

# Christ the Man #1

by Major Ian Thomas

---

*God's demands are logical from His point of view, but unreasonable from man's point of view, and He is looking for a man who will allow Him to show Himself strong.*

**Duration:** 56:51

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Galatians 4:22-23, Galatians 4:26, Galatians 4:28-29

**Topics:** "Christ"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of learning and remembering spiritual principles. He highlights the story of a man who relied on the Lord and experienced divine deliverance. The speaker emphasizes that God is looking for people with faith and a perfect heart towards Him. He also discusses the story of Abraham and how his faith in God's supernatural power led to the birth of Isaac. The speaker encourages listeners to trust in God's strength and not rely on their own abilities.

---

## Transcript

...is prohibited. Copies and further information may be obtained from Torchberry Pages, P.O. Box 2620, Estes Park, Colorado, 80517. Every demand that God makes upon a man, from God's point of view, is completely logical.

Only from man's point of view, utterly unreasonable. Because in the divine logic, there's a hidden factor that's absent in human reason. And that hidden factor? God Himself.

And we recognize that the hidden factor, God Himself, is that which represents the marginal difference between what is divinely possible and what otherwise cannot but be humanly unreasonable. What happens when man fell into sin, was that it satan prevailed in persuading man to believe that a man can be man without God. In other words, without the hidden factor.

He settled for what was reasonably possible to a man without God, instead of what is divinely possible. By virtue only of the hidden factor, God Himself. The result was, of course, that man became morally impotent.

He was no longer competent, spiritually, for the discharge of that office to which God made him. Who created man uniquely in his whole creation to be the means whereby the divine potential could be released in such a way that God could reproduce His image through man. Not man copying God.

That's a sheer impossibility. For the image that you and I are to give to the world and to all creation, of our Creator, is an image which is not by imitation, but image by derivation. An image that demands the presence of the object of the image, that He, at one and the same time, might be the origin of the image of which is the object.

Now, before these morning sessions are up, we're going to talk more fully about the nature of the derived image. But this we do know, that God Himself, from within the man, must be the origin of that image. He must Himself, within man, be the source of His own activity.

He must Himself, from within man, be the dynamic of His own demands, because faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it. Because it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. So whatever His demands, He Himself, as God, is the dynamic that fulfills those demands.

That's why man's presence in a man is imperative to his humanity. God at all times must be the cause of His own effect. That's why, and this is what the old agamic nature doesn't like, when man is functional, by virtue of the fact that it takes God in the man to be functional, there's only one person to congratulate.

And it isn't you. It's God Himself. God, the hidden factor, who makes divinely logical what otherwise cannot but be humanly unreasonable.

One of the early church fathers said that he believed that Christ died for him because it was incredible. He believed that the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead because it was impossible. You see, if you seek proof, that evidence is doubt.

And the moment you have proof, you don't need to believe. So you eliminate that moral relationship of dependence on, and utter obedience to, out of a love for, that credits God with the capacity to be big enough for the job, even though as man, I don't understand. And this is the nature of man's relationship to God.

It's essentially a mystery. But it's a mystery that has become marvellously an open secret in the person of the Lord Jesus. Because when the Lord Jesus came into this world, though God, He came to play the role of man.

And this should, for you and for me, be a source of untold comfort. We tend to look at the Gospels and be discouraged by the quality of the life that He lived, because we shrug our shoulders and say it was alright for Him, He was God. But you're wrong, when you draw that conclusion.

Because the glorious, emancipating, liberating truth is this. That there was nothing the Lord Jesus ever did, said, or was, on earth, which He did, said, or was, of God. Only of man.

Because although He was never ever less than God, He came to this world to behave as though He were never ever more than man. And He'd never so have done, because God He was, God He is, and God He ever will be. Totally and timelessly equal in deity with the Father and the Holy Spirit and the Triune Godhead.

No ambiguities, whatever, in the Scriptures, nor by the testimony of the Lord Jesus Himself about that. Eternal fact. The Word, who was in the beginning with God and was God.

And by Whom, as the creative deity, all things were made. Without Whom there was nothing made that was made. And in Whom alone and exclusively is that light, which is the light of men.

That gives, in other words, to man the moral confidence to shine with the glory. The reflective image of His Maker. That's God in Christ, and Christ in God.

In co-equality, in deity with the Father and the Holy Ghost. But the fantastic thing is this. Although He never ever once repudiated His utter identity with the Father, who said, He is me, is one.

