the pastor of the church decided to leave.

Now, I don't blame him for that. You may have already decided the same yourself. If you've just heard the tapes and now you've seen my face for the first time, you probably prefer the tapes.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing malicious about his departure. He had the opportunity of doing some postgraduate studies and he took the opportunity. But in the absence of their pastor, they had invited a young minister from a little town nearby, a little town called Cassin, to assume certain responsibilities until they could call another man to their own pulpit.

And this young minister was Bob Hopson, who led this girl to Christ. I'd never heard of him before, never met him before, and he'd certainly never heard of me. And I'm not sure that he was particularly enthusiastic, even when he did.

For one thing, he was as thin as a rake. He was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. And although this was his second charge and he had been five years in the ministry, having completed his formal training, he was so completely exhausted, so completely depressed, so completely discouraged, he was just about to quit and walk out of the ministry.

In other words, he was living on his nerves. He was tired, very, very tired. And you know, when you start living on your nerves, you live on everybody else's.

And of course, everybody else lives on yours. And I had been invited by the officers of this church, unknown to him, to conduct the morning radio service, which was a feature of their church life. The only thing is, they'd also invited him and they'd forgotten to tell him that I was going to do it that week, you see.

So when he came to do it, I was doing it, you know, and he couldn't decide whether these people really knew their own minds. So he received me with courtesy, strictly correct, but somewhat cold. He took me along to the radio station, introduced me to the manager, he showed me where the music library was, and he was going then to lead me to stew in my own studio juice.

But for some reason or other, he decided to stay. And afterwards, we had a little chat over a cup of coffee. I didn't know anything about his circumstance, but I began to share with him the sheer joy of sharing the life of Christ.

I explained to him how I was converted at the age of 12, in a boy's camp. I was brought up in the city of London, but for all I knew about the gospel, I might just as well have been brought up in the heart of the jungle. I didn't know a thing at the age of 12.

If you'd talked to me about being born again, or converted, or redeemed, or saved, you might just as well have talked Chinese, or whistled up the drainpipe. I wouldn't have known the first thing that you were talking about. I absolutely knew nothing.

Mind you, I considered myself to be a Christian because my name was Thomas. And everybody by the name of Thomas, according to my family, was a Christian, automatically. Besides, we were born in England.

We weren't cannibals. If anybody had suggested we weren't Christians, we'd have sued them for libel. Besides, we went to church, if it didn't rain too hard, once on Sundays.

Never twice. Twice would have been fanatical. Once was respectable.

We all had Bibles, too. I had a Bible. We never read it.

That would have been vulgar. It was kept underneath the ass-pedestrian in the front window. Dusted once a week.

But as to real Christianity, absolutely not a clue. Not a clue. I didn't go to camp to get converted.

I went there because a young friend of mine, 13 years of age, had been converted one year previously. And as a good friend, he wanted to introduce me to Jesus Christ. Though I wasn't fully aware of his motivations.

I went to a camp simply to have a rattling good time, to go swimming, play cricket, and eat ice cream. Like any healthy boy of 12. So, I arrived in camp on the Thursday.

150 boys, big marquee. We'd meet morning and evenings for our services and slept in tents. Which was heaps of fun.

And the man who was speaking at the meetings, he wasn't a professional preacher, he was a businessman. But he had a unique way of communicating to kids of my shape and size. His name was Lawrence Head.

He's with Christ now. We used to call him Bubbly Head. Because he frothed at the mouth when he spoke.

That played a very big part in my conversion, because it kept me listening. You see, great big bubbles would grow on either side, and I wavered which one was going to burst first. Right or left.

And that was helpful. But I remember on the Saturday night, he was speaking of the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. And it was just as though that night nobody else were in that tent but myself and the Lord Jesus.

Nobody knew I was converted that night. I didn't tell anybody except Christ. But I just thanked him for dying for me.

Asked him to redeem me. And I was converted. I can honestly say I've never once doubted my conversion from that moment.

Quarter to nine, Saturday night, 13th of August 1927. And I'm thankful for those who told me that Christ died for my sins. That I might be reconciled to God.

