

Born, Yet Not Begotten

by Major Ian Thomas

The Lord Jesus Christ is our life, and his death is the principle of life out of death, giving us the power to reproduce his life and become partakers of the divine nature.

Duration: 1:10:30

Scripture: John 6:53, John 7:38-39, John 14:19, Acts 13:30-32, Romans 1:4, Romans 10:4, Ephesians 2:1-5, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 5:8-9, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Salvation", "Divine Life", "Transformation in Christ"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the profound truth that Jesus Christ is not only our Redeemer but also our life, highlighting the necessity of being born again to receive divine life through the Holy Spirit. He explains that while Jesus lived a sinless life, it was His death and resurrection that allowed believers to partake in that same life, transforming them from mere existence to true spiritual vitality. Thomas stresses that being a Christian involves a continuous process of faith and dependence on Christ, leading to a life that reflects His character and power. He warns against living a nominal Christian life, which lacks the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, and encourages believers to allow Christ's life to manifest through them. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of what it means to be both born and begotten in Christ, urging believers to live out their faith in a way that is only explicable through Jesus.

Transcript

Glad to add my welcome to you tonight, glad to see you. Many of you have been here faithfully night by night and others morning by morning. Some of you may have joined us for the first time tonight.

And our concern throughout this week has been to focus our attention upon the person of the Lord Jesus as the one who is not only our Redeemer because of what he did 1900 years ago when he died for what we've done, but who is our life because he rose again from the dead to indwell us by his Holy Spirit and take the place of what we are. So he died for what we've done and he takes the place of what we are. To me to live is Christ.

That's why the Lord Jesus said in John 14, because I live, and he was speaking of his resurrection, because I live, you will live also. You will live by virtue of the fact that I live. In other words, you'll have a quality of life that you've never had before.

It will be God imparted life, divine life. And that is why, in order that we may understand more fully the content of our faith, what it really means to be a Christian, we have of necessity had to focus our attention upon the one who is our life. I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life.

We expect God to take, we expect people to take God seriously when the Lord Jesus says I am the way, and we should expect folk, and we should expect ourselves to take him seriously in the same way when he says I am the life. But as I trust him to be the way, for me a guilty sinner back to a holy God, so I learn to trust him for what he claims to be, my life. He that hath the Son hath life.

He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. And we saw yesterday, out of the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, that the Lord Jesus, in emphasizing that apart from coming to him and believing on him, we don't have that quality of life that he imparts to forgiven sinners. If you will remember the fifty-third verse of the sixth chapter of John, verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, come to him, and drink his blood, believe on him, you have no life in you.

You haven't begun to live, you're just existing. You're subhuman. You're physically alive, you're soulishly active, but you're spiritually dead.

Destitute of that content for which God created you. You don't have life in you. You must be born again.

Having been born the first time of the flesh to receive animal life, you have to be born the second time of the Spirit to receive divine life, by the exceeding great and precious promises, thereby becoming partaker of the divine nature. But we saw last night that the Lord Jesus didn't put a period there. He wasn't satisfied that we might have life.

He went on to explain the implications of having life, what it was going to involve for you and for me. That the crisis of regeneration would only precipitate the process of sanctification. That the act of faith by which we are redeemed through his death precipitates the attitude of faith by which we are saved by his life.

And that to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as an act is to precipitate believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as a process. These things write we unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life because you have believed, and that you may go on believing. Live in the good of that which has become yours because you have believed.

And you will only live in the good of what is yours because you have believed insofar as you go on believing. So believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is more than just making a decision, more than just registering your conversion. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the process of a lifetime on into eternity.

And when we see him face to face we shall go on believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, in other words, the reestablishment of man in his true relationship to God, a faith-love relationship, a love relationship freely entered into that is constantly declared by an attitude of dependence, believing. And that's going to be the work of God while we're here on earth.

For in answer to the question, what shall we men do that we men might do the works of God, the Lord Jesus said this is the work of God, and by this definition you'll know the answer to your question. This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he has sent. In other words, you recognize that you have to take every step in an attitude of dependence upon the one who has come to inhabit your redeemed humanity and your dependence upon him, your attitude of faith will release his divine life.

Then you'll see the work of God. You'll see things happen that are only explicable in terms of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what the Lord Jesus promised.

