

Major Ian Thomas - Part 1

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes that the essence of the Christian life is found in a deep understanding and reliance on Christ.

Duration: 1:06:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 10:1, Matthew 16:20, Luke 20:20, Luke 24:47, John 16:7, John 16:13, 2 Peter 1:21

Topics: "Resurrection Power", "Identifying With Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of God's word and its ability to uphold all things in the universe. He highlights the importance of understanding the Gospel of Luke and the transformative event that occurred in the early church when Jesus was resurrected. The preacher also discusses the concept of identifying oneself with Jesus' death in order to experience his life every day. He uses the analogy of a famous artist admiring his own mural to illustrate the idea that no one has a monopoly on God's work. The sermon concludes with the preacher mentioning his assistant, Mark, and how they met in a home for the deaf and dumb.

Transcript

We have a tremendous privilege this morning. Most of you are aware, I'm sure, that Major Ian Thomas has come to share this morning, this evening, Monday night, Tuesday night, and as strongly as I know how, I'd encourage you to be at each of our times together. Major Thomas is from England.

He served in the British Army. Served during World War II. And then God got a hold of his life in an unusual way with the great, great message that the Christian life from beginning to end is Christ.

And that led to the founding of Torchbearers, which is a worldwide ministry that has touched countless lives. It touched mine. In the middle 70s... Sorry, I usually don't cry introducing speakers.

It's not good. In the middle 70s, I was a carnal, backslidden Christian traveling through Europe. And I was saved, there's no question, but I knew that God had much more for me than I was experiencing.

For whatever reason, I would read Christian literature, and I read a couple of books by a man named John Hunter, who was an associate of Major Thomas'. And he just explained in ways I'd never heard that the Christian life is, in fact, Christ, and if we want to experience the best God has for us on this life, then it requires giving him our all. And I'll never forget, in a bus on my way to Malaga, Spain, just saying, Lord, I

don't know what this means, but the ball of wax is yours.

Let's go for it. The very first book I read after that was The Saving Life of Christ by Major Ian Thomas. Quickly thereafter, I read the other two, If I Perish, I Perish, The Mystery of Godliness.

And it laid a foundation for me that I'm still building upon that I will eternally be grateful for. And the reality is, you guys have been influenced by this man already much more than you realize. And so, Major Thomas, we could not be more pleased to have you.

I don't need it. I'm not going to hit anybody. I'm not really as crippled as I look.

Thank you. He just doesn't want to hear anything. I'm not as decrepit as I look, though I did celebrate my 88th birthday two days ago.

And I can think of no fantastic way that I could better celebrate my birthday then than to be here this morning. Fantastic. It's lovely to be conscious of the presence of a risen, living and indwelling Saviour.

But because I do look so decrepit and sometimes feel like it, rather like this thing, I always have a young man who is my assistant. And that's Mark, who assisted me from the chair to come here. And he would be bitterly disappointed if I didn't tell you how I got to know him.

I met him in a home for the deaf and the dumb. And he's not deaf. But I'm happy to tell you he's not as dumb as he looks.

That's why I have him around, because at 88 years of age, I'm still alive and kicking, and you've got to have somebody to kick. That's why I called him the mule, because he kicks back. And he's not as dumb as he looks.

And that's the name I give to these young fellows, and I've had a whole tribe of them who have assisted me all over the world, as I've had the incredible joy of sharing the life of Jesus, literally, around the world. Because there's nobody else worth talking about. He is the way, the truth and the life.

It's of him, it's through him and it's to him, all things to whom alone be glory, beginning and the end, alpha and omega. Wonderful. And so, I'll give you one guess as to what I'm going to be talking about this few days.

The only one who's worth talking about. You know, there's nothing that perpetuates ignorance more than unenlightened enthusiasm. And there's a whole bunch of enthusiasm around today, but most of it is unenlightened.

And this was, you may be surprised at this, this was Peter's problem. Ignorance. Not lack of enthusiasm.

He had a charisma about him, and he had a genuine love for the Lord Jesus, and a devotion and a loyalty. The problem was, he was ignorant. And that is tragically true right across the board within the Christian church today, in every country.

And I've literally visited almost every country in the world talking about Jesus. You see, Peter didn't want the cross, because he didn't see the need of the cross and didn't understand what was going to happen on the cross. He didn't believe in the resurrection, because he didn't see the need for the resurrection and didn't understand what was going to happen at Pentecost.

