

Drop Your Sack

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas challenges believers to abandon their spiritual poverty and embrace the fullness of life available in Christ, as illustrated through the story of Ruth.

Duration: 49:11

Scripture: Ruth 1:16-17, Matthew 6:33, John 8:44, Romans 7:1-4, Romans 7:14, Romans 7:17-18

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker challenges believers to examine their lives and the evidence they present as members of the bride of Christ. He questions whether their lives reflect the wealth and abundance that comes from their relationship with Jesus. The speaker emphasizes the importance of living in the fullness of Christ's spirit and allowing Him to fill every aspect of their lives. He contrasts this with the image of believers who are constantly seeking blessings and trying different methods to find fulfillment, but ultimately remain unsatisfied. The speaker encourages believers to continually recognize their need for Jesus and to live in the abundance He offers.

Transcript

My god is king stooped to marry pleasure, pleasure was turned to bitterness, but there was good news. Fred in Bethlehem, a mighty man of wealth, boaz, strength, the one who had the right to redeem, to buy back out of bankruptcy and restore the life to the lifeless, and to walk the aisle, but there was only one wedding, but when Ruth in all the beauty of a contrite spirit, entered into this new and holy wedlock with the mighty man of wealth who was strength, whose strength was to be made perfect in her weakness, not only was she purchased back out of bankruptcy, but a little baby was born, new life, and his name was Obed, and her life was filled with worship. That's Ruth, one through four.

But in the fifth chapter of Ruth, and the first verse, it came to pass, always starts like that, it came to pass that after Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife, and after that Ruth bare a son. One morning as the sun began to shine, Boaz got up and he drew the curtains and he looked out of the bedroom window, that's verse five, and he saw Ruth with a sack over her shoulder trudging across the fields, and he said, Ruth, where are you going? And as she looked over her shoulder somewhat wearily, she said, I'm going to get the breakfast. And Boaz said, what do you mean you're going to get the breakfast? Where are you going to get the breakfast? She said, I'm going out to the fields to glean.

I'm going to pick up anything I can find. I'm going grubbing around in the dirt to see if I can find something left over. Now that's the real message of the Book of Ruth.

Can you imagine the look on Boaz's face? Can you imagine the heaviness of his heart if one morning he should see Ruth whom he had redeemed out of bankruptcy, whom he had taken to be his wedded wife, that she might be joint heir with him to the totality of his estate, going across the fields trudging wearily with a sack over her shoulder, grubbing around in the dirt, trying to pick up a little bit here and pick up a little bit there and stuff it in her sack. He'd say, Ruth, come back at once. How dare you? How dare you put to me such shame? I publicly declared that you had become my wedded wife.

I took you in the presence of witnesses and you are my bride. How dare you go out and grub around in the dirt and stuff little bits in your old sack? Everything in the barn is yours. That's the message of the Book of Ruth.

In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily, and you're complete in him. Can you imagine with what heaviness of heart our Lord Jesus, our bridegroom, looks down from heaven at his bride, clad in tattered rags, still with all the evidences of their prior bankruptcy, trudging through the fields with sacks over their shoulders, grubbing in the dirt, picking up the dropping, stuffing it in their sack. And you're a child of God.

You say you're a member of the bride of Christ. You say that you've been blessed by the Father with every spiritual blessing in heavenly things in Christ Jesus. You say you've entered into a holy and wonderful union with a risen Lord whose life you share, who died for you that whether you wake or sleep, alive or dead, in the body or out of it, here or there, you live together with him.

Say, what kind of a picture do you give as an individual believer in the Lord Jesus as one who claims to be a member of his bride? What evidence does your life give of his wealth? Do the neighbors call you worship? Does your roommate with whom you share most of your time, do the other students, do the folk at home, do your own brothers and sisters, do your parents, do the folk you meet downtown, do they become compellingly aware of the unutterable wealth of which you must have become heir by virtue of your new relationship to Jesus Christ? Or alas, does the world see you grubbing around in the dirt with your miserable sack over your shoulder, every now and again shocked as you look at your tattered rags and feel so hungry and go out to grub a little bit of blessing here and a little bit of blessing there, trying this gimmick or that, a new discipline or some other rule or regulation, another little book, another shot in the arm, stuff it in your sack, stuff it in your sack, instead of living day by day in the plenitude of the one who having redeemed you by the blood he shed upon the cross, has come in the fullness of his divine spirit to fill your humanity with himself so that you may become a body, wholly filled and flooded with God! I'll tell you something, if you've never learned that the Lord Jesus died for you so that he could put his life in you, if you've never learned that that act whereby initially you placed your need at his feet was to introduce you to an attitude, a way of life, that for every step you take recognizes that you could never have more and you'd never enjoy less than all that Jesus Christ is, for every step you take into every situation to which that step introduces you, your need at his feet, because everything in the barn! Then you'll get pretty tired of grubbing in the dirt. Your Christianity will be a pretty wearisome business if you're just going here to this meeting and that, to this conference and the other, learning this idea, reading this book, listening to that man, and stuffing a little blessing in your sack. You'll be fit to quit.

