

Christ as King

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon calls for a recognition of Jesus as King and a commitment to living out His will in total obedience.

Duration: 53:25

Scripture: John 2:13

Topics: "King", "Christ's Lordship", "Obedience in Faith"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the significance of recognizing Christ as King, illustrating that Jesus embodies the perfect relationship between God and man. He argues that true faith is demonstrated through obedience to God's will, rather than mere belief or tradition. Thomas warns against the dangers of complacency in faith, urging believers to allow Christ to cleanse their lives and to live in total dependence on Him. He critiques the church's tendency to cling to traditions that hinder God's purpose, calling for a radical commitment to Christ's lordship. Ultimately, he challenges listeners to present their lives as vessels for Christ to work through, embodying the true essence of the Christian life.

Transcript

Now we have been talking very much about the Lord Jesus because ultimately he's the only person really worth talking about because he tells us all there is to know about God and he tells us all there is to know about man as God intended man to be. And we have seen his total identity as perfect man with the father as perfect God. So that in all the activities of the Lord Jesus as man it would be completely impossible to discern between his activity and the father's activity.

In point of fact were it at any time to have been possible in those 33 years to discern between the activity of the son and the father the Lord Jesus would have been less than perfect man. Because sin is the measure in which the eternal purpose of God does not find its fulfillment in you and me. That's the only valid definition of sin.

The measure in your life in which the purpose which God created you and has now redeemed you does not find its fulfillment. Now that takes you way beyond the baby concept that sin is just telling lies or putting your hand in the plum jar when mom's not looking as a or running off with some of the money from the safe. That's all baby concept of sin.

Of course that's sin. God never created you for that. But whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

And remember what faith is. Faith is the expression of your dependence upon God in terms of total obedience. That's faith.

Faith isn't subscribing to a creed. It isn't giving mental consent to certain dogmas or doctrines. Faith is your obedience to God's will.

That's faith. And it's the only valid definition of faith. Faith that does not have obedience is not faith.

It's froth. And there's a tremendous amount of froth today that is disowned and repudiated by God. So the evangelical content of your faith is your obedience to the truth as God has revealed it for you and God's purpose as God has revealed it for you.

Not God's will as he's prepared it and revealed it for anybody else. The only true valid content of your being as a Christian is the measure of your obedience to God's personal handmade program for your life. And this we saw glorious exemplified in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Get once and for all out of your heads that once you're converted, once you've registered your decision to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer, you have the right to run your life as you please, but of course out of a sense of gratitude and duty here and there insofar as it doesn't cause too much inconvenience to your own program for future existence, you do a little bit of Christian work. That's a sheer parody of the truth. The moment you are redeemed you are the blood-bought property of Jesus Christ 24 hours in every day and you are on earth for one purpose and one purpose alone, that in all your humanity the total will of God might find its expression and the moment it ceases to find any expression in you, it's time you went.

It's time somebody buried you because you're just clattering up the planet. And it's time I was buried too. And I've just trusted God for this.

I've trusted God for this in Capernaum. I've told him many many a time the moment this place or anything that we happen to be engaged in ceases to be a positive implementation of your implementation of your purpose, then bury it. Blast it to bits.

Make it nothing because that's all it'll be. Or there'll be a tremendous amount of Christian activity and a tremendous amount of church buildings and innumerable committees and subcommittees on the scrapheap if God had his way. What a tragedy church history has been.

Nearly always has some mighty movement been sparked by the Spirit of God finding expression through some available piece of humanity. The man, he's added to himself men as others have caught the vision and then it's become a movement and now it's become a monument and millions of pounds and countless tens of thousands of man-hours are wasted servicing monuments that should have been blown up long long ago. Christendom is clattered with it.

Think how many, just where you're sitting at this very moment in your mind, think how many organizations that you can think of that way back a few decades, a few generations, were virile with the Spirit of God but today they're not worth the buildings they are housed in spiritually. Any infidel, any unbeliever, any businessman could create what they're running but that has nothing to do with the Church of Jesus Christ, that's debris. But you see very few people have the courage to get rid of the debris, very few.