But there was just one thing they forgot to tell me. They forgot to tell me that the Lord Jesus who died for me rose again to live in me. It took me seven years to find out.

Seven weary years. Seven years in which not without sincerity and with a real sense of dedication and a real sense of mission, I tried to serve Jesus Christ. Seven years in it.

I first began to preach when I was 15 in the streets of London. Led the Christian Union at school. Offered my life for missionary service.

Same time. And finally when I took my matriculation, went to London University, St. Bartholomew's Hospital to study medicine. To become a doctor and to go to Africa as a missionary.

I never became a doctor. For which many people no doubt will be thankful. Because at the age of 19, preparing to become a doctor to go as a missionary, I recognized that my life was a total and complete failure.

I was tired. Very, very tired. Not tired of Christ.

Just tired of myself. I loved the Lord Jesus Christ. I can honestly say that I loved him genuinely and sincerely.

I had no greater ambition than to be used by him to bring blessing to the lives of other people. But although I was frantic in my endeavors to that end, preaching almost every night of the week, leader of the

Bible class through which I myself had come to know Christ, leader of the IVF at the University in London, spending all my vacations at Bible camps, seaside missions, in spite of all that intense activity, I couldn't look back upon one single occasion where I'd succeeded in leading anybody to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And after seven years, I became acutely aware of the fact that I would be as useless in Africa as I was in England.

You see, crossing the sea doesn't make you a spiritual giant. The fact that you put on khaki pants and you're carving your way through a jungle with a Bible under your arm doesn't make you effective for God. Until at the age of 19, one night in London, in my room on the fourth story of an old Victorian house, I got down on my knees and I wept bitterly, really.

And that night I said, Lord Jesus, I'm sorry. I love you, I know you've redeemed me. I don't doubt for one moment that your blood was shed to reconcile me to God.

I believe you're coming back again. I've always longed to be useful to you and a blessing to others. But I'm so tired, so depressed, so discouraged, so dispirited, so exhausted, that I'm quitting.

I'm sorry. Just count me out. I'll be there.

I'll put my money in the play. I'll attend the services. I'll watch from the touchline.

But I'm no longer a player. I'm quitting. I thought he was going to be very disappointed.

Discovered he was overjoyed. It was just as though the Lord Jesus was in the room that night. He said, thanks very much.

I've been waiting for that for seven years. Waiting for you to quit. You see, for seven years you've been trying to live for me a life that only I can live through you.

That was the greatest discovery I've ever made. That the Lord Jesus died for me to put his life in me. I'd known that he died for me and thanked him for it.

But I'd never recognized the fact that the one who died for me rose again to live in me. I knew he was risen again. I could prove it chapter and verse.

I could never prove it experientially because I'd never entered into the good of it. But I could prove it chapter and verse. But you see, Jesus Christ to me, risen from the dead, was somewhere beyond the clouds.

Impersonally out of reach. Somebody who was simply waiting for me to arrive. After I'd sweated it out on earth.

You know, crawling in on my hands and knees, blistered all over. Waiting for the thump on the back, well done my good and faithful servant. But that the Lord Jesus was actually the content of my faith.

That he was the one through whose death I could become a Christian. And that he was the one through whose life I could be the Christian I had become. That had never dawned.

But what a relief. What a magnificent relief it was for me to that day. To discover that I'd never been a bigger failure.

Never a bigger failure than what Christ had expected me to be. Isn't that a relief when you discover that? To me to live is Christ. Suddenly that took on a new meaning.

I'd known it, I'd preached about it. But always interpreted it differently. To me to live is to preach for Christ, to work for Christ, to do for Christ.

To give for Christ, to go as a missionary for Christ. Everything except what the Bible says. To me to live is Christ.

Or to put it, paraphrase, to me to be alive is Christ. The only life content in me now is Jesus Christ. That's what the Bible says.

I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. You're not I. This was the testament of the Apostle Paul. He says, please don't credit me with anything that happens that is of any intrinsic value.

