

# Failure of an Empty Life

by Major Ian Thomas

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*Trying to live a life you don't have will lead to failure, and it takes God to be a man to be a Christian.*

**Duration:** 48:21

**Scripture:** Mark 14:27, John 2:24

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "The Cross and Resurrection", "True Christian Living"

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## Description

Major Ian Thomas discusses the failures of three biblical figures--Peter, Mary, and Thomas--who all attempted to live a Christian life without truly possessing the necessary faith in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Despite their sincere desires, they each faced despair and failure because they tried to embody a life they did not have. Ultimately, through their failures, they discovered that true Christianity requires the indwelling of Christ, who empowers believers to live out their faith. Thomas emphasizes that it is only through the resurrection life of Jesus that one can truly become a Christian, highlighting the necessity of both the cross and the resurrection in the Christian experience.

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## Transcript

I want on this occasion to take the opportunity of telling you about three people who are described for us in the Bible. They are three people, all of whom tried to live a life they didn't have. They all wanted to be Christians.

And their desire was, in each case, inspired by Jesus Christ. And they all failed. That is to say, initially.

And they all failed because they all made the same mistake. And out of their failure, they all made the same discovery. And in making the same discovery, they all became Christians.

That should occupy us most of the afternoon. The first individual, whose case we will consider, is that of Peter the Apostle. A man who desperately tried to be a Christian.

And who tried for three solid years to be a Christian. And whose desire to be a Christian was most undoubtedly inspired by his close proximity to the person of the Lord Jesus. And he was one who, in his endeavors, without any challenge whatever to his sincerity, failed pathetically, miserably.

You see, there are some who would tell us that you become a Christian slowly over a process of time. As you muse upon the beautiful teachings of the Lord Jesus. As you read the Sermon on the Mount.

And as you allow his gracious utterances slowly, as it were, to permeate your personality. And gradually you take on his characteristics. Added to this, they would say, gaze upon his matchless example.

Watch the things he does. Listen to the things he says. See how he reacts under certain circumstances.

And as you listen to all that he has to say, and read his writings, and gaze upon the example that he set for us 1900 years ago. In the beauty of his personality, in the matchlessness of his humanity. See how selflessly he died.

See how he gave himself as a champion of a new order. But who paid the price of being over-progressive in the age in which he lived. But just gaze upon him and slowly this will permeate your being until at last you become a Christian.

For all that he is will slowly crystallize out in terms of your own character and personality. Well, Peter had all the opportunities a man could ever have. He didn't have to read the Sermon on the Mount.

He heard it preached. He was there. Nor did he need to remain in any ambiguity as what the Lord Jesus might have meant by anything he said.

For three solid years he lived in the closest possible proximity with the Lord Jesus and could question and counsel with him at any time about anything. If ever a man had the opportunity of gazing upon the matchless example of the Lord Jesus, it was Peter. If ever a man had the opportunity of seeing what he did.

Watching the example he set. Carefully scrutinizing the reactions of the Lord Jesus under a multitude of varying circumstances. Amidst enemy and amidst foe it was Peter.

He was there. Now without a shadow of a doubt the kind of life that the Lord Jesus lived. The kind of things he said.

The kind of teaching that he made articulate. I'm quite sure all of these things aroused within the heart of Peter a deep, deep genuine concern to become the kind of person that Jesus was. He wanted so desperately to be a Christian.

The trouble of course was that he was trying to live a life he didn't have. And he wasn't aware at first of the symptoms of his case. And that's why in the end he failed so miserably.

And was plunged into dejection and despair. He threw in the sponge. He gave it up.

This was something beyond his grasp. It took three years of course to graduate because he did make a very wonderful discovery. And that was his graduation.

You see he graduated out of despair. He graduated out of the inevitable despair into which an attempt to live a life you haven't got must always plunge you. Of course this by and large is why a great vast multitude of people have stopped even trying to be Christian.

They've tried desperately and not insincerely. They've wanted to be like Jesus. But they've given up the unequal strife.

