

God's Standard of Evaluation

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes that God's evaluation of us hinges on the visibility of Christ in our lives and the necessity of being functional believers through His presence.

Duration: 1:12:15

Scripture: Proverbs 30:6, Matthew 16:16, John 14:8-9, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, Hebrews 10:7, 2 Peter 1:20-21

Topics: "Evaluation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of finding true worth in God rather than in artificial standards and religious performances. He highlights the revelation that a person's worth is determined by their relationship with God and their reflection of His divine intent. The preacher emphasizes that the truth is not a creed or theology, but a person - Jesus Christ. He encourages the audience to truly know and reflect Christ, understanding that they were created to be mirrors of His image.

Transcript

The Lord Jesus Christ as man 2,000 years ago was conscious. Well, in the light of the things we discussed this morning, it's very simple and very obvious. God was visible.

That's the criterion, that's the bottom line, that's the only standard by which God evaluated his Son. It's the only possible standard by which God can evaluate you and me. Of the Lord Jesus, the Father God in heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

In other words, at last I've got a man on earth who's conscious. Because 24 hours a day, by anything he ever did, said or was, it was God who was visible. In order.

It's very simple. So now you've got a touchstone by which to evaluate your own relationship to the Lord Jesus and the quality of life that you are enjoying as one who claims to be a Christian. Because quite obviously, you will be functional only in the measure in which Christ is visible.

Of course, if he is my Father friendly, so can I be. Is that complicated? You don't have to accept, of course, that standard of evaluation. But if you don't, don't expect to hear God say of you, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

For a very simple, all adequate reason. See, obviously. Because in the measure in which you do not let him in you deceive you, you're dysfunctional.

Dysfunctional. The measure in which we, by what we do and say and are, others in us, you see Christ behaving. We're telling lies about God.

So let's just check on that for a moment. Turn to the first chapter, the epistle to Hebrews in verses 1 to 3. I'll read them to you out of the Amplified New Testament. I hope you've got a copy of the Amplified New Testament.

You'll find it wonderfully refreshing. Quite obvious that those who were responsible for its production, a lady in particular who spent a lifetime, knew the significance of the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus, in the life of the believer. In many separate revelations, each of which set forth a portion of the truth.

In other words, if you just read the Bible in bits and starts, and measure on some particular pet verse, you've only got a portion of the truth, even if it's the truth. And to be possessed only of a portion of the truth can be dangerous, because you're calculated to enlarge it, exaggerate it, and put it out of proportion. I mean, if all you knew about your hand is that you've got a thumb, and you focused on your thumb until the thumb got bigger and bigger and bigger, that which is legitimate and essential to the function of the hand will become a monstrosity.

Any truth, no matter how true, if it's put out of context, becomes error. In many separate revelations, each of which set forth a portion of the truth, and in different ways. God spoke of all to our forefathers in and by the prophets.

So we need to hear everything that God had to say by the prophets in the Old Testament if we're to get a full three-dimensional grasp of the truth in death. Then God did something even bigger than that. He didn't only give us the Old Testament as the written word.

In the last of those days, yet on schedule, in the end of that age, the Old Testament age, he has spoken to us in the person of his Son. That's why he's called the Word, capital W. He was the one through whom God spoke as the substance of the shadow. The one who is the living word came to fulfill the written word.

And there's no dichotomy between the one and the other. In the last of these days, God has spoken to us in the person of his Son, whom he appointed heir, lawful owner of all things, by and through whom he created the worlds, the reaches of space, and the ages of time. He made them, produced, built, operates, and arranges them in order.

And he, the one in whom God did all that, is the co-equal member of the triune Godhead, the Word, the Logos. He is the sole expression of the glory of God, the light being, the outbringing of the divine. He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature, functional, because unexceptionally, 24 hours a day for 33 years on earth, in every area of his being, God is living, the Logos, the Word.

Return to that passage in the first chapter of John's Gospel. John's Gospel in chapter 1, in the beginning, with the Word. Before all time, before time existed, because in God, time doesn't exist, it's timeless.

Time to you and to me, as human beings, little creatures on this tiny planet, put out in space to cure their relatives. We experience time because we swing around the sun, and the time it takes, we divide into 24 units, we call them hours. We divide those 60 times and call them minutes.

We divide those and call them seconds. But it's only valid because we happen to swing around the sun. Of course, if you were a little farther from the sun, you'd have a longer day.

If you were nearer to the sun, you'd have shorter days. Time is to the relatives. Mind you, if we were farther from the sun, we'd frizzle.

If we were nearer to the sun, we'd freeze. The other way around. If we were farther from the sun, we'd freeze.

If we were nearer to the sun, we'd frizzle. Isn't it incredible that God could put this little planet in that relationship to the sun, so that neither freezing nor frizzle, we can operate within 100 degrees centigrade? Who thought that up? God. He created that.

