

Let God Be in You

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of letting God be God, and how this is demonstrated through faith and a heart that is perfect towards him.

Duration: 42:34

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Psalm 107:9, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:30, Galatians 4:4, Philippians 2:12-13

Topics: "Christ In Us"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God has chosen individuals from seemingly ordinary and unpromising backgrounds to serve Him. He encourages the audience, whether they are teaching a Sunday school class or preaching from a pulpit, to have confidence in the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit to transform lives. The preacher uses the example of David facing a lion, highlighting how David's perspective shifted from feeling small to seeing God as bigger than the lion, leading him to defeat it. The sermon also references the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, as an example of someone with a perfect heart towards God, whom God chose to show His strength through.

Transcript

In his fourth chapter of the Epistles of Echolation said the Apostle Paul, in the fullness of time God sent his Son, born of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law. The psalmist, he satisfied the longing soul and he filleth the hungry soul with goodness. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.

He broke their bands in thunder. He sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions. He sent his word.

Or let's put it another way, God gave us his word. The biggest thing God ever said, Jesus Christ, his incarnate Son and our Saviour and our Lord. And when God wanted to say the biggest thing he ever said, his eyes ran to and fro throughout the whole earth looking for a young lady hardly more than a teenager whose heart was perfect toward him.

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth looking for the man, the woman, the boy or girl whose heart being perfect toward him he may show himself strong on their behalf. So if at the outset of this introductory evening session tonight you turn with me just for a first chapter of Luke's gospel, Luke and chapter one. God sent his angel to this young lady, this virgin girl.

And through the lips of his servant, the angel Gabriel, God said, Fear not Mary, verse 30, thou hast found favor with God. Now when did Mary find favor with God? Humanly speaking this is our first introduction to the young lady. We have the foreshadowing of course as all of us know in the Old Testament.

That foreshadowing that God gave us in the third chapter of the First Book in the Bible, Genesis 3, 15, God rebuking Satan, I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seat and her seat, it the seat of that woman. Jesus to be born of Mary shall bruise your head. In the process you will bruise his heel.

In the seventh of Isaiah, God said, I will give you a sign. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son. Thou shall call his name God with us, Emmanuel.

The word incarnate, the word made flesh, the word who was in the beginning with God was God and by whom all things were made. In the ninth chapter, unto us a son is given. His name, Everlasting Father, Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace.

And the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this, something inexplicable apart from a divine intervention, without human explanation. So the foreshadowing is there in the Old Testament that this is our first personal encounter with Mary. And to this young lady, little more than a teenager, God says you have found favor.

When did she find favor? We know nothing about her educational background. We don't suppose that she ever went to Bible school. She never hit the headlights.

But you see, God had been watching a little girl grow up. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth looking, looking simply for any boy, any girl, any man, any woman, anywhere, who will let God, as God, be strong on their behalf. And in all kinds of little ways in which we are totally unaware, this young girl in her early childhood and in her early teenage years had learned to reckon with God on the assumption that as God he was big enough for the job.

Nothing more complicated than that. Nothing that was recorded for your information or mine till now unnamed, unsung, unknown, unrecognized. But that's exactly where God chooses.

Those through whom he's going to accomplish his timeless end. Every now and again, of course, that choice based upon their disposition surfaces and the world becomes aware of their availability and the things that God is pleased to accomplish through them. Not always, always at once, but long ever before any boy, girl, man or woman comes out into the limelight, recognized to be the human vehicle of the divine end, God's been watching.

That's where he selects each one of us in the little nitty-gritty things that are unknown, unsung, unadvertised. But where he sees us demonstrating a certain disposition toward God that allows him to move magnificently in full of power and dynamic of deity into our human circumstances, allowed by us in his faithfulness, responding to our faith to demonstrate his integrity. Thou hast found favor.

That's why God didn't expect her to be shocked, overwhelmed, incredulous or cynical when he made a fantastic proposition. Fear not, Mary, thou hast found favor with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.

He shall be great, he shall be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom of which he will be king. There shall be no end. And not in cynicism, not in incredulity, but with wide-eyed wonder, says she to him, God's messenger, how? Shall this thing be seen? I know not a man.

The physical premise, absent. Betrothed, yes indeed, to a man called Joseph, but the marriage not yet consummate. The answer was very simple.