One day you'll say, God I'm throwing in the sponge, and Jesus will say, don't throw in the sponge, just throw down your sack, and please realize that I gave myself for you, so that I might give myself to you. And you really can't afford to have anything less. So simple, isn't it? So simple.

If you're not living day by day on the basis that Jesus Christ who gave himself for you has now given himself to you, and that everything you could ever possibly need at any time in any circumstance is to be found in him, you'll make your Christian life pathetically, pathologically complicated. You'll be working out all kinds of schemes whereby you can go gleaming and pick up a few remnants. You know, every marvelous picture that God has given us in the Old Testament, so lucid, so clear, so fantastically accurate.

This is the miracle of the book. It's God-breathed, it's God-inspired, it's God-authored. Every Old Testament picture that elucidates for us some New Testament principle has its counterpart in the pages of the New Testament.

And the particular counterpart, I believe, of this particular illustration that God has given us in the book of Ruth is found in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Romans and chapter 7. And I trust that this passage, the first four verses of that chapter, will have greater meaning for you now. Romans chapter 7, rather than read them to you from the authorized King James, which is quite frankly in its translation a little fuzzy, you don't really get the strength of the argument, the main thrust of what the Apostle Paul is trying to say, let me read it to you from the amplified New Testament. Seventh of Romans and the first four verses.

Do you not know, brethren, for I am speaking to men who are acquainted with the law, that legal claims have power over a person only for so long as he is alive? For instance, verse 2, a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is loosed and discharged from the law concerning her husband. Now that's a simple statement of fact. A married woman, so long as her husband is alive, is bound by the law in wedlock to that man.

But if he dies, then the law looses her from the deceased husband and she is at liberty. Accordingly, verse 3, she will be held an adulteress if she unites herself to another man while her husband lives, because the law binds her to that man, so that if she then, while still by the law bound to the man whom she first married, marries another, she commits adultery. She's living in polygamy.

She's got two husbands. But if her husband dies, the marriage law no longer is binding on her. The law that bound her to her first husband, that would make a polygamist an adultery, an adulterer, if she were to marry another, now releases her from the wedlock that bound her to her first husband.

She is free from that law, and if she now unites herself to another man, she is not an adulteress, because she now still only has one man. Well, the argument's very simple. A woman is married, she's bound by the law to that man.

If she marries another while he is still alive, she's an adulteress. If he dies, the law no longer binds her to the deceased. She is at liberty, she may marry another, and she is not an adulteress.

That's the argument. Likewise, my brethren, verse 4, you have undergone death, so far as the law is concerned, through the crucified body of Christ, so that now you may belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. Now the picture, of course, is very simple.

That you and I, when we were born to this world, were born married to an old Adam nature. Difficult to define. It's called in the New Testament the flesh, that carnal mind, which is at enmity with God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

It's a rebel through and through. It's a sin principle of satanic origin. It's not the devil himself, but it's a principle that he has introduced into the human soul, so that the human soul, in its spiritual destitution, neither protected by instinct nor governed by God, becomes the workshop of the devil himself, so that the Lord Jesus, talking to the Pharisees, could say this, you are of your father the devil, you have inherited his nature, and the lusts of your father you will do.

Your body is available for him to make himself incarnate, as once I as God gave you a body that I might make myself incarnate. So your humanity, your hands, your feet, your lips, your mind, your eyes, your ears, are being prostituted by an alien influence that has usurped my kingdom. I am no longer king in my kingdom.

This evil satanic principle is king in the kingdom, so that your body, in its members, is now yielded to this principle of sin, and the members of your body become instruments of unrighteousness. So he that committed sin takes his character from the devil. Every act of sin has its origin in Satan himself, who perpetuates his character in terms of human behavior.