One see it sometimes in big city churches where a little handful of people out of sheer sentiment worship the monument. Oh but they say 20 years ago, 50 years ago, 150 years, this place was full. Well supposing it was, it's empty today.

Then sell the site and build six churches where people live. Or you say that would hurt too many people but whose business is it? Theirs or God's? Or we're bond slaves to sentiment and tradition while we pride ourselves on being free from it all. Now the Lord Jesus Christ was totally committed to his Father.

This of course is why they hated him. Do you remember where we began on Saturday evening? What a tumultuous welcome he received on that Passover feast day. Everybody was glad to see him, even the Pharisees.

They were rather fascinating. Great tumultuous welcome for the Lord Jesus Christ as he came into the city. And the multitudes that went before and that followed cried saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. And when he was coming to Jerusalem, all the city was moved saying, who is this? Who's this? And they all tried to see over the fat man in front, you know. And little boys came wheeling their way through people's legs and tripping up the old ladies.

Who's this? And they said, this is Jesus, the Prophet. This is the Prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee, the great preacher, the new teacher, the new philosopher, the Prophet of Nazareth. Everybody was glad to see him because this was the day out.

Like our Christian traditional holidays today, gave them an opportunity for fun. Have a party, get drunk, anything you like. That's Christmas now and Easter, everybody knows it, or Whitsun.

It just boosts the stores. So it was in this day, the Passover feast, except I think they took it maybe a wee bit more seriously than we do in our apostate Christendom in your country and mine. And most of the countries of the West, that's why the Russians aren't afraid of the church or the so-called Christian nation.

They know it's just a flimsy cabaret. They know perfectly well if the church means so much to British people in the United Kingdom that 90% never go near a church and never read the Bible they claim to have as a heritage, as free people for which they're prepared to fight. Fancy fighting for a Bible that you never read.

Fancy fighting for the liberty of going to church that you never enter. You don't think the Russians really take that seriously, do you? Well, it was like that in this day. It was the great day when everybody came out in their party frocks.

They all smelt of mothballs. Everybody knew it was Passover. And then the wind changed and the clouds began to come.

The skies darkened. The climate of the crowd, aroused by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, turned sour. What was it that suddenly made the change? Jesus went into the temple of God and he cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple.

And he overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves. And he said unto them, it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer. You have made it a den of thieves.

That's why the climate changed. John's Gospel, chapter 2, tells us this. Verse 13, John 2, 13.

The Jews' Passover was at hand. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them out, all out of the temple.

And the sheep and the oxen and poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables. And he said unto them that sold doves, take these things, hence make not my father's house a house of merchandise. He just got a whip and drove them out.

That's why they didn't like it. They might well have complained, but these things have become traditional. We've always done these things.

We've done these things for the last few decades. Our grandparents introduced this idea and we've accepted it. And they were perfectly prepared to accept Jesus Christ and give him a tumultuous welcome so long as he was prepared to concede the status quo and accept the wicked traditions that man had injected into pure religion.

But he refused their terms of reference. We criticized the Pharisees. We say they had made the law God to be of no effect by their man-made traditions.

But men and women, fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, again and again today by our evangelical traditions and our church traditions and our denominational traditions and all our organizational decisions, all the things that have become precedents in the past, we're constantly thwarting the purposes of God. And none of us have the moral courage to step over the traces and say we're going to be committed to God and only God. That's why they crucified him.

Because he acted like a king. When he came and they shouted and they threw the branches in the way before him, they called him a prophet. They didn't mind him being a prophet.

They didn't mind him being a popular preacher. They didn't mind him having the crowds. They didn't mind so long as he didn't turn anything out of the temple, so long as he didn't clean the temple.

Leave the temple as dirty as you find it and we'll be very pleased to have you. That's what they said. Nobody minds a big famous preacher coming.