God's answer always to the question in our hearts as to how some divine end is to be accomplished. God, the holy girl, shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God. Absolutely no explanation, but God himself, the zeal of the Lord of hosts, will do this.

And by the way, Mary, just for your encouragement, it may interest you to know that your cousin is in the sixth month, and in three months time another little baby boy is going to be born, John the Baptist, of whom it was said of her, Elizabeth, that she was barren, infertile, physically incapable of bearing. So for your encouragement with Elizabeth, Mary, it was too late, and with you it's going to be too early, because you see, with God, nothing shall be impossible. What was her reaction? Well, the reaction of Mary, presented with this fantastic proposition, was precisely that, that God anticipates of any boy, girl, man, or woman whose heart is perfect towards him.

And you cannot find anywhere in the Bible a more magnificent, nor simpler illustration of the true substance of faith. Behold, said she, the handmaid of the Lord available. Be it unto me, according to your word.

That's all. In all its sublime simplicity. In other words, said she to God's servant, the angel Gabriel, God said it, let him do it.

What do you think God does when he has any boy, girl, man, or woman in his presence for whom he has some delightful plan, part of his timeless strategy, and who, preventing the proposition, simply looks into God's face and says, you said it, you do it. He does it. And that boy, girl, man, or woman has learned the secret of living miraculously.

A quality of life that has no possible explanation, but God himself in action. Every great missionary enterprise has been established on that simple basis, where some boy, girl, man, or woman, finally in the presence of God, presented with the proposition, faced with incredible odds, humanly speaking, everything impossible, simply said, God, you said it, you do it, and he did it. And of course, in that simple way, we discover why it is that God chooses this one and that one, and ignores so many others who to us might seem highly commendable and highly qualified.

You remember how in the fifth chapter, the first of Paul's two epistles to the Thessalonians, faithful is he that calls you, who will also do it. In other words, everything to which God calls you or me, he himself as God is prepared to do. So what would be illogical about anything to which God calls us? Absolutely nothing.

Reiterated, of course, in the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Philippians, where he says, more in my absence than in my presence, work out your own salvation with free and friendly, because everything that God ever gave me when I was converted, God gave you. For it is not Paul the apostle, it is God who works

in you both to will and do of his good pleasure. Well, what would be illogical about anything that God wills for you and for me, if he as God, having willed it, has prepared himself as God to do it? Nothing.

And this is the sheer simplicity of the Christian faith, so long as you and I are prepared to settle for God's terms, and that is that he as God just happens to be big enough for the job and created you and me so engineered that the presence of the Creator in all the fullness and dynamic and illimitable resources that are inherently his as God, so created, so engineered man, that the presence of that Creator within the creature is indispensable to his humanity. And so all he asks of you and me is that disposition, which the Bible calls faith, that lets God do it. But you know, the Lord Jesus said in the 22nd chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Many are called, but few are chosen.

Why do you imagine of the many who are called so few are chosen? Well, I trust that by now the answer is demonstrably obvious. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it. And of the many who are called, so few will let him do it.

So few will adopt that childlike, simple relationship to God that actually lets all God loose, releases the divine energy, and allows him to flesh out in your humanity and mine those eternal purposes that are quite beyond our human reach, but gloriously possible to the God of the impossible. Of the many who are called, so few will let him do it. But Mary, you see, was chosen because she was prepared to let God do it, and God knew it.

That's why he chose her, because he had been watching. Watching. In all those years of insignificant little things in which she demonstrated a disposition, a very simple disposition, she didn't tell God that she would take on the job and roll up her sleeves and clench her fists and grit her teeth and say, Leave it to me.

She fully was cognizant of the fact that it was beyond her reach, and so her disposition in saying, You said it, you do it, was simply, I can't. You never said I could. You remember? But you can, and always said you would.

She'd learned that as a child. And we've discussed this on many occasions when it's been my joy to minister to some of you folks here. I can't.

God never said I could. He can, always said he would. Now if you can't and God can, what's the smartest thing to do? Let him.

And the moment you've learned that, you've learned what it means, first, to become a Christian, and secondly, how to be the Christian you've become. How did you become a Christian? What did you have to do to redeem your soul? How much did you have to pay? What examination did you have to sit and pass? What long list of good works or self-improvement did you have to present to God in order to know that you were redeemed? Well, you say there was nothing of that. He said, Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

He said, My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me, and I give to them eternal life. And there came a day in my life when my soul awakened to a sense of need. I recognized what he said.

