

Becoming the Christian You Are

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the role of the law in our lives, recognizing our need for redemption and regeneration through Jesus Christ, and embracing the promise of God's forgiveness and justification.

Duration: 1:09:44

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:20, Romans 8:1, Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 2:1-2

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the content of the gospel is Jesus Christ Himself. He explains that Jesus gave Himself for redemption and continues to give Himself for regeneration. The speaker also mentions a book called 'The Mystery of Godness' that he has written, which explores this concept further. He uses a diagram to illustrate how God created humans with a body and a soul, consisting of mind, emotions, and will. The sermon references Genesis 3:15, where God promises to put enmity between Satan and humanity.

Transcript

Happy to add my word of welcome to that which has already been extended to you. Now we're going to turn away from our hymn books and to our Bibles and continue to explore the real spiritual content of our faith, the Lord Jesus himself. We'll go to the third chapter, the Epistles of the Galatians, Galatians chapter 3. And remember, as we were continuing to explore the three principles, the form of scripture is the Word of God, the character of the Word of God is gospel, and the content of that gospel, the Lord Jesus himself.

And gospel, both redemptive and regenerative. God's provision, not only that we might become Christians, but God's provision that we might be the Christians that we have become. And remember, crooked walls hate plumb lines, because where there's a plumb line around, a crooked wall knows that somebody's going to start meddling and try to put crooked walls straight.

And this, we saw, could be the role of the law. For whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, to what end? That we might be congratulated by God on our performance in satisfying the demands of that law? No. Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, all the world become guilty before God, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

For a plumb line can never make a crooked wall straight, all that a plumb line can do is prove a crooked wall crooked. And that's why we saw the better hope was brought in, God's redemptive and regenerative plan fashioned in his heart in the eternal ages of the past. And the law was added because of transgression.

430 years after, God pledged his name, his honor, and his glory, that salvation should come to you and to me exclusively through his son, the Lord Jesus, born of Mary, of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah, and of the seed of Abraham. Any doubt about that in the record? For what God said in mercy to Abraham, last verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Mike, has become the truth to a thousand generations. There is none other name given among men under heaven, whereby we may be saved.

Jesus said, I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me. So we see that the law is not the means whereby you and I may be justified before God, the law is our schoolmaster. Do you remember Galatians chapter 3 verse 24? The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, to expose our need that we may be convicted of our sin, recognize ourselves to be the sinners that we are, and embrace the Lord Jesus for the Savior that he is, and came to be.

Who came? We believe it not because the Bible says he did, but we believe it because the Bible said he would. I remember as a boy at school in London, northwest of London, I attended for several years a school that was called the William Ellis School after its founding. It was at a place called Gospel Oak, just a little district to that part of northwest London.

And my class teacher was a man called Clark. Now I don't know what your custom is in this country, but in England anybody called Clark automatically earns the nickname of Knobby. It's always Knobby Clark, you see.

So of course we called him Knobby. And I remember one morning while he was looking over my shoulder as I was working, he noticed that the pencil that I was using was about five-eighths of an inch long and very chewed, because I had chewed it. And for some strange reason he didn't consider that that was adequate.

I was perfectly happy, but he said, Thomas, you need a new pencil. Something which I was completely unconvinced. And point of fact, I had a very deep sentimental attachment to that pencil.

You don't chew a pencil for that long without developing a deep affection for the object of your endeavor. So he said, you need a new pencil. You come to me in the morning break, quarter of an hour, 20 minutes, when we normally would be out in the playground, I'll give you a new pencil.

That was the promise that he made to me, my move, that he recognized and I didn't. Well when the morning break came, I didn't give a thought to that pencil because I wasn't adequately convicted or convinced of the need. So when I got out, of course I played some football, probably had a fight with one of my chums, went down to the tuck shop, bought an ice cream, and before I knew the bell was ringing and I was back in school.

No new pencil. So I went to work again with me old stud. But at four o'clock when it was time to go home, in order to get to the exit, we had to go down what we called the library, into which various classrooms, including mine, opened.

And as I went down through the library, I passed the door of my particular classroom, where I hadn't been during the course of the afternoon, and standing in the doorway, there was Nobby. And the moment I saw Nobby, I remembered the pencil. And of course, the moment I remembered the pencil, I pretended I hadn't seen Nobby.

But the trouble was, he had seen me. He said, Thomas. Oh yes, sir.

With that innocent look that you only find on the face of a guilty boy. What about that pencil? Oh, sir. I forgot.

Oh, you forgot. I see. Then you'd better just come in here.

So I went in there and he shut the door. Then he opened the lid of his desk, and out of the desk he produced, not the promise, something a little longer, just about three feet. Not the promise, but the law.

The law, which he very successfully added after he'd given the promise. Why did he add the law after making the promise? Well, because of transgression. You see, the law, three feet of it, was administered to remind me of the need of which I wasn't previously convinced.

