

# Calculated to Revolutionize

by Major Ian Thomas

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*The Christian life is not about following rules, but about experiencing God's life within us through faith in Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 59:48

**Scripture:** John 10:10, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:20, Colossians 1:27

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, Major Ian Thomas shares his experience of meeting a pastor who was feeling defeated and useless in his role. They discuss the exciting truth that Jesus Christ is not only alive, but also lives in every believer through the Holy Spirit. Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the importance of sharing in the life of Christ 24/7 and experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in every situation. He also mentions his joy in witnessing the transformation of a church in Milwaukee, where 85% of the congregation had been converted in the last 18 months.

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## Transcript

Major Ian Thomas, North Fort Worth Baptist Church, November 7, 1966, Noon Pastors Conference, Calculated to Revolutionize, 60 minutes. I certainly appreciate the gracious words of welcome and I'm both grateful and excited. I'm grateful for the opportunity of being with you at this lunch hour and to share with you the fellowship of our Lord Jesus.

I'm grateful for the opportunity that is mine this week to share with the wonderful people of this church some of the thrilling treasures that are ours as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit through the word of God that we have in our Lord Jesus. I'm grateful for the privilege that is mine now to talk to you and as a fellow minister of the gospel simply to share with you some of the good things that God in his goodness has been making known. But I'm excited.

I'm excited because Jesus Christ is alive. I wasn't always excited about that even though I was a Christian. I wasn't always excited about it even though I knew it was true and believed it and could provide chapter and verse to substantiate the glorious fact of his resurrection.

But it didn't excite me. I didn't become excited about the fact that Jesus Christ was alive until I discovered that he was alive in me. That's what made it exciting.

It was for seven years that I existed as a Christian before I began really to enjoy the Christian life having for the first time seven years after my conversion discovered what it really meant to be a Christian. One of my colleagues, Stuart Briscoe, who may be known to one or two of you if you were in the Southland Keswick Convention I believe a year ago, 18 months ago, speaking to some of our teenager youngsters not too long ago was saying that he had made three major discoveries in the Christian life. In the first instance when he was converted he thought the Christian life was easy and found he was wrong.

Then he said he thought the Christian life was difficult and found that he was wrong again. And the third discovery that he made was that the Christian life is impossible. And it wasn't until, you see, he had discovered that the Christian life was impossible that he became excited about the fact that Jesus Christ was alive.

It isn't until you and I have got to the place in our Christian experience where we've thrown in the sponge and at last admitted what God's trying to tell us from Genesis to the Revelation that the Christian life is a sheer impossibility to you and to me apart from Jesus Christ himself. Not till then does the fact that he's alive risen from the dead really become relevant to us in our day-to-day living. And ever since I made that discovery at the age of 19 which was calculated, as many of you too have discovered, completely to revolutionize one's life as a Christian, life has been the sheer adventure that God, I believe, always intended the Christian life to be.

That's why I'm happy this lunch hour to be sharing with you some of these things. And I don't want, as it were, to preach to you because many of you have many, many years of rich experience in the service of the Lord Jesus. I'm not a pastor and I wouldn't for one moment presume to try to teach you how to be a pastor because I've never been a pastor.

All I want to do is just to share with you some of the good things that are our common heritage in the person of the Lord Jesus who died for us and who rose again from the dead to live in us. Some years ago, when I was invited to speak in a church in Rochester, Minnesota, the pastor of the church, whom I'd never met, was given the opportunity just before I was due to arrive to engage in some additional postgraduate studies, so I never met him. But in his absence, the church officers had invited another young pastor to assume certain responsibilities.

They had a morning broadcast, a quarter of an hour each morning, at the threshold of the day. And they kindly invited me to participate in this program and lead it for the week that I was there. And this was just after this young pastor had been invited to assume other responsibilities and having been told that these would be numbered amongst his responsibilities, somewhat to his dismay, he discovered that all at once they had handed these responsibilities over to me.

And this irked him a wee bit. Now, what do they mean? Am I or am I not going to do this thing? You know how easily you can get a little bit sort of ruffled. Anyway, he was courteous and correct.

He took me to the studio and introduced me to the manager, showed me where the records were, and intended to lead me to it. But he decided to sit it through. And afterwards, over a cup of coffee, he suddenly blurted out what I'd heard on the lips, alas, of many another.

He said, I'm sick and tired of being a useless, defeated pastor. Now, he'd only been a pastor for five years. This was only his second charge.

But already he was flat in his faith. And over that cup of coffee, we began to talk about the exciting news that Jesus Christ was not only alive, to which fact he'd always given his mental consent, and theological credence, but to the exciting fact that Jesus Christ was not only alive, but alive in every believer, in the person and power of the Holy Spirit, and that the Christian life involves nothing less than sharing his life on earth, twenty-four hours a day, for every situation, always relentlessly discovering that he's never less than big enough for any situation that can ever arise at any time, in any circumstance. And that's what makes the Christian life so incredibly exciting.