And in that moment of true repentance toward God and simple faith in Jesus Christ, I said, You said it, you do it. And he did it. And you're redeemed.

And you wouldn't claim one iota of credit for the fact, because you simply took, though you didn't deserve it, what God delights to give who don't deserve what he's waiting to give, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God's eternal life. And all you did was say, You said it, you do it. And he did it.

Well, as you have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him. In other words, enjoy his life in you now as you once enjoyed his death for you then and reckon with the fact that the one who gave himself for you rose again from the dead to give himself to you so that you can step out into the dawn of every new day, marvelously energized and furnished unto every good work by the divine presence of one who close his activity with your redeemed humanity. And every new situation arises, no matter whether it be threat or promise, opportunity or responsibility, you bow yourself out, you bow him in and say, Lord Jesus, you so engineered me as my creator, God and redeemer, that your presence within me is indispensable to my humanity.

And I want to know that I'm counting on the fact that in this particular situation, at this particular moment, you're big enough for the job. Thanks. You're in business.

Now, isn't that simple? Now, this is a principle to live by, and it's a principle that we're going to talk about this week. You see, when David looked at that lion, that lion looked so big. Then David looked at God.

And that lion, he says, looks so small. So I slew him. Isn't that simple? You see, when he looked at the lion, it looked so big and he felt so small.

But when he looked at God, God looked so big and the lion looked so small. So he did a very sensible thing. He slew him.

What a complicated way of living. And David would go on to tell you, he said, when I looked at that bear, that bear looked so big. I felt so small.

But then I looked at God, and God looked so big and the bear looked so small. So I took him by the beard and slew him. Did anybody notice? Well, nobody on earth, because the record isn't preserved for us until after the event.

And that's simply by his own testimony. But God was watching. And when you see, God saw that little shepherd boy deal with bears and deal with lions on God's terms of reference.

By that disposition within his heart that reckoned with the fact that the God in whom he trusted was big enough for bears and lions, God said, I got a king. I got a king. Turn to it.

It's in the first book of Samuel, chapter 16. One Samuel and chapter 16. And God said to Samuel, stop sobbing over King Saul.

Don't waste your sympathy and your pity. How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? God said to Samuel, Samuel, he's a writer, fill mine horn with oil and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons. He said, I got a king.

Now Samuel didn't know who it was, didn't even know how many sons Jesse had, but God did. And he knew precisely which of those eight sons would replace Saul as king of Israel. Just a little ruddy faced shepherd boy who had learned how to deal with lions and had learned how to deal with bears on the simple basis that God just happens to be big enough to be God, if only we'll let him loose and handle

those situations with which we are confronted.

You see why so few of us enjoy the fantastic excitement of this miraculous quality of living that has no explanation but God himself, is that we've seldom learned to let God be as big as God is. We're always trying to be man-sized for God instead of allowing God to be God-sized in the man. Now David as a little boy had learned to let God be God-sized.

So God said, thou shalt anoint unto me him whom, verse 3, I name unto thee. God wasn't in any doubt as to who was going to be king of Israel. Because you see the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth looking for any little boy, any little girl, any man, any woman, anywhere, who'll let God be God.

And in response to what the Bible calls a heart that is perfect toward God, show himself strong in their behalf. Isn't it interesting to think that God's accumulating names right now? You've got a little family back home. Has God got a king or a little queen among your kids? You teach a Sunday school class, Bible class, preach in some pulpits.

When you look at those faces in front of you, some looking sleepy, others looking unpromising, some looking unintelligent, every now and again one who appears to be alert. Well, don't be deceived. Somebody beautifully dressed and somebody a little shabby, somebody obviously the byproduct of an affluent society, somebody only just making the grade.

Just get excited about what you don't know. Because you see, tucked away within the heart of some boy, girl, man or woman in that congregation, God's got a king. And he knows because he's been watching.

That bunch of rascals you teach on Sunday morning, chewing gum, looking out of the window, sticking pins in the one in front, God's got a king in that bunch. Because all kinds of things are going on in the hearts of those kids that you don't know about in ways that are unsung and unseen. But one day it's going to surface.