And after he had added the law to remind me of my need, that he could only satisfy by giving me the promise, he gave me a new pencil. Now I had both. The reminder and the pencil.

And I went home with both. The one didn't last forever. In fact, neither did, but one kept me standing.

Now, you see, this was God's plan. The promise was given to us in the very chapter in which there is recorded the fall of man into sin. Of this we reminded ourselves yesterday, Genesis 3.15, when God addressing himself to Satan, that old serpent, the devil, said, I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman, between your feet and her feet.

Genesis 3.15, referring, of course, to the birth of the Lord Jesus, the feet of the woman, born at Bethlehem, miraculously conceived, fashioned in the borrowed womb of the virgin girl. And the feet of Satan, the Lord Jesus in the age of John, turning to the scribes and the Pharisees, those who engineered his death, the religious leaders of his day and generation, in all their pride and self-righteousness, said the Lord Jesus to them, you are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, that's why you, his children, want to kill me.

Because your humanity is available to him so that he, by character, can be incarnate in what you do. He is a liar and the father of lies, that's why you reject me as the truth. And the feet of the serpent, the scribes and the Pharisees, engineered the death of the feet of the woman.

They bruised his heel, but he through death destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil, and delivered them who through all their lifetime had been subject to fear because of the fear of death, and set them free. And this pledge by God, recorded for us in Genesis 3.15, was confirmed by God in Abraham. When choosing this Chaldean, whose name was Abraham, he said, I'm going to change your name to Abraham, because I'm going to make you the father of many nations.

He begat, by divine intervention, Isaac, who begat Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, who begat the twelve tribes, one of which was Judah, and of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah, nearly 1900 years ago, that seed of the woman was born, in fulfillment of the promise. But in spite of all that, in spite of

the fact, as we're told in the book of the Revelation, chapter 13, that the Lord Jesus was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, God had to add the law, because of transgression. That it might be our schoolmaster, and lead us to Christ, and shock us into an awareness of our deed, our guilt, our bankruptcy, that we're born dead in trespasses and sins, that that law might lead us to Christ.

That we might then be justified, not by the law, or our performance in satisfying it, but through faith, through faith. Christ has redeemed from the curse of the law's condemnation. You glance at that third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans again.

Romans chapter 3, verse 19, we know that what things whoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, without exception, all the world, without exception, may become guilty before God, exposed, that is to say, and subject to his judgment. Therefore, verse 20, by the deeds of the law, by your or my performance in seeking to satisfy its demands, there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. The righteousness of God, God's righteousness, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophet.

Even the righteousness of God, which is made available to you and to me, through faith, in Jesus Christ. This righteousness, God's gift through faith in Christ, is unto all and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely, not on the basis of merit, not as a reward, not because of our performance, but freely, God's unmerited gift, grace, g-r-a-c-e, God's, which is at Christ's expense. All have sinned, come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, on the basis of that redemptive transaction where he was made a curse for us, for cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. Verse 25, Whom, Christ, God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins of the past, through the forbearance of God.

To declare, verse 26, I say at this time, his righteousness, not your righteousness, not my righteousness. Declare his righteousness, that he, God, might be just, in that he is condemned sin in the person of another, and the justifier of those for whom he died in their place. The justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

So God is both just and justifier. He is just, in that in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom our sin was sentenced, executed, his righteousness has been satisfied. Just.

He doesn't just blink his eyes and pretend we haven't sinned. God isn't just a sentimental old daddy sitting on a damp cloud looking through thick glasses for his naughty children. Let's forget it.

God is righteous. He's just. And the wages of sin is death.

And it was executed in the person of the Lord Jesus, vicariously on your part and mine, exactly what happened to Adam when he died. It wasn't just a sentimental gesture. It wasn't the tragic end of a noble life.

He wasn't a great idealist who drifted a disaster. It wasn't simply God showing how far he would condescend to try and woo us and win us back. Nothing like that.

Stern business was accomplished in the day that God executed in the person of his own beloved son, in the sinlessness of his humanity, all his rightful wrath and judgment upon man's wickedness. He died that we might be forgiven. And now he lives to make us good.

God is just. God can only remember our sins no more for his namesake, because his name is Jesus, who saves his people from their sins, in the person of the one who incarnate, incurred deliberately and voluntarily in his own person, that death that has already occurred, as we shall discover tonight in Adam. And now he's the justifier, the justifier of any boy, any girl, any man, any woman who believes, who will come and say, Lord Jesus, I recognize now what happened to you when you died on the cross.

There happened to you when you died on the cross, everything that should have happened to me. Thank you. And the moment you do that, the Lord Jesus introduces you to the Father and says, Father, please accept this person, for my sake I have paid their debt.

Please reckon that they are totally and finally and eternally acquitted. They don't deserve it, Father, I know that. We agreed on this before ever I went into the world.

