

# Our Victory Because of What Christ Is

by Major Ian Thomas

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*The sermon emphasizes the nature of sin as a positive force that opposes God, and the need for faith in Christ to overcome it.*

**Duration:** 1:01:27

**Scripture:** Romans 7:14

**Topics:** "Victory", "Victory in Christ", "Dependence On God"

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## Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes that true victory in the Christian life comes from understanding our identity in Christ and the necessity of His life within us. He explains that humanity, since the fall of Adam, is inherently sinful and uninhabited by God, leading to a life dominated by sin. The sermon highlights that salvation is not just about forgiveness but about being filled with the life of Christ, which empowers believers to live righteously. Thomas stresses the importance of recognizing our total dependence on Christ for both our salvation and daily living, as well as the need for spiritual maturity to discern good from evil. Ultimately, he points to Jesus as the only source of true life and victory over sin.

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## Transcript

I'd like to welcome you here again tonight. For some who may be here for the first time, may I explain that the target for these meetings is constituted by the Christian folk who have gathered with us. It may be that you're not yet a Christian, you haven't yet come to know what it means to be born of God, to be regenerate, to become a forgiven sinner.

I'd like you to know that you're very welcome here tonight, and I'm quite sure that in the course even of this evening's meeting, there will be enough for you to understand how to become a Christian. Because obviously, what I shall have to say to those who are Christians will not be applicable until you have become a Christian. Just that little word of explanation, because the purpose of these meetings is that we may discover the true implications of Christian discipleship.

And that's why these meetings will be of particular interest, and probably solely of interest, to those who are concerned to be the kind of Christian that God intended when he sent his son into this world to accomplish that which would make it possible for guilty sinners to be redeemed and restored to their true humanity. And, there's no entertainment involved. We're exploring into the word of God to discover spiritual principle.

Not purely for the sake of amusing ourselves or fascinating our minds, but in order that having discovered the truth, we may learn to obey it. And although I shall not make it a practice to call night by night for some decision, I want you to understand that to be exposed to the truth as God reveals it in his word always presents a moral issue that demands obedience and demands action on the part of those thus exposed to it. And I shall assure you that before this week is out, from the accumulative evidence of God's word, there should be absolutely no avenue of escape left for you or for me but to face the obvious issues that are involved in being a Christian, which, as we are already beginning to discover, involves so much more than just knowing that your sins are forgiven.

Involves so much more than just knowing that you're on the way to heaven. Being a Christian involves infinitely more than that. We were explaining and exploring together last night into what really happened when Adam fell into sin, or when Adam was converted, as we put it.

We saw in the first instance that by his repudiation of his love toward God, there was a repudiation of his dependence on God. In other words, a repudiation of that moral relationship to God that enables God in man to make man man. For it is only God in man that makes man man, and apart from God in man, man cannot be man as God intended man to be.

But the moral relationship that is to exist between man and God is one of faith and love, a love toward that is demonstrated by a dependence on. Both are mutually interdependent. The moment I repudiate my dependence on God, I repudiate automatically my love toward God.

In the same way, if I repudiate my love toward God, it will inevitably lead me to repudiate my dependence on God. It is a faith-love relationship. And that is what happened when Adam was converted, in that he changed his mind about God and believed the devil's lie and died by faith in a lie.

For in the day that he believed the devil's lie, repudiated God, he lost God. And when he lost God, he lost everything. For it is only God dwelling within man that imparts to man that spiritual quality of life that makes him different from the animal.

And he became uninhabited by God. And ever since Adam fell into sin, all who were ever born into this world, instead of being born in the likeness of the God who made us, were born in the likeness of the fallen Adam, destitute of divine content, spiritually dead. Now that was the first thing that we discovered, but we discovered that there was something infinitely worse than that.

Not only did man forfeit the divine content, God's gracious presence by the Holy Spirit within the human spirit, but being now destitute of God, he became available with vacant possession for the intrusion of a satanic agency called the flesh, the sin principle of satanic origin. So that whereas the Holy Spirit, as the co-equal member of the Trinity, is the divine agency, by virtue of whose gracious presence within the human spirit, the human personality made available to him becomes that beautiful instrument whereby God expresses what God is in terms of his behavior, righteousness, now empty of God, the human personality becoming available to the prostituting activity of the devil in the person of his agency, the flesh, produces what the devil is, unrighteousness. Only one absolute source of righteousness, God himself, being what he is in terms of man, produces righteousness on earth.