This is the nature to which you were wedded when you were born, whether you like it or whether you don't. And it is from this evil principle within you to which you were wedded as a fallen member of a fallen race, from which stems every act of sin that simply makes incarnate the devil's character. He was a murderer, said the Lord Jesus, and therefore you want to kill me, because what he is, you do.

He's a liar from the beginning, so when I tell you the truth, you resist it and you reject it, because what he is, a liar, is manifest incarnate in terms of your behavior patterns. So bear this in mind, that every time you commit sin, you are allowing Satan to become incarnate in terms of your humanity. That's what, of course, the apostle meant in the same epistle and the same chapter.

We know, verse 14, that the law is spiritual, but I am a creature of the flesh. Having been sold into slavery under the control of sin, I do not understand my own actions. I'm baffled and bewildered.

I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe, which my moral instinct condemns. Verse 17, however, it is no longer I who does the deed, but the sin principle, which is at home in me and has possession of me. I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.

I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out, for I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am ever doing. Now, if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it.

It is not myself that acts, but the sin principle which dwells within me, fixed and operating within my soul. In other words, I am wedded to a principle that is inherently hostile to God, and from this principle within me, which is an attitude of rebellion towards God, my creator stems every act of sin, which is only the evidence of the principle within me. So you see, you do not become a liar because you tell lies.

You only tell lies because you're a liar. And you don't even have to tell lies to be the liar that you are. Inherently within you there is a liar waiting for the opportunity to tell a lie.

That's all. And the moment your body becomes available to that principle which is a lie, you're a liar. You don't become a thief because you steal, you steal only because you are a thief.

If you were not a thief, you wouldn't steal. The principle is there, and he is a thief. All he's waiting for is your consent to use your body to make incarnate what he is in action.

That's all. You are not an adulterer because you commit adultery. You will only commit adultery because you are an adulterer.

And within your heart there is a principle which is already adulterous. That's why in your social contacts, with your contact the one with the other, you've got to be incredibly careful. You've got to make perfectly certain that the right person is operating your soul because you are already an adulterer.

That's why the Lord Jesus said a man, if he looks upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery in his heart because he is an adulterer. He simply hasn't as yet had the opportunity, without unpleasant consequences, of making incarnate what is already his nature within. That same principle within you is already adulterous and is simply waiting for the opportunity in an unguarded moment to use your body for the act of adultery.

That's all. And you will not become an adulterer because you commit adultery. You will commit adultery because you are already an adulterer.

So don't kid yourself. This is the nature to which you were wedded and to which I was wedded. And that old nature will never change.

It will never improve. And the adulterer within you today will love adultery in 50 years time as much as that adulterer within you loves adultery now. That liar that's in you will love to tell lies in 50 years time as surely as it loves to tell lies now.

That thief within you will go on being a thief so long as it exists within you. It is an old Adamic nature of satanic origin and God says that in this your flesh dwells no good thing. That proud, arrogant, conceited individual within you will always manifest itself and will love to be self-approving and will be conceited and proud in 50 years time as it is today.

You were wedded to this nature. That's why no amount of legislation will ever make you holy. You cannot legislate righteousness because that principle within you will always bear its own fruits.

He that committed sin takes his character from the devil. It's the natural fruit from the natural root. And if just reminding you again of that beehive where the rigid interlock between the instinctive crust and the bee soul has been shattered so that you have 80,000 bees all of which have become egocentric.

No amount of legislation in the world, no amount of rules and regulations will ever restore discipline to that bee swarm. Only the restoration of the rigid interlock between the instinctive thrust and the bee soul. And that is why said Jesus, unless you're born again and the divine principle of sovereignty is re-established within your humanity, you will know nothing about the kingdom of God.

You can be legislated, you can be submitted to every kind of discipline, rule or regulation, but that principle within you will be as hostile and as much a rebel tomorrow as it was yesterday. You cannot legislate righteousness. And any quality of righteousness that is produced simply by the pressures of some

legislation, some legalistic system, is of absolutely no moral value whatever to God.

You simply become a house-trained evangelical as you may have a house-trained dog in your home. And the tragedy by and large, especially in this country, is that tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of teenager boys and girls and men and women, many of whom go to colleges like this as an evangelical finishing school, have never known the divine principle of a life within from which there derives instinctively a new and glorious quality of life that has its origin in God himself. They're simply house-trained evangelicals who never had any conscience of their own and never came to any one single real conviction of their own.