But thank you that you're prepared, not for their sake, but for my sake, to accept. And remember that every boy, girl, man, or woman who is accepted in the beloved by the Father is redeemed, not out of God's faithfulness to them, but out of God's faithfulness to his son. For if you and I come to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he refuses to accept me as a forgiven sinner because he died in my place, he would be betraying his own son, who lay down his life, a ransom to men.

That's why, of course, if the Father God in heaven sent his Son to die for you and for me, that our sins might be forgiven, there isn't a chance in all eternity that you will ever get into his presence any other way. If God considered that your lot and mine was such that it demanded the atoning sacrifice of his Son upon the cross, what chance is there in eternity that God will accept you and me on any other day? There is none. Absolutely none.

The cross and Christ's death there two thousand years ago was God's final and timeless verdict upon your and my fitness for heaven in ourselves. Acts 13, Acts 13, verse 38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man, through this man, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

What man? Well, that man, verse 28, in which the religious leaders of his then generation found no cause of death, yet desired Pilate that he should be slain. That man. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him in the Old Testament, the volume of the book where his atoning death was foreshadowed, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a sepulchre.

That's their part, the seed of the serpent. But, verse 30, God raised him from the dead. That man.

We declare, he continues, Paul on this occasion, verse 32, we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm. And this isn't a Christian message, this isn't a Christian verse, this isn't a Christmas text, this isn't a Christmas verse, this is a resurrection verse, this is an Easter verse. Thou art my son, this day have I forgotten thee.

Forgotten wherefrom? Not forgotten this time in the womb of Mary, forgotten from the dead. God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm. Thou art my son, this day have I forgotten thee.

And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David, wherefore he said also in another psalm, thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption. David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption. But he whom God raised again saw no corruption.

It is this man, and be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man who was crucified, who God raised from the dead, who ascended to be with his father, who now shares that glory that had always been his in the eternal ages of the past and will be his for the eternal ages of the future. The word who was in the beginning with God, was God, and by whom all things were made, this word that was made flesh. And brethren, in whom John says we beheld the glory hath of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and full of truth, be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin.

So Jesus Christ came for sinners. That's why you'll never be a Christian if you're not a sinner. You can't be.

But of course a Christian is a forgiven sinner, and if you're not a sinner you don't need forgiveness, and therefore Christ didn't come for you. So don't call yourself a Christian. By him, verse 39, by him all that believe are what? Justified.

Just as if I'd never sinned. By him all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the Lord Moses. For the Lord made nothing perfect.

What the Lord could not do through the weakness of the flesh, because there's a principle in you and me that when the Lord says, the Lord says thou shalt, says I won't. When the Lord says thou shalt not, says I will. But the Lord Jesus when he died upon the cross, there was able to justify you and me from all that the Lord could not justify.

That's the role of the Lord. Christ, our Redeemer, whom we neglect and whose salvation we spurn until the Holy Spirit graciously takes the law, the plumb line, and convicts us of our need, and shows us that we're the sinners that we are, and we need him for the Saviour that he came to us. Are you redeemed? Have you allowed God through his dear Son to justify you? Or are you still claiming to be under the law, demanding by your Creator to be judged on the basis of your performance and satisfying its demands? Then you're lost, because the issue has already been settled.

God himself has settled it. By the deeds of the Lord there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

It can only prove you guilty. Now it's at this stage in particular we leave our hymn books and go to our Bible. I'm always very sorry for a brother like this who has to choose hymns from your hymn books.

They're pathetic. They're sweet, they have lovely melodies, they're sentimental, but they're tragically and diametrically opposed all too often in their content from the revelation that God has given us in his Word. Now if we could stop here that would be fine.

Lots of our hymn book songs would be okay, but you see the gospel doesn't stop here. Turn back to Galatians chapter 3. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

That, that we might get to heaven. Is that what it says? No. That we might not go to hell.

No. That our sins might be forgiven. No.

It is absolutely true that our sins can only be forgiven because he has redeemed us from the curse of the law, but that isn't why he died. It was that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, all unbelievers, through Jesus Christ on the grounds of the redemptive act that he accomplished. That further to explain we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

The purpose for which Christ has redeemed us is that reconciled to God our sin forgiven, there might actually be restored to us what was forfeited in Adam, the Holy Spirit, the life of God. Now of course in the beautiful picture language of the Old Testament this is exactly what the children of Israel missed when God redeemed them out of Egypt. How did he redeem them out of Egypt? By his strong hand through Moses.

Beneath the shadow of the shed blood of an unblemished lamb, a bone of whose body was not under any circumstances to be broken. Exodus chapter 12. Because that unblemished lamb whose blood was shed and painted upon the doorpost and the lintel was the Passover lamb and Christ our Passover 1 Corinthians 5-7 has been sacrificed for us.