Nobody would mind a potty little preacher coming, so long as he's prepared to conform. Let him conform to things as they are, but let him keep his fingers off the dirty things in the temple. That's why lots and lots of people are quite prepared to be nominal Christians in your country and mine and throughout our so-called Western civilization.

They're quite prepared to be nominal members of any denomination you like, so long as Jesus Christ never exerts the right to step into their lives and cleanse the temple, the body that was created by God to be inhabited by God, to be a habitation of God by his Holy Spirit. That's why you can always sell a religious program to people that doesn't speak of regeneration or redemption or repentance toward God and a claiming of cleansing through the shed blood of Jesus, but will be fascinating. And when they discover their religious program is almost on a par ethically with the communist political program, they'll swap without a moment.

One day, if they can save their skins by it, they're not Christians, they're just make-believers. When they welcomed him, he was just a preacher. When they crucified him, they called him king.

It was for being king and acting like a king they killed him. I say it kindly, but there are even some of you folk, you're quite prepared to come and listen to preacher after preacher, your connoisseurs. If it hadn't been preaching, it might have been wine.

You could taste anything and say whether it's good or bad. You don't mind welcoming a preacher. And yet there's a cross in your heart still for Christ as king.

And this is what I'm getting at. He came to be king and to behave like a king and to cleanse the temple. Then answered the Jews, verse 18 of John chapter 2, then answered the Jews and said unto him, what sign showest thou unto us seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.

That's my authority. If you want to know why I have authority to cleanse the temple, this one or the temple of your heart, it's because when you've destroyed this temple, my Father in heaven will vindicate my messianic mission. I came to redeem damned men and restore them to their true humanity and make their bodies once again the house of God in all holiness, in total availability.

Then said the Jews, forty years and six years was this temple in building and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said. The authority that the Lord Jesus Christ claims to cleanse the temple of your life and mine is that he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And the Father said amen on that third day and raised him from the dead and vindicated his office as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world that he might buy the right to be king in his kingdom and to behave like king. And this was the principle that Christ was trying to teach his disciples. And I believe it's the principle that Christ is trying to teach you and me today.

And I believe that we don't have the right, not for one moment, to preach the gospel on any other terms of reference. What awful, calamitous damage has been done by watering down the gospel until you wouldn't know it. You wouldn't know it from a gas wall.

I don't know whether you have those here. I mean competition between one petrol pump and another. Sometimes get a bit mixed in my terminology moving from one part of the world to another.

But you can go up to one petrol pump and you'll get a piece of cut glass if you buy the petrol from them. And if you go somewhere else they'll give you, oh I don't know, probably a kettle. It's all a giveaway.

It's all a giveaway. And how the gospel has been preached is a giveaway. You get broadcasts.

And if you've been greatly blessed you write in. Make sure you put your dollar or your pound note and you'll get a giveaway. You get a nice little baker-like purse or something.

With love from granddad. This is the gospel today. It isn't the gospel at all.

It's just sloppy sentiment. And God repudiates it. The gospel involves the total lordship of Jesus Christ re-established as King within his kingdom with the right to cleanse the temple that he occupies.

When I was in Japan last year I learned from many of the missionaries that their greatest embarrassment are sincere but uninstructed individuals who go and have evangelistic campaigns in a people who know nothing but oriental courtesy. They wouldn't dream of failing to respond to your appeal. Tens of thousands of them.

The major damage was done immediately after the war when as a cowed and beaten people went to evangelize the Japanese. Tens of thousands of them registered their decision for Jesus Christ. Didn't mean a thing.

I visited a private home and I was shown the principle that is invoked and this is what the missionary knows who's lived there for years. And on the God shelf as they call it there is the little Buddha and all the attributes of Buddhist worship for a Japanese is basically Buddhist. But side by side to the Buddha and all the attributes of Buddhism on the same God shelf are all the attributes of Shintoism.

Because he's as good a Shintoist as he is a Buddhist. He just makes room for both on his God shelf. He'd no more be discourteous to Shinto in the name of Buddha than he would be discourteous to Buddha in the name of Shinto.