You can produce a dog with a very effective conscience, but there's no moral value to it. When you have a little puppy dog, you have to teach it that there are things best done outside. Well how do you do it? Do you moralize? No, you smack it.

And after a bit the message gets through and the dog learns that there are things that are a smack wrong, that's all. And if you don't like your dog sleeping on your bed while you're out, every time you find it there you thrash it until at last the message gets through. The dog doesn't see any intelligent purpose whatever in the discipline that you are imposing upon it, and when it steals your lunch it doesn't consider itself to be a thief.

A hungry dog ought to eat, and if there's any steak lying around the most obvious thing for a dog to do is to eat it. And it simply cannot understand you, you two-legged animal. Why me, a four-legged animal, shouldn't like steak as much as you do.

But it gets the message. Every time it eats your steak it gets thrashed. So it learns that there are things that are smack wrong, and it stops doing them simply because it hurts, but there's no moral value whatever in the fact that the dog is no longer a thief, and that it's learned the social graces.

Goes outside when it should. Any moral value in this? Absolutely not. And then of course you proceed to teach the dog to do things for which a dog was never invented.

You make it sit on its two legs and hang its two front ones like this. And the dog looks at you with meaningful sympathy. Why ever I should have given four legs and you make me sit on two and dangle these as though they were cabbages or something.

I can't think. But at least every time I try you give me a candy. Thanks.

And so it learns that there are certain things that are smack wrong, and it learns that there are certain things that are candy right. So now it's a house trained dog, and it's got a system of morality which is totally devoid of any intrinsic worth. And lots of you were brought up that way within the evangelical constituency.

You never had any moral conviction about anything, but you learned there were certain things you did and you got smacked. There are certain places you went to and you got smacked. So you learn now there are things that are smack wrong.

So in order to be acceptable within this particular religious club, you don't do this and you don't go there if anybody's watching. But you feel perfectly at liberty to do so if you could get away with it without the smack. That's because you never had any conscience of your own.

And that's why a boy or girl in a Bible college can do things that even the unregenerate would be ashamed of. That's why the carnal church in Corinth, boasting of its charismatic gifts, noisiest in its boastfulness of its own spirituality, was capable of tolerating sin that wasn't even named amongst the Gentiles. And the whole thing is a front.

How long has your life as a Christian been a front? Avoiding the smack and earning the candy, and then congratulating yourself by virtue of your conformity to pattern upon your spirituality, which is totally destitute of any moral value at all. You and I were married to an old Adamic nature that is incorrigibly bad and will never improve. But the message of the gospel tells us this, that when the Lord Jesus died for us objectively, for us, as a historical fact 2,000 years ago, in a marvelous way that you and I will never begin to comprehend, God identified that old Adamic nature to which you and I were by nature wedded when we were born in this world.

He identified that nature with Christ in death, sentenced, executed, and buried. So that judicially God now reckons that the wedlock, the law of marriage that once bound you to that old nature has been severed, and you are at liberty. God judicially reckons you to have been crucified with Christ.

Not your personality, not your body, soul, and spirit, not the real you that God created for himself. I'm not talking about that. That is your individual entity, that's your being, that's your personality, whom God's loved.

There's nothing sinful about your human body, nothing. There is nothing sinful about your human soul. God gave you a mind to think with, and emotions to react with, and a will to decide with.

There is nothing sinful about your human spirit. You were fearfully and wonderfully made. You were given by God intelligently a body, a soul, and a spirit to be intelligently used by an intelligent God for an intelligent purpose.

There is nothing sinful about that. There's only something sinful about the way this body, soul, and spirit may be used by an alien usurper of God's sovereignty when Jesus is no longer allowed to be king in his kingdom. That's all.

And simply, God says, that usurper was sentenced, executed, and buried in the person of my son. And I'm prepared to credit to you the death sentence that was executed in him. So I now release you from that unholy wedlock.

Being released from that unholy wedlock, you now are at liberty to be married to another. And the amazing thing is this, that the other to whom you are to be married is the one who, through his own death, took that old Adamic nature into the grave, but who rose again from the dead, that having left that old Adamic nature in the grave, you might now enter into a new and holy union with him. That you might bring forth fruit unto God.