You'll remember that just before the Lord Jesus was crucified that the Lord Jesus said to them, it's recorded in the 14th chapter of Mark's gospel, Jesus said unto them, all ye shall be offended because of me this night for it is written I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered but after that I am risen I will go before you into Galilee. For again and again the Lord Jesus foreshadowed the cross. He didn't drift helplessly to disaster as some would have us believe.

His death upon the cross wasn't the untimely death of a noble martyr. To this end he said was I born for this cause came I into the world. You'll remember that when Peter and John and James on another occasion joined him in the mount of transfiguration and they saw him glorified as one way we all one day we all will see him in the day that seeing him we'll like him and Elijah was there you remember and Moses was there and they heard the Lord Jesus discussing with Elijah and Moses and I love the way it's described for us in the word of God he discussed with them the death that he would accomplish.

You see the death of the Lord Jesus was an accomplishment wasn't a disaster. This is the very purpose for which he was born. He was born crucified.

He was born to lay down his life a ransom for many. We're told in the scriptures that he set his face like a flint to the cross. He turned neither to the right hand nor to the left.

We're told in the epistle of Paul to the Philippians that he was obedient. Obedient unto death. Unto the death of the cross and the Lord Jesus took pains to make sure that his disciples were fully aware cognizant of the purpose for which he had come.

After that I am risen I will go before you into Galilee but Peter said unto him although all shall be offended yet will not I. Did he mean what he said? Of course he did. Every word of what he said. There wasn't an ounce of insincerity in that affirmation that bold heroic affirmation so far as Peter was concerned.

For he had been deeply impressed by the life that Jesus lived. He had been deeply moved by his teachings. He had been almost overwhelmed by his mastery of every situation that had confronted him.

He was sold out to Jesus Christ and he desperately wanted now to be the kind of man that Jesus was. He said nothing can ever shape my conviction. Nothing.

Though all men forsake you I won't. The amazing thing of course was that the Lord Jesus remained totally unimpressed. Not unkindly but in another place in God's words in the second chapter of John's gospel we're told that the Lord Jesus knew what was in a man.

He knew all men. Do you remember that occasion? When he was in Jerusalem the 23rd verse of John 2 when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover in the last day many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. They were deeply impressed by the things which he did.

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men. You see he had an uncanny way of taking off the lid and looking on the inside. And he needed not that any man should testify of man for he knew what was in man.

And quite frankly when God takes the lid off and looks inside you and me and sees what's in a man he's not terribly impressed. Have you discovered that? Of course we don't often try to take the lid off ourselves and look inside ourselves that's why we remain very impressed with ourselves. But we're pretty skilled of course in the attempt to take the lid off other people and we look in there.

The Lord Jesus was not impressed and he was not unkind when he said to Peter Verily I say unto thee that this day even in this night before the cock crows twice thou shalt deny me pride. I want to tell you this Peter I don't challenge your sincerity. I don't challenge your noble holy motivation.

I know that you desperately want to be the kind of man I am. I know that you want to be a Christian. You've been trying for three years to be a Christian.

But you're trying to live a life that you do not possess. And the end product Peter of your noblest endeavors is going to be this. You're going to be an abject miserable hopeless faith.

Now I'm giving you fair warning Peter. I'm telling you this because I don't want you to be unduly depressed when it happens. I'm giving you fair warning now so that it won't come as too big a shock.

You see it's only inverted conceit that makes us surprised when we fail. Did you know that? You know when we sin we come to God so shocked as if God as if I could do that. God says that's all I've ever expected of you.

You see I've had the lid off for long enough to know what's inside you. And you only come with that innocent apologetic look on your face. Because you a person like you have done it.

Because you've never really faced up to reality. You've never really taken a big long look at yourself to see you as God sees you. Otherwise you'd never come shocked at your own faith.

You'd have learned long since to expect it. Peter hadn't graduated. Peter hadn't got to that stage not yet.

He still had supreme self-confidence. Peter still epitomized the satanic lie that was first perpetrated in the fallen Adam and that has been perpetuated all down time in what is described in God's word as the spirit of the age in which we live. The spirit that's now workers and the children of disobedience.

