

Faith in Action

by Major Ian Thomas

The awakening of the soul is a process that precedes spiritual regeneration, where a person begins to experience God's presence and power in their life, and is made visible through the man called Jesus.

Duration: 44:04

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a young boy named Jacques who had recently accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. The speaker emphasizes the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus and how it is more impactful than preaching, sermons, or theatricals. He explains that Jesus, as the only begotten of the Father, made the invisible Father visible through his utter manhood. The speaker concludes by stating that the greatest service one can offer to mankind is their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Thank you very much. Quite a lot of what you've heard is true. But I won't take time now to tell you what is and what isn't.

I'm glad to be here and to have this opportunity of sharing with you. I don't normally like folk chewing while I'm talking, but I do realize what these biscuits were like. And if you just happen to have taken a bite before I spoke, I realize it'll take you some time before your mouth is empty.

There's a process that the old divines would have described as the awakening of the soul, which we've largely ignored in recent days. It's a process that precedes what otherwise is called spiritual regeneration. The one, in a sense, is the prelude, the preliminary, and may be essential to the other, but shouldn't be confused.

The awakening of the soul will lead a man to spiritual regeneration, but doesn't consist in itself of spiritual regeneration. The problem arises when we do confuse the two and credit a man whose soul has been awakened with being spiritually regenerate. Because an awakened soul will do many things that may be typical of a regenerate man.

Because an awakened soul will normally begin to imitate. He'll begin to do the things that he thinks he ought to do. And he may appear to give very genuine response, and he may be very good at imitating the

things that he feels he ought to do.

And there won't be any insincerity about what he's doing. But if you credit him at that stage with being spiritually regenerate, then, of course, you're encouraging him to try to live a life that he doesn't have. That can only lead to a sense of frustration and disillusion.

And it'll leave him, maybe, jettisoned for many months or even years on the roadside. Because if anybody thereafter approaches him and asks him whether he is converted or whether he's accepted Christ as Savior or whether he's a Christian, or he'll say, yes, I tried that, it doesn't work. So I thought, this morning, we'd examine a story that is found in 9th of John's Gospel, which is a simple illustration of this principle at work.

John, chapter 9, verse 1, And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him one of their typically stupid questions. The disciples were just like you and I are, pretty thick-headed in terms of spiritual truth.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, their foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them. And we all, by natural birth, as the fallen seed of a fallen man, Adam, begin at a very grave disadvantage.

And so we should never be harsh upon the disciples, but just be realist, recognizing that the behavior of the disciples, by and large, throughout the records given to us in the Gospels, was the behavior of those who didn't really know what it was all about. There was no challenge to their sincerity and love and personal devotion to Jesus Christ. They wanted to follow him.

They were willing to sacrifice. They'd all forsaken everything they ever had to follow him. But they really hadn't a clue what it was all about.

Master, who did sin? This man? Or his parents? That he was born blind. In other words, his blindness at birth, they said, will either be because he sinned before he was born, or somebody else since he was born. Which isn't a very intelligent question.

A man can hardly sin before he's born. He can be born a sinner. But he can't sin before he's born.

Who did sin? This man? Or his parents? That, as a consequence of sinning, he was born blind. Well, maybe they didn't think when they were asking. But Jesus answered, quite naturally, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.

That, as a consequence, he was born blind. But the works of God shall be made manifest in him. You're going to see God at work.

And this individual is going to be the individual in whose life you're going to see God at work. I'm going to give you a demonstration of God at work. It happens to be in a man born blind.

I must work the works of him that sent me. Some of us were discussing this last evening. I appreciate that some of you men went at either of the meetings last evening.

But again and again, you'll see that the characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, as utter man, though he was always, at the same time, utter God, the characteristics that he displayed were the characteristics of a sent one. As my Father hath sent me, I'm going to send you. And the responsibility of

the sent one is to be available to, submissive to, obedient to the sender, quite obviously.