And over that cup of coffee, in those few moments, something happened in his heart. That was eight or ten years ago. But just four or five weeks ago, it was my privilege to conduct a series of meetings in his church, of which he's pastor now on the outskirts of Milwaukee, in Wisconsin.

And that was a thrilling experience, because he took over that pastorate three years ago, just a handful of people, they didn't have enough church building, they met in a school classroom. It was so dead, they were thinking of closing it down, and forgetting it. But three years later, when I was there just four or five weeks ago, it was my joy to be in the midst of a vibrant community of new Christians.

Eighty-five percent of his congregation have been converted in the last eighteen months or two years. It's a small community. There were only about two hundred and eighty in church membership.

Then the process of building another church to seat five hundred, and they anticipate that'll be full within the next one or two years. And they'll all be new Christians. And you know there's something uniquely refreshing about ministering to a bunch of new Christians, who are not weighted down by long evangelical traditions, who haven't got their roots deep in old-time patterns, but Christians who are new Christians because they've been led to Christ by other Christians.

The thrilling thing about that church is that there are not only eighty-five percent new Christians, but probably seventy percent of the eighty-five percent had been led to Christ by other members of the church community. Now, this is what happens, of course, when an individual is led to Jesus Christ, not as the one simply who died for him, but as the one who rose again from the dead to live in. But I want to share this with you.

And I'm sure it must, on many occasions, have been your experience to discover how many soundly converted evangelical Christians there are, who know that their sins are forgiven, who've registered a clear-cut decision to accept Christ as Redeemer, but have never really come to understand the spiritual content of their faith. And the result is they've never been able to do anything but struggle along to conform to those Christian patterns of procedure that have been superimposed upon them by the particular church context in which they have found themselves, which by the accident, as it were, of their new birth they adhere. And I believe that in the preaching of the gospel we need to present the glorious fact that the Lord Jesus not only died for us, that we might be redeemed, but that he rose again from the dead, that in the power of his Holy Spirit he might credit us with nothing less than all that he is in his overwhelming sufficiency for every step that we take and for every situation to which that step takes us.

This is calculated to be revolutionary. You know, there was a time when certain men came to the Lord Jesus and they posed a question, what shall we do that we might work the works of God? That was a sincere question, I believe. Maybe it was legitimate.

But it was a question to which the Lord Jesus Christ didn't give them a direct answer. And I've sort of filled in time hoping that the orchestra would finish its overture so that we can really get down to business. This was the question, what shall we do that we might work the works of God? The Lord Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he has sent.

And that wasn't the kind of answer that was calculated to satisfy their question. This, said the Lord Jesus, is the work of God. Or he might have put it another way in the sense in which he projected it.

This is God at work, that ye believe on him whom God has sent. You see, the work of God is God at work. If it isn't God at work, it isn't the work of God.

And there's much activity that we credit to ourselves as being the work of God, which is nothing more nor less than the work of man on God's behalf. But to be legitimate, all work of God must be God at work. And this, of course, was the point that the Lord Jesus Christ here was making to them.

This is God at work, he said, that you believe on him whom he has sent. But immediately that statement in itself would call for a new definition of believing on Jesus Christ. Supposing I were to say to you in the course of casual conversation about somebody else, is he a believer? What would you understand by my question? Wouldn't you probably understand by my question, is he converted? Has he registered a decision for Jesus Christ? Has he accepted Christ as his saviour? Because, by and large, in our normal connotation of that particular expression, we think of believing on Jesus Christ as a specific act whereby we appropriate, savingly, his redemptive work upon the cross.

But, of course, that definition wouldn't do for this particular context. For the Lord Jesus Christ said, this is the work of God, that you believe on him whom God has sent. That doesn't speak of a crisis.

That doesn't speak of a historical decision that has been registered simply to claim forgiveness. Therefore, we need to understand something more by believing on Jesus Christ than simply that of accepting him as redeemer. And I believe this to be the context and the connotation of believing in the whole of God's worth.

That to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ involves nothing less than the release of God's divine activity in terms of that man's redeemed humanity. And, to me, that is evangelism. To preach, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved involves infinitely more than that that individual should escape the punitive consequence of his guilt and his sin and be reconciled to a holy God.

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to be saved means that, as a reconciled sinner, now at peace with God his maker, his redeemed humanity has become available with vacant possession for none other than Jesus Christ himself that there might be the continuing process of his divine activity now clothed with that individual's humanity. That would be God at work. And this is what the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, was talking about.

It didn't satisfy the Jews because they posed this question out of the pragmatic background of an externalistic religion. This, to them, was mystical. This, to them, was otherworldly.