He deliberately, for your sake and mine, set aside the prerogative of deity. And deliberately submitted Himself to the limitations of our humanity. He became man.

Not phony man. Not just the facade of man. Man as He of God created man to be.

And He said, I am the truth. I didn't come to preach the truth, or explain the truth. I am the truth.

I am the truth I preach. I, in my person, am the final exegesis of all truth. If you want to know truth about anything, come to me, says the Lord Jesus.

To Philip, who said, show us the Father, and it suffices us, said the Lord Jesus. Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, said He. He that has seen me, has seen the Father.

And as I reminded you, if the Lord Jesus could testify, and know that it was true, that anyone seeing Him had seen the Father, you may be absolutely certain, if the Father saw Christ, He saw her Himself. For the Lord Jesus on earth was the truth about God. Anything that you and I can know about God, you know in the person of the Lord Jesus.

He is the truth about God. But He is something more than that. He is the truth about man.

Because though Creator playing the role of creature, if there was anybody who knew how the creature should behave in terms of his relationship to the Creator, it must have been the Creator who made the creature. If as God, He was going to play the role of man, whom He as God had made, He must, as God who made the man, know how as man, He is going to satisfy the Father as God. So if you and I want to know normality in humanity, where are we going to look? What book are you going to read? What preacher are you going to consult? What seminary are you going to go to? What psychiatrist will you consult? If you want to know man as God, in totality, in utter accuracy, intended manhood, where are you going to look? There is only one direction in which you can look.

The one who though God, came as God to play the role of man. As He as God created man to be, He is the truth about man. Anything that you and I can know man, functionally satisfying on earth, in the flesh and blood of our humanity, to His Father God in heaven, Jesus Christ.

Now don't forget, I'm making the obvious obvious. If the Lord Jesus was the truth about man, what is the obvious conclusion that you can draw from the fact that He was the truth about man? In the light of how He as God made man. Well, simply, that as the truth about man, He could not help but be the truth about God.

If when He came to this world and lived on this earth for 33 years, He was the truth about God, it was only because He was the truth about man, because the truth about man is that He as God created man to be the truth about God. And that's a glimpse of the obvious. What does it say in Genesis chapter 1? Let us

make man in our image.

In our likeness. And in the likeness of God made as Him, so that just as the Father in heaven could look down on earth upon the sun and see Himself, so when God first made man, in His own utter likeness, God could look at man and see God. So a man whose truth is his humanity will be the truth about man and the truth about God, because the truth about man is that God created man to be the truth about God.

And there's only one man who walked this earth since Adam fell into sin, who being the truth about man as He as God created man to be, could not help but be, for every step He took, for every word He spoke, for every decision that He made, for every look upon His face, for every tone in His voice, the truth about Himself. And of course He came into this world to accomplish that redemptive transaction that would precipitate that regenerative purpose of God that would provide a means whereby fallen men might be restored to their true function. And the function of a man in his humanity is to tell the truth about his Creator.

And this is what the Bible calls salvation. This is what the Bible means when it talks about being saved. It isn't the death of Christ that saves, that reconciles.

It deals with the sin question that stands between a man and God so that God once more can restore His presence to a man. So that by the presence of the divine factor, the hidden factor, God Himself, a man may once more become functional. And the restoration of the life of God to the soul of man is called in the Bible rebirth or spiritual regeneration.

It's the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that He, God the Holy Ghost, in co-equality with the Son and the Father, reinvading the human spirit of the forgiven sinner, might by that forgiven sinner's free consent have access to the soul of that man, woman, boy or girl and begin again to do that for which man was made. Control his mind, govern his emotions, direct his will, and so govern his actions. So that if a man be in Christ, a new creation.

Because he has enjoyed a spiritual resurrection that has put God back into the man. In the presence of Christ Himself within the Christian. Now in the verse of the Lord Jesus, in assuming our humanity, we have one of the most beautiful illustrations that God can give us of some of the principles involved in your humanity and mine.

In our restoration to our true function. So I thought that this morning we might turn to that for a little while. In the first chapter of Luke's Gospel and the 26th verse.

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail thou that art highly favored.

The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Now please bear in mind that apart from the Old Testament prophecies that foreshadowed the miraculous conception and the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, this is our first introduction to this young lady called Mary.