The sent one comes with all the authority and has a call upon all the resources of the sender. If you're an executive in business and you send somebody, what do you expect them to do? Fulfill the purpose which you've sent them. And you expect them to have the right to call upon all the authority of the one who's sent them.

And the Lord Jesus said, I must work the works of him that sent me. That's my business. And in presenting my humanity to my Father, you're going to see my Father as God at work in me as man.

And I want you to watch very carefully. Because this is how I'm going to send you. And later on, the world has got to see me at work as God in you as man.

As you now are going to watch my Father as God at work in me as man. It's just as simple as that. You're going to see God at work.

As long as I'm in the world, I am the light of the world. If I may take the liberty of referring back again, for those of you who were there last evening, remember, light is the invisible having been received by the medium created for that purpose, and the invisible working through that medium and becoming visible. Light.

And no man has seen God at any time. The only begotten of the Father, Jesus Christ, in his utter manhood, indwelt by the invisible Father, made the invisible Father visible. He that has seen me has seen the Father.

Light. That's just the background. When he had thus spoken, verse 6, he spat on the ground.

And he made clear the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with a clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation sent. He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came see. Those are the bare facts of the incident.

And the neighbors, therefore, the inquisitive, nosy neighbors, neighbors are always inquisitive. You know that. You're a neighbor.

And they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he. Others said, He's like him. And there was quite a discussion about the subject.

And he just quietly interrupted and said, I am he. If you must know, I am he. I was blind, and I can see.

Therefore said they unto him, How are thine eyes opened? How's this happened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. And I went and washed, and I received sight. That's all.

That's my story. A man that is called Jesus. Oh, you mean the Messiah? No, he said, I didn't say anything about the Messiah.

I said a man called Jesus. You mean the Christ of God, the promised seed of faithful Abraham, whom all the families of the world should be blessed, the Savior? No, no, no. I didn't say anything about Abraham or the seed of Abraham.

I don't know anything about it. Or the Savior of the world. I don't even know whether the world needs a Savior.

All I know is this, that a man called Jesus. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I don't know. I don't know where he came from, and I know where he's gone.

All I know is that a man called Jesus suddenly broke into my life. He told me to go and do something, and I did it. And when I came back, I could see.

A man called Jesus. Was he a theologian? No. Was he a Christian? No.

Was he saved? No. He just had his eyes opened, that's all. He was blind.

Of course, there's a verse that has been taken from this chapter, which is the 25th. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. Which is a very beautiful statement, that has been often used as an illustration of spiritual new birth.

And of course, it presents us with a very wonderful and a lovely illustration of new birth, because it's perfectly true that the natural man or the animal man receiveth not things of the Spirit of God. He is spiritually, intellectually, morally incompetent to grasp spiritual truth. That's why the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, who was the third richest man in Jerusalem at the time, it's reputed, member of the Sanhedrin, one of the most cultured men, most educated men, scholarly men, one of the leading theologians and philosophers of his day, and the Lord Jesus Christ said to him, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Not just in a physical sense, but he can't see it. As a teacher might say to the boy, can't you see that? He does the equation on the way, he said, can't you see that? And the boy said, no, I can't see that. But he doesn't mean he can't see it, he means he just can't see it, that's all.

And the natural man receiveth not things of the Spirit of God, he just can't see it. Their foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned and he is spiritually destitute. He's got to be born again and have restored to him the Holy Spirit of God, who will enlighten his understanding, light in Jesus Christ, revealing the glory of God in his wonderful face.

So it is absolutely true that spiritual new birth or spiritual regeneration, the restoring to a man of God the Holy Spirit, who by his gracious presence reimparts to that man the divine nature, the divine life, it is perfectly true that it's just like physically having your eyes open. One moment you can hear all about the sun and hear all about color and hear all about light and hear all about trees and only have the vaguest possible idea what the person is talking about until suddenly your eyes are open. And then what has been a vague word impression suddenly becomes reality.