God is timeless. We have seasons, of course. We revolve on an axis.

Well, God doesn't twiddle around anything. We revolve on any axis. It's timeless.

It's eternal. We don't understand that. We don't have that.

I'm so glad I have a God I can't understand. Don't you? Supposing we had a God we could tuck inside our tiny little head and rationalize. That God would be too small.

In the beginning, before all time, was the Word. In the eternal present tense, it is. Christ.

And that Word, the Logos, was with God. The Word was God Himself. The Logos, you see, represents the commanding Word, God's Spoke.

And the things that are, derive from the things that were not. The creative Word. He was present originally with God.

In the timeless eternities of the past. All things were made, came into existence through Him. Without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.

In Him, the creative Word was life. And that life that was in Him, was the light of man. That life that switched a man on when first God created him made him function.

Because everything that all creation could see of God in man had to have its origin in the Creator living within the creature. The simple reason He made it that way. Well, that's the Word.

And then He goes on to say this in verse 14. That Word, the Logos, who was in the beginning with God and was God, and by Him all things were made, became flesh. The world heard a baby cry.

And that was the biggest thing God ever said. When the Word was incarnate. Emmanuel, God's Spirit.

And says, John, we actually saw His glory. His honor, His majesty. Such glory as an only begotten Son receives from His Father full of grace.

In other words, John says, when that little baby boy was born, miraculously conceived of the Holy Ghost, God incarnate, clothed with that humanity that God was pleased to prepare for Him, fashioned the borrowed womb of a virgin girl, when we look at Him, we saw the glory of God. How so? Well, because He was functional. Because the only evidence of being functional is God is living.

If they had seen Him, the person of the One who was incarnate, and had seen our flesh and blood and was born as human beings, if they had seen anything other than the glory of God, He would have been as

dysfunctional as you and I are. But then John goes on to explain that quality of life in Jesus that demonstrated the fact that as man, born at Bethlehem, He was functional. It presents initially, of course, a mystery, which is no longer any mystery.

For He says in verse 18, Having described the Lord Jesus as the Logos, who was in the beginning with God and was God, and by whom all things were made that created, be it. He then goes on to say, having declared, we saw Him. No man has seen God at any time.

How do you reconcile that? He spells it out loud and clear so that there's no inkling of misunderstanding in what He has to say. He was in the beginning with God and was God. No man has seen God at any time.

But He says, we beheld His glory. How did that occur? Well, only because the Lord Jesus was prepared to be the kind of man that He has God created man to be. God, when man fell, looked for another man whom He would use to remedy man's lost condition.

That's why He's called, as all of you know, 1 Corinthians chapter 16, verse 45, the last Adam. He's called in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 47, the second man. The first Adam was made a living soul.

He was created by God's function. Magnificently engineered by God, in such a way that the presence of the Creator within the creature was indispensable to His humanity. The life of God in the soul of man, that which is totally essential, indispensable to His function.

But He fell and died. He forfeited what it takes to be a man. God said He would.

If He was to retaliate the mutual inter-availability that was to exist between man and God and God and man. And the moment man believed the devil's lie that he could be man without God, he was no longer available to the God who was available to him. So God did exactly what He said He would do.

He removed the Holy Spirit from the human spirit and man was on his own. And it became a nasty travesty of the truth about man. A nasty caricature.

But the last Adam, this little baby boy that was born at Bethlehem, he came to be a quickening spirit. In other words, to raise the dead. To restore to man, on God's terms, not man's terms, God's terms, the life that was lost in Adam.

Because we call that new birth, regeneration that we knew into the Holy Ghost. Not on the basis of your merit or mine, it's nothing you can earn, deserve or buy. There's nothing which you can be educated into.

So not by any works of righteousness which we have done, but according to God's mercy He saved us. By the watching of regeneration, rebirth, the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The coming back of somebody to live in somebody.

Christ living in your heart. Your only hope of being restored to function. Glory.

So the first Adam, he was created a living soul in doubt. The last Adam came to restore life to the lifeless. The only cure for death.

That's why Jesus said, I'm come that you might have what you lost in Adam. Life. The 47th verse says, the first man was of the earthly.

He was created. Magnificently created. Fully furnished by the presence of the Creator within the creature unto every good work.

For God, the Creator within man, the creature, was to be the origin in man of that which was to be seen by all creation as the object of the image of God himself. Both the origin and the object. Magnificently created by God.

He fell. He forfeited what it takes to be a man. But the second man.

1 Corinthians 15.47. The first man was of the earthly, created. But he became dysfunctional. Because he broke the rules.

That alone could make him functional. The indispensability of the Creator within the creature. As the church today has long since departed from the indispensability of Christ within the Christian.

He's now taught to echo. And imitate. And immediately becomes dysfunctional.

The first man was of the earthly, created. The second man. The only other real man.