Because it has absolutely nothing to do with soul of Tarsus. He's dead and buried, identified with Christ, and put in the only place he's fit for. The grave.

If anything's happening at all, it's happening only through Paul the Apostle. Who happens to be the flesh and blood that clothes the divine activity of my risen Lord. Who's come to occupy my body and implement his own eternal designs through me.

I am crucified with Christ. The self that the flesh makes of me, nevertheless I live. You're not I. Christ lives in me.

The self that Christ makes of me. The life that I'm now living, I'm simply living through faith that lets him be who he is in me, in action. That's all.

I made discoveries like this marvelous verse from Romans 5 and 10. If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. An accomplished fact.

Reconciliation to God through the death of God's Son. Acquitted. Sins blotted out like a thick cloud.

Put away as far as the east is from the west. To be remembered no more. If when we were enemies.

Born the fallen race of fallen men of a fallen Adam. If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Much more.

Being reconciled we shall be saved by his life. Saved by his life. Thought I was always saved by his death.

Suddenly realized that the death of Christ simply qualifies us as forgiven sinners to be saved by the life of Christ. Because the whole purpose which he died for us was to put his life in us. Because taking God to be a man it takes Christ to be a Christian.

And Christ in the Christian puts God back into the man. And suddenly everything made sense. I see now why he died for me.

He took away my sins that he might earn the right once more to re-inhabit my redeemed humanity through his Holy Spirit. And clothe his program with me. Suddenly realized that for seven years I've been asking God to give me all that I had already had for seven years in Jesus Christ.

I suddenly realized that eternal life is not something that Jesus Christ gives us as apart from himself. You'd be surprised how few Christians there are who really know what eternal life is. If you doubt that sit down sometime and define it for yourself.

I've done it again and again in Bible colleges, given them ten minutes to define certain words they constantly use in their common evangelical parlance in not more than ten words. And you would be shocked at the sort of replies you get. Out of two Bible schools asked to define eternal life, 75% in each categorically by definition indicated that eternal life begins when you're dead and buried.

It's something that you look forward to after you have died. That's eternal life. Can you imagine? Don't be surprised because you'll find that is quite average.

Four out of a hundred in each case got the right answer. 21% gave such fuzzy answers you wouldn't know what they meant. But 75% categorically indicated you first got to die before you begin to enjoy eternal life.

Can you imagine? This is the record God has given to us eternal life and this life, eternal life, is in his Son. The only quality of life which is eternal is God's life. That's why the Lord Jesus Christ there doesn't give to you and to me eternal life here.

He cannot! Because he cannot give to you eternal life without giving you himself. He is eternal life. And if you and I have eternal life at all it's only because we have who he is in us.

He that has the Son has life. He that has not the Son of God does not have life. Eternal life is not a place, eternal life is not a peculiar feeling inside, eternal life is a person.

Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. The word who was in the beginning with God and was God and by whom all things were made, in him was life. And this life that is in him, eternal life, is the light of man.

His life alone in us makes us morally competent for the task for which he first created us. What a marvelous discovery. Transformed my life overnight.

As I learned to thank him for who he was in me, as I'd already learned for seven years to thank him for what he had done for me. I suddenly realized I needed not only what he did because of what I've done, I discovered of course that everything I do is the result of what I am. So I needed not only what he did because of what I've done, I need what he is to take the place of what I am.

I am the way. He holds my hands and my feet. That it is I myself, the hallmarks of my savior, the wounds of the cross.

I am the way. If you're a guilty sinner trying to find your way back to God, says the Lord Jesus, come to me. Reconciliation through my death.

But, says the Lord Jesus, I am the life. If you're weary, if you're tired, if you're exhausted, if you're dispirited, if you're discouraged, if you're beaten, if you're barren, if you're fruitless. If you've tried so hard and nothing happens, says the Lord Jesus, why don't you come to me? I am the life.

That's the truth. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the truth about the way, how to become a Christian.

I am the truth about the life, how to be the Christian you've become. That's gospel truth. As I was talking to Bob Hobson, on the verge of despair, there came to him that moment of truth that had come to me as a kid of 19.