And when you ask him to be a Christian he says yes there's room on my God shelf. I just shove him along a bit. I'm not joking that's a fact.

And so you now go and you find Buddha, Shinto and Jesus all on the same God shelf. If you were to suggest to him that in the name of Jesus they had to get Buddha and Shinto off the God shelf they'd be shocked. Of course not.

I've been courteous to your Jesus in spite of my Buddha and Shinto you wouldn't expect me to be discourteous to Buddha and Shinto in the name of your Jesus. Oh I say that isn't a characteristic only the Japanese. That's a characteristic of the Australian and the British folk in the United Kingdom and the Germans in the United States.

We've got a thousand and one other little gods on our God shelves. We just shove them up a bit for Jesus so we can be happy and go to heaven one day and sing choruses with bubbly feelings inside. That's not the gospel.

It isn't the gospel that's going to stand the test of brainwashing. I want to confess to you I've got a long-term view in meetings like this. I'm thinking of the day when I'm going to be brainwashed.

Won't be long. I'm thinking of the day when some of you folk going to be brainwashed. That won't be long either.

How far with your evangelical creed stand you in good stead? I'll tell you this, if you've only got a creed but you haven't got a Christ, you're a dead loss from the start. You're a dead pigeon. If you've only got a sound orthodox fundamental theology that has never meant to you a personal theocracy with Christ as King in his kingdom, a dogma with no deity, then you're a sitting target from the start.

Wouldn't give you 10 minutes when the bullets fly. We're getting ready for these days. We may have a week, we may have a month, could be we have a year.

God only knows. All I know is at this very moment I have an aged father of 85 and he's under four minute sentence of death at any time if somebody likes to press the button. He lives in London.

Like everybody else he's under four minutes notice. Maybe you'll just get the cloud but life will be pretty lonely. You know the times past for playing at Christianity.

We're beyond it. It's too late to have fun and games. To think that all you've got to do is produce enough entertainment and you'll have enough teenagers to fill the kingdom of heaven.

Entertainment doesn't fill the kingdom of heaven. Entertainment simply produces Christianized vaudeville fans and when the show's over they'll go home and turn on the television and it'll probably be better produced because it'll be done by professionals instead of by sentimental amateurs. The Lord Jesus when he lived here on earth 1,900 years ago for 33 years did so to demonstrate to you and to me God's minimum terms of reference for man to live as man.

This is what he was trying to teach his disciples and they were slow to learn. We don't need to criticize them, we've been slower. They at least learned it and they paid with their lives.

James had his head cut off, Stephen was stoned to death, bleeding, dying in the gutter. Peter was crucified upside down. John went into the isle of Patmos and died, an exile.

They learned their lesson and they acted for years of usefulness so long as God permitted them on the basis of the principle taught. We're content to sit pretty as though it didn't really matter. It's just a question of schools of thought, something that is no more than a topic for discussion.

Do I agree with him or don't I? Do I like his ideas better than somebody else's? Who cares? There's only one person that matters, that's Jesus Christ. It was to the end that on the day of Pentecost their humanity might be as filled and flooded with God himself as Christ's that he lived and died and rose again. And it was to draw the conclusions of his successful mission that he deliberately remained forty days after his resurrection to make quite sure that his disciples after three years of stupidity and stubbornness really had got the point.

Thank God they had or we wouldn't be gathering here today. God knows what would have happened 2,000 years later if we'd been the folk that Christ had on his hand. If we'd been the folk to whom he had entrusted the business of world evangelization, God knows what would have happened 2,000 years later.

Maybe that's why he just chose to come at that particular time. Jesus Christ needn't have been born in that generation. Jesus Christ could have been born in any generation.

If Jesus Christ had chosen to come into this world 2,000 years earlier it would simply have been 3,961, that's all, instead of 1,961. And if Jesus Christ had happened to choose to come just 150 years ago, we would only have been beginning the A.D. of human history. But maybe he chose to come at that particular juncture because he knew he'd got some men whom he could take, who he could make man again.