Whoever was. Was the Lord from heaven. And John says he saw him.

But as such, being functional, what else did he see when he looked at the man? If a man is functional only when God is visible. And the Lord Jesus was born a functional man. Who else did John see when he looked at Jesus? God.

Of course. Because the Lord Jesus, though co-equal in beauty with the Father and the Holy Spirit, was prepared to assume that office which he as God created you and me. To bring an invisible God out into the open where God could be seen and be heard.

So how does he go on? In this 18th verse. No man has ever seen God at any time as God. The only unique son of man.

The only begotten God. A God incarnate. A word made flesh.

He has declared him. He has revealed him. He has brought him, an invisible God, out where he, that invisible God, can be seen.

He has interpreted him. He, Jesus, has made him as the Son. He, Jesus, has made him, the Father, as God.

No. That's the function of man. To bring an invisible God out into the open where that invisible God can be seen and heard.

I like Luther's translation of that. It says of this, the word, Er hat ihn verkündigt. Verkündigen is a German word.

It means to preach or proclaim or announce. Lovely way of putting it. Jesus Christ announced God.

He preached God. And Luther didn't mean by that that he spent all his time preaching sermons on the mount. It means that by everything he did and said and everything he was, the life of Jesus Christ was a sermon.

That revealed the nature and character of God himself. Er hat ihn verkündigt. In other words, if you want to know anything about God, go to Jesus.

Because he has revealed him. He has declared him. He has brought him, God, out where he can be seen.

He has interpreted him and made him known. That was only possible on the part of the Lord Jesus because he was prepared to empty himself, humble himself, make himself of no reputation. New English Bible, out of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, make himself nothing, nothing, nothing, and be born of him again.

The only way in which the Lord Jesus, as a member of the triune co-equal Godhead, could bring an invisible God out into the open where God could be seen and heard, was of his own pre-religion to be born of him again. And fulfill that function which is God creating you and me. Marvellous.

Look at the second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians in Capernaum. And the fourth verse of that fourth chapter. The God of this world, Satan, has blinded the unbelievers' minds that they should not discern the truth.

Preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the gospel of the glory of God, Christ, the Messiah, who is the image and likeness of God. He said the devil blinds your minds by making it impossible for you to discern the truth. You can echo the truth, but you can't discern it.

Or as I indicated this morning, you can be textually aware and memorize the verse and remain spiritually unenlightened. So you get the language right, but you don't know the truth. We have constant evidence of that in God's word in the 16th chapter of Matthew's gospel.

When the Lord Jesus said, Whom do you say that I, the Son of Man, am? Peter immediately stood up and said, The Christ, Son of the living God. He got the language right. Was he wrong or was he right in what he said? He was right.

Had he a clue what he was talking about? None. For the moment the Lord Jesus, in a few verses later, said, I'm going to Jerusalem. I'll be delivered into the hands of wicked men.

They've done a death, but don't panic. Third day I'll be risen from the dead. Peter immediately stepped forward and said, Not so, Lord.

That's not going to happen to you, and we're going to make sure it doesn't. You can forget that. This idea that you're going to do something done to death.

That's not my concept of the Messiah, the Christ. That isn't on our agenda. And as for this far-fetched idea that being crucified, you're going to rise again from the dead.

That's way out. So did Peter know what he was talking about? No. What's the best thing to do if you don't know what you're talking about? Do exactly what the Lord Jesus told him to do.

Keep your mouth shut. And forbid him and the others ever to tell, at that stage, anybody that he, Jesus, was the Christ. You can memorize the Bible from cover to cover and still not know the truth.

But you become textually aware, and other people, because you've learned to echo, and you're exactly on the band. The God of this world has blinded the unbelievers' minds that they should not discern the truth.

Preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the glory of the gospel, of the glory of Christ, who is the image and likeness of God.

God's image, God's likeness. Well, what does that tell you? He was a man. Because he, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, said, Let us make man in our image, our likeness.

And here, Paul affirms the fact. He, our Lord Jesus, is the image and likeness of God. In other words, he's a function.

As a man. The sixth God, who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts. So as to beam forth the light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God.

He has shone forth in our hearts so that we might beam forth, in other words, reflect. Like a mirror. It doesn't derive from us, because we have nothing from which it can derive.

But the light shone forth in our hearts. In that behavior mechanism that God created to be the instrument of his divine activity. So that his character might now beam forth, be reflected in the mirror.

To beam forth the light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and the glory of God as it is manifest in the person and is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. In other words, what he is, is to shine into our hearts and be reflected so that what he is beams forth. And Paul understands that he was created to be a mirror.

But what we've learned already, if we didn't know it before, about a mirror is it doesn't produce the image. It simply reflects, beams it forth. But it's got to receive what it gives.