The spirit that inflates a man's ego and gives him an entirely exaggerated view of his own self-sufficiency. For this is the spirit of the age in which we live. We're tutored to do it.

We're tutored to sell ourselves to our community and persuade everybody that we are the individual for which society has been waiting. And this is the one thing of course that God has to deal with and it takes an awful long time for some folks to arise and of course some never do and some never will. Peter was most indignant.

He was misjudged. He was underestimated. He spake the more vehemently if I should if I should die with thee I will not deny thee in any way if it costs me life itself.

Don't blame Peter only. Likewise authors said they all because by and large we're all tied with the same brush. The Lord Jesus didn't argue.

He didn't need to. You see time was on his side. Why was Peter such a failure? In trying sincerely to become the Christian and live the Christian life that he wanted to.

Well the big mistake that he made that he shared in common with the other two who made the same endeavor with the same failure in performance. He didn't want the cross and he didn't believe in the resurrection. That was the mistake that Peter made.

He didn't want the cross and he didn't believe in the resurrection. Those were the two characteristics of the life of Peter as an apostle. And remember this his apostolic office didn't make him a Christian.

He'd been called to apostleship. He'd been called with the 12. Being called to be an apostle didn't make Judas Iscariot a Christian did it? Judas Iscariot ended up by betraying Jesus Christ into the hands of his enemies and committed suicide.

And yet he was numbered with the 12 apostles. Ecclesiastical office never made anybody a Christian at any time. Takes far more than that to be a Christian.

And Peter didn't have what it takes. Not at this stage. Do you remember when the Lord Jesus very faithfully and painstakingly as he did on so many occasions outlined the messianic program the purpose for which he the eternal word was incarnate.

And on that first Christmas morning born a little baby to be nursed helplessly in the arms of Mary he stepped out of eternity into time. From that time forth began Jesus Matthew 17 21 to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. He told them plainly.

He said that's the program. I want you to know it from the start. I don't want you to be under any illusions about this.

I don't want there to be any ambiguity whatever in your mind as to what the program is going to be. This is it. I'm going to the city of Jerusalem and there I will be delivered into the hands of wicked men.

I shall be done to death. I've got good news for you on the third morning I'll be alive again. So don't let anything any of these things take you by surprise.

Don't let any of these things knock you sideways. How did that go down with the apostles? It didn't go down too well. Peter took him and began to rebuke him saying be it far from thee Lord this shall not be unto thee.

Literally what he said was this this can't happen to you and I for one I'm going to make quite sure it does. I'll defend you even if it costs me my life. Do you remember what the Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter on that occasion? He should have learned long long since before ever he came to the place where at the slip of a servant girl with the curses and oaths upon his lips to which he had become accustomed as the Galilean fisherman he had been to deny his Lord to his very faith even though he was almost within touching this on the eve of his crucifixion.

He had every opportunity to learn what the score was long before then. Jesus turned and said to Peter get thee behind me Satan thou art an offense unto me your attitude offends me for thou savorest not the things that be of God but those that be of men. I have told you that I'm going to the city of Jerusalem and there I will be delivered into the hands of wicked men there I will be crucified and on the third morning I will rise again from the dead and you are standing astride the pathway.

You rebuke me you confront me you do not want the cross you do not believe in my resurrection thou savorest not the things that be of God thou savorest Peter the things that be of men. This you see was the son of man speaking with the mind of God. Peter was one just time to become a son of God but speaking still with the mind of man.

Get thee said Jesus behind me Satan for he looked through a man's sincerity into the face of the devil himself for the satanic genius is that he will close himself even with a man's sincere religious practice and stabbed the Christ of God in the back. Peter didn't want the cross and he didn't believe in the resurrection and of course if you take the cross away and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus there's no such thing as a Christian life and that's why Peter's attempt to become and be a Christian without a cross and without the resurrection was doomed to disaster and that's of course the Lord Jesus knew from the start that's why he wasn't impressed with Peter's affirmation his profession of allegiance and his heroic determination. He didn't challenge his sincerity and he didn't argue with him.