That Obed might be begotten, and your life filled with worship. Recognizing that Jesus, in the day that he redeemed you with his blood, has come by his Holy Spirit to reoccupy your humanity to be king in his kingdom, and to introduce you to the illimitable wealth of his timeless estate, Marlon. Now you see the picture in the book of Ruth.

Ruth, as we introduced to her, was married to Marlon. And so long as Marlon survived, she would not have been at liberty to marry Boaz. But Marlon died, and by the law of death, she was released from the

law of marriage.

And because Marlon was dead, she was at liberty to enter into a new and holy union with Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, and begotten Boaz, begotten in Obed, the one who would fill her life with a new fragrance, and who would be a restorer of her life. And of course, marvelous privilege that should be hers, to become one of that genealogical line through whom from Adam to Bethlehem, God might send his word. Bread in Bethlehem.

Now do you see the picture? Orpah went on living as though she was still married to the dead. She went back to where she belonged, to her people and her gods. The redemption was total and all-embracing, what Boaz was prepared to do for Ruth, Boaz was prepared to do for Orpah.

And Orpah, released through death, was as much entitled to enter into a new marital union with Boaz, as Ruth was entitled to enter into a new marital union with Boaz. And what took place when you accepted Christ as your Redeemer, was simply that you placed your knee at his feet as a bankrupt sinner, and by the blood that he shed through the death that he died, on the basis of the life that he lived that gave him the right to die for you, sinless, he paid your debt. And then being risen again from the dead as your bridegroom, he welcomes you as his bride, and introduces you to his estate, and comes by his Holy Spirit to credit you with all the righteousness of God himself.

So that what the law could not do, in that was weak through the flesh, because within you there was a principle to which by nature you were wedded, that is hostile to God's law, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So what the law could not do, make anything perfect, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and force him, condemn sin in his flesh, so that now the righteousness demanded by the law might be fulfilled in you, who walk no longer after the flesh, trying to discipline or house train that all the dammit nature that is hostile to God, but walking now in the Spirit, sharing the life of Jesus Christ, who will as fully and gloriously and as gladly satisfy the demands of God's law in righteousness in your humanity, as nearly 2,000 years ago, he was capable, gladly, of fulfilling the demands of that law in righteousness in the body the Father gave him at Bethlehem. Don't you see that your body now is that humanity in which Jesus Christ wants once more to fulfill every demand that the law ever made upon a man.

So you are not released from the law, you are simply introduced by this new marriage union with Jesus Christ to somebody whose nature it is to keep that law. He said, I have not come to destroy the law, I have come to fulfill it. Not one jot or tittle of the law and all its demands upon a man will ever be passed away until this earth passes away.

But Jesus Christ is the only person competent within you today to live the Christian life. And so long as you fail to grasp that fact, you'll go around with your sack, rubbing in the dirt, picking up a little bit of blessing here, a little bit of charismatic experience there, a little bit of something somewhere else, pass it in your sack, and you'll look as poverty stricken and as battered and as tattered as ever the day before ever you entered into a union with Jesus Christ, and his heart will be heavy and focused. Don't think much of your husband, so maybe it's time you dropped your sack.

What a marvelous picture this is. Look in the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Romans chapter 6, speaking of course not of water baptism, but of that spiritual baptism of which water baptism is only the outward evidence.

Are you ignorant, verse 3, of the fact that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Don't you realize that by consenting to accept Christ as your Redeemer, you voluntarily accepted God's verdict upon what you are, dominated by the flesh, as opposed to what only God can make you, dominated by the Spirit. And so you said, you're quite right God, you were absolutely right when you sentenced me to death, identified me with your son, and took me with him into the grave and left me there. I was baptized into his death.

We were buried therefore, verse 4, with him by the baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, so we too now might habitually live and behave in newness of life, in union with Jesus Christ, who has become our life, to whom now we are wedded, and whose life we share, for he died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, in the body or out of it, here or there, on earth or in heaven, we might live, live, live, together with him. For if we have become one, verse 5, by sharing a death like his, we shall also be one with him in sharing his resurrection. What a marvelous thing.

And yet the vast bulk of Christians, including a great number of you, if not the vast majority, have lived on as a Christian, as though you had to legislate somehow, that old Adamic nature, to behave like a good house-trained evangelical. And you wonder why your Christian life is such a pathetic, defeated parody of the real thing, just a caricature of the real life, which is Jesus is alive, and he is alive in me. I no more deserve his life in me than I deserve his death for me, but God has given me both.