This, to them, was unrealistic. And the concept of the Lord Jesus himself as God, being God, resident, indwelling, and monopolizing a man's humanity so that he becomes simply the external means whereby Christ, as the indweller, expresses his divine activity to many who are pragmatically inclined, also somewhat mystical and otherworldly and unrealistic. And yet, of course, this is the concept with which the whole Bible is permeated.

Said the Lord Jesus, this is God at work, that you believe on him whom God has sent. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

We need, of course, to understand that verse, the 35th verse of John chapter 6, to understand what the Lord Jesus was to continue to explain to them in the balance of this particular chapter. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, when you stop hungry, when you eat. He that believeth on me shall never thirst, when you stop thirsting, when you drink.

We may understand, therefore, now that the Lord Jesus will use these terms synonymously. When you come and eat, you'll stop hungry. When you believe and drink, you'll stop thirsting.

So that whether he says come and believe, or eat and drink, he'll be saying one and the same thing. Of course, if we don't recognize that fact, and this verse, of course, gives us the key to the exegesis of the balance of the chapter, we shall be confused theologically. We could almost become a Roman Catholic.

To come is to eat, and to eat is to come. To believe is to drink, and to drink is to believe. And, of course, it's a beautiful picture, because it's the faith that appropriates what he is that ultimately applies the life of Christ to the extremities of our being, just as what we drink is that which applies the nourishment that we eat to the extremities of our being.

Having made that introduction, the Lord Jesus then went on to say, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, unless you come and believe, you have no life in you. You're dead. You're totally destitute of that divine content which makes man, man.

Because it's only the life of God within the soul of man that enables a man to function as God created man to function. Because it takes God himself within the man to be the man that God created man to be. Because all human activity that is spiritually legitimate must have its ultimate origin in God himself.

Because if man was created in God's image, it's only because God himself was prepared to be in man the origin of that image, the source of his own activity, the dynamic of his own demands, and the cause of his own effect. This is basic to the doctrine of man's humanity. Unless we're prepared to adhere to the Adamic creed of self-sufficiency and believe the devil's lie that sought to persuade a man that he can be a man without God.

And all that the Lord Jesus Christ is seeking here to teach his disciples is to restore them to that relationship to himself that enables him, Jesus, as God to be God in terms of their humanity. That's why he said to them, unless you eat and drink, unless you come and believe, you have no life in you. That's the evangelistic message.

This is what we preach when we talk to the unregenerate. We say that unless you repent toward God, unless you claim the atoning efficacy of the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ and claim forgiveness before an almighty God on the basis of the blood he shed, you are still dead in your sins, totally destitute of the divine life that God can only re-impart to those who have been reconciled on the basis of the redemptive act of Jesus Christ, historically accomplished when he died and rose again for our justification. This is the evangelistic message.

We don't invite men and women and boys and girls to come to Jesus Christ simply that they might have their sins forgiven. To do that would be to delude them. To do that would be to deceive them.

To do that would be cheating Jesus Christ of that for which his blood was shed. Jesus Christ said, I'm come that you might have life. He didn't say I'm come that you might have forgiveness.

He said that I'm come that you might have life, but you can never have life. You can never have the restored presence of the almighty God within your humanity that makes you a member of his corporate body, that makes your body a habitation of God by his spirit. You cannot have that life until your sins are forgiven.

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see. If you want to know the premise upon which you can be restored to life, this is the premise.

The wounds in my hands and feet. That's true, said Jesus, unless you have come in repentance toward God and you have put your faith deliberately and specifically in me. You have no life in you.

You're destitute. You're bankrupt. You're dead.

You're alienated from the life of God and you're in the condition in which you were born, dead in your sins. Is that true? But is that gospel? Now that's the introduction to the gospel. But from that premise, which is the threshold over which any individual, boy, girl, man or woman must cross, if ever they are to be raised out of a state of lifelessness in which all the fallen seed of a fallen Adam were born in their unregenerate condition, dead in trespasses and sins.

That's just the baby language of the gospel. And the Lord Jesus, of course, now has turned his attention from the Jews who posed the initial question and he's now focusing his attention upon his own closest circle of disciples. And he goes on to say this, he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, the one who comes to me and by faith appropriates all that I am to whom he has come, dwelleth in me and I in him.

In other words, before you have come and believed you're dead, you have no life in you. The life of God hasn't been restored to the soul of man. But says the Lord Jesus, I want you to know this, that the moment a man has come and believed, the moment a man has eaten and has drunk, there has been precipitated in that man's spiritual relationship to God this unique situation.

I am in him and he is in me. Now, what is this relationship? It's the very relationship which the Lord Jesus constantly claimed existed between himself and the Father. Again and again, the Lord Jesus said, the Father is in me and I am in him.

And says the Lord Jesus, when you have come and believed, the relationship that is to exist now between you and me is identically that relationship which exists as between me as a man and my Father in heaven as God. As he is in me and I am in him, so I am in you and you are in me. And of course, it is to precipitate this amazing relationship between the redeemed sinner and the risen indwelling Lord that we preach the gospel.