John 7, 38 and 39, he that believeth on me, not just has believed, no, he that believeth on me, the present continuous tense, he that goes on believing on me, out of his innermost being shall flow a process, riveth of living water. But this spake he of the Holy Spirit, divine activity, clothed with redeemed humanity, this spake he of the Holy Spirit, whom they that believe on him should receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The restoration of divine life, the restoration of our divine content, in the person of the Holy Ghost could only be achieved by the accomplishment of his decease at Calvary. The finished work, whereby through his shed blood we would be reconciled to God and he being raised from the dead and glorified in his father's right hand, the father would implement the promise that he, the Lord Jesus, gave to his disciples that the comforter should come. So that the spirit whom they had recognized with them in his person might thereafter be as from Pentecost in them.

Do you remember the promise? John 14, verily, verily, verse 12, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do for this good reason. I go to my father. Verse 16, and I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever.

I will pray the father, and he shall, future, give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever. I'm with you for a little while, but he's going to be with you forever. Even the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.

That constitutes the world. The world is that mass of humanity uninhabited by God. That's the world.

And that mass of humanity uninhabited by God is uninhabited because sin isn't forgiven. You pass out of the world, translated out of the power of darkness, the world into the kingdom of God's dear Son, the moment you claim forgiveness through the shed blood of Christ. The moment you claim forgiveness through the shed blood of Christ, on the grounds of forgiveness, the Holy Spirit is restored to you, become inhabited by God, and thereby you're translated out to the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but you know him, he says, he, the Spirit of Truth, dwelleth with you because I have presented my body through the eternal Spirit to my father without spot. So you know that he has been with you. For he, the eternal Spirit, through whom I have presented my body to the Father, is the one who has displayed the glory of my father, so that when you have seen me, you have seen the Father.

When you've heard me speak, you've heard my father speak. When you've watched me do, you've seen my father do. For my father who dwells within me, through the eternal Spirit, doeth the works.

He dwelleth with you. He shall be in you. The one who has been dwelling with you is going to be in you.

Chapter 16, verse 4, these things have I told you, that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me.

And none of you asketh me whither goest thou, but because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart, as though I came for any other purpose but for this. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, my other self will not come unto you.

But if I depart, I will send him unto you. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Sinful humanity could only be re-inhabited by God, when sinful humanity became redeemed humanity.

So the Lord Jesus Christ says, I must go away. If I don't go away, the Comforter never can come. Because unless I go away the way appointed, unless I accomplish my death at Jerusalem, he can never come and inhabit you, redeemed sinners, as he has already been inhabiting me, the sinless incarnate Word of God.

In other words, if I may repeat this again, the life he lived, in his sinlessness, qualified him for the death he died, that the death he died, in its atoning efficacy, might qualify you and me to become the recipients of the life he lived. That's the whole purpose of Christ coming into the world. Not just that you might get to heaven, but that your, your redeemed humanity might become re-inhabited by God, the temple of the living God.

So the Holy Spirit might come back into your human spirit, and from your human spirit, as we saw last evening, he might invade your human personality, recapture your mind, and your emotions, and your will, for the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. So that the Lord Jesus may live his life again on earth, in you, and through you, today. John's Gospel, chapter 12, and verse 23, And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.

The hour is come. But didn't the Lord Jesus Christ live for 33 years on earth? What then was the significance of this hour, that he should call it the hour? The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. This is not the first time that the hour is mentioned.

If you look in the 7th chapter of John, and the 30th verse, Then they sought to take him, but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. But was the one hour in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ that had greater significance than any other hour? Chapter 8, and verse 20, These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple, And no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come. Nobody could touch him, because he was living his life according to program, according to a divine schedule.

His hour had not come. In the 17th chapter, and the first verse, John 17, verse 1, These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee.

What was the hour for the Lord Jesus Christ? The hour without which he would have lived, to live in vain. Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it. He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

This is the hour without which the Lord Jesus would have been born and would have lived for 33 years on earth in sinlessness, in vain. When the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth, we discovered the other night, that his whole life was synonymous with that righteousness that the Lord demands. Romans 10 and 4, he was the end of the lawful righteousness.

He satisfied every demand of the Lord. In him there was no sin. And even if Jesus Christ had not been God, which he was, even if he had not been the Creator, which he was, even if he had not been in the beginning, as man, he would have had a perfect right to step right out of time into eternity, straight from heaven, straight from earth to heaven, on the basis of the law.