In so many words okay have a crack be the Christian you think you've become without me without my cross and without my resurrection we'll see what happens and within a matter of hours Peter was cursing and swearing reverting to the type he had been and defying Jesus to his face and running like a frightened chicken and the cock crowed and the Lord Jesus turned didn't say a word looked into Peter's face and he fled from his presence and wept bitterly thrashed beaten but it's a wonderful thing you know when the cock crows it heralds the dawn of a new day and this heralded for Peter the dawn of a new day because out of despair graduating through his own failure in the bitterness of self-discovery he was now upon the threshold of embracing that which was calculated completely to revolutionize

the man and transform his character and flood his personality with God himself you see it takes more than a noble ambition to be a Christian you know what it takes to be a to be a Christian i'm not going to enlarge upon this but there are good sound theological reasons why it takes Jesus Christ to be a Christian you see God created man to be inhabited by God for God and it's only what God is in a man that enables a man to be the man that God created man to be is that a mouthful well chew it again hmm let me say it once more God created man to be inhabited by God for God this is what makes man something more than an animal for man is a unique creation made by God to be inhabited by God and what gives to you the moral capacity to be a man as opposed just to as a opposed to a highly

sophisticated animal is the amazing capacity that God has given to you to share literally the very life of God your maker and that's why John's gospel chapter 1 verse 4 says of the Lord Jesus as the eternal word who was made flesh and walked among us full of grace and truth it says of him in him was life and this life that was in him was the light of men it's only as man shares the life of the word by whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made that ever was made it's only as a man shares the life of his creator does he fulfill the purpose of his creation for God created man to be inhabited literally by God himself for God and it is only that God in that man that man sharing that God's life that gives him the spiritual and moral capacity to be the kind of man that God

created man to be so let's briefly summarize that and we arrive at this conclusion it takes God to be a man did you know that it doesn't it doesn't take God to be an animal it takes God to be a man because it is the presence of God in a man who becomes in that man the origin of his own image the source of his own activity the dynamic of his own demand the cause of his own effect man's humanity made available to the invisible deity so that that invisible deity may be manifest in terms of that man's visible humanity this is the truth about man didn't you know that Jesus came to be the truth he said i am the truth i'm not only the truth about God i'm the truth about man and of the Lord Jesus it said this no man has seen God at any time the only begotten son in the bosom of the father he hath

declared him Jesus Christ on earth walking as a man for 33 years brought God the invisible God out into the open and set him where he could be seen so that Jesus could say to Philip who asked him show us

the father and it suffices said he did Philip have i been so long time with you Philip and you didn't know me he that has seen me has seen the father because i have presented my humanity to my father to be the kind of man that we father son and holy spirit created man to be and the invisible deity my father is making himself known in terms of my visible humanity you see Philip that's what i made you for when i as God created man and i'm simply demonstrating you for 33 years true manhood and it is to this true manhood Philip i'm seeking to restore you but i'll tell you what it's going to

take my cross and my resurrection nothing less than that so that on the grounds of my redemptive act through the cross you may share my resurrection life in you so that what my father is in me and declares himself to be through me i as God risen from the dead i'm going to be in you and will declare myself through you but you see Philip it's going to take me for you to be a Christian it'll take me in you as it takes Philip my father in me to be the man i am this is what the disciples had to learn this is what Peter hadn't learned he thought that Christianity was rolling up his moral sleeves gritting his teeth tensing his muscles and saying let's go i've got what it takes and Jesus Christ says you don't have what it takes except to fall flat in your face let's wait and see and that's

exactly what happened he fell flat in his face a man who tried to live a life he didn't have and who failed because he made this mistake he did not want the cross nor did he believe in the resurrection so it takes Christ you see to be a Christian because it takes God to be a man and Christ in the Christian puts God back into the man that's what the gospel is all about the good news of the gospel is designed to put God back into the man by the presence of Christ in the Christian now if that isn't true then the only Christianity I can preach is a Christianity without Christ but Christianity is Christ Christianity is Christ in unity take Christianity out of Christ and all you've got is a take Christ out of Christianity and all you've got is a dead religion just an impossible thesis just a

tantalizing idealism it's a message of despair not a message of hope Christianity without Christ is to invite you to live the kind of life you don't have that's why I wouldn't waste either your time or mine I wouldn't quite frankly bother to take one minute to come and talk to you this lunch hour to introduce you to the kind of Christianity that you could live without Jesus Christ because what if you could live that kind of life according to those terms of Christianity wouldn't be a Christianity worth having it would just be sort of moral death warmed up the only Christianity to which I would gladly introduce you to is that Christianity which is Christ in you he revealing his character through your humanity as once the father revealed his character through his humanity that's why the Lord