I wouldn't preach the gospel to get sinners out of hell and into heaven. I rejoice with all the angels in heaven over every sinner who repents and who through the sheer grace of God, through the shed blood of Jesus is acquitted and to whom God no more will impute iniquity. But in the discharge of my responsibilities to the Lord Jesus, I wouldn't preach the gospel simply to that end.

For the purpose of God in sending the Lord Jesus Christ was not simply an escape mechanism. The purpose of God in sending the Lord Jesus Christ into this world to accomplish the redemptive act was that

the regenerated purpose of God might be put into operation. The regenerated purpose of God that restores the life of God to the soul of man so that man as man can be man as God intended man to be in the power of the indwelling life of deity.

I said Jesus am in you and you are in me. And if you want to know, he said, what this is going to involve, I'll tell you. It's in the 57 verse of the same chapter.

He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him as the living father hath sent me and I live literally through the father. So he that eateth me has come and believed she'll live through me, not just come to life through me, but she'll live through me. As the living father hath sent me and I live through the father because I am in him and he is in me.

So he that eateth me shall live through me because he is in me and I am in him. Well, I don't need to underline the sheer importance of this statement. The Lord Jesus declares that as the living father sent him and he lives through the father, so we, the moment we put our trust in him, are to live through him.

Can there be anything more important than that in terms of being the Christian that you've become on the basis of his atoning death? What it means, of course, is this, that until I have discovered how Jesus Christ on earth as a man lived through the father by virtue of the fact that the father was in him and he was in the father, I haven't begun to understand how I, as a redeemed sinner, am now to live on earth through him because he is in me and I'm in him. Isn't that true? In other words, if I want to know how to be a Christian as opposed to becoming a Christian, priority number one is for me to discover how Jesus Christ as a man 1900 years ago lived on earth as a man. And I think one of the areas in which as an evangelical constituency we have been robbing ourselves is in an adequate examination of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

In some ways it's understandable. Such attacks have been made upon the deity of the Lord Jesus that we have been jealous of the doctrine of his eternal deity in utter identity and in co-equality with the father and the Holy Spirit in the dry unity of the Godhead. And it's reasonable that we should have contended for the faith once delivered.

But you know, in our defense of the deity of Jesus Christ we have forgotten that he became a man and we have tended to credit to his humanity a superlative sense in which he was not just man but superman. And to this degree we are robbing ourselves of the know-how of being Christians. Because if there was one thing that the Lord Jesus wanted to demonstrate more than another in the course of his sojourn for 33 years on earth, it was that you and I might know how to be men who have been restored on the basis of the redemptive act to our true humanity by the release of the regenerative purpose of God that enables God once more to be God and behave like God in a man.

Now if I preach a gospel that is weaker than that, I will introduce people to the redemptive act of Christ in such a way that they will claim forgiveness and be made fit for heaven and be left thereafter for the rest of their days on earth the regular and loyal and dedicated members of a church community totally unfit for earth. Because it is the death of Christ that gives you the power to become a Christian, it is only the life of Christ within you that gives you the power to be the Christian that his death has given you the right to become. And this is the part of the gospel in which we have been sadly lacking.

We've preached a weak gospel. Come to Jesus and have your sins forgiven. And then Jesus Christ, the historical Jesus who died historically 1900 years ago to accomplish the vicarious atoning sacrifice that

makes it possible for guilty men to be at peace with God their maker is now relegated beyond the clouds to appear only in eschatological glory one day when we see him in the far distant future or by dint of our physical death when we meet him face to face in his eternal presence.

So that by and large the average evangelical Christian has got a Jesus who was buried and risen from the dead, the Jesus who is the historical redeemer and a Jesus who is an eschatological hope, one who one day we shall see in his presence forever in the place that he's going to prepare for us. But between the Jesus that was historically dying that we might be redeemed and the Jesus that will be whom we shall see vindicated in his deity in the day that every eye will see him and every knee will bow, between the Jesus that was and the Jesus that will be we leave people to live in a spiritual vacuum and seek to conform to certain church practices that make them acceptable within that particular religious society. And the measure of their conformity to the demands that we project upon them as a Christian community by and large will be the measure of their spirituality.

And of course nothing could be farther from the truth. And this of course was the the point of emphasis that the Lord Jesus was here lay. How did Jesus Christ live through the Father? In his first apostolic address Peter speaking of the Lord Jesus, Acts chapter 2 and verse 22.

You men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man. That's how he introduced him.

On the first day of Pentecost, filled with the Holy Ghost, Jesus of Nazareth, a man, approved of God. Now what's the characteristic of a man approved of God? Jesus of Nazareth, a man, approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did. How? By him.

Jesus, a man, approved by miracles, signs and wonders which God did by him. As you yourselves also know. Is Peter in this apostolic address detracting from the eternal deity of Jesus Christ? No.