Oh, yes. In his own right as man, Jesus Christ would have had the right to go to heaven, even if he hadn't been God. Because the only thing that keeps man from heaven is sin.

The only thing that keeps man from the presence of a holy God is sin. And in him there was no sin. And Jesus Christ would have had the right as man to go straight from earth to heaven.

At the end of 33 years, he might have said to his father, Father, I'm coming home, straight home. And supposing he had done so, without the cross, would his father have received him? Oh, yes. Before Pontius Pilate, the Lord Jesus said, one word from me and my father would send ten legions of angels.

You say you have power to slay me, you have power to crucify me, or you have power to release me, said Jesus Christ, you have no power. And if I gave my father one word, that was no idle boast on the part of Jesus Christ. He meant every word of what he said.

He never said words he didn't mean. And if the Lord Jesus Christ had said the word to his father, and his father had sent the ten legions of angels, and he had been received straight away from earth to heaven, without submitting to the cross, he would have been received by the father, for what he was, perfect God and perfect man. And he would have had the eternal right to remain with the glory, and enjoy that glory with the father that he had had before ever the world was.

But he would have remained alone, eternally alone. For the life he lived on earth, thirty-three years, being the complete fulfillment of the righteousness demanded by the law, could only have condemned you and condemned me as the law condemns you and the law condemns me. The life he lived for thirty-three years on earth could never have got you or me to heaven, could never have atoned for our sin.

It could only have mocked us for our moral depravity and our spiritual destitution. Reading from the Amplified New Testament in John's Gospel, chapter 12 and verse 23, back to the passage that we have just been considering. John 12, 23, and Jesus answered them, the time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified and exalted.

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, I want you to listen to this particularly carefully, it remains, it remains just one grain, but it remains, never becomes more, but lives, goes on living, by itself, alone. That's a grain of wheat. If it doesn't go into the ground and die, it remains, one grain, never becomes more, it lives, and goes on living, by itself, alone.

That is why the Lord Jesus spoke of the hour, without which he would have been born to live in vain. He might just as well have stayed in heaven as come down to earth, to live a life like that and go straight back to heaven. He could have been as sinless in heaven as he was sinless on earth, but he came to live that kind of life on earth that by virtue, that you and I might become the recipients of the life he lived.

That was the hour for which he was born. Because you see, in his utter sinlessness, God added to him your sinfulness. God made him to be sin for us whom you know sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

What the law could not do through the weakness of our flesh, what it could do through the sinlessness of Christ, what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Had the Lord Jesus himself sinned, he could only have incurred himself his own penalty. But because of the life he lived in sinlessness, he was qualified to die for you and for me, to take our place vicariously, and there was imputed to him your guilt and mine.

And God executed in his person our sin. So that when you and I give ourselves to Christ, we give ourselves to him that being identified with him in God's economy, we might be executed with him and buried. Then God raised him from the dead.

That you and I might become the recipients of the very life he lived. So that the Holy Spirit, who occupied his whole yielded humanity as he was a man on earth, might come and occupy our humanity now redeemed through the death he died. That qualifies us to be re-inhabited by the one who inhabited him, the Eternal Spirit.

So that the very life that he possessed on earth, becomes your life and mine. That's regeneration. That's new birth.

So the very life that a forgiven sinner receives, the very instant that he's born again, the very instant that he's redeemed, that life is the identical life that Jesus Christ lived 1900 years ago. That's the sublime genius of our salvation. That's why God never expects you or me to be made perfect in the flesh.

That's why God abhors every attempt on your part or mine to re-educate an old, wicked, fallen nature that God executed and sentenced to death and carried out that sentence in the person of his son 1900 years ago. It grieves God. It offends God.

It's in defiance of God's wisdom and God's whole redemptive plan and purpose, when you and I try to re-educate a fallen nature to live like Christ, when God says, I have sentenced that old, wicked nature of yours to death, and I have executed in the person of my sinless son, that you, by virtue of his death, on your behalf. That's why the Lord Jesus Christ said, the hour has come, for which I was born and for which I have lived, that by my death taking you into death, you might become the recipients of what I am. Life, by the exceeding great and precious promises, becoming partakers of the divine nature.

That's the whole principle of life out of death. Here's a grain of wheat. It has life.