Always have an unshatterable confidence in the Word of God and the power of God, the Holy Ghost, to take that truth that you present in general and make it the truth in particular to most unlikely people. And in their own hearts, maybe too timid, too shy, too reserved to admit it, they're beginning to experiment in the silence of their heart in those little things of life that are immensely important and meaningful to them and mean absolutely nothing to anybody else. But in those areas of experiment, they're letting God be God.

They're growing in a way that you would never dream until the day one day God says, I've got a king. Samuel did, verse 4, that which the Lord spoke. He came to Bethlehem and they were somewhat alarmed at his presence.

Camest thou said they peaceably? He said, yes, peaceably. I'm going to church. Why don't you sanctify yourself and come to church with me? And it came to pass, verse 6, when they were come that Samuel looked upon Eliab and from the sheer physique of the man, fine, magnificent, perfect specimen of humanity, he said to himself, surely the Lord's anointed is the force.

But God said, uh-uh. The Lord said to Samuel, look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. Don't be impressed by his physique.

Man looketh on the outward appearance, Samuel, but the Lord looketh on the heart. I'm not looking for muscle. I haven't counted the hairs on his chest.

I've been looking at his heart. What concerns me, Samuel, is a man's disposition. Not an impression he can make on his fellow human beings, his heart.

So if you're thinking about Eliab, said God to Samuel, forget him. I have refused him. Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel, and God said again, uh-uh.

So Jesse made Shammah to pass by, and God said, uh-uh. And so Jesse brought four other sons, and God said, uh-uh, uh-uh, uh-uh, uh-uh. Seven times God said, uh-uh.

And when God says, uh-uh, he means, uh-uh. So finally, you see, Samuel said, you got any more sons? We're running out, running out of sons. I hear, said he to Jesse, verse 11, I hear all thy children.

And he said, there remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he keepeth the sheep. Just a kid in the hillside. And Samuel said unto him, send and fetch him, and we will not sit down till he come hither.

And he sent, and he brought him in. He was running, and with all of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look on. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him.

This is he. I've got a king. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and he anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

So Samuel rose up, and he went to Ramah. Tucked away in that family, the little boy. He had learned to deal with lions, and learned to deal with bears, on God's terms of reference.

You'll remember that King Saul himself, whom God rejected, as a young man, was of no mean stature, the son of a Benjamite, whose name was Kish. You needn't turn to this. I'm citing from the ninth chapter.

You're familiar with the fact. He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly. There was not among the children of Israel a goodly, a person than he.

On his shoulders and upward, he was higher than any of the people. And he was rejected, because he was a moral coward. Because he played to the gallery.

He wanted to be popular, and for the moral coward he was, he always blamed the people. They did it. And God said, I've rejected him.

No matter how impressive he may have been as a young man, he ended up by his own testimony, a man who played the fool. Now we're told in the 17th chapter, this first book of Samuel, and the third verse, that the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side. And there was a valley between them, and there went out a champion out of a camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits in a span.

And he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And the Philistines said, verse 10, I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.

And when Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistines, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. Who do you think they were looking at? Well the giant. You see they hadn't learned the principle that a little shepherd boy come to know healing his sheep on the hillside.

And these, you see, the king and his men, when they looked at the giant, felt so small. But David came around, because he'd been sent, if you remember, by his dad to bring some packed lunch for all the brothers, and a few cheeses for the captain. And all the men of Israel, verse 24 of that chapter, when they saw the man fled from him, and was so afraid, and the men of Israel said, have you seen this man that has come up surely to defy Israel? If he come up, it shall be that the man who kills him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free to realize in Israel.

And David, you know, sort of talking to his older brothers and taking the cheeses, listened to their conversation, so finally he muscled up somebody and said, verse 26, what shall be done to the man that kills this Philistine, and take it away the reproach from Israel? And by this time, David was getting quite quite indignant. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? And finally, you see, he'd become the sort of talk of the town. This was the whippersnapper, and they brought him to David, but they brought him to Saul.

And in verse 32, David said to Saul, let no man's heart fail because of him, thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul, needless to say, said to him, now I'm not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, but a youth, you're only a kid. He's a man of war from his youth.

And then David told a story. He said, thy servant, verse 34, kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him, and I smote him.

Mind you, he said to the king, when he looked, when I looked at the lion, he looked so big. But when I looked at God, he looked so small. So I killed him.