Not one tiny whit. For the Lord Jesus was never less than God, never less than in total and eternal equality in the trite unity of deity. But the amazing thing is this, what is so crushingly humiliating, is that the Lord Jesus was prepared though God to be and behave like a man.

And the characteristic of man as God made man is that only God within the man can be the origin of his own image, source of his own activity, dynamic of his own demands, cause of his own effect. And if Jesus Christ was to be less than a play actor, if his humanity was to be anything other than a mere front, in setting aside those divine prerogatives that make Jesus Christ and God, God, he had to submit himself deliberately and voluntarily to those limitations that make man, man. And the primary limitation that makes man, man is his utter unrelenting dependence upon God and his willingness to let God be God in him.

And the amazing thing is this, this, this was exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ was prepared to do as a man. In the second chapter of the Philippian epistle, it says, let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. In other words, let this attitude be characteristic of you which was in Jesus.

Because remember, as the living Father sent him and he lived through the Father, so we now are to live through him. So whatever attitude it was that he adopted as a man toward the Father that allowed him to live through the Father, has got to be now the attitude that we adopt towards Jesus that allows Jesus to be the one who lives through us. For as he lived through the Father, we are now to live through Jesus.

So we need to understand the mind that was in Christ Jesus. We have to comprehend the attitude that he adopted. And what was the attitude that he adopted? We're told this, that though being essentially one

with God and in the form of God and possessing the attributes which make God God, he did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained.

But he stripped himself of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant, in that he became like men and was born a human being. And after he had appeared in human form, he abased and humbled himself still further and carried his obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross. Being essentially one with God, he stripped himself so as to assume the guise of a servant.

In the New English translation, we're told that he made himself nothing. In the authorized version, we're told that he humbled himself. In the German translation, we're told that he emptied himself.

In other words, when Jesus Christ, though God came into this world to become man, he became all that a man is without God. How much is that? Did you ever ask yourself that question? If God created man in such a way that only God within the man can be the origin of his own image, only God within the man can be the source of glory, for in him was life and this life was the light of man. If it takes God really to behave like the man that God created man to be and Jesus Christ came to the world to behave like a man, he had to become all that a man is without God.

And that is nothing. So that the Father as God could be everything. And let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

So we have two pictures of the Lord Jesus. This picture of his becoming, which is further described for us in the 10th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Christ entered into the world and said, sacrifices and offerings you do not desire, but instead you've made ready a body for me to offer.

Then I said, Lo, here I am. Come to do your will, O God, to fulfill what is written of me in the volume of the book. In other words, he said, Father, you have prepared for me a body, a body conceived miraculously of the Holy Spirit and fashioned in the womb of Mary.

Thank you, Father, for this body that you have prepared for me to offer, that in this body there may be accomplished all that has already been written of me in the volume of the book. I haven't come to exercise my initiative, Father, on your behalf. I haven't come to lift a finger to redeem a damned humanity.

I've simply come, Father, to offer to you the humanity that you've prepared for me in the womb of Mary, that you may tell in terms of my humanity that redemptive and regenerative purpose, as recorded in the word of God, now to be told in terms of my yieldedness, placing myself unreserved at your disposal. This is how the Lord Jesus Christ presented the body to the Father in which he became man. And Bethlehem was his becoming, conceived of the Holy Spirit.

But the second picture that we have of the Lord Jesus is not his becoming by spiritual conception of the Holy Ghost to inhabit a body that the Father prepared for him to offer. You have the next picture of Jesus being what he was born to become. And of course, that's what is of supreme importance to us, isn't it? This is what is of supreme interest to us.

How was Jesus able to be what at Bethlehem he was born to become? And the answer to that is given to us in the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel. And if we pause after the third word, we get the sense of it. In Luke's Gospel, in chapter four and verse one, it says, and Jesus being.

Being what? Being what he was born to become. Man. Superman? No, man.

God-man? No, man. Jesus being. What does it take to be what you've become? If you want to fulfill the function for which God made man, man.

It's very simple. Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost. That's Jesus being.

Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit being the one through whom a man offers his humanity to God, and the Holy Spirit being the one through whom God offers his deity to a man. And as some of us this morning read in the paraphrased New Testament, in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, we saw all that God is in the humanity of a man, Jesus Christ.

In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead body, all of God in one human being. All of God in one human being. That was Jesus Christ.

But when you look at him, Jesus Christ on earth with his two feet on the ground, when you look at him and see all of God in one human being, what are you looking at? Man. Just man. Not Superman.

Just man as God created you and me to be. All of God by the Holy Spirit who is indivisible, in whose person there is comprehended all the triunity of deity, God the Holy Ghost, indwelling the total personality of a man so that he becomes a body wholly filled and flooded with God himself. That is man as God intended man to be.