However, will that life that is contained within that grain of wheat ever become another grain of wheat? However, will that life ever be reproduced by copying it? Did you ever produce another grain of wheat by copying one grain of wheat? Was ever a harvest weeded by copying grains of wheat? Never. Every harvest that is reaped is harvested from a graveyard. I could copy a grain of wheat a thousand times, and plant a thousand copies that I have made, and every copy will be sterile, because it does not contain the life of the original grain.

And that is what the Lord Jesus meant in John 6 when he said, until you have come to me and believed on me, you do not have any life in you. You can copy me, you can emulate my example. But you won't have

life.

You will be a sterile copy, never capable of growth and never capable of reproduction. You will be dead. Now that's nominal Christianity.

Just a copy of the real thing. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die and abides alone. It remains just one grain.

Never becomes more. But lives by itself, alone. When they opened Tutankhamen's tomb, and other of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs, they found corn and wheat that had been placed in the tombs in their superstition, imagining that they were providing food for the late deceased.

It had been there in the tomb for thousands of years. And yet the amazing thing is this, when they took those grains of wheat out of the tombs where they had been buried for thousands of years, and planted them in the earth, the grains of wheat which had remained alone, all those thousands of years, in the darkness, sprouted, grew and reproduced. The life germ in a grain of wheat is the nearest thing to eternal life that you can imagine.

But it will remain alone. Never be more than one grain. It will live by itself until it dies.

Until it relinquishes what it is, it can never become what it was intended to be. And if the Lord Jesus Christ had not relinquished himself into death, he would have remained, he would have lived, he could have gone straight back to heaven, he would have been welcomed by the Father, he would have had the glory with the Father that he had before the world was, but he would have lived by himself, alone. He would never have been called in the Bible the first fruits of many brethren.

He would never have been described in the Bible as the first begotten from the dead. He would have been born, he would have lived, gone straight to heaven, eternally lonely. And he would have left you, and he would have left me on earth, and the whole fallen race of the fallen seed of Adam, dead in trespasses and sins.

Maybe hopelessly trying to copy, hopelessly trying to emulate the matchless life of the perfect example that was exhibited 1,900 years ago, but a message only of frustration and despair would be the invitation to fallen unregenerate men to live the kind of life he lived 1,900 years ago. For what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, his life could not do through the weakness of the flesh, unless that life somehow could be reproduced, imparted to you and to me. And that could only be possible by virtue of the fact that he died the death he did.

Make sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Our sin was imputed to him that his life might be imparted to us. That's the gospel.

Acts chapter 30 and verse 28. And though they found no cause of death in him, for you see he was sinless, that was the life he lived, which qualified him for the death he died. Yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

Verse 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, in the volume of the book, that's why he came, they took him down from the tree, and they laid him in a sepulchre. And the perfect sinless grain of wheat, the incarnate word, whose seed remained within him, who did not and who could not sin, was buried.

He relinquished what he was, but God raised him from the dead and made him what he was intended to be, your redeemer and mine. Keeping your finger in Acts 13, turn with me to the epistle to the Hebrews. Verse 8 of chapter 5. Hebrews 5, verse 8. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience.

As we discovered last night, as the Son incarnate humanity, the Son can do nothing by himself. I can only take every step in an attitude as man of total dependence upon my Father. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey.

How did he become the author of eternal salvation? By the obedience that led him to Calvary, where he relinquished what he was, that he might be the author of our eternal salvation. Had he never relinquished, he could never have become. He, being made perfect, became perfect in vocation, as he was already perfect in his person.

And his vocation was to lay down his life a ransom for many. And by his obedience to his vocation, he became what he could never have become if he had not been prepared to relinquish what he was. He was made sin, and he relinquished his sinlessness to be made sin.

He relinquished his right to step straight from earth to heaven, to go by way of the cross, that he might become what he was intended to be. This was his hour, without which he would have been born to live for thirty-three years in vain, to be eternally lonely. Back to Acts 30, verse 30.

But God raised him from the dead. He was raised by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, whom he relinquished when he was made sin, was the one by whom we are told, in Peter's epistle, he was quickened.

1 Peter, chapter 3, and verse 18. 1 Peter 3.18, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins the just, relinquishing his justness for the unjust, being identified with all man's sin, that he might bring us to God, that he might become what he was intended to be, the author of our eternal salvation. Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened, how? By the Spirit.