He didn't walk home, he didn't ride home, he didn't fly home, he floated home. For the first time in his life, as an ordained minister, he had discovered what the Christian life was all about. He was thoroughly converted, he could look back to the day of his redemption.

He'd gone into the ministry because he loved Christ. The tragedy was this, that he didn't know what the Christian life was, a person. But when he went back home, he spoke to his wife, Nina, a sweet Christian girl.

And she too came to understand the full significance of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And it's been fascinating to watch their lives over the last 15 years. About six years ago, while preaching in the Midwest, some men waited upon him at the end of a meeting.

And said, we wondered whether you would be interested in becoming pastor of our church, we have a vacancy. He said, tell me something about your church. Well, they said, we don't yet have a church building, we've been in existence nine years, but we meet in a school classroom.

And every week our numbers get less. As a matter of fact, they said, we're so discouraged, so tired, so weary, that unless something happens very soon, we're going to pack in. We wondered whether you'd like to be our pastor.

He said, I'd be delighted. You see, one of the beauties about taking over a dying church is you don't have to kill it. And six years ago, he became pastor of that church.

I was there 18 months later, that's when I first met Bonnie Hayne. And with her, a whole group of her neighbors and friends whom she, with her husband, had led to Christ. By that time, they'd got a church foundation, but no building as such, except a Sunday school block, which was already in being.

It hadn't grown enormously, they managed to squeeze in just under 200 into the assembly hall of the Sunday school block. I was there just about 18 months ago, where it was my privilege to speak to all the pastors of the Conservative Baptist Association of the State of Wisconsin, which was held in their church as the largest church in the association as the host church. With a beautiful auditorium, not particularly large, seating about 500.

Which is packed twice every Sunday morning, with a congregation aggregate of some 1,000. And unless they build a new building, they've got to have three morning services. In the city of Brookfield, about 20 miles from Milwaukee.

What's interesting to me about that congregation is that 85% have been converted in the last few years. Doctors, business executives, bank presidents, it's a sort of dormitory for the city of Milwaukee. Men and women who were totally unchurched, but who discovered that Jesus Christ is alive.

But of the 85% who have been converted, of that church congregation of nearly 1,000 in the last few years, 85% of the 85% have been converted outside the church building. That's even more exciting. Because they don't really normally expect people to get converted in the church building.

That's where the church meets, that's where the church prays, that's where the church is instructed, that's where the church worships. The church is in action outside the building. I just had a letter from him two or three days ago, because he's resigned the pastorate.

He's now a North American director of the torchbearers. And our field representative, hoping God willing, one day he'll come see you in Adelaide. But he just wrote to me last week when I was in Brisbane.

He said in the last three weeks, 40 people have professed their faith in Christ. And this happens week after week. But they don't normally get converted in a church service.

You see, a man comes along, introduces his friend to the pastor and says, Mr. Smith, my friend, I'm a lawyer in the city. He was in my office, I was consulting him about certain things, and led him to Christ. He'd like to join our fellowship and worship with us.

Another man comes along and says, Mr. Brown, you know, I'm a dentist. I was just about to draw his teeth when he got converted. Of course, anybody can get converted, perhaps under those circumstances.

But another kid comes along, school kid. Excuse me, pastor, this is my chum, Bill. Led him to Christ at school last Thursday.

Somebody else comes along and says, this is my neighbor, Mrs. Jones. We were chatting over the garden wall, had the joy of leading her to Christ. This happens week after week.

Is it happening in your church? They don't reckon with the professional. Of course, some are called to the pastor. Some are called to an evangelistic ministry.

Some are called to be teachers. But the church of Jesus Christ is an organic whole. Indwelt by the resurrection life of the one who died for us, that he might share his life with us.

And when the church is in action, the church is in action, not in a building made of bricks and mortar and stone. It's convenient to have a place, and we should have, where we meet to worship and to pray. But the church is in action in the office, at the factory bench, at the school, on the playing field, in the university lecture theater, at the operating table.