That's true. And I don't quarrel with anybody who likes to use that sentence out of this particular story to illustrate, but it isn't strictly accurate in the particular context from which it's derived, because at this stage of the proceedings, however much the man may have experienced the healing power of Jesus Christ to give him physical sight, whereas previously he had been physically born from birth, he wasn't a Christian. He didn't even know who Jesus Christ was.

He was impressed with Jesus Christ, the man called Jesus. But that's where the awakening of the soul begins. It begins with the man called Jesus, because it's the man that makes the invisible God visible.

It's the man who first interprets God to man. He was unaware of the fact, of course, that this perfect and utter man was wholly and perfectly and utterly filled with God. He didn't know that.

He met the man, the man called Jesus. That's how I got converted. Up to the age of 12, I'd never heard the gospel.

I was taken to church every Sunday, but it was the kind of church where I never heard the gospel. We went every Sunday morning. That was respectable.

It was a good religious practice for a respectable Church of England family. It just happened to be one of those churches where the simplicity of faith in Christ as the Redeemer who died that our sins might be forgiven and rose again from the dead, according to the Scriptures, that guilty men might be reconciled to a holy God on the grounds of redemption and be re-inhabited by God by the process of spiritual regeneration. I never heard that.

I never heard of being converted or being saved or being redeemed. That just wasn't talked about. So that I might just as well have been born in the heart of Africa, for all I knew was a boy born in the city of London.

What it meant to be a Christian. Fortunately, one of the families that we knew that went to the same church had also a son of 13 years of age who one year previously had received Christ as his Savior. He didn't go to the same school that I went to, but we chummed up and I quite liked him.

He was different. I didn't know why he was different. I couldn't have told you that he was different because Jesus Christ had come to live in his life and was now coloring his behavior.

I didn't know that. I simply liked him, that's all. But I was struck that there was something different.

But that, for me, was the man called Jesus. The first interpretation to me of God. He could have told me why it was he was different.

Of course he could. Maybe he did, but I didn't understand what he was talking about. But I met the man called Jesus and he suggested one day that I went along to Bible class.

I'd never been to Sunday school in my life. And so he took me along to a Bible class and there I met some other folk just like him and the leaders, and they all had the same peculiar characteristics. And now I met the man called Jesus.

And then a few weeks later they suggested I went to a boys camp, about 150, with young businessmen and university students, all of them born again, lively Christians. And we had a wonderful time, heaps of fun. But again I was faced with the same peculiarity.

Here were people who talked about God as though they knew him. And as I listened in that big marquee, night by night in those first few evenings, I began to be aware. It wasn't until the third night that a man speaking from John's Gospel, chapter 10, spoke of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Nobody shall ever pluck them out of my hand.

And I didn't tell anybody the night I was converted. I simply, in my heart, thanked Jesus Christ. And now I had discovered the secret that had made the man what they were, different.

But my first contact with God was through the man, the man called Jesus. It's a very simple process. That's why the church was never designed to be a sort of building where people come to be preached at by a professional.

That plays its part, because there is the pastoral calling, there's the teacher calling, the evangelist calling, of course. But that was never intended to be the functioning witnessing church. The Church of Jesus Christ is a fellowship of redeemed sinners indwelt by the deity of Jesus Christ.

So that wherever those men are, at the desk, at the office, behind the counter, in the class, at the desk, in all that they are and do in terms of character, behavior, they should be making the invisible Lord Jesus visible. So that your workmates and business associates and fellow executives and school chums and fellow collegians and faculty and neighbors become to them inexplicably aware of God, though they would never define it as God. Initially, they're first impressed with you, and they don't know what it is that makes you different.

That's all. It takes quite a time for them to discover that sometimes. But that's where the awakening begins that creates within them a hunger after God, which they wouldn't define as a hunger after God.

Initially, maybe they'd just say, I wish I could be as poised and as panic-proof as that man is. If I had to face the things that he has to face, I'd never be going around with as serene a state of mind as he is. I don't know what the secret of that man's life is.

Doesn't yet. But the very question that's been aroused in his heart is the beginning of the awakening of his soul. He's met the man called Jesus.