And if there's nothing to give, that it might receive, there's nothing to receive. However, he continues, by way of explanation. He's not saying, I got the message, God says I've got to imitate Jesus.

I've got to do my best to bring him out into the open where he can receive. No, he says that isn't what God is saying. In the seventh verse, we possess this precious treasure.

The divine light of the gospel that has shone into our hearts. In frail human vessels of earth. That the grandeur and the exceeding greatness of the power may be shown to you of God and not from ourselves.

In other words, says Paul, if I'm to be functional, it's got to become demonstrably obvious that what others see in me doesn't have its origin in me. But in the one who has come to take up residence as the light that has shone into my heart. And to whom now, gladly, I give the right to teach my mind, control my emotions, so direct my will that he governs my behavior.

And becomes in me as God in the man, created within the creature, the origin of his own image, source of his own activity, dynamic of his own demand and cause of his own effect. And so, says he, I realize there's only one person to be congratulated. And it isn't Paul the Apostle.

That the grandeur, the exceeding greatness of the power may be shown to thee of God. So he recognized himself to be a mirror because he was made that way. But a mirror that does even more than just reflect.

That which it receives. Look at Philippians in chapter 1 verse 20. The Philippian epistle in the 20th verse.

This is his prime concern. This is in keeping with my own eager desire and persistent expectation and hope. That I shall not disgrace myself nor be put to shame in anything.

But that with the utmost freedom of speech and unflinching courage, now as always heretofore, Christ the Messiah will be. What's the word? Magnified. He said I'm not only a mirror, I'm a magnifying glass.

In other words, as the light shines into my heart, when it beams forth, it's to magnify Jesus. That doesn't sound like the evangelistic prayer today. A cult of personality.

A man's prime ambition is to magnify himself. Bring himself out into the open where he can be seen. That Christ will be magnified and get glory and praise in this body of mine.

Be boldly exalted in my person. Whether through life or through death. Put very simply in the King James, and what was good enough of Paul the Apostle is good enough for me.

According to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body. Whether it be by life or death. For me, to live is Christ, to die is death.

So God has given to you and to me as the creature, as a gift from the creator, a body in which there is to be reflected the perfect image and glory of God so that he who is invisible will be brought out into the open where he can be seen and in the process the world will look at us and see Christ magnified. That's why he says in the same first chapter, the Epistles of the Philippians, in the twelfth verse, that I might be to the praise of his glory. In other words, so that people will look at me as Paul the Apostle and say, man, what a preacher.

Man, what dedication. Man, what commitment. He's been to jail.

He's been whipped. He's been ridiculed and maligned. He's been thrown into jail.

He's been, uh-uh, says Paul. That I might be to the praise of his glory. So that some little boy, girl, man or woman would look at me, no matter where they come from, and say, isn't he one such a Christian.

When your body is a means whereby the Lord Jesus is revealed and magnified, reflecting as in a magnifying mirror, the glory of the Lord. And progressively being moved from one degree of glory to another, you grow in grace and learn to let him who alone can do it. Let's grow in grace, letting God do it.

Because every time you let God do it, he does it. And that produces a memory that undergirds your faith that in the next situation you'll let him do it again. And when you let him do it again, he does it.

Now you've got two memories of God doing it. And in the measure in which you let him do it and God does it, so you grow in grace. You accumulate memories of God's adequacy.

But the strange thing is, no matter how God does it a thousand times, we have to remind every twenty seconds of the principle that governs. That quality of life. Because we're all prone to forget.

Reflect and magnify. All right, well, as a member of the student body, how do you shape up under that definition of being Christian? Is it true to say of you as a student here in this school that by everything other students see you do and say and are, by day or by night, Christ is revealed and magnified? Is that true? If that isn't true, you're dysfunctional. You're betraying the trust that God vested in you, first when he

created you and secondly when he redeemed you to recreate you and restore you to function.

It isn't how many Bible verses you've memorized, it isn't how many doctrines you've grasped. A man can be a prince of a creature, go home and behave like a bear. What's the only evidence of his relationship to God? That by what he does, says, and does, it's demonstrably obvious there's only one possible origin of that quality of life that he displays.

The one whose glory he reflects and in the process magnifies. This, Paul illustrates, just look at it for a moment, in the third chapter again of his second epistle to the Corinthians, but the first verse on of that chapter. We've seen the 18th verse magnifying like a mirror, but this is how he describes the origin of that which is magnified and revealed.

He says in the first verse of the third chapter, second Corinthians, are we starting to commend ourselves again? Am I swanky? Am I parading my virtue? Am I trying to elicit your praise? Am I trying to get another job on the basis of my reputation? Am I trying to keep myself in business? Are we, as some false teachers, seeking written credentials or letters of recommendation to you or from you? Because I want a job with you, I get a letter to you. Because I want a job on the basis of what I did among you, I want a letter from you. In self-advertisement, uh-uh, he says, I'm not interested.