That she was quite obviously known of God is evidence from the manner in which she was addressed by the angel Gabriel. And apart from that of course, known in the timelessness of God who inhabits eternity in the Old Testament scriptures. For in the 15th verse of the third chapter of Genesis, which you'll be well familiar, Genesis 3.15, side by side with the record of man's fall into sin, God's rebuke of Satan.

And what he said to Satan then was this. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between her seed and your seed. If the seed of that woman will bruise your head, strike a mortal blow, destroy it.

In the process you'll bruise his heel. The first foreshadowing that you have in the Old Testament scriptures, third chapter, the first book in the Bible, of the cross. As the means of redemption, whereby guilty sinners can be reconciled to a holy God.

The seed of a woman would bruise Satan's head. Jesus, born of men, on a cross, a Roman gallerist, whose heel there would be bruised, destroying him that had the power of death, even the devil. And thereby of course liberating them who through all their lifetime were subject to bondage for fear of death.

And of course in the 7th chapter, the prophecy of Isaiah, a virgin shall conceive. And bear a son. Thou shalt call his name God with us.

God incarnate. God assuming man's humanity. And this was the sign that was to be given.

And of course in the 9th chapter the same prophecy, unto us, a son is born. What's his name going to be? Everlasting Father. Wonderful Counselor.

Mighty God. Prince of Peace. These are the names given to this boy that was to be born.

And at the end of the succeeding verse it says, the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this. In other words it will be something beyond any possible human explanation. It will take the zeal of the Lord of Hosts.

It will take God in action. So you see, this young lady was known of God in the eternal ages of the past before ever she was born. But quite apart from that, after her physical birth as she walked this earth as a little girl, it's quite obviously that she had captured God's attention.

You and I don't know anything about her. We're not told where she went to school. We're not told the kind of company she kept.

But of this one thing we may be absolutely certain that as God looked upon that little girl as she grew up, she was satisfied. She was pleased. She found favour.

High favour. And she was blessed among women. What do you think it was that God noticed in this girl that qualified her to be the one to whom, as God's emissary, to bear the message this angel Gabriel should address himself? What do you think God was looking for? Do you think it was because of her physical stature? Or her family pedigree? Or the educational background and scholastic attainment? Was it because she had a good bank balance, you know, that would be able to finance the operation? What do you think God was looking for? What does God look for? If he wants any man, any woman, any boy or girl in this church family, or any church family from which you may have come today, if he's looking for some boy, girl, man or woman through whom all the potential of God could be released to accomplish some timeless end, what do you think he's looking for? Business technique? Promotional capacity? Showmanship? Organisational skills? What do you think God's looking for? Keep the place there, but I think it will be worth your while turning to the passage.

You'll find it in the second book of Chronicles. The second book of Chronicles. Sixteenth chapter.

And the eighth and the ninth verses. And this fantastic truth emerges from a rebuke that God had to give to a man who had once known the principle and practised it, but forgot it. It's a wonderful thing, you know,

to learn a principle that you never knew.

But it's a tragic thing to forget a principle that once you've known. And it was in the rebuke of this man that God tells us what he's looking for. Look at verse eight.

Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubyans a huge host with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because thou didst rely on the Lord, the hidden factor that makes divinely possible what otherwise cannot but be humanly unreasonable, yet because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hands. God moved into action and demonstrated himself strong on your behalf and you released all the divine, illimitable resources. You let God loose.

By virtue of the disposition. That's all. By virtue of an attitude of mind.

By virtue of the fact that you were willing as man to allow God to demonstrate that his strength is made perfect in your weakness. Simply in response in his faithfulness to your faith. All God was let loose.

Four. Verse nine. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.

That's all. That's all God's looking for. Herein he says to this stupid man, thou hast done foolishness.

Therefore from henceforth I shall have war. You've taken the burden on your own shoulder. You've checked your muscles.

You've gritted your teeth. You've clenched your fists. You've said, I can do it.

I can get by. I've got what it takes. And God said, okay.

Take the consequence. What he had forgotten you see that man's need is either man's problem or God's opportunity. And he had chosen now to allow his needs to be his problems.

As once he had allowed them to be God's opportunity. Where does your option lie? How many tranquilizers do you have to take? Because your needs have been allowed by you to be your problems instead of God's opportunity. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.

He's not talking about perfect men or women or boys and girls. He says, I'm not looking for a perfect man. I know I would look in vain in a fallen society.