And when the soldiers came out because of a Sabbath day that was to follow, the Passover Sabbath, they smashed the legs of one thief and they smashed the legs of the other, but when they came to the Lord Jesus they found he was already dead. Why? Because he gave up the ghost. He laid down his life.

So not a bone in his body was broken. That's why that Old Testament picture that foreshadowed the one whom John the Baptist described as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Not one bone of the body of that little lamb was to be broken.

And beneath the shadow of the shed blood of that little lamb, under the hand of Moses they were led through the Red Sea, out of Egypt, a picture in the Old Testament always of the unregenerate, unconverted, unsaved, what in the New Testament sometimes called the Gentiles, out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, beautiful picture of our identity with Christ in death and resurrection, to be poised upon the threshold of a new life, an onward march that would take them through and in to heaven? To heaven? Uh-uh. To Canaan. Which nowhere, anywhere, at any time, ever in the Bible speaks of heaven.

So you see we don't tread into Jordan's, you know, murky waves. Suddenly to wake up the other side in heaven. Nor does he feed our hungry souls with manna.

Manna for the wilderness. Did they eat any manna in Canaan? No. That was the land flowing with milk and honey.

There were the grapes and the pomegranates. Here was the golden corn swaying in the breeze. Christ in all the fullness and power of his resurrection.

That is the birthright of every redeemed sinner. Not just in heaven, but here on earth, on the way to heaven. That's Canaan.

The fullness of the Holy Ghost. The life of victory in Jesus Christ. I said, what did these people do for 40 years in the wilderness? Did they please God? No, he said, for 40 years you grieved me.

You rebelled and grumbled and fought and disobeyed and were idolatrous. You worshiped golden cards. You ridiculed my servant Moses.

You ridiculed my servant Aaron. That's what they did in the wilderness. So you see, Jordan is the day when we go off earth and into heaven.

Then the normality of the Christian life must be the kind of life, the quality of life, they enjoyed in the wilderness. It means that we for 40 years can grieve God. That's what we expected on the way to heaven.

But one day we'll go through Jordan. Would that be valid? Listen to this. In the book of Deuteronomy and chapter 1 and verse 1, these be the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness and the plain over against the Red Sea.

And verse 2, there are 11 days journey from Horeb where the journey began by the way of Mount Seir and the Kadesh Barnea on the frontiers of Canaan. How long? 11 days. How long did it take them? 40 years.

That's worse than British Railway. It took them 40 years to do an 11-day journey. Would God please? No.

No. They simply had to relearn at Jordan what they forgot at the Red Sea, that's all. God command to Moses, was this bring them out that you might bring them in, but he dumped them in the desert and died there with them for 40 years.

Look at chapter 8 in the book of Deuteronomy. Chapter 8 and the third verse, God says through Moses, he humbled thee and he suffered thee to hunger. Where did he suffer them to hunger? In the wilderness.

What was God doing in the wilderness when he suffered them to hunger? He fed them with manna. So while God was feeding them with manna in the wilderness, he was suffering them to hunger. Why? For the simple reason that God refuses to satisfy a people in the wilderness when he's laid the table in Canaan.

Canaan. Canaan is not heaven. We are to be partakers of Christ now.

Hebrews chapter 3, we are to be partakers of Christ now as they should have been partakers of Canaan then. And says God, keep the place there in Deuteronomy, but let me quote it to you from the third chapter of the epistles of the Hebrews. Exhort one another today, daily, verse 13 of Hebrews 3, while it is cold today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, for we are made partakers of Christ.

If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, take thee brethren, verse 12, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Harden not your hearts, verse 8, as in the provocation of the dead, temptation of the wilderness. When your fathers tempted me, pruned me, stole my work, forty years I was green with that generation.

They said, thee do always err in thy heart. They have not known my way, so I swear in my wrath they shall not enter into my way. They'll never know the joy of that through which I brought them out of Egypt.

They're a redeemed people. Yes, they're saved out of Egypt, but they'll never take the good things that I intended should be theirs in the day that by the hands of Moses I brought them through the Red Sea and poised them upon the threshold of that new journey that was to take them on and in to the land of promise. Jesus, in the fullness and power of his indwelling Holy Spirit, who died for us, the unblemished land, that whether we wake or sleep, whether we're on earth or in heaven, whether we're in the body or out of it, we should live together with him in all the overwhelming unspeakable plenitude of his divine presence.

That is Cain. Are you still in Deuteronomy? Look at the 12th chapter. This is by way of parenthesis.

These are the statutes, verse 1 of Deuteronomy 12, and judgments which you shall observe to do in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it all the days that you live where? On the earth. The land is for now, not for then. But the tragedy you see is this, that the vast majority of truly converted men and women, boys and girls, who claim redemption through the death of Jesus Christ, are living between the Jesus that was and the Jesus that will be in heaven.