Jesus said as my father sent me I'm going to send you Christianity without Christ is a dead religion it'll tell you how to be sorry it won't tell you how to be saved it could new year's day tell you to turn over a new leaf but it won't offer a new life it'll offer you a pattern of behavior but never once give you the power to implement it that's why lots and lots and lots and lots of people have tried Christianity without Christ and given it up because they are doing today what Peter did then trying to live a life they never had and without a shadow of a doubt without one single shadow of a doubt I'm speaking at this very moment to a large number of people who adhere to many different denominational groups who practice religion with as much zeal as did the Jews who crucified Jesus hmm but

not according to knowledge Romans 10 verses 2 and 3 and when you practice religion not according to knowledge how do you do it in ignorance what was the character of their ignorance who practice religion with such zeal but not according to knowledge the third verse of Romans 10 tells that being ignorant of God's righteousness they went about to establish their own righteousness and were not submitted to the

righteousness of God that is the practice of religion in ignorance ignorance of God's righteousness is which is absolute an absoluteness in righteousness for which only Jesus Christ himself is adequate as the fourth verse of that chapter of the epistle to the Romans goes on to say it goes on to say but Jesus Christ alone is the end of the law for righteousness he's the only person

whose righteousness matches up to the righteousness demanded by God so these people who ignored Jesus in his death and resurrection were practicing religion but in ignorance of God's righteousness and being ignorant of the absoluteness of God's righteousness that only absolute righteousness could ever satisfy those demands still foolishly try to establish their own righteousness threw out their chest and says we have what it takes and God all the time has been saying you're done you've only got what it takes to false that and you say I try to teach Peter this and he wouldn't believe I'm trying to teach you this and you won't believe you see if you don't recognize that the demands that God makes upon us are absolute that there are no comparative standards of righteousness as far as God is

concerned he doesn't relate righteousness to worldly contemporary standards and say you'll be a little bit better than the world and you'll be righteous no no because the standards of the world may sink 20 degrees and your righteousness then as a Christian can sink 20 degrees and you'll call it new morality and the morality therefore the Christian church will cease to be as absolute as God and will be as relative as worldly godless chaotic anarchist morality that's what we're suffering from today within the connotation and context of our modern theology we cease to be anchored to anything absolute in God we are purely now anchored to the rising or the lowering of the tide of human fashion God knows nothing about such a morality and when you and I are ignorant of the absoluteness of God's

righteousness we can afford in our folly to seek to establish our own righteousness not by God's standards but by contemporary standards and we can all be very very good so long as we are careful to pick the person with whom we compare ourselves I can be very good so long as I'm allowed to pick the object of my comparison isn't that right in other words there's not one single person sitting around these tables here today who can't give them the opportunity to choose the point of reference who can't be good enough by whose standards? our own and I'm quite sure that I'm speaking to a lot of people who'll be very shocked if I said you were not Christians but you are only Christians by your own standards and not by God Peter was a wonderful Christian by his own standards at the end of three

years he had listened to Christ's teaching he'd watched his example he'd rolled up his sleeves he's got his hand on his sword and he said die I must die I will I've got what it takes by my standards I'm one of your best followers the rest can forsake you but I won't the Lord Jesus just kept his mouth shut after that and let him fall flat on his face because you see some people only learn the hard way not just a noble ambition that won't make you a Christian however sincere however dedicated however instructed however Christian I am as Peter was it takes Christ to be a Christian same look at the time John 20 don't suppose you have a bible with you but you'll recognize the story for here's the other woman another and we'll only have a moment of course to touch upon these two but we shall