I'm simply looking for any boy, any girl, any man, any woman who recognizing their own poverty, recognizing their own bankruptcy, recognizing their own need will adopt towards me a disposition that will allow me as God to show myself strong on their behalf. He isn't looking for a man who's going to show himself strong on God's behalf. You see this is the challenge you normally get today in this pragmatic society in which we live.

This success oriented age where turnover takes precedence over the quality of the end product and our statistics must be boost even at the cost of substance. You're constantly being promoted to do something, promoted to do something else. Be man sized for God.

God isn't interested. Do you know why? Because as men we're too small. All that God is waiting for is a man who knowing just how small he is who is prepared to let God be God sized in the man.

That's all he's looking for. I'm looking for any man, any woman, any boy, any girl, anywhere whose heart will dispose that attitude towards me that will allow me to demonstrate that I just happen to be God and that I'm big enough for the job. That I'm a hidden factor in the divine logic that makes divinely possible what otherwise cannot but be humanly unreasonable.

Why are we such pigmen? Well because long since the carnal mind has said if it is possible then it's right. And so we have to grub around in the dirt until we find enough resources to make it possible. Then we say it's right.

You see from God's point of view it only has to be right. Then it will always be possible. Not according to the resources that we can grub around and accumulate but according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

And where does he live? In you and me. In whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And in whom we are complete.

So why do you think God sent his angel to men? If the eyes of the Lord are simply looking for any boy, girl, man or woman whose heart is perfect toward him and is prepared to let God be as big as God is in their experience strong on their behalf the only reason why God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary was that as he had watched her as a little girl and a growing woman he had recognized that disposition in her heart toward God that would allow him to expose her to a proposition that humanly speaking would be utterly incredible. Utterly incredible. She was a little disturbed of course at seeing the angel you don't see an angel every day of the week.

When she saw him, it says verse 29 of Luke 1 she was troubled at his saying, cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. But the angel said to her fear not Mary, don't be frightened for thou hast found favour with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus.

He shall be great. He shall be called the son of the highest. The Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom of which he will be king.

There shall be no end. There shall be a timeless eternal kingdom and he will be the timeless and eternal king of that kingdom. And he's going to be born Mary.

Of you. You're going to be that boy's mother. Well what was the natural reaction of the natural heart of this natural woman to that unnatural message? True she was engaged to a man but the marriage hadn't been consummated.

Well what would your reaction have been? Well I imagine it would have been the same as hers. Not a cynicism in her case. Just as the wide-eyed woman said Mary to the angel in verse 34 How? Just how shall this be seen? I know not a man.

In other words, in view of the fact that the physical premise of the birth of a child born of me is absolute. How's it going to happen? I don't think she was challenging God's intelligence. I think long since she had

learned to accept something expect something in her life that was explicable only in terms of theosis.

She said, ah, this is, this is we've had some wonderful experiences with God in the past and you've done marvellous things but this is something, this is something different this is something else. How? How? So the angel answered very simply. He said, you see, Mary every demand that God makes upon a man from God's point of view is completely logical.

It's only from man's point of view that it's utterly unreasonable. Because you see, Mary, in the divine logic there's a hidden factor that's absent in human reason. And that hidden factor, Mary present in the divine logic, absent in human reason is God himself.

You want to know how? It's terribly simple, Mary. So simple. God.

Next verse. The angel answered and said to her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest will overshadow thee therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. So see that the Lord of Hosts is going to do this.

He's going to move miraculously into your experience by your consent and demonstrate that he's big enough for his own will dynamic of his own demand and at all times cause of his own effect the source of his own activity. God. Oh, by the way, the angel added for your encouragement, it may interest you to know that your cousin Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age.

This is the sixth month with her who was called barren. The sixth month with her who was called barren. All her days she was physically incapable of bearing and now in her old age, long beyond the age of bearing she's in the sixth month having conceived that she too might bear a son.

You see, Mary, with Elizabeth it's too late. With you it's too soon. But, next verse.

Don't forget the hidden factor. With God nothing shall be impossible. And all that God is looking for is any boy, any girl, any man, any woman who'll let the God of the impossible do the impossible, that's all.

And you see, Mary, this is normality. This is exactly the quality of life for which man was made. A quality of life that allows of no possible explanation but God himself allowed by man to be God in the man.

Well, that was the proposition, so far as Mary was concerned. How did she react? Now, had she reacted as you and I might react today under the pressure of our pragmatic society that has invaded the evangelical constituency having got the message that we were to have a son we'd say, OK, God, I've got the message, leave it to me. I'll organize it somehow.