When God, for the first time in human history since Adam fell, restored to man by his gift of the Holy Spirit, the life man lost in the day that Adam, in his stupidity, believed the devil's lie that a man could be man without God, and died, as God said he would. Not physically. He didn't die physically for 900 years.

But he forfeited that life by which you and I alone can be truly alive. The life of God. Because he created us to be functional as the creature only by virtue of the presence of God, the creator within the creature.

It takes God to be a man. And man, since Adam fell, lost his humanity. Jesus came to restore us to our true humanity.

He came that we might have life and have it in an entirely new dimension, more abundantly. Didn't want the cross. Didn't believe in the resurrection.

You'll remember how on one occasion it's recorded for us in the 16th chapter of Matthew's Gospel. He asked a very simple question. Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? It wasn't that the Lord Jesus was particularly interested in what men had to say as to who he was, because it didn't matter.

He knew who he was and he knew why he had come and what he was going to do. But he said, who do men say that I am? And one of the disciples said, well, the bunch down the road, they call, they say you're John the Baptist. Not only they, but Herod too.

Because Herod was the one who ordered that his head be cut off and dead. Have his head cut off. And there were those, you see, in one part of the city who thought that John had had his head put back on and he was back in business.

Well, they chuckled about that. And then another one piped up and said, there are others who think that you're Elijah. Well, you know what happened to Elijah.

He was caught up in a whirlwind and escorted home by a chariot of fire. And there was a little bunch the other side of town and they thought that Elijah had been in orbit all down the centuries, but was landed and back in circulation. And somebody else chirped up and said, there are others who think you're Jeremiah.

As though you look that miserable. And then suddenly the Lord Jesus swung round and looking at Peter, straight in the faces, whom do you say that I, the Son of Man, am? And immediately Peter, in his wild enthusiasm and genuine love for the Lord Jesus, says, you're the Christ, Son of the Living God. Right or wrong? Well, you say, absolutely right.

The Christ, the promised Messiah, Son of the Living God. But Peter still had a problem. Although what he said was absolutely right and the Lord Jesus commended him and said, it isn't because you're smart.

If you've recognised my identity, it's because my Father in Heaven has revealed it unto you. It's by revelation. All truth, ultimately if it's real, is by revelation.

But although what he had to say was true, God imparted, he still had a problem. He hadn't a clue what he was talking about. And that's a problem.

And unenlightened enthusiasm always insists on saying something and Peter was nearly always the one who stood up and spoke first. And nearly always what he said was nonsense. On this occasion it was right, but didn't know what he meant by what he was saying.

Do you remember the story? From that time forth, the Lord Jesus began to show unto his disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. The Lord Jesus gave them a panoramic view of his messianic mission. Why he was born, why he had come, what he was going to do and did it.

But immediately the Lord Jesus, having declared the purpose of his birth and life and death and resurrection, Peter took him and began to rebuke him. Literally drew him on one side and said forget it. That cannot, must not and will not happen to you and we'll make sure it doesn't.

Was he insincere? No, it was an expression of his genuine love and affection for Jesus. But that was Satan's subtlety. He was capitalizing upon his loyalty and love.

And he's still on the job. The Lord Jesus turned around and said get thee behind me, Satan. One moment, the voice piece of the father in heaven by whom he had received the revelation of Christ's identity.

The next moment, the mouthpiece of the devil himself said Jesus you're an offense unto me. You savor not the things that are of God but of the world. Your theology is of the earth.

Earthy. That was Peter. Ignorant of the purpose which the Lord Jesus, God's sinless incarnate son was born at Bethlehem so that on the cross he might bear our sins in his own body on the tree and suffer the just for the unjust in order to bring us to God.

Unenlightened enthusiasm. The Lord Jesus took Peter, James and John up the Mount of Transfiguration and many think that that was a fantastic experience. Wished only that they could have been numbered amongst the three.

Soul-stirring. Psychedelic. After six days, Jesus takes Peter verse one of the seventeenth chapter and John his brother brings them up into a high mountain apart.