But they don't know the Jesus that is. In all the fullness and power of his indwelling Holy Spirit, through whose presence alone we derive that moral competence once more on earth, in the body, to discharge that office for which, having been created, we now have been redeemed. So living between the Jesus that was, the historical act of a redeemer who gets us out of hell and into heaven, and the Jesus who will be one day coming back in eschatological glory to take us to the place that he's gone to before for us, the average Christian lives in the meantime in a spiritual vacuum.

Setting it out for God down here, doing your best for Jesus, trying to live for Jesus, until at last you crawl into heaven on your hands and knees, covered with dust and blisters, and wait for him to thump you on the back and say, well done my good and faithful servant, you made it. Now isn't that pathetic? Isn't that pathetic? Why did Christ redeem us? Why did God lead his people by the hand of Moses out of Egypt so that they could enjoy Canaan? Wait! On earth, on earth, every step of the way. If Canaan is heaven, I'll tell you where Moses is.

Where? In hell. Did he ever go through Jordan? No. He died with those whom he dumped in the desert.

Christ redeemed us that we might receive the Holy Spirit. Christ redeemed us that the Lord Jesus and the power of his resurrection might come and reinvade our humanity. Christ redeemed us so that you and I might step out into every new day knowing that somebody lives within us, who as God in us, Christ living in our heart, is never ever less than big enough for any situation that can ever arise at any time.

So that we can reign in life through one Christ Jesus. So that we can be more than conquered. So that we can know a peace that passes understanding, staggers the neighbours.

So that we can have a joy that passes knowledge. So that that joy can be unspeakable. Note, unknown to man, adequate to describe it, a love that passes knowledge.

We're not just to get by somehow, but triumphant. Every day is to be the sheer adventure of enjoying that quality of life that the Lord Jesus described as more abundant. It's life in a new dimension.

It's superlative. So is it. The form of scripture is the Word of God.

The character of the Word of God is gospel and the content of that gospel is what? Christianity? No. The Beatitudes? No. The Sermon on the Mount? No.

The beautiful example that he left behind 2,000 years ago? No. The content of the gospel is Jesus Christ himself. The one who gave himself for us, redemption, and the one who gives himself to us, regeneration.

It may be that some of you will pick up the book called The Mystery of Godliness, which is the second of the books that I've written, and I think you'd find it quite helpful. But I use a diagram there, and sometimes folk at first glance think it's a little complicated and put it down and say, now it isn't complicated a bit. It

does look like the nervous system or the blood system of a frog, I realize that, but it isn't.

And I thought maybe it would be helpful in the context of what we have been saying morning and evening, if I just built that diagram, which in itself, like all diagrams, is a little cold and impersonal, but could be helpful. That line there, XX, represents this planet, this earth that you and I are living on, temporally. And God, our Creator, in the triunity of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit. May be difficult for you to see that from way back. But some of us last night were discussing how God created us.

And you remember, he gave us, in common with all forms of created life, a body. But not only a body that is characteristic of vegetable, animal, and man. He gave to man, also, a soul.

Mind, emotions, and will. That's the human soul. Man, body, and soul.

Body, and soul. Mind, emotion, and will. Our behavior mechanism.

So that we exercise our wills under the influence of mind and emotion. Whoever controls your mind, whoever controls your emotions, controls your wills, whoever controls your wills, governs your behavior. So what you do, derives from whatever it may be that governs mind and emotion.

Precipitate it into action through will, in terms of this body. Okay? But we saw that God made all animals that way. But he perfected the animal kingdom, in a very unique fashion, that some of us explored last evening.

With a mind, a calculator, just like yours and mine, a memory that can retain your shape, and sound, and size, and smell, so that the dog recognizes you when you come home, as we explained last night. When the door in the front is shut, the dog's got enough savvy to go around and see if the door in the back is open. And having been told not to sleep on the best furniture, it waits till you go out, before it does.

Haven't you got a dog like that? Mind, emotion, a dog can be angry, or friendly, it can be jealous, it can be amused. Ever seen a dog grin? And it has a will. You take a dog for a walk, and let it off the leash, maybe if you're living somewhere in the country, and it strays, and you say, come here! It stops.

But it's seen a cat. And so, it, you know, sort of wobbles a bit. One ear up, one ear down, a mischievous look on its face.

What am I going to do, obey, or chase the cat? Much more fun. Come here! Oh, I see. Well, I'd better forget the cat.

And so it comes back with its tail between its legs. Now, all that's going on in the dog, you see. Mind, emotion, and will.

But God has protected the animal kingdom, we don't have time now to pause upon this for long, because we explored this thoroughly last evening, by an instinctive trust, with a rigid interlock between that instinctive trust and the animal soul, that protects it. Mating seasons, feeding habits, migratory paths, building skills, none of them have to be learned by the animal, or insect, or fish, or bird. They're built in, a computerized program, repetitive, year after year, generation after generation, century after century.