And then that bear came, and that bear learned nothing from the lion. And when that bear came, he looked so big. And I felt so small.

But then I looked at God, and God looked so big. And the bear looked so small. And I flew into him.

Thy servant, verse 36, flew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that delivered me out of the port of the lion, and the Lord that delivered me out of the port of the bear, he, that God, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. Not much point in arguing with David.

And Saul said, go, and the Lord be with thee. Very pious thought. He'd much rather David go than go himself.

And David, we're told in verse 40, took his staff in his hand, chose him five smooth stones out of the book, and his sling in his hand. Of course, when the Philistine came, he mocked him and said, you think I'm a dog that you come out against me with a stick? And the Philistine cursed David by his God. Then said David, verse 45, said the Philistine, thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield.

I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. You haven't defied me. You haven't defied King Saul.

You haven't defied this army of men. You've defied the living God. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, and I will smite thee, and I'll take thine head from thee, and I'll give thee the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a champion to maintain the cause of Israel.

And David is his name. Then he said, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, a living, a real one, a living one, not a rubber dummy, not just a name, not a stained glass window, not a melancholy history of somebody who lived long ago, but a God who's alive and well, and very much in business. That all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and all this assembly shall know that the Lord's fate is not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand.

And God said, I've got a king, I've got a king. You know, this is the supreme privilege that God has given to you and to me, to demonstrate precisely now, today, in the nitty-gritty of living on earth. He's given to you and to me the privilege of demonstrating in no matter what walk of life we may be in, no matter what our human circumstance, that there does just happen to be in heaven a God who's big enough for the job.

Have your family found that out? I mean, you mums and dads, by the way you confront your problems, do your children know there's a God in the land, who's alive and well, and with whom you enjoy a living, intimate, dynamic, robust, adventurous relationship? Are you a pastor of a church? Is your prime occupation to make quite sure that everybody knows there's a pastor in that particular church? Or are you particularly concerned that everybody, pastor or no pastor, knows there's a God in that particular church, who's alive and well? Teaching in a school? Running a business downtown? Pioneering some financial empire? What's your prime preoccupation? What are you primarily concerned about? That everybody recognizes just how smart you are in business? Or how fine you are a coach because your team always wins? What's your supreme preoccupation? God has entrusted to you and to me one supreme priority, and that is no matter whether it's in the home, or in the business, or whether it's in school, or whether it's in church, whether it's on vacation, in every area of life you and I are to demonstrate indisputably by the quality of lives that we live, and the way we handle our problems, that there's a God in the land. And he was. And David, verse 49, put his hand in his bag, and he took and sent a stone in his pocket, and he smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him, but there was no sword in the hand of David, no sword in his hand, but faith in his heart. In a God whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, not looking for a fat bank balance, not looking for a three and a half cent, not looking for a whole string of academic degrees, not looking for some built-in inherent native talents and gifts, all of which are perfectly legitimate, and all of which, if God so pleases, he can use at his pleasure. That's not what he's looking for.

He's just looking for any little girl, any little boy, any man or woman, totally unknown, unsung, unreadable, who's learned a principle to live by, no sword in his hand, but faith in his heart. In a God whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking for any boy, girl, man or woman, whose heart, being perfect toward him, are such that he, God, being who he is, can show himself strong on their behalf. And then there's only one person to be congratulated, God himself.

What a delightful thing it is that we have been redeemed in the precious blood of God's dear Son, that we might be healed by the Holy Ghost, so that the Lord Jesus on earth today may close himself with our humanity, and others, looking into our face, will say, isn't Jesus Christ marvellous? Because we've learned to live to the praise of his glory, reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord. And it's also the same thing, so long as we're prepared to let him do it. Of course, if you don't, you'll fight your own bears, you'll fight your own lions, you'll fight your own giants.

And do you know what you'll find out? That the bears and lions and giants that you meet are just as big as you think they are, when you look at yourself, instead of looking at God. But he's called us to reign in life by one Christ Jesus, and be more than conquerors through him that loves us, and to embark upon that incredible adventure whereby as every new day dawns, making ourselves available to the living Christ, who's promised to close himself with our humanity, in all his divine activity, we look into his face and say, be steady, be different. I can't, but you can.

And that's all I need to know. Let's go.

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