Jesus clothed with a man. That's all. We've, as you've heard, brought over a great number of young people from the continent of Europe, from Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, and so on.

About 5,000 of them in the last few years since the war, and intermingled them with about 50,000 young folk from all over the British Isles. And we've had some very wonderful experiences with them. I remember one boy.

He came in 1949. He was just about 16 years of age, German boy. And I remember the day he came into my study, and his soul had been awakened.

He'd met the man called Jesus in that particular fellowship. And so he wanted to know the Lord Jesus Christ, who had clothed himself with these men. It was very simple to lead him to Christ.

We got down on our knees, and he said, Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for me. Thank you for your precious blood that was shed to cleanse my heart from sin. And thank you for being willing to come and live your life in me and through me.

Thank you very much. And so Hubertus Harbi, whom we call Hubi, came to Christ. It was only a few months later that he was taken ill with Hodgkin's disease.

Sentence of death, humanly speaking. The doctors, when I visited him in Germany a little while later, had given him three weeks to live. In God's goodness, he lived five years.

He was always sick. Then he died. Unafraid, radiantly happy.

He said, if I die tomorrow. Told me this several times. Just like stepping out of one room to another.

If he wants to keep me alive, he'll keep me alive just as long as he wants me alive. And when he wants me home, I'll go. It's all right.

He was only a kid, 20, 21 years of age. But he was absolutely radiant for the Lord. He spent many, many, many months in my home and assisted me in our German-speaking program.

He couldn't do normal physical work. Sometimes he was fit and happy. Sometimes he was always waiting in pain, often bedridden.

But I remember one Sunday morning, as we were going to our morning service, at the close of which we have a very simple form of communion service, because we're completely interdenominational. A Belgian boy who was with us was just going in, and I thought he was a Christian. He'd been with us a week or two.

And so I said, Jean, I hope that you'll feel very free to stay with us for our simple form of family worship and the breaking of bread and the communion service. He said, I can't do that. I've discovered since I've been here that I'm not a Christian.

Well, I didn't have time to talk to him, but Hubie, the German boy, came by a little while later, and I just tapped him on the arm and said, Hubie, we must pray very specially for Jean. He'll be returning to Belgium very soon. He's discovered that he's not really born again.

He's not a Christian. That afternoon, Hubie came to me with a big sort of joyful grin from ear to ear, and he said, I just had a wonderful talk with Jean, and I believe it's been a real blessing to his own soul. And then he added this.

He said, I'm so thankful to God, because I've prayed for so long that God would make me a blessing to a Belgian boy. And then he added this. You see, he said, it was a Belgian who shot my father dead, the man called Jesus.

I want to repay the Belgian nation. They killed my father. We had a little group of French boys brought over by an English school teacher who had deliberately gone to Paris to teach in a school to be the man called Jesus, in that school to reach French boys.

One of the boys in that small group was a boy born in Poland of Jewish parents. He was then of French nationality. All his family except his mother and one younger brother had been murdered, most in the gas chambers.

The father, finally, only a day or two before France was finally overrun by the American invading armies in that particular district. And the French Gestapo had captured him just a few days before and killed him. His mother, he told me while he was with us, this French boy, was filled with bitterness.

She hated God, the world. She hated the Germans. She hated the French.

She hated life itself. God, he said, in my home is never to be mentioned. There's nothing but cold, hard bitterness in my home.

We had also a little German boy. He had been converted just a few weeks before, before this French party arrived. His name was Georg Arnim, son of a family of Arnim, which is an old aristocratic family in Germany.

And he was a wonderful boy with an infectious sort of smile. He was about 14 years of age, and he had come to Christ very simply. This group of French kids was sharing the same dormitory of German kids.

We had a very strange situation. It was fairly soon after the war. We always have a very friendly, warm atmosphere.

Sometimes 12 different nationalities mixed together. But in this particular instance, the French youngsters wouldn't even look at the Germans, let alone talk to them. Even in the garden, they'd just turn their heads to one side.