So there is a rigid interlock, a rigid interlock, between the instinctive trust and the animal soul, so that the law that operates in the animal kingdom is a law of compulsion. A law of compulsion. It can't behave any other way than that which has been computerized by the Creator, and built into it in the person of an instinctive, impersonal trust.

We call it instinct. And we saw that by virtue of this fact, the animal, when it behaves, is functionally satisfying to God, but not morally satisfying to God. Because by what it does, it's not saying anything to God, any more than your television is saying anything to you, when you switch it on, and it gives you the football match, or presents you with the news.

You don't go up to it afterwards and say, well, thank you very much, that was a beautifully clear picture today, I'd like to congratulate you, and I think it was very kind, in view of the fact it's so late. Is that the way you talk to your television? If you did, your family would get worried. You know perfectly well that that's just a piece of transistorized machinery.

It can't help behave the way it's behaving, it was made that way. That's the animal thing. So, functionally satisfying, yes.

Morally satisfying, no. So God made man different. He gave to man a human spirit, that unique capacity, possessed only by man, exclusively, that allows God as creator to take up residence within man as creature.

Beautiful illustration given of the human spirit in the book of the Proverbs 20, verse 27, says this, the spirit of man, the human spirit, not to be confused with the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of man, is the candle, or the lamp of the Lord, God's lamp. That's why throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, with relentless consistency, oil is a picture of the person, work, and office of the Holy Spirit. The human spirit is God's lamp, but what does a lamp take to produce light? Of course, in Bible times, oil.

And what oil is to a lamp, what the electricity is to these, the Holy Spirit was to be to the human spirit. For in him was light, and this light that was in him was the what? The light of man. If man was to be alight with God's likeness, if man was to be alight with God's glory, if man was to glow with God's righteousness, what does it take to be a man alight? A man alive with the life of God.

So when God first made man, he gave him a body, he gave him a soul, he gave him a human spirit, and God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, came to indwell the human spirit, so that man was not only physically alive, like the animal kingdom, man was spiritually alive, in that by the very presence of God himself, through the Holy Spirit, within the human spirit, he shared the life of the Word's Creator, Jesus. That the Holy Spirit might play the role in the human soul, that instinct plays in the animal soul. So man was created, mind, emotion, will, and the Holy Spirit to operate within the human soul as instinct operates within the animal soul.

But not by virtue of a rigid interlock, but by virtue of a moral interlock. Threefold in character. Love for God, dependence on God, obedience to God.

Love for, dependent on, obedience to. My obedience to, the only valid way in which I can demonstrate my dependence on, and my dependence on, the only valid way in which I can express my love for. Love for, dependence on, obedience to.

I say, God, I want to be the kind of man you created me to be. Alive, and alive with your glory. I know, God, I don't have in myself what it takes to be like you.

You're God, and I'm just your creature. But thank you, that as my Creator, you're prepared to come and live in me, your creature, and by your Holy Spirit, teach my mind, control my emotions, direct my will, govern my behavior, so that everybody looking at me sees you, God, in me, behaving. That's God-like.

That's righteousness. Not by imitation, but by derivation. God in you, not only the object of the image, but the origin in you of the image of which he's the object.

So that your humanity, fulfilling and discharging the office which you were made, God-likeness, for that to function, God's presence is imperative. Take God out of the man, and he ceases to function as a lamp ceases to function when you take oil out of the bulb. So the Holy Spirit was in the human spirit.

Teaching mind, emotion, and will was to produce in human behavior, God's character. That's how we were made. The moral interlock, and not the law of compulsion, but the law of love.

If you love me, keep my command. If you love me, out of your dependence on me, yield your obedience to me. Not just a rule of regulation, not just a list of things you do and don't do.

No. Maintain that sensitivity within your human spirit to my Holy Spirit, that with unchallenged right, he might himself motivate your thinking, motivate your reactions, and motivate your decisions. Satan came along, and introduced a new principle.

A principle which in the Bible is called sin, singular, deriving from an Adamic attitude that was introduced when man fell into sin that is called the flesh. For Satan said, you can be a man without God, and God said that if you lose him you'll die. Suffer, suffer nonsense, said Satan.

Forget it. You've got all that it takes to be a man in your own right. Just vindicate your own adequacy.

Be a man, said the devil. What he really meant was be an animal, without even the capacity to behave like one. And Adam believed the devil's lies.

Traded his attitude of dependence on God for one of arrogant, conceited, self-sufficient, independent of God. He'd become a humanist, carving his own destiny, king in his own kingdom, master of his own future, probing into space, riding in jeeps around the moon. I've got what it takes.

What happened? Exactly what God said. In the day that you eat thereof you will die. Not physically, spiritually.