For a very simple reason, I'm not looking for a job. I've got one. I'm the servant of Jesus Christ.

Apart from whom I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing. For I am crucified with Christ. I gladly identify myself with him.

In that death, he suffered on my behalf, knowing that I deserve no more nor less than what happened to him and took my place. Sentenced, executed, and buried. Nevertheless, I live here, not I. Christ lives in me.

So, if you want to congratulate anybody, congratulate him. No, he says, as evidence of the validity of my ministry, which has its origin in the only one who can, Jesus Christ. You yourselves are our letter of recommendation.

You represent our credentials. Written in your hearts to be perceived, recognized, known, and read by everybody. In other words, you folks here in Corinth are the letter that God has given me to deliver.

All I am is a potion. You show and you make obvious that you are a letter from Christ. I didn't write it.

He did. But it's a letter from Christ delivered by us, that's all. Not written with ink, but with the Holy Spirit of the living God.

Not on tables of stone as once God wrote and etched with his finger the moral law that he gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. Not on tables of stone, but on the tables of your human heart. As God etched that law then on stone, he's now etched that law by the Holy Spirit on your heart.

So, what's the evidence that in measure you've been restored to function? Well, it's very simple. You were alive, now you tell the truth. You once told, but now you're honest.

You were dirty and unchaste. You engaged in promiscuous sex, but now you're pure. The only measure in which my ministry is validated is the measure in which you've become functional because Christ has become visible.

That's the only evidence that validates a man's ministry, not how many decisions to give. Not the statistics of which he can vote. The only evidence of any validity in a man's ministry is the quality of life evidenced now by those who've had that divine encounter with a risen Savior who redeems and regenerates.

He says the measure of the validity of my ministry is the measure now in which Christ is reflected like a mirror and magnified. By what you do and say now. I don't need letters of recommendation.

Because if this isn't true of you, that you reflect now the glory of Jesus by what you do and say now and magnify him in the process, no matter what letters of recommendation I may receive that put me back in business, I'm a phony. And I don't deserve to be in business. I'm simply exploiting.

Those who've become the merchandise of my ministry. Well, from whom did Paul the Apostle learn all this stuff? Well, there was only one person from whom he could learn it. God's man.

Who was willing in the eternal ages of the past to volunteer. To be the vehicle in God's gracious hand of your redemption and mine. For the Lord Jesus was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

Thirteenth chapter of the book of the Revelation. So the birth and life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus as indeed his imminent return isn't something that God thought up at the last moment. At the height of a crisis, a panic that suddenly hit God's plans when Adam fell.

In the eternal ages of the past I imagine that there might have been a conference between Father, Son and Holy Spirit and say supposing something goes wrong. A man created to enjoy that special relationship of mutual inter-availability that derives from that moral relationship of love for dependence on obedience to supposing he opts out of life into death and becomes dysfunctional. I imagine purely imagination.

The Lord Jesus might have said if that happens I'll go to earth and be a real man. So that as real man I'll be qualified to provide for fallen men the redemptive transaction that will allow them to enjoy a spiritual regeneration. In the restoration for them of that life they lost because of their sins I'm prepared to go and pay a debt I did not owe because they now owe a debt they cannot pay.

That was settled in the heart of God wherever the world was in the eternal ages of the past. The gospel isn't some neat tangled religion. It was created in the mind of a man who lived as a preacher or prophet or teacher or theologian of the first century.

It was the implementation of the divine plan, the plan of a God who knows the end from the beginning. And to in creating man with the moral capacity to see the greatest privilege God gave to any creature on this planet, the right to adopt the disposition of his choice in terms of that relationship between creature and creation. That was the incredible privilege and liberty that God gave to man.

So that God in man might have a man capable of loving God back because love can't be compared. It's calculated real but it wasn't irresponsible. For in the eternal ages of the past before ever this world was put into space and man created to live in it, God had provided in Christ the remnant, the last Adam and the second man.

So Paul learned the principle from Jesus who was not only the truth about man but could not but be as we've seen the truth about God because the truth about man is that man was created to be the truth about God. So all who looked at Jesus as man could not but be God because being functional God was visible. Isn't it simple? Isn't it obvious? Isn't it logical? Nothing more logical than the Bible.

Nothing more logical than the timeless wisdom of God. It's not human logic. It's divine logic.

But to understand the divine logic you've got to grasp the hidden factor that alone makes man functional. God in the name of Christ in the Christians. So look at Corinthians and Colossians in chapter 1 and verse 15.

We know of whom the apostle here is writing because he explains that in the 14th preceding verse in whom, that is the Lord Jesus, we have our redemption through his blood. That means the forgiveness of our sins. And having told us that he then goes on to say this.

He is the exact likeness of the ungodly man. He is the exact likeness of an unseen God. He, this man Jesus, the exact likeness of an unseen God.