His face did shine as the sun. His raiment was white as light. And then there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

They weren't aware that Moses and Elijah had come on the scene until later. Why later? Well, because there on the Mount of Transfiguration the Lord Jesus gave them a fantastic Bible study. An exegesis of his birth and life and death and resurrection.

Tells us about it in the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel. Which is another record by Luke of the same incident in the Mount of Transfiguration that is first told there by Matthew. And the Lord Jesus in the twenty-eighth verse of the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel took Peter, James and John went up into the mountain to pray and he prayed.

And as he was praying the fashion of his countenance was altered. His raiment was white and glistening. And behold, there talked with him two men Moses and Elijah.

And what was the Lord Jesus talking to them about? Well, he spoke of his decease. His death. Which he would, lovely word this, accomplish at Jerusalem.

He didn't drift to disaster. His death wasn't the untimely end of a noble life. Somebody who was misunderstood by his peers and paid the price of his lack of popularity.

Uh-uh. The accomplishment of death. When you accomplish something you set out to do it and you did it.

That's what Jesus did when he left heaven and came to earth. Left eternity and stepped into time. The accomplishment of death.

To Pontius Pilate he said to this end was I born. And for this cause I came into the world. That's why I'm here.

Clothing deity with my sinless humanity. There's something else that the Lord Jesus said in that regard. And if I can find it in my battered Bible I'll read it to you.

I've had this Bible for over fifty years and if I lost it I'd have to give up preaching. Because I steal all my sermons from the book that God wrote. And the Lord Jesus in the twentieth chapter of Luke's gospel foreshadowed his death.

That he would accomplish. Lovely word accomplishment. Something I set out to do and did.

And it was done to God's holy satisfaction. Well you'd have thought that the Lord Jesus would have capitalized as Satan did upon his enthusiasm but he didn't. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew again to which I will return no sooner had the Lord Jesus congratulated Peter on knowing the truth as to his identity the Christ the Messiah son of the living God than he told him to keep his mouth shut.

Twentieth verse, sixteenth chapter of Matthew then charged the Lord Jesus, his disciples not only Peter but all the rest that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. Not a word. If you've recognized my identity and to the revelation that God had given to Peter no doubt the others added their affirmation now said Jesus you know who I am, keep your mouth shut.

Do you find that a little strange? Here's a man who discovers the truth and Jesus says now keep your mouth shut. Why do you tell him to keep his mouth shut? Because he knew that Peter didn't know enough in his ignorance to talk sense. The smartest thing to do if you don't know enough to talk sense is keep your mouth shut.

And the Lord Jesus spent a lot of his time in the early church keeping their mouth shut. I wonder if you know enough to keep your mouth open because God has given us in his book a wonderful promise. He said if you know the truth open your mouth wide and I'll fill it.

That's a great promise. If you don't know quite what to talk about well turn to God's word, allow the Holy Spirit who is our teacher to introduce us to a risen, living, indwelling Savior and then talk about Jesus and you'll be talking sense. It's been my privilege for 68 years of the last 88 all over the world just talk about Jesus.

That's all you have to do. And the Holy Spirit whom the Lord Jesus said would come 16th chapter of John's gospel and he'll lead you into all truth and he'll take, said he, the Lord Jesus, the things that are mine and reveal them to you. So you've got a marvellous teacher, the Holy Spirit whose delight it is to exalt Jesus whom the Father delights to honour.

So you wonder why Jesus said keep your mouth shut. They didn't know enough because they hadn't as yet been taught by the one who is our divine teacher and prepares us for the ministry into which God is pleased to put us. The lovely thing is when you're in the place where God puts you you never have to ask

for blessing.

It's inevitable. If I were to say I'm here by God's divine providence he put me here and I say God please bless me you know what God would say? Don't waste my time or yours. Don't you credit me with any intelligence? If I put you there, I put you there for a purpose so get on with the job and I'll take care of the consequences.

Isn't that restful? Who's going to do it? Faithful is he that calls you who will also do it. And if you don't let him do it, you blew it. And there are millions of true believers who know Christ as their Redeemer who are busy, busy, busy doing it.

And all that Jesus can say is thanks for nothing because without me you can do nothing. So how much is that worth that you do which isn't Jesus doing it? Nothing. It's amazing how busy you can be doing nothing.

But it's very tiring. That's why a lot of genuine, hard-working, dedicated, committed Christians burn out. They're tired of doing nothing.