Only one absolute source of sinfulness, the devil himself, producing in terms of man, sinfulness. So we have two origins of activity, God and the devil. The one produces righteousness, the other produces unrighteousness, or sin.

Now, it isn't just as simple as that, of course. That's why in order to understand the true implications of what sin is, we have to be spiritually grown up, spiritually mature. That's why in the fifth chapter of the Epistles of the Hebrews, concerning the Lord Jesus, the writer says, verse 11 of Hebrews 5, of whom, the Lord Jesus, we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, who've grown up, who are no longer babies pushed around in their prams, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. And if there is one thing more needed than another in the church of Jesus Christ today, it is a spirit of discernment to know the difference between good and evil. Not the difference between what is obviously good and what is obviously evil.

Anybody can discern that. We don't need to be spiritually or even physically adult to know that it's wrong to take a hatchet and hit your grandmother on the head. Most of us would disapprove of that kind of behavior.

But it does take spiritual adulthood to discover what is evil in what appears to be good. And that is the kind of spiritual discernment of which the church of Jesus Christ today stands in such desperate lack. And that is why there is so much perpetrated in the name of Christianity and all too often sincerely conceived, but which never can gain God's approval.

That's what makes it so difficult. Because Satan himself will capitalize upon your highest motivations and produce in the very name of God sin. What prompted Peter when he stood astride the path of Jesus Christ and the cross? What was his motivation after the Lord Jesus had said that he must go to Jerusalem and there be delivered into the hands of wicked men and be crucified? And the third day he would rise again from the dead and Peter said, banish the thought! Not so, Lord! Pity yourself! That can never be! What was his motivation? Personal devotion.

Sheer love to Christ. He believed that he was serving the best interests of God's Christ, God's Messiah. He believed that he was giving to the Lord Jesus Christ the best available advice.

And the devil looked right through all his sincerity, all his genuineness, all his personal devotion, his sense of duty, loyalty and love into the face of the devil himself and said, Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou art an offense unto me. Thou savest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. So we need to grow up and to discover that even our personal loyalty to Christ, our deep genuine affection for him, our sense of duty, all that we could conceive to be in the best interests of God's purposes on earth can never be a substitute for that kind of relationship to Jesus Christ that releases his life in perfect harmony with the eternal will of an eternal God.

In other words, the flesh takes on very subtle forms. It doesn't display itself as heinous and objectionable always. Sometimes it does, but not always.

It's always objectionable, but it doesn't always look objectionable. It can be very attractive, very winsome, very plausible. And its suggestions appear to be prompted by the highest motivations.

The flesh will always give you the reasonable, obvious, sensible alternative to faith. We shall be discovering some of these things as illustrated for us, so lucidly in the word of God. But always beware of the flesh in all its subtleties, for this is the sin principle of satanic origin that usurped the position of Christ's sovereignty in the human personality and prostituted man's humanity to the devil.

As we saw yesterday in our closing illustration, the royal resident of the royal residence, the human spirit, was forfeited in the day that Adam sinned, and so the right man left the console of man's human personality, the music room of his soul, where the keyboard was of human mind, emotion, and will. And the wrong man stepped in, and instead of the perfect melodies of a life lived in harmony with God being amplified in terms of the human body to the world around, all the discords of a life severed, cut off, alienated from the life of God, in all the misery and sin and wickedness that the world knows today. So we have this picture that ever since Adam fell into sin, you and I have been born uninhabited by God, but inhabited by sin.

Very important to remember that. This is absolutely basic if ever you are to understand what it is that happens when a man is reconverted or converted to God. You are born by nature a child of wrath, uninhabited by God, alienated in other words from the life of God, uninhabited by God, but inhabited by sin, so that he that committeth sin is of the devil.

1 John 3.8, he that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. Every act of sin, no matter what its shape or size or shade, is of satanic origin, whether you recognize it as sin or whether you do not recognize it as sin, it is of the devil. Or putting it another way around, everything that has its origin in the devil is sin.