God raised him from the dead. Acts 13, verse 32. Acts 13, 32.

And 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. There were certain promises made to the fathers in the Old Testament in the volume of the book, which he came to fulfill, presenting his body to the father through the eternal spirit without spot. There were certain promises made to the fathers that were fulfilled when God raised up Jesus again from the dead.

Now this may be a surprise to you. This may be an unusual interpretation, but it isn't mine, it is the interpretation of the Holy Spirit, given to you here in the record, the 13th of Acts. It came as a surprise to me, because I, without reference to the interpretation given by the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, had interpreted my own way, the way that seemed to be most logical, without thinking.

God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he has raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Did you ever read the second psalm? And when you read the second psalm, and you read, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee, what day did you think of, automatically, instinctively? Christmas day? I did. This day have I begotten thee, and I thought of Christmas day.

Bethlehem. Of course, that was the day when Jesus Christ, God's son, was begotten. But was it? According to this scripture? 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.

He's risen, as it is also written in the second psalm, thou art my son, this day, the day that God. The Lord Jesus was begotten from the dead. And the day he was begotten was the day God raised him from the dead.

And don't you see that if the Lord Jesus had only been born in Bethlehem, he would have been the perfect grain of wheat, remaining just one grain, never more than one. He would have lived by himself forever. Born never to be begotten.

Born never to become what he was intended to be. The author of our eternal salvation. That's why the Lord Jesus, again and again, is called the first begotten from the dead.

In the Colossian epistle, chapter 1, verse 18, Colossians 1.18, he is the head of the body, the church who is the beginning. He's the beginning. He was the first perfect grain of wheat.

The beginning. That is where the whole life of the church stems from. Given just one grain of wheat, in the course of the generations of grains of wheat that have relinquished themselves that they might become what they were intended to be, we could have a million grains of wheat, but the life continues.

Isn't that right? And he was the beginning. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God by him. This life was the light of man.

He was the life from the very beginning. But, in Adam's sin, Adam forfeited the life of the one who is the beginning. And the purpose of God in Christ was that we might receive again the life of the beginning.

The Lord Jesus said, I am come that you might have life. I am the life. You had the life until your forefather, Adam, sinned.

But I have come into the world so that you may have life again. The first Adam was a living soul, but he died. The last Adam was a quickening spirit.

One who could raise dead men to life again. Who is the beginning? The firstborn from the dead. That because the sinless grain of wheat that came from heaven, the Word incarnate died identified with man's wickedness, sin, guilt, and shame.

All who put their trust in him as Redeemer, accept his vicarious, substitutionary, atoning death, might become the recipients again of the life he lived, the original grain of wheat. And so we could go through the scriptures. If you look in the Revelation, chapter 1 and verse 5, from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth.

In Adam, all men became the heirs of death. In Jesus Christ, the last Adam, all men, if they so will, may become the heirs of life. But don't you see every boy, every girl, every man is redeemed in the blood of Jesus Christ, receives the very same life? The life of the beginning.

The life of Jesus Christ. Ephesians and chapter 2. Better read just a verse or two from the first chapter to get the true context. Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 18.

By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which he has called you, and how rich is his glorious inheritance in the saints, so that you can know and understand what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of his power in and for us, who believe as demonstrated in the working of God. Paul says, if you want to know what is the immeasurable, verse 22, he has put all things under his feet, Jesus Christ. Has appointed him the universal and supreme head of the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all, for in that body, the church, the fellowship of forgiven sinners, lives the full measure of him who makes everything complete and who fills everything everywhere with himself.

Isn't that tremendous? His body, the fullness of him who fills all in all, for in that body, the church of Jesus Christ, the invisible true church of Jesus Christ, that comprehends every boy, girl, man, and reconciled to God, in that body lives the full measure of him by the process of life out of death, who fills everything everywhere with himself. Chapter 2, verse 1, and you, Christians in Ephesus, and you, Christians in Lubbock, he made alive, who were dead by trespasses and sins, verse 4, but God, so which is he in his mercy, because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which he loved us, even when we were dead by our own shortcomings and trespasses, he, God, made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ. He gave us the very life of Christ himself, the same new life with which he quickened him.

So the Lord Jesus, the perfect grain of wheat, taken down from the cross, was buried in the ground. God raised him from the dead. And there was fulfilled the wonderful promise, this day have I begotten you.