Some folk who would be full-bloodedly gods and only gods. They were a privileged generation. The Lord Jesus presented himself as man to the Father through the Spirit.

Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Dead works, of course, all that you can do and be apart from what Christ is and does. Those are dead works.

Writing out a check for a hundred pounds as an act of philanthropy that stems from self, that doesn't stem from Christ, is one of the dead works. Going to church, accepting church office, preaching a sermon, being ordained into the ministry, any of these things that stem from anything other than the behaviour of the Lord Jesus in the humanity of a forgiven sinner, that's all dead works. Good works to which we have been redeemed are the behaviour of Jesus Christ.

We're saved from dead works to good works. The only difference is not in the nature of the works but in the origin. We've enlarged upon this on many occasions but we can't enlarge upon it enough because we're constantly deceiving ourselves with it.

Because a certain person prompted by the Holy Ghost does a certain thing we patronize it and say now everybody who does that thing will obviously be prompted by the Holy Spirit. Nonsense. That's just sheer copyism.

Only what is personally prompted by the Holy Spirit in you is good works, not your imitation of what somebody else did. That's why there's such appalling bankruptcy, even in the lives of well-meaning individuals who deeply admire the achievements of spirit-filled men. It's amazing.

And almost frustrating. I've ministered in many churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, founded by a man called A.B. Simpson. You've only got to read some of his hymns to know the radical revolutionary change of principle that took place in his life, when he recognized that for every step he took and for every word he said and for every breath he was to breathe and every decision that he was to make and every responsibility that he was to assume, he had by faith and obedience to appropriate the life of Christ.

But I can go to dozens and dozens of their 800 churches throughout the United States and they haven't a clue as to the principles involved, but they still admire A.B. Simpson. And they're desperately sincere and they're trying so hard to do what he did and be what he was, without ever pausing for one moment to discover how he was what he was and how he did what he did. And when you tap them on the shoulder and say, supposing you just put your tools down for a moment and let the dust settle and let's find out what it's all about.

They say, oh no, we're too busy being like him and doing the things he did. And off they go, like a dog chasing their tail. Many admirers of the China Inland Mission have never grasped the principle that revolutionized the life of Hudson Taylor.

He wouldn't challenge their devotion and loyalty and concern and prayer interest. But there's never taken place in their lives what took place in his life and turned him into the human vehicle of divine activity instead of just being a missionary for God in China. The principle of an exchange life, as a result of which God, through Hudson Taylor, sent a thousand men and women to that country.

They're constantly imitating the behavior of men of God without discovering how they became men of God. We're satisfied to learn language and copy style. But it doesn't give you a cutting edge.

Only God gives you that. How did Jesus Christ present his humanity to the Father? Without blemish, without spot, he presented himself as man to the Father through the Eternal Spirit. This we saw yesterday

was the agreed plan in the councils of the triune deity that by a predetermined plan, the Father would inhabit the Son as man through the Spirit.

In a perfect demonstration of what the Creator intended the created to be and how the created should behave under the domination and control of the Creator. They looked down upon the awful confusion, the hopeless chaos that man's self-willed pig-headed rebellion had brought in the world and they said we'll give them a demonstration. And in the perfection of demonstration we'll sentence their sin and execute.

So they can start all over again as a new race of recreated humans. That was the plan. So fashioned in the womb of Mary there was the perfect humanity that was to be the Son.

And the Father was to occupy that humanity, a perfect habitation of the Father God through the Spirit. And the Lord Jesus in fulfillment of the plan as perfect man was to present himself in completion to the Father through the Spirit and the Father would act and behave and execute his designs through the Spirit clothed with the Son. Simple, isn't it? But don't you realize that this is just man's normality? Don't you see that that is just precisely and exactly why God created you? That as the Father occupied the Son and behaved through the Son by the Spirit, so the Lord Jesus Christ now is to occupy you and behave through you through the Spirit.