Every activity that finds its continuity in what the devil is, is sin. No matter what the activity may be, if it has that origin, it is sin. And whatever you do other than independence upon the Christ who is in you by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit, by faith in other words, whatever you do other than independence, other than by faith upon the Christ who is in you, can only be done in independence of the Christ who is within you, in independence of the God whose presence alone makes you man, and being in independence of God it will be dependence upon that which was within you before you ever had God, sin, the flesh.

That is why whatsoever is not of faith is sin, because there are only two possible sources of activity in man, God's activity and the devil's activity, God's activity implemented by his agency within the human spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the devil's activity implemented by his agency within man's soul, the flesh. Therefore there are only two possibilities of action, one of satanic origin and the other of divine origin, and whatever you do other than independence upon God that releases what God is in terms of your human behavior, is automatically done in the energy of the only other activity source that's within you, the flesh, and it's sin. Now that's very disconcerting, because it means that you can teach your Sunday school in the energy of the flesh, and with a Bible tucked under your arm you can go to church to commit sin.

You can do all manner of Christian activity in the energy of the flesh, and be baffled and bewildered because the heavens are brass, and because there's so very little spiritual import or content to what you're doing, and so little impact upon the powers of darkness and sin and hell, as though God didn't care. But you see, God will never honor the activity of the flesh, for the flesh is in league with hell, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. When Satan invaded the human soul, in the absence of the Holy Spirit, he captured the

mind of man, he captured the emotions of man, and he captured the will of man.

And human personality was prostituted to the dead. You get this description, Genesis, chapter 6. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Here is the invasion by Satan of the mind of man.

Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The heart, the human personality, mind, emotion, will, the soul of man. And the mind invaded by the devil, producing every evil kind of imagination.

That's how sin works, of course. Sin begins with a suggestion. That's how it began in the first instance, when Adam was converted, stepped out of life into death, out of dependence into independence.

There was the suggestion. God said, stop the nonsense. You won't lose anything if you lose God, you'll lose nothing.

Because you are what you are by virtue of what you are, and you are not what you are by virtue of what God is in you. Lose God, said the devil, and lose nothing. Just a suggestion.

And a suggestion becomes a desire. And then the desire becomes an intent. So long as the suggestion remains only a desire and does not become the intent, it is temptation, but it is not sin.

And it is not sin to be tempted. That's the devil's stock in trade. Jesus Christ was tempted, but he didn't sin.

The suggestion produces the desire. It is when you harbor the desire and allow it to germinate into intent, then it becomes sin, even before you've committed the act. That is why the Lord Jesus said, if you look upon a woman to lust after her, you have already committed adultery in your heart.

If the suggestion, having become a desire, is allowed to germinate into intent, though you may be physically prevented from implementing the intent, you have already committed sin. That's why most people go to the cinema. They don't have the moral courage to do the things upon which they can thrive.

But in their minds, they are doing all the things that are being done before them, and they are enjoying it by proxy. That's why folk keep novels at the back of their bookshelf, that they would be ashamed to have displayed in public. That's why countless people feed upon their Sunday newspapers, and with a tut-tut-tut how shocking, revel in the things that they would only love to do themselves if they just had enough courage to do it.

They could think of all kinds of people they'd like to have shocked for years, but they never had the courage to do it. But they enjoy reading about other people who had the courage to do it, and they live it all themselves. That's a psychological thing.

But you see, when physical situation, or the moral situation, or the social situation allows you, often by making sin fashionable, to turn the intent into action, then that action becomes a memory in the imagination of your heart. So that the suggestion becomes a desire, and the desire becomes an intent, and the intent becomes an act, and the act becomes a memory. And that memory is hung up in the imagination of your mind, in the picture gallery of your mind.

And do you know what happens? You wander through the picture gallery of your mind one day, and you see the picture, which is the memory of the act that once was an intent, that was produced by desire, that came into being because of a suggestion. And the moment you look at that memory, it becomes a suggestion. And that suggestion becomes a desire to repeat.

And that desire becomes an intent. And if the situation is favourable, it becomes an act, and now you've got two memories instead of one memory, and when you go through the picture gallery of your mind, now you have two suggestions. That's the vicious circle of sin.