Can you think of anybody else who did that? When he was told he'd have a son? What was his name? Abraham. Didn't God promise Abraham a son by Sarai? They had changed to Sarah who was barren all her days, never had born, nor could and now close on 18 years of age and God said she's going to have a son? Well, all that Abraham heard was that they were going to have a son. And he did just that.

He did just that. He said, OK, God, I'll take care of it. But of course, he recognized that God was a little absent-minded and hadn't, you know, noticed that Sarah was beyond bearing and never could have born anyway.

And so, Abraham's great preoccupation was to get God out of his dilemma so that God wouldn't be embarrassed. Now, wasn't that nice of him? Now, when men were the best, don't think that he was

insincere, he wasn't. He was totally dedicated to his own dedication.

He was a man who had faith in his own faith and was going to do big things for God and countless, countless, earnest, sincere, delightful Christian folks reduced themselves to a nervous breakdown because they weren't. With the noblest ambition in the world to do big things for God he never asked them to. Never has, never will.

Because the eyes of the Lord simply run to and fro throughout the whole of history for any boy, any girl, any man, any woman, anywhere whose heart being perfect towards Him will allow God to be as big as God is in their experience. God's simply waiting for those who will let God be big enough for the job. But if you miss the principle, you'll do what Abraham did you'll go into committee and begin to organize on God's behalf and try to do God's work man's way.

So they went into committee and co-opted Hagar, the Egyptian bondwoman and Sarah herself took the motion. She said to get God out of the awful dilemma in which he's got himself you bear a son of Hagar and we'll give him to God. Of course he'd already tried to offer to God the son of the steward of his home.

Elie, God said uh-uh. Sell. And so as well you know Ishmael was born.

I keep doing that. One pair is normally enough. Let me draw your attention.

Keep the place there again. Remember the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. The cheapest too.

When you bought the Bible you bought the commentary. And most you'll find that the Bible shows a tremendous amount of light on most commentaries. In the epistles of the Galatians.

Fourth chapter. You see we should relate these two events. In the 22nd verse of the fourth chapter of the epistles of the Galatians and I'm taking this from the Amplified New Testament.

Galatians 4.22 It is written that Abraham had two sons. One by the bondmaid. One by the free woman.

Hagar, Egyptian servant. And Sarah. But he continues verse 23 Whereas the child of a slave woman was born according to the flesh and had an ordinary birth.

What does that mean? Well it was the best that a man dedicated to God could do on God's behalf. He didn't need any supernatural explanation for the birth of Ishmael. It was a man in committee doing his best.

Mobilizing the human resources were at his disposal. All that was humanly reasonable. As opposed to that which alone must be divinely possible.

Because the one thing he wasn't reckoning with was the hidden fact in the divine logic that absent in human reason, God himself. So Ishmael was born of the flesh. The very best that Abraham could do for God.

And God said thank you for nothing. Isn't it tragic that our minds are brainwashed so constantly in our misguided hymns? Have I done my best for Jesus? Whoever asked you this? This was the folly of Abraham. This was the folly of Moses when he went out 40 years of age.

Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Mighty in word and deed to champion the cause of his people. And do for them what only God could do through him.

And for 40 years a murderer chased into the oblivion, backside of the desert. Until he was 80 years of age and learned that there was a God in the bush. Who alone could explain the fact that it burned and burned and burned.

And never became the heap of ashes that Moses had become. Doing his best for God 40 years before. Will we ever learn? Whereas the child of a slave woman was born according to the flesh.

Had an ordinary birth. The son of a free woman was born in fulfillment of a promise. An incredible promise.

An impossible promise. The promise that God had said to a man. Whose wife barren all her days was now too old to bear.

But God is big enough for his own will. All this he continues to say verse 24 is an allegory. Story with a hidden meaning.

For these two women represent two covenants. The one covenant originated from Mount Sinai where the law was given. A man doing his best for God.

And bears children just time for slavery. But the other in verse 26. Speaks of Jerusalem above the messianic kingdom of Christ.

Free and our mother. We brethren verse 28. Are children not by physical descent as with Ishmael.

But like Isis born in virtue of promise. That which is born of the flesh said the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus is flesh. Which the best that man can do.

But that which is born of the spirit is spirit. It demands a divine intervention. Yet just as at that time verse 29 of that source of Galatians.