We went accustomed to that. This particular night, the German boy, George, looking across, saw the English schoolmaster conducting a little quiet time before the kids turned in, just reading the Word of God and praying just like a little family group. And he noticed that the Jewish boy, Jacques, was strangely moved.

And noticing that, and although he was fully aware of the reaction of the one to the other, he got up and he tiptoed across the room, and he just dropped down on his knees in front of that Jewish boy and just hurled at his hands with his own infectious smile. And the Jewish boy took his hands and his. And then he just melted into tears and crept into his bed and wept himself to sleep.

I didn't know anything about this until the next day, when I happened to bump into Jacques in the garden. I said, How old are you, Jacques? He said, I'm 14. I said, Jacques, when I was 12, I received Jesus Christ as my Savior.

And he looked up instantly and broke in. He said, I received Jesus Christ as my Savior last night. I said, That's a wonderful thing.

Tell me all about it. And we went into my study and he told me the story. I said, That's a very wonderful thing, Jacques.

He said, It's like this. You see, these fingers are members of my body, not because they look like fingers, but because they have my life. That's what unites them and makes them one.

And makes each one submissive to my head in perfect unity as a corporate whole. You see, there's an English finger and there's a French finger and there's a Jewish finger. Before I could say anymore, he broke in and pointing at my fourth finger and said, There's a German finger.

I said, That's right. And they've become one man. The man called Jesus.

It's where the awakening of the soul begins. If you in your office and I in my sphere of activity, or in your home or amongst your friends, if your life isn't making the invisible Lord Jesus Christ visible, those around you, humanly speaking, will never meet the man called Jesus. This is the high office and privilege that God has given to you and to me.

That's why it isn't just our theological soundness, our evangelical orthodoxy. We can be as fundamental as the devil is himself. Because there's no greater believer than the devil.

He believes everything. He believes the Bible from Capricorn. We can believe it as much as he does.

There was never a devil that saw Jesus Christ, but didn't recognize him at once to be the Son of God. What hast thou to do with us? Jesus, Son of the living God. We can be all of that, and be as unethical, discourteous, rude, proud, conceited, blunt, in our behavior patterns, as the most godless, irreligious individual that ever lived.

That's the tragedy of it. And folk are not impressed. Nobody's going to be impressed with your theology if it doesn't demonstrate a theocracy in your life.

Nobody's going to be impressed with the soundness of your dogmas if there's no evidence of deity in your actions. Nobody's going to be impressed with your Christianity if they've never had cause to meet Christ in what you are. It begins with a man called Jesus.

They brought to the Pharisees, verse 13, him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.

He said unto them, same story, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

They began to quarrel. They weren't particularly interested whether a man was healed or not healed, whether he was any of the better or the worse for this encounter, this personal encounter with Jesus Christ. They weren't particularly interested whether he was happier or more miserable.

Because to those who simply made religion their business, it doesn't really matter what happens to men. They are simply the merchandise, the stock in trade. And there's nothing cruel, harder or more cruel than mere religion without God.

They said therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him that he opened thine eyes? And I think after a moment's pause, looking at these men, the professionals with their cold religion, in so many words he said, Well, whatever you may call yourselves, and maybe I'm not in a position to judge, he is a prophet. There's an awakening of his soul. He may not know much about who Jesus Christ was or the purpose which he came.

But there was something that told him that this man was a prophet. The Jews did not believe, concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.

But by what means he now seeth, we know not. Or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. He's of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.

Why were they so guarded? These words spake his parents because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed that if any man did confess that he, Jesus, was Christ, he should be put out of the

synagogue, lock, stock and barrel. No matter how overwhelming the evidence, no matter that, this would be ecclesiastically inconvenient.

It'd spoil their business. So they said, No matter how overwhelming the evidence, anybody who dares to identify this fanatical street preacher, Jesus, with God's Christ, must be put out of the synagogue at once, and this must be suppressed. Hardly honest, spiritually, morally or intellectually.