That's where the church is in action. Serving over the counter. Driving a bus.

It's the taxi that picks you up. That's the church. Church in action.

There are enough people in this building here tonight, to make a revolutionary impact upon the city of Adelaide. If the church were really in action. I mean the church, as a fellowship of redeemed sinners, indwelt by a risen Lord, on God's terms of reverence.

That by a heart relationship, lets Jesus Christ be the God he is in action. The daily adventure of doing the impossible. Because you are not monopolized by the God of the impossible.

These are some of the principles that we're going to talk about this week. The simple basic first line principles of the Christian life. By and large, all I'm going to do is make the obvious obvious.

Take this book and we'll examine it and discover the principles that govern man's relationship to God and God's relationship to man. Make the obvious obvious. And we need to make the obvious obvious,

because normally the obvious is so obvious that it ceases to be obvious.

Have you found that out? You learn language that you've learned to put in its right context, but you've never taken the lid off to look inside and discover what that language really means. I discover this is pathetically true of countless, tens of thousands of evangelical Christians, to whom it's my privilege to minister in over 50 different countries all around the world. Language? All well known, schooled.

But content? Very little. It's easy to learn language without knowing its life content. A young man might come home one evening and burst into the house and say to his wife, I'm sorry darling, I'm going to be late for dinner.

She says, why? Well, he says, I've trouble with my carburetor, I think I've got a punctured float. Oh, she says, I am sorry. Now she hasn't a clue what he's talking about.

But she says, I'll keep you dinner warm. And he disappears, and ten minutes later his friend Jim calls and says, on the phone, is Tom in? She says, no, he's out, going to be late for dinner. Oh, why? Oh, he's got trouble with his carburetor, he thinks he's got a punctured float.

Well, she's got the language right, hasn't she? Jim knows exactly what she means, she doesn't. She doesn't know whether he's gone to the doctor or the garage. And you know you can have boys and girls brought up in evangelical homes who've learned all the language and haven't a clue what they're talking about, but they get it in the right place.

Memorized scriptures can say them by heart, but for whom there's no spiritual validity in the jargon with which they have become familiar. So we're simply going to do a little examination. We're going to take some of the language of the Christian faith and discover what it really means in terms of a risen, living Lord Jesus.

The one who's not only the author, but the finisher of our faith and everything in between. Who's not only the source, but the sustenance. Who's the root and the fatness.

The beginning and the end. Jesus Christ. A person.

Who claims the right, on the grounds of that redemptive transaction triumphantly enacted through his death and resurrection. He claims the right, on the basis of that transaction, to monopolize every area of your being 24 hours, every day, 7 days a week. So that you as a living, healthy member of his corporate body may be caught up into the timeless purpose of an eternal God.

But the marvelous thing, of course, is that to be inextricably and spiritually identified with the Lord Jesus is to enter into that rest, which is not inactivity or passivity, but which is Christ activity. Just clothed with you. That's why in conclusion, the Lord Jesus said, Are you tired? Then come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden.

I'll give you rest. Says the Lord Jesus, if you're tired, better come to me. And it isn't only the poor, sin-stricken world that's tired.

Preachers are tired. Missionaries are tired. I minister to them all over the world.

Sunday school teachers are tired. Church officers are tired. At this very moment in the city of Los Angeles, there are at least 200 pastors and missionaries in the hands of psychiatrists.

Did you know that? And that's typical of countless cities throughout the state. Any numbers of them, suffering from nervous breakdowns. Invalided home from the fields.

Tired. And nearly always because they've never really discovered the dynamic content of their faith. Says Jesus, if you're tired, weary, exhausted, discouraged, He says, come to me, I'll give you rest.

I'll give you rest. If you were digging a hole in the ground, you know, sweating, pouring, perspiration, muscles fit, you know, to burst, back fit to break, if you were really, really tired, and I said, let me give you a rest, what would you expect me to do? Recite a little ditty about digging? Read you some rules and regulations? Or demonstrate a new technique whereby you could throw the shovel full over your left shoulder without getting it in your right eye? Would that give you a rest? Well, of course it would. If I said, let me give you a rest, the only way I could do it would be if you were to quit and let me take over.