The child of ordinary birth born according to the flesh. Despised and persecuted. Him who was born remarkably.

According to the promise and working of the Holy Spirit. So it is now. What do you find when you tell folk that they've got to give up sweating it out for God.

And let God be God. They say that's passivity. It went for folks like us.

Where would God be. Where would the church be. It's folks like us that with our feet on the ground really keep God in business.

And they'll deal with the utmost contempt. Somebody who says you must bow yourself out and bow God in. Not say it's right because you made it possible.

But know that it's right and let God make it possible. You'll have ridicule heaps upon you. Don't be surprised.

What does the scripture say. So that which is born according to the flesh despises and persecutes that which is born of the Holy Spirit. Cast out and send away the slave woman and her son.

For never shall the son of the slave woman be heir and share the inheritance with the son of the free woman. So brethren we who are born again who know that remarkable spiritual regeneration. That new

birth that put God back into the man that we might let God get loose and in action.

We who are born again are not children of a slave woman. The natural we are the free. The supernatural.

And the Christian life must essentially be supernatural. It must allow no possible explanation but the divine activity of a living God clothed with the flesh and blood of the redeemed sinner. Restored by his divine presence to his true humanity.

Any boy, girl, man or woman who with a perfect heart will let God show himself strong. Well it took many weary years before Abraham quit sweating it out in the flesh and trying to squeeze blessing out of Ishmael. And finally settled for Israel.

God blessed him. There are 120 million of them now. For the Arabs were the descendants of Ishmael.

That's why in the 20th century you are paying so much dear gas. Blame Abraham. And his misguided dedication.

A man doing his best for God. There came a day when little Isaac was born. And as that little child grew up with its shrill voice and its sparkling eyes.

Abraham learned to love that which was born of the Spirit. For whose birth there was no possible explanation but the fulfillment by God who gave his word of the word he'd given. Miraculous.

And there came a day when God said to Abraham, do you love Isaac? Oh he said, do I love him? He's the joy of my heart, the apple of my eye. God said, fine. Take him up Mount Moriah.

And take wood and fire and a knife. And slay him. Slay him? But you told me that of this seed his seed shall be as the stars of heaven.

Stand by the seashore innumerable and that in his seed shall all the fountains of the earth be blessed. And you want me to take him up the mountain and slay him? Yes God says, slay him. And you see this was the point of moral choice, the ultimate option for Abraham.

You see there was a little voice arguing inside saying, keep him now that you've got the blessing hang on to the blessing don't let him go. But Abraham was wise enough to recognize that years before when God had promised him Isaac he didn't take God seriously. He didn't credit God with the intelligence or ability to behave like God.

And so he tried to do on God's behalf what only God could do on Abraham's behalf. He said, I made a fool of myself. And though I don't understand now what God is at.

If he tells me to take this little boy up Mount Moriah and slay him and slay him I must and slay him I will. Even if God has to raise him from the dead. Let God be God.

And the night flashed in the sun. On the third morning. Does that tell you anything? Three days before he reached the top.

And on the third morning. As the night flashed in the sun God said. Thank you Abraham.

Throw the night away. That's all I needed to know. We are told in Hebrews 11 that.

He was willing to slay Isaac. Reckoning that God if needs be must even raise him from the dead. Which indeed he did.

Hebrews tells us. Chapter 11. In a figure.

For so far as Abraham was concerned in his heart. Isaac was already dead. In other words he had learned to be alive to the blesser and die to the blessing.

You see the moment we are alive only to the blessing and we die to the blesser. Then the blessing itself becomes the object of our idolatry. When we are alive only to the gift and we are no longer alive to the giver.

Then the gift itself that was given by the giver becomes the object of our idolatry. And had Abraham faltered at that stage and withheld his son. His very Isaac would have become an Ishmael.

But on that day God said to Abraham. Because you have done this thing. Because you were alive to God alone.

In blessing I will bless you. In multiplying I will multiply you. And the seed of this child shall indeed be as the stars of heaven.

And the sand of the seashore innumerable. And on that day we are told. Abraham became.

The friend of God. God is looking for friends. It's a long and weary journey sometimes before we come to the place of total absolute and utter capitulation.

Mary with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said. I don't understand.

I don't see how it could ever happen. But for that very reason it's going to be all that much more exciting. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

She is. Be it. Unto me.

That is from you God to me. Be it unto me according to your word. You said it.