But unfortunately, it wasn't confined to that particular era or generation. There are countless people in the world today who are not prepared to be honest. And no matter how overwhelming the evidence may be that the Lord Jesus was the incarnate Word of God who came to this world to restore man to his true humanity, it must be repudiated at once.

Because it is either ecclesiastically inconvenient, bad for business. It may be intellectually inconvenient, I'd lose face because of the stand I've taken in the past on the basis of my own inflated self-estimate of my own opinions, of my own worth. It may be morally inconvenient because it's going to change the things I do and the company I keep.

It may be socially inconvenient because I shall lose caste. And therefore, no matter how much my heart may be convinced of the truth, it must be repudiated. Now, that was the behavior and that was the attitude of the Pharisees, and the parents of this man knew it, and so they kept their mouths shut.

Because they weren't prepared to risk their ecclesiastical acceptance. They weren't prepared to risk their social standing, even for their own son, in identifying themselves with the only man who'd ever cared to give him sight. Therefore said his parents, he is of age, ask him.

Then again, called they the man that was blind, and said, give God the praise. They knew all the phraseology. We know that this man is a sinner.

And he answered and said, whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. Doesn't sound like a good, convinced, conservative evangelical. One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.

That I do know. I know this, that you never cared whether I was blind or whether I could see. You never cared whether I was a beggar or anything else.

He did for me what none of you ever cared to do, or could do. Call him what you like. One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Then said they to him again, what did he do to thee? How opened he thine eyes? Now they had asked that question before. And I think this man had a real sense of humor. He said, I told you already, and you did not hear me.

Wherefore would you hear it again? Would you like to be his disciples? That was a real red rag to a bull. They reviled him and said, thou art his disciples. We are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spake unto Moses. As for this fellow, we know not. From hence he is.

And quietly the man answered and said, why, hearing is a marvelous thing. You folk who know everything, you're the last word. And you know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God here is not sinners. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, he may hear it. You ought to know this.

This is your business. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind? If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. The man called Jesus a prophet from God.

Something's happening in the heart of this man. His soul's awakened. He's not converted yet.

He's preaching even. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. He was preaching.

Preaching Jesus. Didn't know what he was preaching even. Pharisees thought he was preaching.

They answered and said to him, verse 34, thou wast altogether born in sins. Dost thou teach us? You're going to preach to us? We're the preachers, not you. And they cast him out.

Best day's work they ever did. Now, I want you to notice this. How much has Jesus Christ interfered? Didn't he barge in and push everywhere? And say, what are you talking to this man like this for? No, he didn't do a thing.

If only we'd learned this. If only we'd learned this. God's never in a hurry.

We're in a hurry. We must get results. We must have some statistics on paper.

Because after all, the financial returns will be directly related to the statistics we render. This worldly concept has permeated the church today. You can't present statistics in terms of results.

How many heads? How many decisions? How many rededications? As a man said to me a little while ago in a Christian center, he said, ever since we got our hammer and organ, we've doubled our turnover at the altar call. Wonderful, isn't it? Good technique. And then quite unwittingly, on another occasion, the same man, and he was sufficiently ignorant to fail to grasp the significance of it.

He says, do you know? He says, the financial response to my prayer letter is always directly related to the number of decisions that I can record in that particular month. He'd already paid for his hammer and organ. Because his turnover had doubled.

Isn't it pathetic? And yet that man couldn't see through it. May God deliver us from this unholy haste to be successful on human terms of reference. Christ didn't take the slightest interest, apparently, in what was going on.

He was very interested. But he was just waiting for the man to awaken. How many there are who've been almost irreparably damaged by the unholy zeal, this guided zeal, the zeal not according to knowledge on the part of people who've been precipitated by the go, go, go challenge that unless we get about God's business, God's bankrupt.

God never asked us to be man-sized for God, mobilizing ourselves. He does wait for the opportunity to be God-sized in man. That's quite a different thing.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And when he had found him, not till then, he said unto him, simple question, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord? Never heard of

him. That I might believe on him.