The animal part of you will survive. You'll still have a body, and you'll still have a soul. And the mind that you've got will be as clever as the mind I gave you to be governed by God.

So clever that you can produce hydrogen bombs. And while you're building with one hand, with the other you can build all the means for destroying overnight what you've created. That's why your country alone at this very moment has top piled enough energy to destroy the world 50 times over.

That's how smart man is without God. That's why we're trying to put space platforms up in the sky. Everybody knows why.

If you can bring an astronaut down with absolute precision, precisely where you want him, exactly when you want it, what else can you bring down? All you need is a little team of three or four or five men on a space platform with a hundred hydrogens on, and you govern the world. Everybody does exactly what you say, or else. Right? That's how smart man is without God.

Clever, yeah. He's still got the mind that God gave to a man to be governed by God. But you see, in the day that he believed the devil's plan became a man without God.

He still had a body, he still had a soul, he still had a will, but he was neither protected by instinct nor governed by God. So he couldn't behave like an animal, and he didn't know how to behave like a man. He could only behave like a maniac, living for himself, ego, egocentric, every man for himself.

And I'm on your side only so long as you're on my side. And it's everybody's fault but mine. That's fallen man.

Physically alive, soulishly active, but spiritually dead. And the wages of sin is death. Physically alive, still on the earth, soulishly active, but ego, self, the flesh dominating, prostituting, abusing, misusing his humanity, spiritually destitute, bankrupt, dead in trespasses and sin.

Now only two things can happen, as I've reminded you, and we'll talk about this a bit more tonight, only two things can happen to a person who's dead. What are they? Stay dead or come alive. You either stay dead or you're raised from the dead.

And let us, let us not be deceived in this area. The Bible tells us emphatically again and again and again, verified again and again and again by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that you and I, as the fallen seed of a fallen Adam, heirs of his fallen condition, are born spiritually dead. And we either stay that way or come alive, come alive.

And why the Lord Jesus Christ came to this world and died upon the cross was that guilty, sinful men, dead in sins, might come alive. The Lord Jesus said, I'm come that you might have life. What kind of people need life? Those that don't have it.

What kind of people are they who don't have life? Dead people. That's why in writing in his second epistle to Timothy, the first chapter, Paul says, when the Lord Jesus was manifest, he was manifest to abolish what? Death. Not just physical death, spiritual death.

He came to abolish death and bring life and immortality to life. He came to raise the dead. But if sin coming in drove the life of God out, under what circumstances do you think it will be possible for God to put life in? The restoration of the Holy Spirit, the coming back of the Holy Spirit of the living God, God the Holy Spirit, in equality with God the Father and God the Son, under what conditions do you think God, by the Holy Spirit, will come back into the human spirit, which the Holy Spirit vacated when Adam fell into sin, leaving man dead? Under what conditions? If sin came in, drove him out, under what conditions will he come back? Only when sin has been forgiven.

So when the Lord Jesus Christ came to this world, he deliberately chose of his own pre-volition to accept from the Father a body just like yours and mine, a soul just like yours and mine, a spirit just like yours and mine. And having received this, our humanity in totality, exactly and precisely as he, as God, created you and me, he presented that body to the Father through what? The eternal spirit. Hebrews 9 verse 14.

He allowed the Father, by the Holy Spirit, to indwell his human spirit, invade his soul, capture his mind, his will, his emotions, so that by everything the Lord Jesus ever did or ever said or ever was, he could say, he that has seen me has seen him that sent me. I'm sent. I'm sent.

I've come as God incarnate to assume your humanity as one sent. And I'm utterly dependent out of my love for, and therefore obedience to, the one who sent me. So everything I do, my Father does.

Everything I say, my Father says. Everything I am, my Father is. He that has seen me in action 24 hours a day, has seen him in action 24 hours a day.

And Jesus Christ wasn't being Superman. He wasn't being superstar. Do you know what he was being? Man.

Period. Just man. Man as you and I were created to be.

Man as you and I are not because of sin. And this is God's controversy. There is no difference.

All have sinned and come short of what? Heaven? No. His glory. Man created in God's image is no longer giving a valid representation of God's character.

And by what we do and say in our 24 hours a day, we're telling lies about God. And that's what God calls sin. There was only one person who ever walked this earth to the Father's holy and complete and total satisfaction, in whom there was no sin.

And who was that? The incarnate worst. And then he said, Father, you know why I've come? In the perfection of my humanity, demonstrating man as we, Father, intended man to be, that you might take their sin and lay it on me. The cunning are curseful, for cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

He laid down his life, a ransom for men. He suffered the just for the unjust. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and the cost of our peace with God was laid upon him.

Manners, horrors, what a name for the Son of God who came. Ruined sinners to reclaim. That's why if you're not prepared to admit yourself to be one of the ruined sinners, you'll never know Jesus as your Savior.

And you'll never see God. Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah.