And to enjoy less than his life in me, by this new marriage union with the one who was risen from the dead, to enjoy less than that, is to cheat Jesus Christ of that for which he shed his blood to purchase me back out of bankruptcy. It does nothing but shame his holy name, for the world to see me trudging through the fields, gleaning in the dirt with my sack over my back. This was the, this was the Galatian church.

That's why Paul rebukes them. Do you remember how in the third chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, Paul says this, Galatians in chapter three, let me read this too from the Amplified New Testament, because it's somewhat more pointed. Foolish Galatians, it says in the authorized, but in the third, more accurately translated and more fully rendered, oh you poor and silly and thoughtless and unreflecting and senseless Galatians.

Well that's Amplified, but it's not exaggerated, because it takes all that to describe the sheer stupidity of a boy, girl, man or woman who having claimed redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, lives less than in the plenitude of his indwelling life, who has reduced Christianity to a procedure, to a formula, to so many rules and regulations. Instead of enjoying that superb divine quality of life that makes every rule and regulation a delight to fulfill. It doesn't relieve you from an element of discipline, but the discipline is from the inside instead of from within the, from the outside.

That's the difference. If you've got a bunch of carnal Christians, then you've got no option but to have rules and regulations. If you've got a beehive in which the rigid interlock has not been restored between the instinctive thrust and the bee soul, then you've got to legislate.

You've got to try to teach those bees to behave themselves. And if you've got a bunch of carnal Bible school students, then you've got to have a thousand rules and regulations to keep them in line. But if you can get a bunch of Bible school students who are so related to Jesus Christ, that he who is the common content of every true believer, and the one king in all of his kingdom, you'll find that in a corporate dynamic thrust there'll be one supreme spiritual organic whole, and any rule or regulation that is sensible and

reasonable will be a delight to fulfill by the inner thrust of his divine discipline that makes us disciples.

Discipline. Disciple. A disciple is simply not somebody who's learned to keep human regulations.

A disciple is somebody who's learned to yield unquestioning obedience to the Holy Spirit. For they that are led by the Spirit of God, who are under his discipline, they are the sons of God. They're being what they have become.

So you see the rules and regulations that may irk your flesh will become a delight to God's Spirit if they offer to him a joyful opportunity of expressing his nature, his character, his selflessness, his humility, so that everybody can know that boy, that girl lives together with Christ. Let me ask you this one question. Verse 2 of Galatians 3, did you receive the Holy Spirit as the result of obeying the law and doing its works, or was it by hearing the message of the gospel and believing? Now you understand what Paul understands? By the gospel.

What are we to receive by hearing and believing the message of the gospel? Forgiveness? No. Heaven? No. It includes forgiveness, it includes heaven.

That's in the package, but that wasn't what God had in mind. The purpose of God in gospel was not just to get men out of hell and into heaven, but to get God out of heaven into man. Let me ask you this one question.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit as the result of obeying the law and doing its works, or was it by hearing the message of the gospel and believing? You received the Holy Spirit, the re-impacted life of your now risen Lord, that he might be king in his kingdom when you listen to the gospel of God's grace that provides through his blood the redemption that reconciles you to a holy God and allows him to re-impart to you by the gift of his Holy Spirit the life that was lost in Adam. And you come alive, you're resurrected, you're reborn, and now you can understand the kingdom because the king is back in his kingdom. Verse three, are you so foolish and so senseless and so silly, having begun your new life spiritually with the Holy Spirit, the king being back in his kingdom? Are you so stupid, so senseless, so unthoughtful that you lock him up downstairs in the cellar, and although he, the only person capable of governing the kingdom, is resident within his kingdom, you ignore his presence entirely, and you now try to be made perfect in the flesh.

Instead of letting Jesus Christ be the only person in you who can satisfy the demands of God's law and the demands of God's righteousness, you totally ignore his presence and allow the flesh to dominate on the pretense that it's going to live an evangelical life. Well, can you imagine anything more stupid than that? Here are men and women in the church in Galatia, out in the fields with their sack over their shoulder, grubbing in the dirt, trying to eat out a living when everything in the barn provided for them by their new husband is totally neglected. God couldn't speak any louder or clearer than that.