Isn't that true? In the imagination of your mind. It's amazing how you can disappear from a building like this, leaving your body where it's sitting. Where have you been since I've been talking to you? Where have you been? Oh, you've been looking at me, some of you moderately intelligently, others with a glassy stare.

I say, where were you when you were just staring at me? How far have you been? I say, who have you been talking to? What company have you been keeping? How many miles did you travel in the imagination of your mind just five minutes ago? Where have you been? Wouldn't it be interesting to know where everybody has been for the last ten minutes? It would be better than any Sunday newspaper. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Let a part of the 21st verse of the 8th chapter, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

Doesn't just have to be taught these things. No David takes this one stage further. As in the 51st Psalm, he declares the bitter self-discovery of a man who was discovering the awful, wicked depths of his own heart.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies. Block out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me against thee.

Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. I was born this way.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me what I don't have, a clean heart, O God.

Renew what I don't by nature possess, a right spirit within me. I was born in sin. We need to make this discovery, that man is born uninhabited by God, and inhabited only by sin.

The sin principle of satanic origin, and I want you to get this clearly in your mind if it's never been burned there before, that you are not a sinner because you commit sins. You commit sins because you are a sinner. An apple tree is not an apple tree because it bears apples.

It bears apples because it is an apple tree. And you can rip off all the apples, and you can pretend that it's a pear tree, and you can put a big notice on it and say, this is no longer an apple tree, it is now a pear tree. But when you come next year to pick your pears, you will find only apples, because it happens to be an apple tree.

And if you're baffled by the fact that even as a Christian you still want to sin, don't be baffled any longer. You're not a sinner because you commit sins. You want to commit sin because you are a sinner.

And you were born that way. You were born by nature, empty of God and filled only of that which has its origin in the devil himself, his satanic agency within you, the sin principle called the flesh, which God says is putrid, it's rotten through and through, it'll never go in God's presence, he doesn't see any salvageable content, whatever in it, he says, in your flesh dwells absolutely no good thing. In other words, what you are apart from what God is in you is fit for nothing but the dung heap, it's fit for nothing but the cross, to be executed and buried.

Did you know that? It's one of the greatest discoveries you can make when you discover that you're fit for nothing. It's a tremendous relief. It was a tremendous relief for me the day that I discovered it.

I was converted at the age of 12, but I didn't discover that I was fit for nothing but the dung heap until I was 19. I'd tried for seven miserable years to live a useful, happy, victorious Christian life, and I can promise you that in all those seven years I was 100% genuine, 100% sincere. I loved the Lord with all my heart.

I began to preach when I was 15 years of age, was leader of the school Christian union. I stood up in the parks and on the streets because I loved Jesus Christ. I went to London University, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, become a doctor in order to go to Africa as a missionary because I wanted to serve Jesus Christ.

And I'd given my whole life to his service, and I wasn't prepared to hold anything back. I wanted him to have the love. I preached by the time I was 17 years of age every Sunday morning and every Sunday afternoon and most Sunday evenings, and soon every night of the week.

I had a slum club in London. All my vacation times I gave as a counselor at boys' camps. I was a windmill of activity.

I actually enjoyed being on committees in those days. Imagine it. That's how keen I was.

But by the age of 19, I was tired beyond description. I was utterly exhausted. I'd never led a single soul to Christ.

I'd preached myself empty. And I came to God, and in sheer despair, although I loved him with all my heart and had no greater ambition than to become a missionary and to serve him all my life, I came to God and said, I'm quitting. And I thought God was going to be terribly depressed.

And I discovered that he was overjoyed. He said, I've been waiting for that for seven years. For seven years, you've been trying to live for me a life that only I can live through.

I hadn't discovered my own wretchedness. I thought in the ignorance in which, alas, I was bred within the area of my own Christian service, that there was some salvageable content that I had somehow to scrape up from the bottom of the barrel and bring it to God. I was always trying to dandy myself up and present myself to God in a better light and apologize for what I was, as if God expected anything more than he'd ever had from me.

Total, utter, and absolute failure. What a tremendous relief it is to discover that God never expected anything of you other than total, absolute, unrelenting, unremitting failure. Why not admit it? Instead of carrying a skunk around your neck and always complaining of the smell.

Bury it. It's all it's fit for. This is the flesh.