But they don't know they're doing nothing because they're ignorant of the truth. That Jesus alone can and we can't. And that's the principle of the Christian life whereby you'll reign in Christ Jesus moment by moment, more than conquer.

In every situation, threat, promise, opportunity or responsibility you say, Lord Jesus, I can't. You never said I could. But you can, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness and you always said you would.

That's a simple principle, isn't it? I can't. You never said I could. You can and always said you would.

And if you can't and he can, what's the smartest thing to do? Let him. That's what the Bible calls faith. Not shouting at God and trying, you know, to wake him up and get him on the move.

Uh-uh. It isn't trying to get God into action or keep him in business. It's simply recognizing that he's big enough as God for the job.

Huh. Then you stop trying to play God on his behalf. It's also simple.

It's only man who makes the gospel complicated. That's why we have theological colleges. To give the devil a chance.

With my apologies to all theological colleges. But I'm glad I never went to one. Because I didn't want anybody to confuse me.

Jesus said, I'm the truth. The way, the truth and the life. The way, how to become a Christian.

The life, how to be the Christian you become. That's the truth. Gospel truth.

The only truth. The eternal, timeless, immutable, unchanging truth. Jesus.

The way, the truth and the life. Well, what happened? Well, of course, Peter made a fool of himself, as all the world knew. He was the one who was going to die for Jesus.

Did the Lord Jesus take him seriously? Uh-uh. Not because he was unkind. Because he knew more about Peter than Peter knew about himself.

He said, before the cock has crowed twice, you will have denied me three times. And did. With curses and with oaths.

Before the slip of a servant girl, I never knew the man, never met him. This is Peter the liar. Not Peter the apostle.

And he ended up weeping bitterly. A dead loss. Because he had never discovered the truth about what it really means to be a Christian.

Something happened to Peter. Do you know what he was doing? And the other two, Peter, James and John, while the Lord Jesus was giving that fantastic Bible study, exegesis of his birth and life and death, resurrection after the death that he had accomplished. Do you know what Peter was doing? You might well have imagined that in the presence of Jesus, teaching them from the word of God, sitting on their rock, they had kept their eyes fixed on him.

Fearful lest one single word would drop unheard. But you'd be wrong. They were fast asleep.

Fast asleep. It was only when they woke up that they realized that Moses and Elijah were on the program. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day.

And Peter took him and rebuked him and said that cannot, will not and must not happen to you. It wasn't until he woke up that he discovered that Moses and Elijah were present. What do you think he said the moment he woke up? You know, when you are asleep when you shouldn't be asleep and wake up, that's a dangerous moment.

Because you may not know exactly where you are. I remember being in a Baptist church many years ago and the pastor called upon one of the elders or whatever they call themselves now. Deacons I think they call themselves, that's right.

I don't know what you call yourselves here, who are either deacons or elders. Doesn't matter very much because you're nothing anyway. And can do nothing.

Apart from Jesus. But the pastor suddenly asked one of these deacons to give thanks for the offering. And he was asleep.

But one of the other deacons dug him in the ribs and said you've got to give thanks. So he stood up and gave thanks for breakfast. Dangerous when you wake up when you shouldn't be asleep.

So make sure you know where you are when I'm finished. And said Peter, when he woke up, fantastic message, Lord. Hadn't heard a word, he was fast asleep.

Wouldn't have missed this for anything. Out of this world. Well he ought to have known because that's where he had been.

Out of this world. But he said let's have a little tent, a tabernacle for you Lord Jesus. A little tent, another tabernacle for Moses.

Another tent, a tabernacle for Elijah. He wanted three little tents. One for Jesus and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

He wanted to turn the whole episode into a sort of fairground. Little wonder the Lord Jesus told him to keep his mouth shut. Three little tents.

But something happened. Because at that moment God spoke through the clouds. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Hear ye him. Don't listen to Peter. He hasn't got anything to say, worth saying.

He's just blathering on three little tents. Listen to my son. Because he's got something to say, worth saying.

Am I making all that up? Well no. Peter tells us about it in the second of his two epistles. And in the second epistle of Peter and the first chapter he recalls that occasion.

Let me remind you of it. Second Peter, chapter one. Takes me a little time, you know, to get there.