I shared a letter with your president the other morning or the other evening, just these two or three lines, but it's startling. It's a man, a doctor of 55 years of age, who's been a Christian for many, many years, but he attended meetings that we had a couple of weeks back in Phoenix, Arizona, and he wrote to me in California just a week or so back, and he simply thanked me for the messages. Your message was a refreshing change from the usual evangelistic theme.

Now, listen to this. The usual evangelistic theme. Now, he'd been listening to the usual evangelistic theme for year in, year out, year in, year out, year in, year out, Sunday by Sunday.

A refreshing change from the usual evangelistic theme. In fact, he says, it was the first time I have ever heard anyone emphasize the role Jesus Christ actually plays in our lives, who alone is able to carry out the purposes of God through our imperfect humanity. Now, if the usual evangelistic theme is such that nobody ever hears that Jesus Christ has a role to play in the Christian life, where have we arrived in our evangelism? What is the spiritual content of our gospel churches? If I can preach an evangelistic theme that does not introduce the forgiven sinner to the glorious fact that Jesus Christ has a role to play in his life as a Christian on earth, God help the church of Jesus Christ, and God help above everything else our evangelical constituency.

And if men and women are coming out of our Bible institutes and Bible colleges and Bible seminaries to preach a quality of Christianity that does not demand the presence and person of Jesus Christ to play any role whatever in the process of being a Christian on earth, we might as well shut our door and become communists. I'll tell you something, Jesus Christ is the only person capable of living the Christian life, and if you want to live a Christian life apart from Jesus Christ, you might just as well go back to the first Adam, who believed the devil's lie that he could be a man without God. Because if a man can be a man without God, a Christian can be a Christian without Christ.

And if you want to practice the Christian faith as a Christian without Christ, have an evangelistic theme that denies him any role in the Christian life on earth, then you are perpetuating in your very evangelicalism the lie that the devil told to Adam and the Adamic creed of self-sufficiency that led to him dying on a cross. Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? How long have you been living your Christian life without Christ? How long have you reduced it to a pattern, to a procedure, to so many rules and regulations? How long have you been out gleaning, grubbing in the dirt with your sack over your shoulder, instead of entering into all the exhilarating, exciting, thrilling, marvelous plenitude of the risen Lord sharing his life with us on earth? Little wonder that so few people are impressed by the message we have to bring to them. I wouldn't trade my life as an unregenerate sinner for the average life of the defeated Christian, would you? They're having a whale of a time on the way to hell, and so many Christians are having a miserable time on the way to heaven.

God never intended you and me to have a miserable time on the way to heaven. He said it's heaven on the way to heaven, in the body or out of it, awake or asleep, here or there, on earth or in heaven. You live together, a quality of life which is superlative.

I've come, said the Lord Jesus, that you might have life more abundant. I've come that you might have joy unspeakable and full of glory. I've come that you might evidence every moment of every day to all your neighbors a peace that passes understanding.

Yours is to be a love that passes knowledge. You are to be more than conquerors through him that loved you, who gave himself not only for you, but gave himself to you, that every day may be stamped by the miraculous, so that your life may have a quality that is totally inexplicable, except in terms of God himself. Forgive me if I use an illustration that I used some four or five years ago when I was here.

Some of you have reminded me of it, but it's the simplest thing I know. You see, if you're a foolish Galatian doing exactly what they did, married to another but living as though you were still married to the dead, instead of drawing from the barn, going out with your sack, you're like this. Supposing, if you could just imagine this, that when you were born, you were born with an old vintage tin Ford, with apologies to the Ford Motor Company, some 25 years old in the garage.

You see it's got battered body work and broken springs and slipped tires and dirty upholstery and fouled plugs and tapping tappets. There it is, an old crate, that's all you had, that's the flesh of satanic origin. And when you go out in town, everybody knows you're there, they can hear your springs rattling, they can hear your tappets tapping, they can see the dirty smoke blowing out from your dirty plugs.

You're in town, everybody knows it. But then you claim redemption through the blood of Christ and God in his infinite mercy placed a brand new Cadillac alongside the old tin Ford. Because by the exceeding great and precious promises, you became partaker of the divine nature, Jesus Christ himself, whose life now, as his life then, satisfies every demand of the law.

So you've received a brand new life, a brand new, begun your life, says Paul to the Galatians, by the Holy Spirit, the very Lord Jesus himself who created you to evidence his own matchless character. Isn't that marvelous? And you say tremendous. And immediately, having imbibed the fact that Jesus Christ has redeemed you, that he's become your life, you immediately go out in the old tin Ford.