only need a moment because you see all three tried the same thing all made the same mistake all failed and all graduated out of faith what a wonderful discovery it was they all made and what sheer joy into which they entered in the making of the discovery it says Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping and she wept so she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre see two angels in white sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain and they say to her woman why weepest thou she said unto them because they've taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him

she was looking for the dead body of a crucified Lord Jesus who was already risen from the dead Mary thought she was a Christian she'd wept over his feet and washed them with her

tears and wiped them with her hair didn't Mary love Jesus she had a deep sentimental emotional attachment to Jesus Christ but she hadn't a clue as to what it meant to be a Christian because she didn't want the cross and she didn't believe in the resurrection the cross broke her heart and after he was risen from the dead she was still groping around in a gloomy tomb looking for his dead body and when she about said she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus of course she didn't know it was Jesus you'll never recognize the living risen Lord Jesus if you've still got him buried tucked away in a gloomy tomb Jesus said unto her woman why weepest thou who seekest thou she's supposing him to be the gardener said unto him sir if thou have borne him the dead body

of my wonderful Lord if thou have borne him hence tell me please where thou hast laid him and I will take him away well Mary was a pretty miserable failure wasn't she you think the Lord Jesus might have turned to Peter and said all right Peter you were the one that was going to die for me you were the one that wouldn't forsake me at any cost all right if that's kind if that's the kind of Christianity you want mock heroics that ends by cursing and blaspheming in my face you go your way I'll go my way but John in his tenth chapter tells us that the Lord Jesus is a good shepherd and he always calls his own sheep by name and you'll remember that when these women finally met the Lord Jesus after he was risen from the dead he sent them back and in the last chapter of Mark's gospel it tells us

that a special message was given by the angel sent by the Lord Jesus that at all costs he said at all costs don't forget tell his disciples and please please don't forget and see don't forget don't leave him out because he thinks he's going to be left out forever a special message he calls him by name Jesus might have turned to Mary and said Mary all right all your lavish ostentatious display of affection weeping over my feet wiping them with my hair and now you look for me in a gloomy tomb I told you solidly for three years that I would be crucified and arise again from the dead and you said you loved me you said you trusted me you said you believed me and here you are gathered with the anointment or ointments to anoint my dead body if your idea of Christianity is just a sentimental

sloppy thing that weeps at a tomb then I'll leave you to weep on is that what he did Jesus said to her may I call her by name one was she turned herself and said which is to say last telepathy beaten and bereft God called Peter by his name broken and bewildered he called Mary by her name takes more than a noble ambition it takes more than a sentimental attack because he didn't trust in the air of the will like Mary tried in the area of her emotions both say in the area of the will and in the area of the emotions because you see they neither wanted the cross nor believed in the resurrection here's the third one Thomas one of the twelve called Didymus was not with them when Jesus came do you remember how he said to them in the upper room and they all thought he was a ghost and he said

behold my hands and my senses as I myself handle me and see the spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have touch me and they touched him and they were flooded with joy they could hardly believe but joy the other disciples therefore said to him when Thomas later came and they were they were so excited we've seen them all they all wanted to tell him at once it was just a babel of tongues and then there was a cold sticky sign there wasn't a smile he said except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side I'll not believe with all the bitterness of resentment baffled and embittered as Mary had been broken in the womb as Peter had been beaten I'll believe nothing I left everything for Jesus I invested

all my time I invested all my time I left my profession I left my home I gave myself to him in total dedication and it all ended all ended in that disastrous way like a common criminal putting us all to shame hanging on a Roman cross a Roman god Christ Messiah Christ that does violence he says to my intellect that does violence he says to my intellect you see Thomas had his own theological concepts as to what the Christ of God should do when he came to this world blood-stained Roman gallery and that blood-stained Roman gallery advanced to his own refined intellectual concept of religion I'll believe I'm a down-to-earth materialist as from today I'll believe only what I can touch and see and handle and understand with my own brain and after eight days again his disciples were within and