In sin did my mother conceive me. It's rotten through and through. So cut the cantons, stop putting on airs, and be as honest about yourself as once maybe you learned to be about your sin.

You see, it's comparatively easy to be sorry for what you've done. It takes some of us an awful long time to be sorry for what we are. But you see, this is the gospel.

The Lord Jesus not only died for what you've done. He rose again from the dead to take the place of what you are. That's the sublime genius of the gospel.

This is salvation. This saves us from the sheer heartbreak of trying to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. Jeremiah 17 and verse 9. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. What kind of a heart? The heart that is destitute of God. The human personality, mind, emotion, and will that has been invaded by the sin principle of satanic origin, the emissary of hell itself.

This is the heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. And you and I are born with a heart like that. There's nothing wrong with your mind, God made it and God gave it to you.

There's nothing wrong with your emotional capacities. God gave you these emotional capacities and for your use. There's nothing wrong with the human will.

God gave you this delicate instrument of mind, emotion, and will, of mental, emotional, volitional capacity, but it's been invaded by the wrong man. It has been prostituted by the devil himself. He has polluted your mind, he's turned love into lust, and he has subordinated your will to the demon spirit who still works today in the children of disobedience.

And your body that was created by God to be the human vehicle of that wonderful life of his, filling you with himself and flooding you with God, this body instead of being the instrument of righteousness, God being what he is in terms of what you do, becomes the instrument of unrighteousness, the devil being what he is in terms of what you do. That's the nature of sin. Mark's Gospel, and the seventh chapter.

And the Lord Jesus said, verse 20, Mark 7, verse 20. That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

For from within, out of the heart of men, a heart that is deceitful of all things and desperately wicked, proceeds evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these things come from within and defile the man. All this is in you, because all this is in the devil, and the devil is in you.

In the person of his substitute, his satanic agency, the flesh. And no matter how clean may be the bucket, and no matter how new may be the rope, you'll only get dirty water from a dirty well, and that's your heart. Don't be angry with me, because it's true.

And if you deny it, you only deceive yourself, but you neither deceive God, nor do you deceive your fellow man. So it would be far, far wiser, far, far more honest to stop living the fool's path, and recognize that the depths of human iniquity, the possibilities of the human heart, are unplumbable for evil. Yes, that was the discovery that David made.

He was a nobleman. He was a champion. He was kingly in character, and yet he discovered that he could commit murder by proxy in order to commit adultery.

He made the bitter discovery of his own heart. John's Gospel, chapter 8, verse 37, I know that ye are Abraham's seed, he is speaking to the unbelieving Jews, but ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my father, and ye do that which you have seen with your father.

Ye do what ye have seen with your father. I speak, I do, what I have seen with my father. In other words, by implication, says the Lord Jesus, my father is not your father.

What my father is, I speak and do, what your father is, you speak and do. They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.

Then said they to him, we be not born of fornication, we have one father, even God. Jesus said unto them, if God were your father, then your attitude to me would be his attitude to me. You would love me.

For I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me. You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. And what he is, a murderer, you do. What he is, a liar, you do.

That's the nature of sin. Whosoever committeth sin is of the devil. Every lie you ever told was a prostitution of your humanity to the devil, being what he is in terms of what you said or acted.

Hate within the human heart is the natural expression of the murderer, the devil himself. All human sin is an incarnation of what the devil is in terms of prostituted humanity, a mind, an emotion, a will given over to the wrong man, who invaded the human soul vacated by God. That's the nature of sin.

Call it any pretty name you like, but that's what it is. And that's what God treats it as. And there will be no escape for those who are not prepared to accept God's verdict upon what sin is.

Whosoever committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. It's his profession, it's his stocking trade. Now that's one side of the picture, and that is how you and I were born.

Uninhabited by God, destitute of our divine content, occupied, monopolized, tyrannized by sin. That's what baffles you. It's called the flesh, it's called I, it's called self, it's called the old man.

Remember these words in Romans chapter 7? Romans 7, verse 14. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, soul under sin. For that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, for what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me, for I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not, for

the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do not. If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me, for I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members, warning against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Did you notice anything? He seems to be an eye specialist. An eye is right in the center of sin.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? For sin reigns unto death. I thank God. That's the answer.

