

Christians Under Law

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the divine principle and the nature of man, and how we can live as the complete expression of the divine life through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 35:42

Scripture: John 1:1-12, Romans 11:36, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 1:1-3

Topics: "Law"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker explores the nature of man and how God created him. The purpose of man's creation is to be inhabited by God and used for His purposes. The speaker emphasizes the tripartite nature of man, consisting of spirit, soul, and body. He explains that the mind and emotions play a significant role in influencing the will of man. Additionally, the speaker highlights that all forms of created life have a body, which helps us recognize and distinguish different beings. The sermon references the Bible verse from the fifth chapter of the Epistles of the Testilons, where it mentions the sanctification of the whole spirit, soul, and body.

Transcript

of Him, through Him, and to Him. All things to whom be glory forever. This was the divine principle that we saw perfectly exhibited and fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as man.

For God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past under the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the Word, who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He hath by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The Lord Jesus Christ, the complete fulfillment as the living Word of all that had previously been uttered to the fathers by the prophets. In Him, the whole fullness of deity, the Godhead, continues to dwell in bodily form, giving complete expression of the divine nature.

Colossians 2.9, giving complete expression of the divine nature. That is to say, the evidence of His perfect manhood was the complete expression of the Father's deity. In this we have a definition of true manhood.

For perfect manhood is a perfect manifestation of God. In John's epistles, and the first chapter, John, his epistles, and the first chapter, the second verse, for the light was manifesting. He is speaking of the life which is the light of manhood.

For John, in his first chapter of the first of the Gospel of John, says, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. By Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that was made. But in Him, the creative deity, who now is the final living Word, the complete consummation of all that God has said, in Him was life.

And this, the quality of life which is nothing less than Jesus Christ Himself, this life was the light of man. And says John, in the first chapter of his first epistle, this life, he said, was manifesting. The very life of deity, the divine nature, was manifesting.

We have seen it. We bear witness and show unto you that eternal life. In Him who was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

Manifested in His perfect manhood, is the quality of eternal life, which is nothing less than deity itself. So the perfect man is the complete expression of the divine life. That is the explanation for rather a strange statement that the Lord Jesus made, that you'll find in the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel.

John chapter twelve. I wonder if you've ever noticed it. In the forty-fourth verse, John 12 44, Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me.

Did you know that when you believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, you did not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what the Lord Jesus said. He said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

What he means is this, that when you look at me as a man, see me as a man, watch me as a man, listen to me as a man, because of my complete and absolute perfection in manhood, you see my father. You listen to my father. For everything I say, he says.

Everything I do, he does. Everything I am, he is. So when you believe on me, you may imagine that you are believing on the man Jesus, but you are not.

You are believing on the God who indwells and fills the man Jesus with himself. For I have come to demonstrate to you perfect manhood, which is the complete expression of the divine life. That is why you do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in the way that you believe on a great theologian, or a great spiritual leader.

You don't become a Christian the way you become a Lutheran, or a Calvinist. You don't become a Christian in the way men become Marxist. They subscribe to the opinions of a man.

They acknowledge his philosophy. They accept his interpretation of facts. They absorb his ideas.

Jesus Christ said, you do not believe on me that way. For I have not come to propagate a philosophy. I have not come to interpret my idea of truth.

I am that my father acts. I am the human expression of my divine father. He that has seen me, verse 45, seeeth him that sent him.

Now this is perfect manhood. Now don't misunderstand me. There was never a moment of time in which the Lord Jesus as man was not God.

He is the eternal God, in the beginning with God and was God. But when he came into this world from the Father to go to the Father, he came to be man. As man by God was intended to be, and therefore in his role as man, he could only do everything through the Father, and he in his perfect manhood was the complete manifestation of the Father.

Show us the Father, said Philip, and it sufficeth us. And the Lord Jesus replied, have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father. Now remember the Lord Jesus came into this world to redeem man and to restore man to his true humanity.

The measure therefore in which his redemptive purpose has been accomplished in you is the measure in which what you are is what he is. The measure in which what you say is what he says. The measure in which what you do is what he does.

That will be the touchstone of the measure in which his redemptive work has been accomplished in your life. This is what is called sanctification. Sanctification is a word that simply means that an object is put to its correct use.