Obedient unto death, he became the author of our eternal salvation. And the first ear of corn was reaped. It was a very fat, healthy ear of corn that was reaped of that first sinless grain that was laid at Calvary into the tomb.

For on the day of Pentecost, we are told, some 120 men and women waited at Christ's command to receive the firstfruits of his death and resurrection. And on the day of Pentecost, their redeemed humanity was suddenly re-inhabited by the same spirit by whom he was raised from the dead. And the life of the Lord Jesus Christ that he had lived on earth in his own humanity was imparted by the Holy Spirit to them.

And the life of the original grain was now reproduced. And the life of Peter and James and John and the other apostles waiting at Christ's command to be endued with power, life from on high, the lives they lived were not imitations according to a certain mold that was projected upon them. The lives they lived on earth were the life of Jesus Christ.

The very same life of Jesus Christ. Now clothed with their humanity. For the life he lived had been reproduced in them.

They became partakers of his divine nature. Life had sprung out of death. And the life that had been imparted to them by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was in its turn imparted to grow and to reproduce.

And on that very same afternoon the life of the Lord Jesus clothed now with the humanity of 120 men and women redeemed in his blood and re-inhabited received the Holy Spirit. And the life that the 3,000 others received was identical with the life that was lived by the original perfect grain of wheat. And all down the centuries life has sprung out of death.

Until you and I today here in Lubbock if we are redeemed in the blood of Christ are the possessors of the same life of the original grain of wheat, the Lord Jesus. So we may say to me to live is Christ. What then is the object of the preaching of the truth? For the believer.

The object, of course, of the preaching of the truth to the unbeliever is that they might be convicted of the fact that they're dead. Conviction of sin. And in repentance toward God they may put their faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer and obtain the Holy Ghost.

This is the spiritual ministry that we might obtain and be governed by the Holy Ghost. So the first ministry of the gospel is that unregenerate, unconverted, unforgiven sinners might obtain. That's the first object of preaching truth.

That men might obtain what by nature they don't have. Life. But what's the full measure of the purpose of the preaching of the gospel? Not only that men and women and boys and girls might obtain, but that they might be governed by the Holy Ghost.

Tell me this. How much good in terms of reproduction is the grain of wheat that has never submitted itself to death that it might be governed by the life within? How much jurisdiction, how much sovereignty how much control does the life germ within a grain of wheat exercise over that grain of wheat until the grain of wheat dies? None. For over a thousand, for three, four thousand years there were grains of wheat in the Pharaoh's tomb.

And yet the life germ for all those thousands of years didn't make the slightest difference to the behavior or conduct of those grains of wheat. The hidden life germ exercised absolutely no jurisdiction, had absolutely no control over the shape of things to come. Not for thousands of years.

And then suddenly those tombs were opened up, the grains of wheat were put into the ground, they died and suddenly fashioned the shape of things to come. See the point? You're born again. That means you've been born of the Spirit.

That's what you are. Have you ever become what God intended you to be? Have you ever been begotten? The Lord Jesus could have been born without ever having been begotten. If he had chosen never to die but just go straight to heaven.

Don't you see how tragically possible it is for you to be born of the Holy Spirit and have an imputed righteousness that will make you fit for heaven and gives you the right by virtue of the righteousness with which you have now been imputed, the righteousness with which you now are clothed, you have the right as a born again redeemed sinner to go straight to heaven and live forever alone. If as the recipient of the life of Jesus Christ you are never prepared to die to yourself, you'll get to heaven. If you've claimed cleansing in the blood of Christ, you'll get to heaven.

You don't deserve it, but you'll get to heaven. That's why he died. And because your sin is forgiven and you're fit for heaven by the imputed righteousness of Christ, there has been imparted to you the life of Christ.

But if you want to, you can live for 33 years on earth with the life of Christ imparted, never to be revealed. That life imparted to you never allowed to exercise any jurisdiction, never allowed to shape the things to come, never allowed to play any role in your life, never allowed to exercise jurisdiction or sovereignty, and you will get to heaven alive, remaining just one to live by yourself eternally alone. For if you hold on to

what you are as a forgiven sinner, you will never become what God intended you to be.

You will never be declared to the world for what you are. How many believe that Jesus Christ really was God's son? There were some who said they believed, like the apostles and the disciples, but when he died, what then? They all ran away. And they said, we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel.