The visible representation of the invisible. In King James, the image of an invisible God. Now we have that word image again that I mentioned this morning.

Image not by imitation. Not by echoing or aching. But image by derivation.

This is the word icon. Image by derivation. So that what was seen of God in Christ derives.

In that he willingly made himself nothing but the mirror. An image that had to derive from the Father as God. The origin of that image that was seen in Jesus.

The object of the image. God himself. He made this humanity in the totality of his being.

Body, soul, spirit, mind, emotion and will. Being born a human being. Wholly available in mutual availability to the Father's availability vision.

So he didn't echo, as a man, what the Father was saying. The Father was saying it. The Father was saying it.

What he had to say was not an echo. Because he was playing the role of man. He was functional for the purpose which he as God created man.

Though the Creator, he's playing the role of creature. Though the God who made man, he was put there to be the kind of man that he was. The kind of man that he as God had made.

So it wasn't echoing what God had to say in the mindlessness of a parrot. God was saying it. Look at John's Gospel in chapter 12, verse 44.

John's Gospel, chapter 12, verse 44. The Lord Jesus cried and said, He that believes on me, believes not on me. Have you got that underlined in your Bible? He that believes on me, believes not on me.

Haven't you been told from the year dot to believe on Jesus? Well Jesus says, when you believe on me, don't believe on me. He says, he that believes on believes not on me, but on him that sent me. Because when my Father sent me, and I left heaven and came to earth, left eternally and landed in time, of my own free volition I was willing to be born a human being.

And play that role for which we, Father, Son and Holy Ghost created man. To be the human vehicle of a divine activity. To bring an invisible and inaudible God out into the open where he can be seen and heard.

So when you believe on me, you do not believe on me, but on him that sent me. And when you look at me, you don't see me, but him that sent me, verse 45. He that sees me, in the physical form of a human being.

You're simply looking at a real man, who by what he does, says and is, motivated from the Father God, is the one who indwells and therefore motivates what he does and says and is. You're looking at my Father behaving. Because I'm man.

As I have God created man to be. Just turn over the page to the 14th chapter. Philip said to the Lord, show us the Father, verse 8. And it's sufficeable.

That's all we need. Just show us the Father. And evidence of fact that everything that the Lord Jesus had gone way over his head.

He had listened, but heard nothing. And it's very possible that at the moment you're listening, but you're not hearing. Because remember, the devil doesn't blind your mind from memorizing scripture or knowing your Bible.

He blinds your mind so that you don't discern the truth. And his satanic device is to fill your mind with Bible verses so that you think yourself pretty mature, because you remember what this verse says and that verse says, and know all the time that you know no more about what you're saying, or what God has said, than what Peter knew when he said that to Christ. And then stood between him and the cross.

So if there's a student here, you fill your notebook with all kinds of notes, all of which are valid, but you haven't discerned the truth. We've done nothing for you during your time at Bible school but compound the injury. Because you'll get the idea because you've got a notebook full of notes.

You've mastered the truth. The truth is a person, not a creed, but Christ, not dogma, but He is. Not a theology, but a theocracy.

God behaves as king in his kingdom. So, the Lord Jesus replied in the ninth verse, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? You've been listening to what I'm saying, but you haven't come to know me, because you've listened without hearing it. He that has seen me has seen the Father, because I'm playing the role of man.

As man, I'm making my humanity in totality available to my Father to behave. So when you look at me, you see my Father behaving. How sayest thou then, show us the Father? Philip, you've missed it.

I'm trying to teach you by what I am what it means to be a man. You haven't got a clue. Verse 14.

Verse 10, I beg your pardon. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, that it is between myself and man, and my Father is God, a relationship of mutual inter-availability, so that everything I do is what my Father is doing, what I say is what he's saying, what I am is what he is. You look at me and see God behaving.

That's man, Philip, in normality, mutual inter-availability. I am in my Father, my Father is in me. This is how we created Adam.

But he failed. I've come, born a human being, to demonstrate what we had in mind when we first met. But, Philip, quite obviously, sadly enough, the truth is it hasn't hurt so far as you're concerned.

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, the words that I speak unto you are not echoing like a parrot, I speak not of myself. It isn't that I've got good at imitating. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself.

The Father that dwells in me, he does the work. My lips are his to make articulate what he's saying. My body is available to him to clothe his activity.

Philip, I'm man, as I was God created man to be. I mean, if you heard a parrot saying, shut the door, shut the door, shut the door, shut the door, and you might turn to the parrot, if you could, and talk to him and say, why, what do you want me to shut the door for, is it drafty? If he could reply, he'd say, I haven't a clue, I was simply taught to say that, shut the door, shut the door, shut the door. That's called evangelism today, that's called preaching today, just get people to repeat things that are true, mindlessly, without any understanding what they're meaning by what they're saying.