And everybody knows you're in town again. Except for this time, in your old tin Ford, you're giving out tracts. And in your old tin Ford, you stop and have an open air meeting.

And in your old tin Ford, you say we're going to have an amazing evangelistic rally, and hundreds of thousands of people coming in the old tin Ford. We're having an old tin Ford rally in the name of Jesus Christ, our new Cadillac. And incidentally, we're all going to the mission field in our old tin Ford.

Who's going to be impressed when they see you out with your sack, or in your own tin Ford? You can know perfectly well this is what you're doing, but I'll tell you something. If you're out in your old tin Ford, your prayer life will be one long list of spares that you need. Is that your prayer life? Oh God, my plugs are so dirty.

Please give me new plugs. God said, I won't give you one new plug. Go out in the Cadillac, dump the thing over the hedge.

Oh God, my spring. Every time I go over a bump, every time there's a difficulty in my life, nearly breaks my back. Please give me new springs.

And God says, dump the thing right over the hedge. I've given you a brand new Cadillac. Oh God, my tappets.

You don't know how they tap. Is that your prayer life? Is this a day of prayer where you're all going to come to God in your little groups with your prayer list of spares that you need? God help you, and those whom you pray for. God says, dump the thing and go out in your Cadillac.

I've given you all that you could ever have. In Jesus Christ you can't have more than you've got. You never need to enjoy less than you have.

I am crucified. Oh I see. God never intended me to try to repair the old crate.

No. He says, in your old crate there dwells no good thing. Put it on the dump.

That's where God sent it when he sent his son to the cross. And recognize that your only hope to be restored to his glory is Christ in himself. Well that's great.

And I trust that you may derive some comfort from the fact that if you've been out for years since your conversion in the old tin ford, God never expected you to be a bigger failure than you've been. But he's just waiting for you to admit it, and quit, and get on board. And if I may mix my metaphors, discover your little pot of oil, sell it, pay your debt, buy a Cadillac, and go on vacation.

That's it. So I trust in this prayer day we're going to have a marvelous vacation, when at last you bring all the multitude of facts that you know, and interests in which you're legitimately concerned, and you do exactly what God tells you to do. Caring for nothing, caring for no sweat, no beads of perspiration, caring for nothing.

Carefree, not careless, not unconcerned, but utterly, gloriously, unshatterably convinced that everything in the barn is yours. Carefree, with prayer and supplication, intelligently making known the facts, as an affirmation of your dependence, but always with thanksgiving, because God is never less than big enough, make your requests known unto God. And let this prayer day be a praise day.

I said, give the angels, would you please, give the angels a big surprise today, would you? Do you know the poor old angels, they open up the prayer, ah, another list of spares, open up and oh, so he wants plugs again. Just give them a real holiday, would you? Let the angels go on vacation. Let heaven really resound with astonishment today.

Boys, you should have heard the way those people are praying in Columbia. They seem to have discovered that Jesus is alive. They really seem to have discovered as though he was not dead.

Wouldn't that be a surprise? Wouldn't that be a joy for heaven? Drop your sack and go to the barn and have a word of prayer. We just want to thank you, Lord Jesus, for being who you are, and we missed it. We've been so preoccupied with trying to re-educate that old Adamic nature.

We've been so busy with our sack, grubbing in the dirt. We haven't done it insincerely, God knows. We haven't done it insincerely.

We almost killed ourselves in the effort. But we realize now our folly. We missed the whole point.

A wedding took place, and we didn't realize that we were the bride. We entered into a holy and glorious and timeless wedlock with this mighty a man of wealth, but we didn't know just how vast was that estate of which we with him had become the joint heirs. Lord Jesus, we long by the blood that you shed for our redemption to make us as wealthy as this, that your heart may be refreshed and blessed today, as you hear from the lips of your servants in this college, that quality of praise and affirmation and joyful expectation that at last will make heaven ring with gladness.

Thank you for that release that is coming to some fella or girl who's struggled so long and so desperately to live the Christian life and failed, ready to throw in the sponge, but now ready to throw down the sack. Thank you so much for victory. Your victory, not our victory.

Your life, not our life. Prospects, not our prospects, your prospects. Mighty God.

Wonderful Savior. We want our lives to be fragrant with worship for your dear name's sake. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27669.mp3>
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