You do it. Now if ever you wanted a picture of true faith that's this. Because you see contrary to popular belief.

Faith is never demonstrated by what you are doing for God. Faith is only and always and exclusively demonstrated. By what he in response in faithfulness to your faith is doing for you.

That's the nature of faith. Faith invokes the activity of a second party. It brings somebody, something into action on your behalf.

When we get on board a plane we don't exercise a faith that is demonstrated by what we are doing for the plane. I need faith to get on board a plane. I need faith in the pilot, the airline, the equipment, the ground crew, the air control.

I'm exercising faith in all those different factors which alone can bring me safely to my destination. But my faith does nothing for the airline. My faith does nothing for the pilot.

My faith does nothing for the equipment. My faith does nothing for the ground crew or air control. My faith simply brings all those factors into action on my behalf.

The pilot is in action for me. The air crew is in action for me. Air control is in action for me.

That is all in response in their integrity, in their faithfulness to my faith. And this is the nature of faith. Mary looked into the face of God and said, you said it, you do it.

She was invoking by her disposition the activity of God in terms of her humanity. And when nine months later a little baby was born there was only one person to be congratulated. God himself.

Now, why should Mary make herself available to God like this? Any particular reason? Looking back retrospectively over two millenniums of course it's easy for you and for me to say, it would be absolutely shocking if she had said no to God. How could she have said no to God? I could ask you a very simple question. Does God demand of you anything less than he demands of Mary? Does he? Who should ever be among you that for faith is not all that he has? I'll remind myself.

Does God ask of you anything less than that of Mary? What is God asking of Mary? Everything. What has God asked of you? Everything. I mean, who was going to believe her story? Would you have believed her story? What was she putting on the line? Her integrity? Her moral integrity? All her future plans? All the happy dreams around which maybe her life until then had been woven? Was all going on the line? Who was going to believe her story? Did Joseph believe her story? No.

Not even the man to whom she was a spouse. So it was going to ruin all her plans. It was going to smash her marriage process.

Here's a knock on your door. There's a girl standing outside. You say, oh good morning.

Nice to see you. Quite a stranger. And the girl says, what do you think? And you say, what do you mean, what do you think? I mean, I'm going to have a child.

Oh, well I'm happy to know that. Congratulations. Where does your husband work? Oh, I don't have a husband.

Oh, I see, you mean you're in trouble. Oh no, no, I'm not in trouble. You see, although I'm going to have a child, I'm going to have a son.

Oh, you know in advance it's going to be a son, do you? Oh yes, yes, it's going to be a son. I'll tell you something else, it's going to be God's son. He's going to be its father.

By which time, of course, you'd have been reaching for the phone. Hoping to get the ambulance before she became silent. Would you have believed her story? Of course you wouldn't.

But this was the proposition that God made to Mary. He said, Mary, though I can trust you, though I know your heart, I want you to be quite clear about this, nobody's going to believe you. Are you prepared for that, Mary? Are you prepared for the theologians of your day constantly to insist, after the birth of that son, that it was illegitimately born of you, an ignorant Galilean lying peasant girl? Because that's what they'll say.

As indeed Mary, they'll say it all down the centuries until they also say it even in Baptist seminaries. In 1977. So I want you to be fully warned, Mary, what you're letting yourself in for when you make yourself available for me to be as God, all that God can be in the life of a girl.

Are you ready for that, Mary? Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Whatever it does to my reputation, whatever it does to my future plans, whatever it may do to all the hopes and ambitions that I've cherished, whatever it may do even to the man I love, because I know he's going to be broken-hearted, at the idea that I've betrayed him. Be it unto me according to your will.

That's the virgin verse. Matthew chapter 1. We only have a moment or two. 18th verse, the verse of Jesus Christ was on this wife.

When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together, before the marriage was consummated, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privileged, because the custom then was that if a woman espoused to a man would betray him and out of wedlock, in fornication, bear a child of another, she should be brought to the public marketplace and bear stone to death, as an example. And Joseph, being a just man, a kind-hearted, tender-hearted man, he said, broken-hearted as I am, but this girl whom I loved and I thought loved me, should have borne a child by another.

Let's put it away privileged. Let's cover the whole thing up. Let's forget.

Does it sound as though Joseph was responsible, physically, for the birth of Jesus Christ? And if he wasn't, and the Lord Jesus was not born miraculously of the Holy Spirit, then of course these theologians are right. They were right when John 8 said to the Lord Jesus that the scribes and the Pharisees, we weren't born of fornication. What do they mean by that? We're not illegitimate children like you.