The purpose for which it was created. The Lord Jesus Christ, as he walked on earth as man, presented his body to the Father that by the Father, through the Spirit, his humanity might be put to its correct use as the complete manifestation of the divine life. And what he was to the Father then, man, you are to be to him now, man.

That's what the Father was to him then, God. He now restored to the right hand of the Father to share with him the glory that he had with the Father before ever the world was, might be to you now, God. What he was to the Father, man, you are to be to him, man.

That what the Father was to him then, God, he is to be to you now, God. And as his manhood then was the complete manifestation of the Father's deity, so your manhood now is to be the complete expression of the Son's deity. The measure in which this process has been accomplished in you is the measure of your sanctification.

And this is the will of God. Even your sanctification. That your manhood should be used once again for the purpose for which God created it.

I'm going to ask you now to do a little donkey work with me. Examine a few basic facts concerning the nature of man. Because if I am to place myself at God's disposal that I as man might be used for the purpose which man was created, I need to know something about man, how God created man, and the purpose for which he created him.

God created man to be inhabited by God, for God. It is only what God is in man that enables man to be man, as God intended man to be. God in man makes man, man.

In the fifth chapter of the Ephesians of the Thessalonians, and the 23rd verse, the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, put you completely to your correct use. I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your whole spirit, soul, and body.

Here is the tripartite nature of a man. A spirit, a soul, and a body. For the sake of simplicity, we're going to examine man as he is here declared in this 23rd verse of the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians.

This is technically called a trichotomy. There are some folk who prefer a dichotomy. In other words, they prefer to divide man into two parts and not into three parts.

Well, I'm not here to engage in any kind of theological controversy. For the sake of sheer simplicity, to satisfy a simple mind like mine, I'm simply going to explain man as I find him explained here, as spirit, soul, and body. And I respect the views of those who think of man in two parts, and in point of fact, as I hope to explain to you, I don't think there's any conflict whatever.

The most important part of man is his spirit. That's why it comes first. The second important part of man is his soul.

The least but not unimportant part of man is his body. These three parts. Now, all forms of created life have a body.

If you look out of the window, you'll see many forms of created life, all of which have bodies. And you recognize them individually and specifically by the shape of their body. You look out and say, that is a tree, it's got a tree body.

You may look out of the window here and see and say, that's a dog, it's got a dog body. I can look at you and say, you've got a man body. But we recognize each other by the different shapes.

I know a tree is a tree and not a carrot by its shape. I know you from a cat, and we recognize each other individually as men by our peculiar shapes. Some more peculiar than others.

But that's how we get around. I'm glad we have got bodies. This would be a very peculiar meeting.

If we hadn't got bodies, it would be a bit spooky. So, God has chosen that every form of created life should be housed with a body. Vegetable, animal, and man.

But there's an essential difference between a vegetable, in its body, possessing that strange quality of life that man has never been able to reproduce, that enables it to grow and reproduce. There is an essential difference between a vegetable and an animal. And in the animal kingdom, of course, I include all other forms of life other than man.

What is it that makes the difference between, say, a dog and a cabbage, or a tree? Well, you see, a tree doesn't get angry with its neighbors. It doesn't get irritated by all the little bushes in the garden. That's one of the advantages of being a vegetable.

But at the same time, a tree doesn't fall in love with the bush over the wall. That's one of the disadvantages of being a vegetable. In other words, there's something lacking in the life of a vegetable, which we may call its life mechanism.

Now, this may surprise you, but an animal has a soul. There is an essential difference between the animal soul and the human soul, which I hope to be able to explain, at least in some measure. But if you turn to the first chapter of the first book in the Bible, Genesis, you'll see that a word recurs on several occasions in the 19th, 21st, 24th verses, the word for living creature or creatures.

It's a word that is again used in another form in the 30th verse. To every beast of the earth and to every fowl of the air and to everything that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat--vegetables. And it was so.

So to one form of creation that has life in a particular sense, the animal order, there has been given the vegetable order. And it was so. Now, that word creature and life, translated by those two words, is the same word.

And it's the same word that you'll discover in the seventh verse of the second chapter. The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. A living soul, exactly the same word as is previously translated as creature or life.

So that there is a common property between this form of animal creation and man, the soul. His life mechanism that enables both man and animal to behave other than a cabbage. Broadly speaking, this mechanism is divided into three parts--mind, emotion, and will.