That's true of the echo of a parrot, it's true of the ape that's merely imitating and tries to be like. They would be able, even if they were capable of speech, to give no possible explanation for what they were saying or doing. I was squeezed into this mold, I was taught it, by somebody else.

In correcting somebody who was giving a totally false impression of what God's truth is in his word, but he says, I was taught it in seminary. In other words, he'd been taught to echo an ape, that he'd never come to grips with Jesus, because when you come to grips and appropriated his life, then what you do is what he does, what you say is what he said, and from that alone derives the authority that you have the right to express. So, said the Lord Jesus, John 8, look at it in verse 28, where in John's Gospel, she appears just as well as I am.

Said the Lord Jesus, I neither echo nor ape, I'm a human vehicle, a real man in my Father's divine activity. Verse 28, of the 8th chapter of John's Gospel, then said Jesus to them, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, in other words, crucify him, when you look and gaze at me in the crowd, nailed to a Roman gallows, there are two things you can know, one, I am he, I am he. You'll see enacted before your very eyes what God, in centuries ago, had to say through the lips of his servant David, they look and stare upon me, they pierce my hands and my feet.

They cast lots for my vesture, they gamble for my place. He said, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, you'll see being enacted before your very eyes, what you could read for yourself in the 22nd Psalm. That's why the Lord Jesus quoted the first verse of that Psalm, as well you know, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He was trying to tell his disciples to look it up, and see what would happen.

They didn't look it up, so what did they do? They did exactly what the Lord Jesus said they'd do, like a bunch of frightened sheep, you'll quit and run away. They were very angry when the Lord Jesus said that. They were mad.

He was underestimating their integrity. That's exactly what they did. And the Lord Jesus wasn't shocked, because he knew about them what they didn't know about their own hearts, that they went to quit for the job, that they were trying to do.

Because at that stage, you see, before the cross and Pentecost, they were trying to be for Jesus, but only Christ could be in and through them. He didn't blame them for it, he knew their folly derived from ignorance. It always does.

As Moses had to learn, any old bush will do, so long as God's in the bush. The bush tries to sustain the flame out of its own substance, it'll end up a heap of ash. So said the Lord Jesus, when you've lifted up the Son of Man, you'll know first that I'm the Messiah, the Christ.

And secondly, what else are you going to know? He said, look at verse 28, you'll know that I'm He and that, what else? I do nothing. I'm simply making my humanity available for my Father to tell the story that has been already written. As it's recorded for us in the 10th chapter, don't turn to it, 10th chapter, the epistle of the Hebrews and the 7th verse, the Lord Jesus said, I have come, Father, to do your will, all that has been written of me in the volume of the book, and placing my humanity in totality, without reserve, at your disposal, so that you now in me, clothed with this body, can implement the plan upon which we agreed in the eternal ages of the past.

I've come to do your will, O God. All that has been written of me in the volume of the book. The volume of what, the Old Testament? Where the whole redemptive and regenerative purpose of God was foreshadowed magnificently and found its fulfillment in the substance of the shadow which was Jesus when he was born at Bethlehem.

I do nothing. For my office isn't to act, for my office isn't to be, but my Father can act, and he will, and he does. But notice what he says, verse 29, the next verse, still in the 8th chapter of John, you'll know that I'm he, you'll know that I in the process do nothing, as if my Father has taught me, so I speak.

I only say the words that he puts into my lips to give utterance. For, verse 29, he that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone.

That's why I do always only those things that please him, because he's doing them. In other words, as man, I live by the presence of my Father, God, because he sent me, but hasn't left me, because he's with me. In other words, his divine presence is the secret of the quality of life that you see displayed in my humanity.

I live as man in the eternal present tense of the verb to be. My Father is with me, because I'm real man. And I've never, as Adam did repudiate it, that relationship that makes him, my Father, as God, that's why he's never left me.

If I were as stupid as Adam to believe the devil's lie that a man can be man without God, carve his own destiny, be king in his own kingdom, do his own thing, my Father would have left me long since as he left and I left and the Holy Spirit left. But he was the one who was without sin, and whatsoever is not of faith, the disposition that lets God do it, that is sin, strayed from that disposition within his heart that lived in total dependence on his Father. So all you could see and hear in Jesus was what the Father was doing and what the Father was saying.

Real man. Paul discovered this. Look at 2 Corinthians in chapter 5. 2 Corinthians in chapter 5 and the 15th verse.

The Lord Jesus died for all. Not for an elect, not for a favored few, for all. But that doesn't mean that the all for whom he died are going to live because only those will live who enter in the good of what he did when he died because the whole purpose of his dying was that we might enjoy his living.