Because this hand is alive, but it's paralytic. Like people who will be in church this morning all over the town. They're alive, but don't do as they're told.

So I have to use my left hand and it hasn't been trained to find the page in the Bible. But it's learned. Sixteenth verse of the first chapter of the second of Peter's two epistles.

We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received from God the Father honour and glory.

When there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And Peter remembered God speaking through the clouds. This voice, verse eighteen of that first chapter, second Peter.

This voice which came from heaven and we heard when we were with him in the Holy Mount. But we have also a more sure word of prophecy. More sure than the voice of God sounding through the clouds, yes.

We have a more sure word of prophecy. Where unto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star rise in your hearts, knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. Nobody's got a corner on the market.

The prophecy came not in all time by the will of man. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Something happened to Peter.

One moment he was a dead loss. The next moment, true revelation. And a Bible that came alive.

Fantastic. When did all that happen? Not only was it the turning point in the life of Peter when he discovered Jesus for who he really is and for what he really came to do. The whole church was revolutionized.

When the Lord Jesus begins to teach, where do you think he begins? Well, it tells us very clearly in the 24th chapter of Luke's gospel. This is where Jesus begins when he teaches the gospel. 24th chapter of

the gospel of Luke.

And if I remember rightly, it's about the 27th verse. If it isn't, it'll be another one. But my fingers are doing their best to find the place.

And never having been to a theological college, I never got a B.D. or a D.D. I only got a D.B. at the school I went to, which was the B.S.B.S., Bedside Bible School, with an open Bible and the most fantastic teacher, the Holy Spirit. So I didn't get a B.D., I got a D.B. Do you know what that is? You can't see it from where you are, but it's a dirty Bible. So dirty I can hardly read it.

But 24th chapter of Luke, 27th verse. Jesus, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So he made it abundantly clear what the Bible is all about.

It isn't a theological proposition, it isn't a philosophy, it isn't a man-made way of life, it isn't just a religious book with some good ideas to be interpreted any way that you and I please or anybody else. Beginning at Moses, all the prophets, not picking and choosing, expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, Jesus. That's where he begins.

That's where he began then, that's where he begins now. You and I will never be able adequately to explain the gospel to any little boy, girl, man or woman until we begin where Christ began, creation. Because until you know how God created man and how God, having created him as he did, intended man to live by virtue of the presence of his creator within the creature, taking God to be the man God intended man to be, you'll never know what happened to Adam when he fell and therefore you'll never know what remedial measures God had to introduce to put things right in restoring the life of God to a man who had lost the life of God.

We call it new birth because that's what Jesus called it. A reconciling act, the cross, and a regenerative purpose in the gift of the Holy Spirit. But Peter didn't want the cross because he didn't know what happened to Adam when he fell and because he didn't know what happened to Adam when he fell he didn't know what happened to Jesus or why when he went to Calvary.

Because they had to happen to him exactly what happened to man in Adam when man first fell into sin. And if that didn't happen then to Jesus on the cross he never paid the price. He never reconciled us to a holy God in incurring in his person all that had occurred to Adam and the whole of mankind for in him all die.

So he began where God begins, creation. And what did God begin with? Nothing. Put the universes into space, the stars into the far corners of the night.

Upholds all things by the word of his power, God. That's what it takes to be a man. When you've discovered who he is and where he has the right to live.

You need to read the earlier chapters of the Gospel of Luke to understand what then was to happen that transformed the whole history of the early church. Remember how the women came all excitedly pounded their way up the stairs where the apostles were in the upper room and said, Jesus is alive. And they mocked them.

Including Peter. They said, women you're hilarious, you're delirious. We've all had a tough time and if your nerves have snapped, we don't blame you.

But take six aspirins and you'll be better in the morning. That was Peter. With the other apostles.

And then he did something which was typically Petrine. Having heard from the women what the angels declared that Jesus was alive and well, he set off to visit the tomb and find Jesus where he wasn't. That wasn't very smart.

But then Peter wasn't very smart then. But he was to become far smarter. And it took place when he was on the road to Emmaus and met the Lord Jesus.

Alive. Didn't recognize him for who he was because you don't expect to meet anybody who's already dead and buried down the road. And said, don't you know what happened in Jerusalem? Are you the only stranger? Said he to Jesus.