A capacity to calculate, a capacity to react, and a capacity to decide. This is the life mechanism of all forms of animal life, in varying degrees, of course, of development or skill. What I do with my will, by the exercise of my volitional capacity, I do under the exercise or influence of my mind, my mental capacity, or my emotions, my emotional capacity, my feelings.

If you suddenly got very angry with me, that would be an emotional disturbance. And it might well be that the influence of your emotions, highly disturbed upon your will, would be to say to the will, hit him. Now if your will were captured by your emotions at that moment, that's precisely what you'd do.

You'd hit me. But probably at that moment your mental capacity would also come into operation and make a certain calculation, looking at my size and comparing my size with your size. And your mind would say to your will, on the other hand, don't do that, he'll hit you back.

And so you come to a certain decision under the influence of mind and emotion. Now of course this happens a thousand thousand times a day. In everything you do, you are operating with this life mechanism.

This is the same function that goes on in the animal kingdom. You may have a dog, and when you come home it will recognize you by your peculiar shape, and recognizing you in the air of its mind, will be highly delighted to see you, I hope, and will probably express its emotional reaction to its mental recognition by wagging its tail, at one end of its anatomy. Now the dog is simply functioning.

And mind that recognizes, and emotion that is pleased, says to the will, go and greet him. And it runs through the dirtiest puddle it can find, and then jumps up, all down your front. And it has translated its mental recognition and its emotional delight into action, through the exercise of its will.

Now that's the function of a dog. It will remember the man that kicked it, and growl when he passes. It will remember the girl that gave it a piece of chocolate, and go up with a smile on its face, for the next bit.

It will remember where it buried its bone. If it can't get through the front door, it'll get in through the back window. It knows exactly the most comfortable seat in the house.

Furthermore, having welcomed you on your arrival, and permitting you gladly to go through the front door, the same dog will be highly irritated at the suggestion that a man should be allowed to climb in through the bathroom window in the middle of the night. For a mental calculation will go on in the dog's mind and say, my master has the right to go through the front door, but this man doesn't have the right to come through the bathroom window. And as a result of its mental calculation, its emotions will again be stirred at the

other end of its anatomy, to the detriment of the man's pants.

Now this is the soul of a dog in action. I was staying on the east coast about two years ago with friends, and my hostess was explaining the great dilemma in which she had found herself in her desire to feed both birds and squirrels at one and the same time. For she discovered that the squirrels had an unhappy knack of getting all that she provided for the birds, and she used all her ingenuity to discover a means whereby she could segregate the two appetites.

Then she hit on the master plan. From the second story of her home there was a laundry line that went out to a distant tree over a lawn, and so she took about two yards of fine thread, and at one end she fastened the lid of a tin, making a little tray upon which she put the peanut butter for the birds. She then tied it about two yards from the laundry line and pulled it out halfway between house and tree.

Now no squirrel could get there, she thought, until she looked out through the window, and she saw a squirrel go up the trunk of the tree, climb upside down along the laundry line, hang by its hind legs over the tray, and pull the cotton up with its hind legs. Now that was cold calculation, and I'm sorry to say that she now just feeds squirrels, because her human ingenuity has not as yet been able to outwit the squirrel's ingenuity in the area of its soul. Now that being so, we come to the unhappy conclusion that if that's all we are, body and soul, we're nothing more than animals.

Now this is vitally important, we shan't have time to enlarge upon this, at least I doubt it, but this is the very basis of international, godless, Christless communism. This is the very basis of dialectic materialism, that man is nothing more than the highest form of animal life upon this particular planet. He has no eternal destiny, when he dies, he dies like a dog.

So this is not irrelevant to the day in which you and I live, for we are threatened now on every side by this basic philosophy. We need therefore to know why it is we consider ourselves to be men as distinct from animals, and not just animals that are called men. What is the essential basic difference between man as man, and the animal kingdom in general? The basic difference is this, that God has given to man a quality, or a capacity, that he did not give to any other form of created life.