He gave himself for us only that risen from the dead he might then, as he did first on the day of Pentecost, give himself to us. So he says he died for all but it's that those who live who on the grounds of the

redemptive act become the recipients of his resurrection life because I deal with sins so that God can restore to man the life he lost in Adam that's regeneration, new birth renewing of the Holy Ghost. He died for all so that all those who live might live of course an entirely new quality of life that has its origin in the only one capable of living the Christian life the only man who ever did.

There's only one man who ever lived the Christian life. And he died for us then so that he, the only man who ever lived the Christian life might live that life today in your body and mine that he lived in his body then. That's the Christian life.

The Christian life is the life the Lord Jesus lived then in that body the Father gave him at Bethlehem, lived now by the same Lord Jesus in your body and mine. It's a person not a program. That's when you can say he died for us.

so that all those who live might live no longer two and four the same. Self-oriented egocentric deriving all their energies and activities from their own resources. As kids are taught right now in our evangelical theological seminaries mobilize your own resources draw upon the illimitable depth of your own personality.

Self-realization That's nothing new. That's what the devil told Adam and Eve. Self-realization.

He died for all so that all those who live who have been born again who have been regenerate to whom the life of God has been restored should now no longer live two and four themselves but two and four him who died and was raised again for their sake who gave himself for them to redeem them reconcile them to a holy God and then rose again from the dead by the indwelling Holy Spirit to presence himself in them as the Father for 33 years of presence himself in the Son. So that as demonstrably obvious as it then was that what Jesus did, said, and was derived from the Father in the Son it may become as demonstrably obvious as Paul that by the quality of your life everybody will know that it derives from the Son who now lives in you. In other words, you're a Christian.

Not a super-Christian just a Christian because a Christian is one who's opted out of Adam into Christ to be restored to function. And the measure in which you've been restored to the function is the measure in which Christ can be risen, seen. So he then goes on to say this in verse 16 Consequently from now on we estimate and regard no one from the purely human point of view.

He said, I did because I was brought up that way. I evaluated people and their worth on the basis of their performance on the basis of their pedigree the color of their skin the academic achievement on the balance the size of it in the bank. That's the only way I could evaluate anybody because that's how I was evaluated.

I was considered to be the theological bright blue-eyed boy of my theological class. I was promoted above many of my equals in the Jewish religion. As touching that requirement imposed upon me by the pharisaical law I was blamed.

I was top of the class. And I learned to evaluate everybody else that way. But now, he said from now on we estimate and regard no one from a purely human point of view in terms of natural standards of value.

No, said he even though we once did estimate Christ from a human viewpoint and as a man yet now we have such knowledge of him that we know him no longer in terms of the flesh. I've discerned the truth. As a human being enjoying the slap on the back from my theological peers congratulated for my academic

excellence and my biblical scholarship I consider Jesus Christ to be the fanatical street preacher who didn't even go to high school.

His origins to say the least were somewhat murky. He was the illegitimate child of a lying faithless ignorant Galilean peasant. That was my evaluation of Jesus Christ.

He was a scrounger. Even as a fanatical street preacher when he wanted to use an illustration he had no coin in his pocket because he always lived under somebody else's roof. Had to borrow a coin.

That was my evaluation of Jesus Christ. He was worth nothing. But now although I once did estimate Christ from a human viewpoint and as a man I now know him in such a way that I no longer evaluate him or know him in terms of the flesh.

Because something happened to me on the road to Damascus when there was a light bright in the sun at noonday that flung me sightless blinded to the earth. And I heard a voice speaking in the Hebrew tongue from heaven saying, Lord, why persecute this man? Because then it was my cherished ambition to stamp out this heretical idea that Jesus was the Christ and the Messiah. Willing, if need be, to do them to death at least throw them into jail.

Standing, consenting to the death of Stephen, seeing his blood run in the gut and hearing his bones snap as he was thrown to death. Relishing every moment of it. Why persecute this man? I said, who are you? I said, I'm Jesus.

I'm not persecuted. I'm that fanatical street preacher who didn't even go to high school. I'm that illegitimate child of a lying faithless Galilean ignorant peasant.

I'm the imposter who pretended that he was the Christ. I'm just Jesus. And thou didst in the soul of Tarsus capitulate, bowed his head and said, Lord, what was I having to do? In the soul of Tarsus was transformed into holy apostasy.

He was emancipated, delivered from the hollow art of living in a fool's paradise, of faulty values, a world of artificial standards anchored to a cloud, changing with every whim and fashion. Blown around, souls had found reality and a living God and the religious show was over. He could put aside his makeup discard the musty costumes of a religious performance and found life because I saw in the face of Jesus Christ the glory of God.

I realized in that moment of time that a man is worth no more nor less than can be seen of God. So the obvious question to ask at the conclusion of this session is how much are you worth? How much are you worth? Bearing in mind that a boy, girl, man or woman is worth no more nor less by creation and God's divine intent and can be seen of God in him for a human being is functional only when God is visible. How much are you worth?

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