And Jesus said, what things? Lord Jesus had a wonderful sense of humor. That's why he had fun with his disciples every now and again. If he hadn't had a sense of humor he wouldn't have made some of you and me.

Said he, what things? That had happened in Jerusalem. I think the Lord Jesus knew a whole bunch about what had happened. It was through his wrists they drove the nails.

Through his ankles they drove the nails. It was on his head they put the crown of thorns. It was into his side they thrust the spear.

What things? And they told what things, verse 35, Luke 24, they told what things were done in the way. And he was known of them in the breaking of bread because they persuaded him to spend the night and two pairs of eyes, as he, the guest, played the role of host and broke the bread, two pairs of eyes saw one pair of hands. They saw the print of the nails and said, Jesus, look at my feet too.

And they saw the print of the nails. As they thus spake among themselves after that encounter, Luke 24 and verse 35, known of them in the breaking of bread and as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said, peace be unto you. And when the risen Lord Jesus stood in the midst of them, how do you think they reacted? They shrieked in terror.

They were terrified and affrighted and supposed they'd seen a ghost. The Lord Jesus said, why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your heart? Just look at my hand. Look at my feet.

That it is I myself. Literally, I am. Not I was, not even I will be.

I am. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And verse 41, while they could hardly believe for joy in the presence of a risen Saviour whom they thought had been crucified, dead and buried, they could hardly believe for joy.

What was the first consequence when the early church discovered Jesus was alive and well? Joy. Peter describes it in the first of his two epistles, joy unspeakable and full of glory. Such a joy, so overwhelming that there's no vocabulary adequate to describe what you enjoy once you know that Jesus is alive and well and living within you, sharing his life, sharing with you his resurrection, a new joy.

And the Lord Jesus said to them, these are the words which I speak unto you, but you were fast asleep, Peter. So was John and James. Nothing penetrated.

You were still dreaming of little tents. But these are the words which I speak unto you while I was with you, while I was among you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me. That's what I was talking about.

Then, verse 45 of Luke 24, he opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. Nothing wrong with the Scriptures. Nothing wrong then, nothing ever has been wrong with the Scriptures.

God's Word. There was something wrong with their understanding. But now the risen Lord Jesus in the upper room opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.

So, added to their new joy they got a new Bible. A Bible that really made sense. It came alive.

Every part of it. The Lord Jesus never preached from the New Testament. It isn't because he didn't like the New Testament.

He didn't have one. Did he ever preach from John's Gospel? Did he ever give an exegesis of the book of the Revelation? Did he quote from the Epistles? Uh-uh. He didn't have them.

The only Bible he had was the Old Testament. And what the New Testament has to say is that the Lord Jesus did everything that in the Old Testament God said he would. That's all.

Same message, same truth, same Jesus. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And said to them in verse 46 of Luke 24, thus it is written, thus it behoved Christ, it was incumbent upon him, it was necessary that he should suffer and rise from the dead the third day.

And he came to accomplish his death and triumphant resurrection so that you and I today in the present tense of his divine indwelling might live that in the power that flows out from his resurrection. The great longing that was in the heart of Paul when he wrote Philippians chapter 3, verse 10. My continual desire is that in my ever increasing measure enjoy the power that flows out from the resurrection of Jesus.

Because I am crucified with Christ. God has identified with me in his death. Judicially executed in the person of another to deal with my sin but nevertheless I live.

If not I. Don't get me wrong. Christ lives in me. And to me to live, to be alive at all is Christ.

Hope in their understanding so they got a new joy, they got a new Bible. That verse 47 of Luke 24, repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations to the outermost ends of the earth. A new joy, a new Bible and because they got a new Bible, a new message.

There was a time when the Lord Jesus called the twelve apostles to him including Judas Iscariot because he was a preacher but he had nothing to say worth saying and if a preacher has nothing to say worth saying he should quit the ministry as Judas did. But don't do it the way he did. He committed suicide.

There are better ways of quitting the ministry. You can sell real estate or cars or cosmetics and you'd be astounded and shocked to know how many have done it that way. But at least they did it which was the only sensible thing for him to do because you've got nothing to say worth saying then keep him out yet.

That's what Jesus said. Repentance and remission of sin. If you read the story and it's found in Mark's gospel chapter 6 and from verse 12 onwards the twelve, two by two went out including Judas Iscariot and what do you think they talked about? They preached that men should repent, period.