You drop the spade, I pick it up. You vacate and I get in. Right? That's exactly what the Lord Jesus meant.

Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden. I'll give you a rest. Why don't you quit? Why don't you drop the spade? Why don't you get out? Why don't you vacate? And let me move into every situation of your life in all the illimitable resources of deity as the one in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and in whom you are complete.

This is called walking in the Spirit. Living through faith. The faith that lets Jesus Christ be as big as he is as God himself.

Never, never, never less than big enough for every situation that can ever arise at any time in your experience. So you learn to take one step at a time because that's how you walk. One step at a time and for every situation in which that next step takes you no matter whether it be threat or promise, temptation or perplexity, you learn to vacate.

You step aside, you bow yourself out and you bow the Lord Jesus in and you say, Lord Jesus, you not only died for me to redeem me, you rose again from the dead to come and live in me, to share all the illimitable resources of your deity with me and to communicate your life and your adequacy through me. Thanks, you're in business. And when you are prepared to do that, the Lord Jesus Christ immediately responds to your faith, vindicates his deity magnificently and you take another step into a new situation and in that new situation you adopt exactly the same attitude because your attitude of dependence in this situation will never, never, never be adequate for the next.

God in no situation will ever relieve you of the moral obligation of exercising the option that gives him right of way. So in the next situation you step out of that, bow yourself out once more, you bow him in and you say, Lord Jesus, I can't but you can, thanks. I'm at the receiving end of your instructions, tell me what to do and I'll do as I am told and he will once more vindicate his deity.

And you take a third step into a new situation, you vacate and he occupies. You take a fourth step, you vacate and he occupies. You take a fifth step, you vacate and he occupies.

So the Christian life, one step at a time, is one vacation after another until finally you're always on vacation. And that's a rest. Don't you go on vacation to have a rest? That's the Christian life.

Not I. I have vacated. Not I. But Christ, who gives me his instructions, tells me what to do, and I have learned to do as I am told. So now to me to live is Christ.

Because if he tells you what to do and you do what he tells you, who's in action? It's your body, but he's in action. Your hands, but he motivates. Your mind, but he thinks.

Your lips, but he speaks. Your feet, but he walks. Your heart, but he loves.

That's great. That's exciting. That's normality.

Let's have a word of prayer. If you're tired tonight, not just physically tired, but as you look back over your Christian life, to be quite frank, somewhat discouraged, perhaps baffled at your own impotence, bewildered at your own barrenness, there's good news for you. The Lord Jesus Christ, who died to redeem you, rose again to live in you, to share the overwhelming adequacy of his deity with you.

Always enough, if you will learn to thank him for his life in you. As you once learned to thank him for his death, for loving Savior, we're so glad tonight for the amazing, fantastic privilege of being forgiven sinners. We never deserved that.

But forgiven sinners, occupied by you in the person and power of your gracious Holy Spirit. Thank you for the sheer delight that may be ours of placing ourselves at your disposal, so that you may vindicate your deity in every new situation as it arises. Thank you for tomorrow.

Thank you for all the lovely opportunities that are going to arise tomorrow, in which you can prove that you're God. Thank you for the problems that are going to arise. Thank you for the letters that we're going to open that normally would dismay us, but now, now exposed to your adequacy are going to give you a glorious opportunity to demonstrate your deity.

Thank you for the problems we have with our children. Thank you, dear Lord, for the business worries that in the past have weighed us down, but now are your problems. Thank you for every new day that's going to dawn, that will represent the unfolding of your relentless plan, as we give you total right of way to monopolize every area of our beings, body, soul, and spirit, mind, emotion, and will, so that we become bodies, wholly filled and flooded with God himself.

You made us this way, and thank you for the blood you shed upon the cross, that we might be qualified to become again the recipients of your resurrection life. Send us on our way tonight refreshed, encouraged, and blessed, and in high expectation of that blessing which is inevitable to those who are in the place of obedience. For your dear name's sake, Amen.

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