If he's a friend of yours, he's a friend of mine. If you can recommend him to me, that's what I want. Huh.

It wasn't very difficult to lead that man to a saving knowledge. He was a ripened soul waiting to be plucked. Is that the impact that your life makes upon other men and women and boys and girls? So that when you talk to somebody about the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer and the Savior, somebody may, out of a totally ignorant background, as I came as a boy of twelve, out of a totally ignorant background, I say, if he's the one who makes you what you are, if he's a friend of yours, he's a friend of mine.

Tell me more about him. It isn't preaching that does that. It isn't sermons that do that.

It isn't our theatricals that do that. It's simply Christ behaving in terms of our humanity that does that. And that isn't the byproduct of tuition and schooling.

That is the byproduct of heart relationship. That's why the greatest service that you can render to mankind is not your skills, your dedication, your enthusiasm, your gift, your personality, your energy. It's your own personal, individual relationship to Jesus Christ.

Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, it is he that talketh with thee. And you can almost imagine the hush in heaven, a silence that you could have cut, every angel standing on tiptoe. What's he going to say to that? Because this was the crucial moment.

He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. That was his conversion.

He bowed his head and said, Lord, I never understood this before. Now I understand what it is that made the man. The man called Jesus.

It was Jesus that made the man. And I know now who Jesus is. He's the Son of God.

The Lord from heaven. God himself. What a wonderful discovery.

What a wonderful thing it is that it's possible, wonderfully possible. We don't deserve this. We no more deserve the life of the Lord Jesus in us than we deserve the death of Christ for us.

But isn't it thrilling and a wonderful thing that boys and girls and men and women around us can make a wonderful discovery in terms of our humanity and say, I never understood why it was you wear what you wear, but now I see it. It's Jesus that makes the man. And he's God's Son.

God himself. And the amazing thing to me, that person would say, is that the Jesus who's made you the man you are is the same Lord Jesus who can make me what I ought to be if he's a friend of yours. I want him to be a friend of mine.

A man called Jesus. Who's going out to this room this morning into the routine of another day? Just you? I think some of us from our hearts want to say, Lord Jesus, as we go out into the world today, we want you simply to live your life in and through us. Clothe your activity with our humanity.

Take me 15 seconds just to read this. It was thrust into my hand by a businessman in the city of Toronto in a church that I've been to several times where I've talked in this way often about the Lord Jesus simply using our humanity as the suit of clothes. When Jesus died for me on Calvary, he paid the penalty for all

my sin.

He suffered all the pain my sinful heart to gain. And now his spirit witnesses within. I'm just a suit of clothes that Jesus wears.

My body is the house in which he lives. My voice is his to talk. My feet are his to walk.

I'm just a suit of clothes that Jesus wears. He rose again to bring abundant life, to justify before his Father's face. I live no more, but he lives out his life through me.

I'm just a vessel fashioned by his grace. As life goes on, I fear not. Come what may, he carries all my burdens and my cares.

For me, the battle's done. He's the victory one. I'm just a suit of clothes that Jesus wears.

And it's the Lord Jesus who makes the man the man called Jesus. Let's bow our heads in prayer. I mean, Lord, we bless thee for what thou art.

We know that we can only enjoy in us what thou art because of what thou hast done for us. Shedding thy precious blood that we might be reconciled to a holy God and re-inhabited by God, for God. We don't deserve this.

We're conscious of our own inbred wickedness. The rebellion, hardness, coldness, ingratitude, lovelessness, and prayerlessness of our own hearts. But how glad we are that we can step out today utterly undeserving in all the good of what thy precious shed blood and calvary has made possible for us.

If there's a man, Lord, around these tables this morning who's never humbly bowed his head and looked into thy face by faith and said, Lord, I believe and worship thee. We pray that that man in the simplicity of a child may take what grace provides and know not only the joy of forgiveness but with us all the joy of taking every step in the overwhelming adequacy of a living savior not far distant in heaven but unchangingly present within the heart. And we ask it for his dear sake.

Amen.

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