They told naughty people to be good. They said bad people turn over a new leaf and be better. Why didn't they tell them about redemption? Why didn't they tell them that the precious blood of God's dear son was shed at Calvary to cleanse them from all sin? Why didn't they tell them? Because they didn't want the cross.

Because they didn't understand the cross or what was going to happen on the cross. Why didn't they tell them about a new life that God gives to those who come in repentance and receive forgiveness? Because they didn't believe in the resurrection. Idle tales they said.

We were there when it happened. He's dead. Enthusiastic? Lots of it.

Eager? Genuine love for Jesus? All of that too. A sentimental attachment. But didn't know enough.

Ignorance. To talk sense. But now the Lord Jesus has given them a new joy in their rediscovery of a risen Lord still bearing the marks of the cross.

He gave them a new Bible and a new message. Repentance and remission. Forgiveness.

Cleansing. Their sins to be blotted out. Whiter than linen.

Whiter than the snow. Why whiter than the snow? Because in every myriad crystal that is within a snowflake there's always a speck of dust. The nucleus upon that crystal is formed.

Did you know that? That's why the Bible says when Jesus cleanses you from your sin you'll be whiter even than the snow. Because there won't even be a speck left. Because when God forgives God forgets.

And he says I will remember your sin no more. Marvelous message. New joy.

New Bible. On the basis of that new Bible a new message. Anything else? And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you.

Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high. Not your power. Not the ingenuity.

Not programs that you conceive in committee. Uh uh. Power from on high.

New joy. New Bible. And in verse 48 you are witnesses of these things.

A new responsibility. But don't embark upon your new responsibility to tell the world the truth that you've rediscovered that I died for you and rose again to give myself to you. Pentecost.

New responsibility. But you need a new enabling. Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.

New joy. Unspeakable. Full of glory.

New Bible. New message. New responsibility.

Witnesses to the outermost ends of the earth. And a new enabling. When on the day of Pentecost the risen Lord Jesus came in the person of the Holy Spirit to re-invade the redeemed humanity of a bunch of forgiven sinners so that he, clothed with their flesh and blood could continue to do and continue to teach the things that he first began to do and began to teach in his own body.

When first God in Christ began to reconcile the world unto himself. Marvelous. What a privilege he's given to you and to me.

But what did it take for them to begin to live the Christian life? They had to rediscover Jesus. That's why the Lord Jesus told them to keep their mouths shut until that happened which he knew would change the whole course of the early church. Matthew 17, verse 9, let me read it.

Jesus is coming down from the mount of transfiguration where Peter, James and John had been fast asleep while the Lord Jesus had been telling them all these things and they heard nothing. Why didn't they hear? Well, it was so incredibly boring. Because they didn't understand.

And they didn't understand because they didn't know enough. So as they came down from the mount of transfiguration Jesus, verse 9, Matthew 17 charged them saying, tell the vision to no man. No matter what you've seen up there on the mount.

No matter what you've heard up there on the mount of transfiguration tell no man, keep your mouth shut. Until. Until what? The Son of Man be risen again from the dead.

The indispensability of the resurrection and the life of Jesus in the life of every believer. Until you've entered into the good not only of what I did on the cross, dead but who I am now, alive again you're not qualified to tell the world anything. So not a word of what you've seen or heard until the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

So what's the most urgent message of the gospel? That Jesus is dead, that's what the church has been telling the world for centuries. I've travelled literally all over the world talking about a risen Jesus and all I've seen of him on the street corner in their church buildings is a dead Jesus hanging on a cross. That's what the church has been telling the world, Jesus is dead.

That's where he is, look, still on the cross. If going into a church building you were to see Jesus dead on a cross before you go through the door, who would you expect to find in the pulpit? A dead Jesus? The only people that God ever wants in the pulpit or on a platform talking to others is himself clothed with the redeemed humanity of a forgiven sinner who knows why Jesus died. Not to get us out of hell and into heaven the only one who can and does and will if you let him.

But that isn't why he was born at Bethlehem. Not to get people out of hell and into heaven but to get him back out of heaven into us. Then you can say to me to live is what? Doing my best for Jesus, sweating it out for God, keeping him employed.