I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, full stop. That's the answer, and it is the only answer. I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, full stop.

Not I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and anything, just Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ himself, God's own dear Son, is the only, final, absolute, ultimate solution. And I want to underline that tonight.

I trust that you're not coming here in the hope of getting a blessing, because I don't have any. As God enables me, I will present to you Christ, the Lord Jesus. I don't have any techniques.

I don't have any patent medicines. Just Christ, the Lord Jesus himself. I'm not the slightest bit interested in any school of thought, or teaching, or any particular kind of hobby horse.

We're here to allow the Holy Spirit to take the things that are Christ's, and to minister them unto us, and glorify him. The only answer to sins, and the only answer to sin, the fruit and the root, is Jesus Christ himself. And he is more precious than all his blessings, and he is more precious than all his gifts.

For he is the blesser, and he is the giver. And it will only be in the measure in which you enter into that unique relationship with him, that allows him to be what he is in you and through you. Will you ever enter in for that purpose for which his blood was shed? For of God is he, Christ, made unto a sanctification.

Sanctification isn't a blessing. Sanctification isn't a peculiar feeling, or an experience. It isn't a tickly feeling in the spines.

You don't have to goggle your eyes or grow your hair long, or turn head over heels, or thump chairs in a prayer meeting. That isn't sanctification. Sanctification is a person.

Of God is he, Christ, made unto a sanctification. And the measure of your sanctification will be the measure in which the Lord Jesus himself is allowed to re-inhabit your humanity, re-invade your human personality, re-establish the Christ rule in the air of your mind, your emotions and your will, so that you become man again as God intended man to be, the human vehicle of the divine life. That's your sanctification.

And that isn't the crisis of a moment. That's the process of a lifetime that will take you through time on into eternity. He that committeth sin is of the devil.

What does the next verse go on to say? Of 1 John, chapter 3. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy

the works of the devil. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy.

The word is disintegrate. Render null and void. Rip up and destroy the works of the devil.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to the world to turn completely into reverse all that the devil accomplished in the day that Adam was converted. The special series of meetings that the devil held in those days. The Lord Jesus came to put everything in reverse.

I want you to appreciate that when a man is born again, it's nothing new that God does for a man. It's simply a restoration of an original condition. It is simply subhumans being made human again.

Abnormalities being made normal again. And a Christian filled with the Holy Ghost is simply man as God intended man to be. He's not a monstrosity.

It's the unconverted man who's the monstrosity. And if you happen to be unconverted tonight, that's what you are. You're a monstrosity.

Because God created you to be inhabited by himself, and you're uninhabited by him. And you've become the plaything of Satan himself. That's why the world's in such a mess.

That's why we stare disaster in the face. For God created man by virtue of this moral relationship, faith, love, to exercise dominion over all the works of his hands. And man in pursuit of the devil's policy says, I will conquer space without God.

And he'd have a pretty good stab at it. I think it's most unfair of him to try and land on the moon. As if we hadn't made a mess enough of this world without making a mess of that one.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God. Isn't that a wonderful verse? And I can almost sense a few people getting tense.

Yes, it's a wonderful verse. It means exactly what it says, like all the rest of the Bible. But it probably doesn't mean what you think it means.

That's just the difference. Does the Bible teach sinless perfection? Yes, it does. The sinless perfection of Jesus Christ.

That's the only sinless perfection the Bible teaches. Sinless perfection as applied to the Lord Jesus is a doctrine. Sinless perfection as applied to you or to me is a delusion.

The Bible teaches sinless perfection. You see, this verse neatly presents us with any problem. One thing I may be perfectly convinced of, and that is this.

That if a person born of God does not and cannot commit sin, then I for one am not yet born of God. Nor are you. But it is a bit baffling at first sight, isn't it? Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.

His seed remaineth in him. He cannot sin. He doth not and cannot because he is born of God.

Well, either it means in that I can and do commit sin, that I'm not born of God, or it doesn't really mean what it says and therefore I've got to tamper with the wording and try to get it sorted out a wee bit and reinterpret it. I don't think we need do either. The simple question to ask is this.

Who is it that's born of God? Who was it that was born of God 1900 years ago? Miraculously conceived of the Holy Ghost and the womb of Mary. Jesus Christ. He's the one whose seed remains within him.