That as he presented his body to the Father so you and I are exhorted in the first verse of the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Romans to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is our reasonable service. That every day might be the glorious proving of that good, acceptable and perfect will of God. Not carving God's will for him, not presenting to him our blueprints and saying this is what the best brains in the city have produced on your behalf, please your rubber stamp.

That's how we behave and we tell God what he ought to be doing about his own business. The Christian life is a triumphant, glorious fulfillment, a proving of a predetermined purpose. The proving of that good, acceptable and perfect will of God and he doesn't need your advice to make it perfect, nor mine.

All he needs is our availability. All he needs is a sufficient measure of repentance that will bring us back to dependence that will produce obedience. Our ability to respond to his ability to expand which will become our ability to avail.

For all the illimitable resources of deity are available to those who are available to all the illimitable resources of deity. He that cometh to God must first believe that God is absolute and that he God who is absolute is a rewarder of them that diligently seek. That all that God is is available to those who are available to all that God is.

That's the Christian life, did you know that? And you will live impossibly just in the measure that you're available to the God who's available to you. That's all. And yet we strut around with airs as though we were getting God out of a jam, looking after his best interests, publicizing him onto the map, getting him back into his orbit, attracting the world's attention who've forgotten that God ever existed.

God is perfectly capable of doing his own advertising. You ask Noah, I think he must have got pretty sick of those animals in the ark. And all the way around through the windows they could see God's advertising that God is God.

God's been advertising ever since, every time, he says, the rain cloud produces the bow in the sky. Just remember, he says, I'm God. And if it hadn't have been for mercy, the sun, shining through judgment, the

cloud that produced the rain, there wouldn't have been any survivors at all.

But I'm not going to judge you by water again, he said, I'm going to judge you by fire. And you clever little men, you're just beginning to discover how I'm going to do it. You've discovered how to split the atom.

Clever, aren't you? I thought of the atom before ever the world was. And so the Lord Jesus lived and walked and worked on earth, under the relentless supreme direction of the Father through the Spirit. I want to say this a thousand times if it's necessary, because this is the only valid definition of the Christian life for you and for me.

Shut your eyes to it, deafen your ears to it, and you'll still sail on within an evangelical context, but you'll miss the purpose which Christ redeemed. He said, I'm come that you might have life, my life, the life that you forfeited as a sinful seed of a fallen atom. In him, Jesus was life, this life alone was the light of man.

And when the life went out, the light went out. And only when the life comes back, the light goes on. And man knows at last, again, where he's going.

Because when you and I begin to present our humanity to the Lord Jesus through the Spirit as he presented his humanity to the Father through the Spirit, they that are led by the Spirit as he was led by the Spirit are the sons of God as he was the Son of God. Let me remind you of a passage that we've glanced at before, Luke 4. Luke 4, chapter 1. And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan. Jesus full of the Holy Ghost.

Don't get false ideas about that. Forget every previous definition you may ever had of what it means to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Or some of you might have the idea of growing long hair or goggling your eyes or speaking in tongues or something like that.

The Lord Jesus never spoke in tongues. He never goggled his eyes. He never crawled around on the floor thumping chairs.

He was just filled with the Holy Spirit, that's all. What does that mean? He was perfect man, that's all. A man filled with the Holy Ghost is simply man as God intended man to be.

Whose humanity has been presented to God through the Spirit as the Lord Jesus presented his body as the Son to the Father through the Spirit. But without reserve. Absolutely without reserve.

For he was committed to the Father and only to the Father for all that to which the Father was committed in him through the Spirit. Knowing that the Father dwelling in him through the Spirit was completely adequate for all that to which the Father in him as man through the Spirit was committed. And because he acted completely on that basis he was filled with the Spirit.

And when you and I are prepared to act on this basis that we are committed to Christ and to all that to which Christ is committed to us in the supreme confidence that the Christ who indwells us by the Holy Spirit is supremely competent to implement all that to which he through the Spirit in and through us is committed, we shall be filled with the Spirit. Don't have to wait for the fullness of the Spirit. It's the one thing God is waiting to make real in your experience.

All you need to do is consent. Become available. In other words, repent.