We were mistaken. Even after 33 years of sinlessness and perfect ministry, nobody convinced. Not even Peter, James, and John.

So that when the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead according to program, stood in the midst and showed them his hands and his feet and said, be not afraid, it is I myself. Handle me and see, they all thought they'd seen a ghost. When was he convincingly declared to be the son of God with power? Romans chapter 1, verse 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated under the gospel of God, which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures concerning his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Get the significance of that, it's so easy to read a verse and you don't quite get what it says. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. That's the thing to remember.

Paul was separated unto the gospel of God. His vocation was to declare the gospel of God, verse 3, concerning God's son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Paul was separated to the proclamation of the good news concerning God's son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh.

When was he made of the seed of David, according to the flesh? Bethlehem. That is when he was born. Verse 4. And declared to be the son of God with power, according to the Holy Spirit, by the resurrection from the dead.

What happened on the day he was resurrected from the dead? He was begotten. Was he declared to be the son of God with power? Oh, no. He was declared to be the son of God with power on the day that he was begotten from the dead.

And when risen from the dead, he stood in the midst of his disciples and showed them his hands and his feet, the hallmarks of his saviourhood, and said, Handle me and see. It says that the gloom was banished. Not until he was raised from the dead.

How long have you been born? Into the family of heaven. How convincing to the world around you has your claim to sonship been? How convincing amongst your friends? How convincing amongst your business associates? How convincing amongst your own family? How convincing amongst your fellow students? How convincing in the school classroom has your claim been to sonship? You have given testimony. You've given witness.

I'm born again. I'm a son of God. I'm a daughter of God.

I'm a I tell you this, that your claim to sonship will never be declared with convincing power until you by faith in you and through you until you have allowed the Holy Spirit who has come to indwell your human Jesus Christ. Then at last your testimony will be convincing. When what you are and what you do is

explicable only in terms of Jesus then your sonship will be declared with power.

Then you will begin to live supernaturally. A life that isn't yours. Then you will be legitimately numbered amongst those who by a moral and spiritual resurrection have been lifted out from among the dead even while still in the body.

And your friends and your family and your school chums and your fellow students will scratch their head and your business associates and they say I don't know really what that chap is talking about but one thing I know is this there's no explanation for that fellow's life, there's no explanation for that boy's life, that woman's life, that girl's life but Jesus Christ. Then your sonship will have been declared with power. Born and begotten.

You're a Christian. Well thank God for that you've been born. Have you ever been begotten? Is the resurrection life of Jesus Christ manifestly obvious to the world around you? To you unconsciously declaring your sonship, the life you live being a million times more compelling than the word you speak because what you are in terms of human character is only explicable to the world around you in terms of Jesus Christ.

That is normal Christianity. That is what it means to be a healthy member of the body of Christ that is filled with the full measure of himself who fills everything everywhere and that is why he died and rose again. That was his and to live anything less than a life like that is to cheat Jesus Christ of that for which he was born, lived and died and rose again.

Tomorrow evening we're going to pick up the threads from there and I suggest that in anticipation you take the trouble to read the first dozen verses say of the 55th chapter of Isaiah Isaiah 55 and in our closing message tomorrow night after a simple demonstration that I shall give you in terms of pictures, these aren't pretty pictures, they're not designed to entertain you they may even be some of the pictures I showed you last year because I've only brought a very small selection as I'm travelling rather a long way and to save weight but after a simple illustration of the principle in terms of these sequences that I shall show you the latter part of the meeting we shall explore what really happens when a grain of wheat grows into the ground and dies in other words when a Christian yields to the demands of discipleship the sheer thrill of it the sheer privilege of it the sheer inevitability of blessing inherent in it it should send us away hilariously happy more than conquerors through him that loved us to be normal Christians instead of subnormal now let's bow our heads in prayer Lord Jesus we thank thee for thy obedience unto death we thank thee for thy willingness to relinquish that thou mightest become just what we need the author of our eternal salvation and how we bless thee tonight that we possess thy life that thou art for us the beginning the first begotten amongst many brethren how we thank that we may be numbered tonight amongst the many brethren of whom thou art the first begotten who share the life with which thou thyself was raised from the dead we pray that we may be declared in our sonship with power by the Holy Ghost and for thy name's sake Amen

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