And Jesus was the second man. The only other man that ever walked this earth as man by God was intended to be. That's why he is the last Adam.

Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost. What did this involve for the Lord Jesus? It involved total submission to every demand that the Father could make upon him in his humanity through the Holy Spirit. Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Led by whom? Led by the Spirit. Do you mean to tell me that Jesus Christ didn't have the right to exercise his own initiative? Couldn't he plan and program and promote on God's behalf? Never. Not as a man.

As God, yes. He could throw the universes into space. He could throw the stars into the far corners of the night.

As God, he was the creative deity by whom all things were made and without whom not anything was made that ever was made. But as a man, he could only be full of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus might well have put it this way.

Father, my office is to be. It's your office to act. And my humanity I place now unreserved at your divine disposal so that there may be the unblemished, untarnished, unsullied expression of what you are and all your relentless purpose in terms of my humanity.

Jesus being led of the Holy Spirit. In other words, he was told what to do and he did as he was told. And Jesus says, as the living Father sent me and I live through the Father, he that eateth me is going to live through me.

And being led into the wilderness, tempted forty days and nights, we are told in the fourteenth verse of this same fourth chapter that Jesus returned. How? In the power of the Spirit. Whose power? That of the Holy Spirit.

Because as a man, he was totally dependent upon the life of his father imparted to him through the Holy Ghost. For it was through the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ yielded his humanity to the Father. This is made abundantly clear for us in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews.

You'll remember that the context concerns the Old Testament sacrifices that find their final glorious and eternal consummation in his one sacrifice for sins forever. And in the middle of that context, we read this, Hebrews 9, 14, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience and dead works. How did he offer himself without spot to God? Through the eternal Spirit.

Body, soul, and spirit, mind, emotion, and will, in the totality of his humanity and in every area of his personality, Jesus Christ presented himself to the Father through the Holy Ghost. And he lived through the Father. He enjoyed the life of the Father.

He shared the life of the Father. If Jesus Christ had put it into Pauline language, he would have said, To me to live is the Father, whose life I share by virtue of the fact that he indwells my humanity through the Holy Ghost, through whom I have yielded myself without spot to God. And as I am in my Father and my Father is in me, so he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood is in me and I am in him.

And as the living Father sent me and I live through the Father, so he that eateth me shall live through me. So I'm beginning to understand now how Jesus Christ lived his life as a man on earth by virtue of what the Father was in him. But somebody may be saying, almost as a protest, you're giving the idea that Jesus Christ, a man on earth, could do nothing of himself.

Well, what was the testimony of Jesus Christ? In the fifth chapter of John's Gospel, in the 19th and in the 30th verses, Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing. Have you ever said that in your ministry? The Son can do nothing of himself. He said, As a man, I don't have what it takes.

That's incredible. That's crushingly humiliating. He amplifies the statement, lest there should be any doubt or ambiguity in our minds.

In the 30th verse of the same chapter, John 5, 30, I can, that's what the world says. This is the spirit of the Adamic creed. I can.

I am just the person who can. This is Peter when he says, Lord, you can count on me. Everybody else is going to run away.

I can believe that. I know them well enough, but I know my own heart. You can count on me.

I'm the man who can. But Jesus said, I can of mine own self do nothing. This was the testimony of Jesus Christ by virtue of his humanity.

Because you see, he was a man approved. He was one of whom the father could look down from heaven and say, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. Who was willing to make himself nothing so that I, by my Holy Spirit in him could be everything.

The moment Jesus Christ had claimed to exercise his own initiative, he would have repudiated the basic principles of his humanity. And that's why Satan all the way through the temptation in the wilderness was

trying to make Jesus Christ act on his own initiative as God. He says, you're God.

You made stone. You made bread. Turn the stone into bread.

Why behind you when you're God? He said, I may be God. He said, I'm behaving as a man. And a man can't behave without God.

So you see, this isn't my business. It's my father's business. And you'll find in every instant Satan referred, the Lord Jesus referred Satan's temptations to the father.

He says, he's the only one who has the right to exercise any initiative. My office is to be, it's my father's office to act. And it's my happy privilege in the sinlessness and spotlessness and unblemished purity of my humanity to offer myself totally without question to my father, to be told what to do and to do what I am told.

How much did Jesus Christ do for you when he died for you? You'd be surprised maybe by his own testimony. In the eighth chapter of John's gospel, where the Lord Jesus said this, verse 28 of eight of John, when you have lifted up the son of man, then shall you know that I am he, when you see them drive the nails through my hands and my feet, I will be adequately identified as the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. When you have lifted up the son of man, then shall you know that I am he and that I do nothing, nothing of myself.