Uh-uh, to me to live, if I'm alive at all from God's point of view is Christ who gave himself for me then and who has given himself to me now. For Jesus said, Revelation 1, 18 I was dead, you're quite right. I die.

To that end I was born and for that cause I came into the world to lay down my life for ransom. I was dead but I am, present tense, alive again. Not just for the weekend.

Not for your special events. I am alive again forevermore and because I live you will live also. That's the gospel.

Not a dead Jesus doing his thing 2,000 years ago but a risen, living saviour clothing his divinity with our redeemed humanity so that every new day in the measure in which we're prepared to let him be who he is as God in us every new day that dawns is as big as God. Exciting. But in order to share his life every moment of every day you've got to reckon yourself identified with him in the death that paid the price of your reconciliation to God so that you could enjoy the regenerative purpose that allows God to give back to a fallen but forgiven sinner the life man lost in the day that Adam fell.

On the platform beneath the lofty dome of a great cathedral a famous artist he'd been painting a mural on the underside of the dome. It was fantastic. Brilliant.

And the artist paused on the platform to gaze at it drink it all in. It was his work, his achievement. He did it himself and to better view what he had done he took a step back and then another step back and then another step back until one more step would have sent him plunging to his death on the stone floor of the lofty cathedral.

At that moment his assistant on the platform looked up grasped the situation in a moment and with amazing presence of mind grabbed a bucket of paint and threw it all over that beautiful mural on the underside of the cathedral dome. The artist stopped in his tracks and then glaring at his assistant he said you've spoiled my picture. You've spoiled my picture.

And his assistant quietly said yes sir, I spoiled your picture. Mesmerized with your own achievement glorying in what you did. I spoiled your picture but I saved your life and you'll live to paint again.

When Satan is smart enough and subtle enough as he is to persuade us that we can do something for Jesus in the native energy of our own humanity it comes as a shock when somebody else comes along and spoils your picture trashes your dreams and reduces you to all that God intended you to be apart from our creator, nothing. It hurts. The Lord Jesus deliberately choosing to be born a human being we're told Philippians 2 emptied himself humbled himself made himself of no reputation literally translated he made himself all that he knew man to be apart from God nothing so that he in us might be all that he allowed the father to be in him.

Everything. Without whom said he I can do nothing. That's the gospel.

It's not the gospel and it isn't ancillary to the Christian life you doing your best and God giving you a hand every now and again we've got to go into the place where God put us in Christ two thousand years ago death so that we might live in the power of his resurrection every moment of every day and in true repentance in every situation no matter what threat, promise, opportunity, responsibility simply say Lord Jesus I can't but then you never said I could you said without me you can do nothing thank you I take my place Lord Jesus with you in the place where God put you two thousand years ago on a Roman gallows where you not only died physically but you cried in the true agony of Calvary my God why hast thou forsaken me because you incurred then Lord Jesus though all undeservingly in the sinlessness of your humanity you incurred all that occurred in Adam when he fell and died but thank you for that triumphant cry three hours later when you could say and know that it was true finished *tete-a-lete* I paid in full father it's all over and I'm coming home and remember what is his home if you're a forgiven sinner your heart every moment of every day until he comes and then forever have I spoiled your picture I'm glad maybe I

saved your life from ending up in a heap of ashes at the end of your days on earth the wood the hay and the stubble of self-effort when Jesus has been left on the sidelines unemployed because you thought misguidedly it was your business to keep him on the job thank you Lord Jesus if you're so patient it must frustrate you when you know as our creator redeemer we can't be functional apart from your divine indwelling and our simple childlike trust that lets you do it must be frustrating for you to see us so busy doing nothing of any timeless worth because we recognize that only that is legitimate of which you in us are the origin of your own image the source of your own activity the dynamic of your own demands at all times and the only cause in us as God of your own effect and there's only one person to be congratulated when we've chosen to be restored to normality you yourself our redeemer creator saviour and lord grant that some boy, girl, man or woman gathered here this morning will leave this place never ever to be the same again because they've discovered who alone is the Christian life because you said so I am the way I am the truth I am the life thank you dear lord for every tomorrow that will give to us the privilege of allowing you to be God in us doing your thing, your way, for your reason and only to your praise and glory thank you dear lord thank you in your own all prevailing unchanging precious name Jesus our lord our life forever Amen

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