Repent of pig-headed independence. Repent of being self-willed. Repent of being self-sufficient.

Repent of having the right to run your own affairs and spend your own bank account and plan your own future and marry the girl you like and have the family you want and live where you please. Repent of all that and you'll be filled with the Holy Spirit. And that doesn't mean for one moment that he's going to take you from where you are or shoot any of your children or forbid you to marry the girl you love.

Doesn't mean anything of that. But it means that in your heart you've renounced and repudiated forever any right to anything except insofar as he gives it to you. That's all.

God isn't mean and niggardly. Some folk think that if you release yourself totally to God, he'll immediately forbid you to have all the things that you really want. What a funny God you've got, if that's your concept.

If you're afraid of being totally abandoned because you're going to think you're going to lose the one thing that makes life worthwhile, it means the devil's been unusually successful in brainwashing you. The Lord Jesus was simply behaving according to the triune plan of the triune God as perfect man. He was filled with the Holy Spirit always.

That's why he was so natural. That's why he could sit down with godless individuals in such a way that they called him a wine bibber, but perfectly naturally and without anything brushing off on him of the iniquity with those whom he mixed. The spirit-filled life is the most leisurely, restful, poised life in all the world.

You'll be physically tired sometime. Of course, he was, but panic-proof. He, being full of the Holy Ghost, latter part of the verse, was led.

Who by? By the Spirit into the wilderness. Why should he submit himself to the Spirit? Wasn't he God, equal to the Holy Spirit? Yes, but there's no jealousy in the Godhead, and the three triune members of the Godhead had agreed that he, as the Son, should behave as man. So he placed himself completely, unquestioningly, at the disposal of the Holy Spirit who was executing the will of the Father.

And so every step he took was a spirit-breed step. A God-ordered step, as every word he spoke was a God-commanded word, as we saw last night in John 12. This was the natural expression of the natural man in God's naturalness.

How far are you functioning as a Son of God, a child of God? For remember, they that are led by the Spirit of God, just like this, they're the children of God. This is the stamp of genuineness. Hear a person blather about being a child of God and witness their lives, which are patently a complete contradiction of their professions of loyalty to the Lord Jesus, and you can sum them up for what they are.

Just sentimental gasbags. But folk who gently move around so that hardly anybody notices them, and yet folk scratch their heads and say it's an extraordinary thing, they always seem to be just where they're wanted at the right moment. And they always seem to be saying just the right thing at the right moment.

If I were to go in there, I'd just say the wrong thing. And I can't explain, there's nothing much about the fellow after all. Oh yes there is.

God. The Lord Jesus behaving at all. That's all.

Verse 14, and the Lord Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit. Whose power? Why didn't he stand up for his own dignity? Why didn't he insist that by virtue of who he was, he had the right to exercise his own

authority, and exercise his own power? Why didn't he say, I'm the creative deity, I'm the Word who was in the beginning with God and was God, and by me all things that were made, were made. Why didn't Jesus Christ stand up for his rights? Because he wasn't fallen man like you and me.

Because he wasn't contaminated and poisoned and diseased by this satanic germ of self-importance that says, I will be, I will have, I will do, apart from God. The Lord Jesus said, I've come to be man. I've come to be all that you cease to be because of sin.

I don't have to stand up for my rights or my dignity. I'm perfectly prepared to have absolutely no power and absolutely no authority except the Holy Spirit by whom my Father lives within. Isn't that amazing? Have you ever learned humility? This is where we learn it.

This cuts us right down to our right sides and exposes for the little self-opinionated puppets that we have made ourselves to be, except that we pull the string and make the faces. It's amazing. And yet the Word of God says, let this mind, let this mental attitude, let this whole concept of living, let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus.

So who's going to monopolize your humanity and all that you possess and are? The Lord Jesus through his Spirit. Who's going to direct your paths? The Lord Jesus through his Spirit. By whose authority will you speak? By whose authority can you command obedience or demand faith or achieve anything? By whose authority? Yours? No, you're nobody.