Isn't that amazing? That even when the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross, this was a testimony of his utter identity with the will and purpose of his father in heaven. He himself did nothing save to be available for the divine redemptive act that was to be clothed with his sinless, unblemished humanity. Then if Jesus Christ did nothing and could do nothing apart from the father, the last relevant question, of course, is who did everything by his own testimony in the 14th of John and verse 10, believe us thou not that I am in the father and the father in me, same relationship, the relationship that is precipitated by coming and believing, eating and drinking.

The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. So what was the secret of the life of Jesus Christ, the man on earth, by his own testimony? The indwelling father. He said, the father that dwells in me, he does the work.

My office as a man is to be, it is my father's office to act. Everything I say, my father says. Everything I do, my father does.

Everything I am, my father is. And when you look at me, you look at him that sent me. Because as a man in the sinlessness of my humanity, I have so given myself to my father through his spirit that he can give unblemished expression of his character, will and purpose in terms of my humanity.

Amen. Now, said Jesus Christ, get that? Well, if you get that, the way I live through the father, you're going to live through me. And if I, without my father, can do nothing, how much can you do without me? Just precisely as much as I can do without my father.

That's why you have in John 15 and 5, I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him, same relationship, bringeth forth much fruit. But without me, how much can you do? As much as I can do without my father. Nothing.

So everything you do that doesn't stem from me is worth how much? Nothing. And it's amazing how busy you can be for 50 years a pastor doing nothing. And you know, that's why there are countless pastors frustrated, broken.

There are 200 missionaries at this moment in Los Angeles undergoing psychiatric treatment. Did you know that? And this can be repeated in city after city where pastors and missionaries and those engaged in what is sometimes described as full-time Christian ministry are broken in body and in health and mentally, simply because they've never learned the basic content of their faith. It's my privilege to minister to missionaries all over the world, in Africa, in India, in Japan, in Formosa, and to minister to pastors and those who dedicatedly and with immense sacrifice and real sheer enthusiasm and love and sense of loyalty to Jesus Christ have given themselves, but when they are given half a chance to let their hair down, they'll weep their eyes out and say, I'm dry as a bum.

I've worked myself to the bottom of the barrel. I've nothing left. I'm empty.

Men, this is true. And it's true for only one good reason. We've forgotten that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead.

We've defended his deity in such a way we've forgotten to learn anything from his humanity. And we've defended his atoning death in such a way that we've forgotten that he rose again from the dead to live within and inhabit the humanity of those who have been redeemed by the death he died. You and I need not only what he did because of what we've done, we need what he is because of what we are.

It's easy enough to be sorry for what you've done and see the relevance of what he did, but what's difficult for proud pig-headed men like you and me is to be sorry for what we are and see the relevance of what he is. We refuse to die. We're too busy being pastors.

We're too busy being famous. We're too busy being evangelists. We're too busy hitting the headlines to take our place with Jesus in death and let God be God.

And the kind of Christians we produce are the kind of Christians we are. Empty, flabby gas bags, advertising ourselves. And this is the anemia, this is the poverty.

You can fill your church buildings and the more you fill them, the more money you've got to build a bigger one. But I'll tell you this, and I've been warning these folk in this church already, your next generation of Christians will be as weak as the gospel you preach in the present generation. And unless you're going to preach the kind of gospel that lets Jesus Christ inhabit a man's humanity and lets him be God within that man, I'll tell you this, you'll have your enormous churches in the next generation and the next they'll be half empty because you'll have nobody who will be concerned to attend them.

And you are in trust at this moment by the gospel you preach with the health and vigor of the next generation of Christians. How did this go down? And with this we conclude, and I thank you for your courtesy and your patience. How did this go down actually with the disciples? I want to tell you something, it didn't go down at all well.

It went down no better then than it does today. And I want to tell you this, if you want big crowds and if you want to be a really popular evangelist, keep off this message. You make your salvation as cheap as you can.

Let it just be come to Jesus and have your sins forgiven. Let them walk down the aisle and have them in, that's it, and you'll be popular. But please don't preach the kind of gospel that's going to involve God in a man's humanity, 24 hours a day, so that he recognizes intelligently and willingly and voluntarily that he has only one place for which God has credited him the right to occupy, that's death.

And that there's only one person whom God recognizes as with the right to live with any redeemed sinner, that's Jesus Christ. If you want to preach that kind of message, then you can decimate your crowds and I promise you, you'll do it very, very quickly. But at least you'll have one satisfaction.

You'll be preaching the truth, the kind of truth that sets men free, not only from the punitive consequence of their sin, but sets them free from the greatest tyrant of all, themselves. Now, this didn't go down too well with the disciples. Many, therefore, were told in the sixth chapter of John, in the 60th verse, many, therefore, of his disciples, when they had heard this say, said, this is an hard saying.