Added to his body, added to his soul, God gave him a spirit, as an act of creation, as the God created the universes, so he also created the spirit of man within him. Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 1. Zechariah 12 verse 1, The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth. The one who threw the universes into space, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

As a deliberate act of creation, God created man different from any other form of created life, for he formed in him what is described in the Bible as the spirit of man. We need therefore to understand what is involved in having within us this spirit that God created. What is an adequate definition of the spirit of man? Well there's a very fascinating definition given to us, which is extremely valuable, in the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 20 and verse 27. Proverbs 20 and verse 27. The spirit of man is the candle or the lamp of the Lord.

The human spirit is a lamp inbuilt. Now that's a very very valuable definition of the human spirit, and extremely accurate. Because contrary to popular idea, a lamp doesn't produce light.

We say that a lamp produces light, but it's very easy to demonstrate that a lamp doesn't produce light. Go at night into a lightened room, and throw the master switch and see how much light the lamps produce. They don't produce any.

They're still lamps, they're still suspended from the same position, they still would look as beautiful if you could see them, but they don't produce light. Because lamps just don't produce light. I wish they did.

We wouldn't have any electricity bills. Lamps simply have an inbuilt capacity to receive that, upon which they are totally dependent for the performance of a function for which they were created. A lamp simply has a capacity to receive, and if it ceases to receive that upon which it must relentlessly be dependent, it will cease to function.

As a lamp was created to function, it may still be beautiful, but it will be beautifully useless, and beautifully lightless. And darkness is simply lightlessness. And a lamp that ceases to receive becomes lightless.

And that is a state called darkness. So God created in man a capacity to receive his lamp. The capacity to receive that which alone enables man to function as man as God intended man to function.

God himself. What makes you different from the animal creation, although you are an animal, biologically, is the fact that you can receive God, and enjoy God. And it is only what God is in you that makes you man.

And apart from this capacity to receive and enjoy God, you would be no more than the communists say, an animal. And therefore to destroy you is only to destroy animal life. And if that is in the interest of the herd, your death is moral.

For there is no other absolute standard of morality than the survival of the herd. And that is basic to the communistic philosophy of life. That is why the atrocities and the heinous crimes that they commit, estimated as such to us, are acts of complete morality to them.

Because of this basic philosophy. It is your capacity to receive God and to enjoy God that makes you man. And man is man only by virtue of what God is in man.

If he loses God, he loses everything that makes him man. Now that's the nature of man. A spirit which we may describe as the royal residence for God himself, the king.

A life mechanism which we'll call the human personality. Mind, emotions, and will. Otherwise described in the bible as the heart.

Let's think of that as the music room. With the beautiful mechanism of the human personality calculated to produce perfect melody when played by the master musician. And here in the human soul there is the console, the keyboard, designed to be available exclusively to the resident within the royal palace of the spirit.

So that the whole of man's human personality was created by God to be totally, exclusively, and unreservedly available to God. And the body is the amplifier. So that as the royal resident, God by his spirit, who indwells the human spirit, plays the console of the human personality, there is produced in terms of action, through the body, amplified to the world, a complete manifestation of the nature and life of God, who created, indwells, and expresses himself through man.

And that's man in perfection. This is man as God intended man to be. Man in his innocence.

Man as we see manhood demonstrated in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the father gave his spirit, we're told, without measure. Whom we are told in the first verse of the fourth chapter of Luke's gospel was filled with the Holy Ghost, not spasmodically, but always, always, completely, unquestioningly, available to the father. That the father who indwelt him through the spirit might do the work, amplifying in terms of his perfect manhood, his body, to the world, all that the father is.

So he could say, when you see me, you see him. When you hear me, you hear him. What I am, he is.

Perfect manhood, but something happens. It's called the fall of man, and we're going to examine this in closer detail tomorrow. For I'm firmly convinced that you will never intelligently understand that to which you are saved, until you understand that from which you are saved.

And you will never understand that from which you are saved, until you understand that from which man fell. We shall cease then simply to know language, and we shall begin to understand principles. And so tomorrow we will discuss what happened when man forfeited the divine presence from the human spirit, and the human personality represented by the music room was invaded by one who, instead of producing the perfect melody of a life in harmony with God, prostituted man's humanity and perpetrated nothing but discord in the error of his mind, emotions, and his will, having usurped in man's soul the sovereignty that belongs alone to the God who created him.

Then maybe we shall begin to understand the true nature of our salvation and the purpose of God in Christ, and the difference between walking in the spirit and in the flesh. Now let us pray.

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