Who does not and who cannot sin. Jesus Christ. The only sinless life that ever lived this earth.

1900 years ago. God's nature abides in him. His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him and he cannot practice sinning because he is born of God.

Jesus Christ. He's the one who does not and who cannot sin. How long have you had Jesus Christ living within you? How long have you been a Christian? You say Jesus Christ lives within you.

You were converted ten years ago? Born of God? Were you sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise? Did you together with Peter become by the exceeding great and precious promises partaker of the divine nature? Have you been a partaker of that divine nature in the ten years since you were born again or the thirty years or the five months or the six weeks, whatever it may be? Has the Lord Jesus ever left you? Not even for the weekend? Then if the Lord Jesus Christ has been dwelling within you, literally within you, making your body the temple of the living God, know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? If the Holy Spirit of the Holy God, the Spirit of Christ, has been dwelling within your redeemed humanity ever since you were born again, how long have you had within you a sinless life? Just as long as you've had Jesus Christ. That, unfortunately, is not to say that you've enjoyed His sinless life ever since you've had His sinless life. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he's none of His.

And if you don't have the Spirit of the sinless Christ within you, you don't even belong to Christ. You're none of His. You're not even saved.

You're not a child of God. You don't belong to Him. But if you have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, as Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, you are not in the flesh, you are now in the Spirit.

If so be the Spirit of God dwells in you. Is the Spirit of God capable of sinning? Does He? Can He? Of course He is. His divine sperm remains within Him.

It is the very life of deity itself, and that's the sublime genius of salvation. That man on earth is inhabited by none other than God Himself. This is what makes man, man, and this is why Christ's blood was shed.

This is why He went to Calvary, to restore you to your true manhood. That's why in Romans chapter 5 verse 10 it says this, If when we were enemies, that nature hostile to God, usurping the sovereignty of Christ. If when we were enemies, the natural condition in which we were born by our natural birth, destitute of our divine content, cut off from God, uninhabited by God.

If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, crisis, an act of faith, as I repent toward God and put my faith in Jesus Christ crucified. If when we were enemies, I was reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, much more, being reconciled, an accomplished fact, we shall be saved by His life. You're not saved by the death of Christ, you're saved by the life of Christ, but some of you never discovered it yet.

You're only saved by the death of Christ in a very limited sense. He saves you from the punitive consequence of sin that is true by His death. He saves you from that spiritual alienation that leaves you destitute of God, uninhabited, dead in trespasses and sins by His atoning, vicarious death.

He takes indeed your guilt upon His sinless person, and in a moment of time, by a critical act of faith, you pass from death to life. Because restored to the human spirit of the forgiven sinner comes the Holy Spirit. To do what? To impart to you the life that He lives, by which you are to be saved as a continuous moment-by-moment process.

Living with Jesus, a new life, divine, moment-by-moment. A life from above. Yes, of course, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit there dwells somebody within you who saves you by His life.

We're going to examine this a wee bit more later on, but here's another simple principle that I want you to take home tonight. The life He lived. What kind of a life did He live? For 33 years on earth, 1900 years ago, a sinless life.

The life He lived qualified Him for the death He died. Only by virtue of His sinlessness could He die vicariously for your sinfulness. So the life He lived qualified Him for the death He died.

An atoning, redeeming, vicarious, substitutionary death. But the death He died qualifies you and qualifies me to become the recipients by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of the life He lived. So the life He lived qualified Him for the death He died, and the death He died qualified us for the life He lives.

That's the spiritual content of your faith. By the death He died, you're reconciled to God, and by the life He lives, imparted by the Holy Spirit, you are saved. Moment-by-moment.

That's why the Lord Jesus Christ, of sheer necessity, had to be born miraculously, conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary. Because had Jesus Christ been born as you and I were born, He too would have inherited with us the fallen seed of the fallen Adam. He would have been a sinner by birth, and would have committed sins as you and I commit sins, because He was a sinner by birth.

But you and I were born into this world uninhabited by God, but inhabited by sin. But when Jesus Christ was born, conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary, He was born uninhabited by sin, but wholly inhabited by God. That was the difference.