That's what they meant. But if Joseph repudiated responsibility for the birth of Christ, and he was not born conceived of the Holy Ghost, there's no alternative. But while he sought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Named in the Old Testament a boy, named in the New Testament a boy. Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus, Savior, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Were you named before you were born? Did your parents send a card round to announce your arrival, saying that Mary will arrive on the 31st of June, or Henry on the 1st of May? Well no, they wouldn't have stuck their necks out that far. Because Mary might have turned out to be Henry, and Henry might have turned out to be Mary. Have you ever thought how embarrassing it would be for God, and for Mary, and Joseph, and the angel, if on that first Christmas morning it had turned out to be a girl? Did you ever think about that? Why not? Why not? Well you say, God doesn't make that kind of a mistake.

No, you're right. You say, I don't believe that the Lord Jesus came miraculously born of the Holy Ghost of Mary because the Bible said he did. I believe that the Lord Jesus came miraculously born conceived of the Holy Ghost because the Bible said he would.

In the Old Testament, the New Testament as a bonus for you and me, since it records the fact that he did exactly what the Bible said he would. I don't believe that the Lord Jesus died on the cross and rose again

from the dead and ascended to be with the Father because the Bible said he did. I believe it because the Bible said he would and the New Testament says he did what the Old Testament said he would.

Because he was the virgin born child and there came a day when a man in the middle of the night consulted with the Lord Jesus who's name was Nicodemus. Now he said, you're a teacher come from God. Nobody, nobody could do the things that you do and say and be.

The quality of life that you live allows there's no possible explanation but God. Right, said the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus. You're absolutely right.

There is no possible explanation for my life, Nicodemus, but God. Don't misunderstand me Nicodemus not because I am God though God I am but because Nicodemus a man born miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit fashioned in the borrowed womb of a virgin girl though created to play the role for 33 years of preaching. And because I as the creator Nicodemus created man the creature to be inhabited by deity so that the Holy Spirit could have access to the human soul to teach my mind, control my emotions and direct my will and thus govern my behavior you see Nicodemus because I as man am allowing God to be God in the man when you see me you see him.

Oh by the way Nicodemus I've got good news for you. I came to this world to be man as man was so that man as man is might once more become man as God intended man to be. How could a man Nicodemus? Verily verily I say unto you except a man be born from above he'll never see the kingdom of God he'll never know the king back in his kingdom because Nicodemus was baffled he said how could a man be born twice he said exactly what Mary said how? and the Lord Jesus said oh well it's very simple Nicodemus you see every demand that God makes upon a man from God's point of view is completely logical it's a hidden factor that's absent in human reason and if you want to know how I'll tell you the Holy Ghost for the wind bloweth where it listeth you hear the sound thereof you know that whence it cometh whither it goeth so is every one that is born of the Holy Ghost you see Nicodemus that which is born of the flesh is flesh natural animal birth produces natural animal men but that which is born Nicodemus of the Holy Ghost that is spirit that's why you see in every kingdom Nicodemus there's got to be a divine conception and just as once Nicodemus I was born of Mary by miraculous conception so a greater miracle will take place on the grounds of that redemptive transaction that I will enact for as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever on the basis of that shed blood that reconciles guilty sinners to a holy God might become the recipient might not perish but have everlasting life but that will only take place Nicodemus when pleading my blood there takes place a divine conception and the Holy Spirit comes to reinvade your human spirit and as once I was born of Mary I will be born Nicodemus in you now you know what new birth is all about and then you'll be a member of that new body corporate that the Father will give me on the day of Pentecost and then from the dead I will come back to inhabit the humanity of boys, girls, men and women the flesh and blood of their humanity that is the great miracle now let's pray Lord Jesus it was a miracle when conceived of the Holy Spirit you were born of Mary by her availability in presenting her human to your divine invasion but greater is the miracle that is our privilege as those cleansed in your blood that by the invasion of your Holy Spirit you might be conceived in us not to be detached from the body in which you were born as then but to inhabit the body in which you were born our bodies temples of the living God our hands, your hands and feet, your feet and lips, your lips so that we as members in particular added to the body corporate in which you are the head may say to me to live with Christ help us to understand in your own precious name Amen

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17017.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/major-ian-thomas/christ-the-man-1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**