Who can hear it? When his disciples heard this, more accurately translated in the Amplified New Testament, when his disciples heard this, many of them said, this is a hard and difficult and strange saying, an offensive and unbearable message. Who can stand to hear it? Who can be expected to listen to such teaching? This was the reaction of the disciples to Jesus Christ. And Jesus, verse 61, knowing in himself that his disciples were complaining and protesting and grumbling about it, said to them, is this a stumbling block and an offense to you? Does this upset and displease and shock and scandalize you? Then would you tell me, please, the Lord Jesus might have continued as well he may have, would you tell me what is in you that is scandalized, upset and displeased at the suggestion that I as the God who created you am indispensable to your humanity? Would you tell me what it is that displeases and scandalizes and shocks you and causes you to grumble and protest at the suggestion that you can't be the man that I as God created you to be apart from what I am as God in you? Would you tell me, please, what causes you to challenge that statement? He didn't wait for their answer.

He says the flesh, the Adamic principle of satanic origin that first perpetrated the lie in human experience that a man can be a man without God. The flesh, he said, profiteth nothing in its arrogant, hostile self-sufficiency. The flesh profiteth nothing.

He said it is the spirit of the living God alone quickens and gives life. And from that time on, verse 66, many of his disciples, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. There was a wild rush for the door.

And you can imagine what the Lord Jesus did when he saw his crowds disappearing that way, rushing for the door, the exit, he flew after them and said just a minute, half a minute, let's pair things down a bit. I'm sorry if I've offended you. Now let's talk this over, let's get to a working basis upon which the flesh will have adequate opportunity to stalk across the stage.

I didn't realize that you men were simply here to use me as a platform. But of course, I don't want to offend you. Is that what he did? He just waited with his arms full until the dust had settled.

And then he looked round. And all he had got left was a handful. Jesus said to the twelve, that's all that was left.

Will you also go away? Would you like to go home too? All right. You know now my terms of reference. They didn't understand it.

They were baffled. They were bewildered. We know they didn't understand it because they didn't want the cross and they didn't believe in the resurrection.

They hardly knew what it was all about. But something inside held them. Simon Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

They battle us, they confuse us. We don't make head and a tail of it. But we believe somehow and assure thou art that Christ, the son of the living God.

And we want to know what this means. They never came to know what it meant. Not until Jesus stood in the upper room and showed them his hands and his feet.

Not until they touched him, handled him, the one who through death had destroyed him that had the power of death and now is alive. But he says, I'm not only alive, don't only rejoice in the fact that I am no longer buried, no longer hanging on a cross. I've got good news for you.

You're going to share my resurrection. Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high. And I'll fulfill the promise that I vowed safety was recorded in the fourteenth of John, that when I have ascended to my father, we all of us in the triunity of deity, in the person of God, the Holy Spirit will come to inhabit your humanity.

I will come to you, for I haven't only given myself for you. I have given myself for you so that I could give myself to you. And on the day of Pentecost, you're going to enter into the good of it.

And you're going to be my body. And I'm going to live on earth again. And your hands are going to be my hands and your lips are going to be my lips and your mind, my mind to think within your heart, my heart to love with and your lips mind to speak with.

But it'll be my life, simply your humanity. And this is what it means to be a Christian. And I don't know any other kind of gospel.

I don't know any other kind of evangelism. I don't know any other kind of appeal that I can make to men, to boys, to girls or men or women, save to come to Jesus, not to receive forgiveness of sins, but to receive what they have in him, which includes their forgiveness. But the Savior himself stepping into their humanity, welcomed by them as guilty sinners in repentance toward God, knowing that on the basis of this, their reconciliation through his atoning death, they're going to embark upon the hilarious adventure of sharing his life through time and on into eternity.

That's why it's so exciting to know that Jesus Christ is alive and alive in you. Lord Jesus, thank you for what you are. Thank you for what you did so that we may enjoy what you are.

Thank you for the blood you shed. We didn't deserve your death for us. We certainly don't deserve your life in us.

But the amazing thing is that you've given us the right to have both. And we don't enjoy less. Enable us, we pray the dear Lord, as those who genuinely love you.

Enable us to be faithful to you in the discharge of our trust. And in being faithful to you, be faithful to those to whom we minister. And Lord Jesus, if there's a man here this lunch hour who's weary, tired, who's dedicated, who's sacrificed, who's given himself and spent himself, who's put on a good show, and who

doesn't have the opportunity to expose the deep, deep need of his own heart.

For every heart knows its own bitterness. But who's whacked and thrashed and beaten, who knows that he's scraping at the bottom of the barrel, who's flattened his face, who can only look back to a history of failure. And yet he's been bravely going on, getting up, almost dreading every new day, dreading every time he has to go into the pulpit.

God, if there's a man like that, in your mercy, reveal yourself afresh as the one who not only died for that man, but arose again from the dead to live within him, to share with him your life, your victory, your strength, your power, to make life the sheer, wonderful, thrilling adventure it was always intended to be in telling the good news to a dying, crying world. He's alive, and he's alive in me, and he wants to be alive in you. We ask it for your namesake.

Amen.

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