That's why in John's Gospel, chapter 14, verse 30, He's able to turn to His disciples and say, The Prince of this world is come, the devil himself. He hath nothing in me. He hath nothing in me.

He's got something in you. He's got His own agency in you. He's got the flesh in you.

But He doesn't have that in me. Because I wasn't born of corruptible seed. I was born of the incorruptible seed.

Of my father by the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary. And this incorruptible seed dwells within me. That's Jesus Christ.

And the wonderful thing is this. At the moment you repent toward God, recognizing your guilt, and you put your trust in the vicarious, atoning death of Christ, you're cleansed from sin. You're reconciled to God.

And the Holy Spirit is restored to your human spirit. And it's Christmas all over again. For the Lord Jesus is born in you.

Not now to be clothed with the sinless humanity that was fashioned miraculously in the womb of Mary, but wonder of all wonder since the day of Pentecost, to be clothed with the sin-free, redeemed humanity of

forgiven sin. So that you and I, by this baptism of His Spirit, are added to the Lord and made members of His body. The new body that the Father presented to Him on the day of Pentecost.

As once the Father had presented to Him a sinless body on that first Christmas morning 1900 years ago. And now the same Lord Jesus Christ who lived on earth in the one body, is the very same Lord Jesus Christ who lives on earth in the other body. Of which body you and I are members in particular.

Of which He is the head and the life content, whose seed remains within Him, who does not and who cannot sin. Christian victory is not you attaining victory over evil habits by wooing or bludgeoning or re-educating or conforming that old nature to a Christian pattern. That isn't Christian victory.

Christian victory is allowing the Lord Jesus simply to be Himself for what He is. In terms of your humanity, on God's terms, reckoning not only that when He died, He died for you, but that when He died, He took you with Him to the place of execution. The only place for which you and I by nature are fit.

Into the place of death and burial. So when you give yourself to Jesus Christ, it's not to dedicate what you are to His service. No, no, that isn't consecration.

When you give yourself to Jesus Christ, it is that He may take you into the place of death and bury you. That He being risen from the place of death may give Himself to you. You give yourself to Him and He buries you.

He gives Himself to you and He lives you. That's the gospel. This isn't the gospel class.

This isn't a special blessing. This is just the gospel. This is what God had in mind at the cross.

And to miss this is to miss the much more. If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled by His death we shall be saved by His life. And as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ is act of faith.

So walk in a process, attitude of faith. The one is an act and the other is an attitude. The one is climactic, the other is a process.

You pass instantly from death to life and then you begin to live. He died for what you've done. He rose again to live in you and take your place in what you are.

As you thank Him for what He did, learn to thank Him for what He did and you will walk like that. For the just shall not only come to life but live. There we'll have to stop tonight, pick up the threads again there tomorrow, underline the principles more fully, discover if we may from God's word how it was all worked out, and remember this is going to present you with a moral issue, a spiritual choice.

You've probably faced the issue as to your reaction to what He did. But the issue you may yet have to face is your reaction to what He is. If you can come in the lunch hour tomorrow, I hope you will because we're just coming in the book of Ruth that we're studying in the initial stages of our midday meetings to the most thrilling part of the story.

And it meets just this point that we've reached tonight. And if you want to do a little homework, you read Romans chapter 7. Not the latter part that we read together just now, but the first ten verses say it. And we'll discover that in the book of Ruth we have the solution to those early verses of the seventh chapter of Romans.

And we shall pick up the threads again tomorrow night and discover how illimitably wealthy God made us. When redeemed in the blood of Christ, He credited us with the life of Christ. So that we may henceforth say, and know, thank God it's true, to me, to live, literally, is bow our heads in prayer.

Loving Lord, we bless Thee again for the plenitude of provision that has been made for us. We don't deserve Thy death that redeems us, and we don't deserve Thy life that saves us. But how we thank Thee that we may have what grace provides.

And we know that nothing delights Thy heart more than those who take and say thank You. We pray that none may grieve Thee in repudiating the adequacy of Thy death for redemption. And we pray that none of us may grieve Thee in repudiating the adequacy of Thy life for salvation.

Grant that we may awake tomorrow conscious of all that is ours because of what Thou art. And teach us to step out by faith in the good of it. We ask it for Thy namesake.

Amen.

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