What a Savior. Rock of ages. Cleft for me.

Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy riven side which flows be a sin that double-cures. Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

That's gospel. As it redeems a guilty sinner and reconciles that guilty sinner to a holy God. To what end? That as we turn to Christ and say, thank you, I'm one of the sinners you died to save, we might be redeemed.

And that decision to turn to Christ and receive him as Redeemer is called in the Bible, conversion. That's why Jesus said, except a man become humbly like a little child and be converted, he cannot, he will not enter the kingdom of heaven. But the moment you convert and turn to God and plead the name of Jesus, God for Jesus' sake receives you, redeems that redemption.

But the moment you're redeemed, what happens? How alone can God demonstrate to you and to me that sin that drove the Holy Spirit out has been blotted out like a thick cloud, remembered no more for his dear name's sake, cast away as far as the east is from there west, and buried in the depths of the sea. How can God demonstrate that that sin has been forgiven that forfeited the Holy Spirit? Only by renewing, restoring the Holy Spirit. So here's the redemptive act, but this is the regenerated purpose, that the Holy Spirit might be restored to the human spirit, that Jesus Christ might come back into your heart and mind, Christ in the Christian, who by his Holy Spirit put God back into the man.

Oil in the lamp, gas in the car, God in the man, Christ in your heart, your only hope. As you allow him now from the human spirit once more to reinvade your human soul, capture your will, govern your behavior, and reproduce the likeness of your Creator. And that salvation, consummated in the day that Jesus comes and we see him, and seeing him we are like him.

Back in Genesis 1, perfect man again, cleansed in his blood, indwelt by his spirit, sharing his life. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, not that we might grieve God for the 40 years we have left on earth, eating manna, never, never, ever satisfied, always hungry. No, that as we got out by his breath, so we might let in all the fullness of God in the power of his resurrection.

Sharing day by day the glorious fact that the Lord Jesus is alive, not just there in heaven, but here in me, so that he ceases to be the object of my activity, he becomes the origin of his activity. I had a letter from a medical doctor when I was in California, just after I'd spoken at a series of meetings in Phoenix, Arizona. He said, thank you for the three addresses that I was able to attend.

He said, I have been a redeemed sinner, acted in my church for 20 years, but you're the first man that ever told me that Jesus Christ actually has a role to play in the Christian life. Do you get that? Redeemed, converted, born again, yes. His name in the Lamb's book of life, yes.

Serving, teaching a Bible class, yes. Serving on this committee and that within his evangelical constituency, yes. But Jesus Christ, so far as he was concerned then for 20 years, had done his thing 2,000 years ago.

When he died upon the cross, went to heaven, as was now dismissed, until he finally got to heaven, then Jesus Christ comes into action again. But in the meantime for 20 years, Christ up there had simply been the object of his activity down here, on his up there behalf. And he never realized that the only purpose which the Lord Jesus actually died for him, was to come and give himself to him, live his life in him, share that life with him, and communicate that life to him.

Not the object up there of his activity down here, but the origin down here of his activity down here, or up there. For whether we wake, or whether we sleep, in the body or out of it, we're to live together with him. That's Canaan.

So I hope you're not going to settle for the wilderness, with manna for breakfast, and manna for lunch, and manna for dinner, and manna for supper, seven days a week, all the days of your life, going round and round in the wilderness, sitting on every cactus bush that you can find, until finally at last you plunge into the murky waters of Jordan and hope to wake up in heaven. No, having got out on the basis of his redemptive death, let go in, in all the fullness and power of his indwelling resurrection life. For to me, to live, to be alive, not one day when I'm dead, but right here and now on earth in this body, to me, to be alive, is Christ.

Christ himself. He doesn't give me strength, he is my strength. He doesn't give me victory, he is my victory.

He doesn't give me wisdom, he is my wisdom. He doesn't give me joy, I share his joy. And the sky is the limit.

Every horizon beckons me, heavy with blessings, golden with prospects. All I've got to do in every attitude that I adopt in every situation, which every new step takes me, is to admit, I can't. God never said I could.

But he can, and he will, if I let him. And that's something. From that moment on, there is no possible explanation for your life as a Christian, but Jesus Christ himself, and you have discovered the secret of living miraculously.

Now let's pray. Thank you, dear Lord, again for such a wonderful, so great salvation. Thank you we're not just doing a patched-up repair job, but that's cleansing us from our sins, allowing us, though we never deserved it, to taste the sweetness of forgiveness.

You've come to take up residence within this common clay of our humanity, only that you might take over and be in us that moral competence that we never ever had in your absence. Thank you for the Holy Spirit, to whom we gladly now offer our humanity to you, as once through that same Holy Spirit, once then, you offered your humanity to the Father, that is who sent you, so now you may send us in all the power, dynamic of deity, what a life, God's life, your life, to time and to eternity. Amen.

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