Thomas with them and came Jesus the doors being shut and stood in the midst and said peace be unto you and every eye followed his gaze and he walked slowly across the room and look Thomas straight in the face Thomas I understand that you're a down-to-earth materialist but you believe now nothing that you can't touch and see and handle all right that's your kind of religion then your God is too small the size of your God is going to fit in the tiny little skull that you carry on your two shoulders so we part comfortably he said reach hither thy finger and behold my hand and reach hither thy hand and trust it into my side and be not afraid of it come on just put your finger in there come on give me the other hand Thomas answered and said my Lord my God Jesus said and called him by name

Thomas because I have seen me that has believed blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe because you see Thomas it takes more than a theological thesis to be a Christian it takes more than a noble ambition it takes more than a sentimental attachment it takes more than a theological concept Peter in the air of his will Mary in the area of her emotions Thomas in the area of his mind all tried to live a life they didn't have because they didn't want the cross and didn't believe in the resurrection they all failed and then Jesus came called them each by name led them from the upper room to Pentecost the risen Lord Jesus and said now carry in the city of Jerusalem until you receive what it takes to be a Christian you remember what I told you in John 14 I'm going to my father if I go

not away he will not come the confidence but if I go he will come to be with you forever I will not leave you orphans I will not leave you comfortably I Jesus will come to you that as I have been with you in this humanity I may be in you in the part Holy Spirit now wait said the Lord Jesus he is in the city of Jerusalem until you receive what it takes to be a Christian I am coming to you to close my deity with your humanity and Pentecost Whitson was added to Easter and Easter was added to Christmas and now Christmas Easter and Whitson all made sense because they saw that through his atoning death upon the cross he shedding his blood had cleansed their hearts from sin and reconciled them to a holy God that he the risen Lord Jesus now exalted at the father's right hand might come in the

power of the Holy Spirit to live his resurrection life in them and be for every moment of every day in every human situation all that it takes to be the Christian they tried to become and they tried to live without and on the day of Pentecost as the Lord Jesus in his other self the Holy Spirit came to indwell their humanity Peter stood up the one who cursed and sworn and denied that he ever known his Lord he stood up as did the others and they spoke with such boldness and clarity of utterance that three thousand others were added to that first little handful of 120 men and women and this handful evangelized the then known world in one generation because they all made the same wonderful discovery that Jesus Christ in the sinlessness of his humanity he died for us to redeem us and rose

again to live in us and that's what it means to be a Christian and to become a Christian and to be the Christian you have become all you've got to do is let him as the one who died for you to redeem you let

him redeem you but he only redeems sinners that's why if you are not a sinner in need of redemption you will never never never never become nor be a Christian you can't for a Christian is a redeemed sinner who has let him and he rose again to live in regeneration born again I've received the life of Jesus by his Holy Spirit and he'll never be less than big enough for every step I take in time or eternity all I've got to do is to share his life now on earth as I let him live his life to me what a wonderful thing it is then to be the Christian you've become by what he is in you because

of what he did for you for he not only gives himself for you historically he gives himself to you contemporarily that's what it means to be a Christian isn't that exciting well why not that's it started in prayer you've been trying to live a life you haven't got you made the same mistake as sincere as Peter as sentimental as Mary as dedicated as Thomas they didn't want the cross because they didn't understand the cross they didn't believe in the resurrection because they couldn't credit the resurrection but then you see their God was too small you can make the same discovery that they made and find that God is big enough to die for you and God is big enough to live in you you'll let him you can do that just where you're sitting you don't have to talk to me you don't have to talk to your

neighbor but you do have to talk to Jesus Christ because he says behold I stand at the door knock and as I knock I call your name if any man woman hear my voice recognize their name and open the door and you can invite him how do you do it well you talk to him like this you can echo these words even as I pray them make them yours as you talk to him Lord Jesus thank you you died for me it was an ugly cross but I need the cross thank you your blood was shed to cleanse my heart from sin Lord Jesus maybe I have found it hard to credit the resurrection but I need it desperately because I need not only what you did for me I need what you can be now in me thank you living wonderful Lord for being willing at this very moment to come into my life not only to be my savior but to be my Lord life

itself and right here and now I claim the right to become what you're going to give me the power to be a real Christian for your name's sake amen

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27706.mp3>

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