Your only worth to God is not the reputation you've earned for yourself as a man. Your social standing, the influence you yield, your only worth is the measure which Christ is exercising his authority through you and you stand self-confessed alone in the power of Christ through his Spirit. And if anybody asks for an explanation of anything that's ever happened, you simply say, well, there's no explanation except Jesus Christ.

None. Because you see, I am crucified with Christ, so there's no explanation there. Dead men don't behave, you see.

Dead men aren't clever. Dead men aren't even important except as manure. I'm crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live. Not I. Christ liveth in me. You want an explanation? Well, there's no explanation except Christ, you see.

That's the normal Christian mind. And when you and I in the silence, in the secret of our room, not telling anybody else about it or asking their opinions, but when we're alone with God and we look back over the day and say, Lord Jesus, what a wonderful day I've had. Do you know, Lord Jesus, in almost everything, there's been absolutely no explanation except you.

I'm only sorry, Lord Jesus, for those things that have happened for which there's been an explanation in me. Because that's the measure of my sin today, Lord Jesus. That's the measure in which I've dethroned you.

Thank you for those wonderful moments when you walked into the room clothed with me. I'm terribly, terribly sorry, Lord Jesus, for those moments when I strutted in the room and you bowed your head in shame, downright ashamed of me for the display I made of myself. I wonder if you're beginning to get the point.

I'm not normally very impressed when folk thrust a piece of poetry into my pocket. I'm even less impressed when I get poetic. And yet, I have got a piece of paper here.

It was thrust into my hand by a dear child of God, a man in a church in Toronto, where it's been my joy and privilege to minister on occasions. And sometimes I've spoken as I've spoken to you about our bodies simply being the suit of clothes that Jesus wears. And last time I was there, last fall, just about a year ago, he gave me this and wondered whether I'd like it.

This is what it says. When Jesus died for me on Calvary, he paid the penalty for all my sin. He suffered all the pain my sinful heart to gain.

And now his spirit witnesses within. I'm just a suit of clothes that Jesus wears. My body is the house in which he lives.

My voice is his to talk. My feet are his to walk. I'm just a suit of clothes that Jesus wears.

He rose again to bring abundant life, to justify me before his Father's face. I live no more, but he lives out his life through me. I'm just a vessel fashioned by his grace.

As life goes on, I fear not. Come what may, he carries all my burdens and my cares. For me, the battle's done.

He is the victory one. I'm just a suit of clothes that Jesus wears. Is that what you want? That's what he wants.

Now let's bow our heads in prayer. May I remind you solemnly that the issue that I'm asking you to face these days is not a lesser issue, one of many, but totally. That's why I haven't made any kind of appeal.

I'm not asking you to face lesser issues. I'm asking you, each one individually, to face an issue that will be final, absolute, which leaves no lesser issue to face, only simply directions to recognize and obey. But in this quiet, solemn moment, will you speak with the Lord Jesus? Think back over the day.

Who gives the explanation for the day? You or Christ? Who's the big reason for everything that's happened today? You or Christ? You want to be the suit of clothes that he wears. Will you tell him so? You won't be perfect, but you'll begin. And every vindication of his adequacy in you will undergird your faith for the next step.

And illustrate the principle that you violated when you fall, that will make it so easy for you to repent again and get back to where you belong. Lord Jesus, there are some of us tonight, and we're beginning to recognize the shallowness of so much of our sincerity, the flimsiness of so much of our depth, the lack of validity of so much that we have considered to be foundational. We're being stripped until there's nothing left but you.

But in the process, we're beginning to discover that that's all that ought to be left and all that we need. What a wonderful discovery. We've got the right to stop apologizing for ourselves, because you never expected anything of us but what we are, in all our worthlessness.

And the Father never expected anything of you but what you are, in all your fullness and sufficiency. How wealthy have we become, because you live within our hearts. So we wait upon thee that thou would send us away with thy blessing, having stepped out of all our need and guilt and shame and pride, but having

stepped as positively into Christ, and for his dear sake.

Amen.

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