

Something Happened to Peter - Pentecost

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas explores the struggles of living the Christian life through the story of Peter, emphasizing the necessity of true faith and the transformative power of being born again.

Duration: 39:21

Scripture: Mark 14:27

Topics: "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit", "Living the Christian Life"

Description

Major Ian Thomas discusses the transformation of Peter from a man who tried to live the Christian life in his own strength to one who was empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He emphasizes that many Christians fail because they attempt to live a life they do not possess, and that true Christian living comes from allowing Christ to live through us. Thomas illustrates this with Peter's denial of Jesus and his eventual realization of the necessity of being born again, highlighting that the Christian life is not about our efforts but about Christ's life within us. The sermon concludes with the affirmation that Jesus knows our failures and still loves us, inviting us to rely on His strength rather than our own.

Transcript

Millions of boys and girls and men and women sincerely try to live the Christian life and fail. But it's always comforting to know that you've never ever been a bigger failure than God expected you to be. Isn't that a comfort? What would you expect of a car without gas? Failure.

What would you expect of a lamp without oil? Failure. What would you expect of a pen without ink? Failure. What do you think God expects of a man without God? Failure.

And there are two reasons why the millions who try to live the Christian life and fail do so. One, try to live a life they haven't got. And that's tiring.

And that's the vast bulk of those who'll be attending church services next Sunday. And today, I forgot Sunday was today, I mean today was Sunday. Many of them, not insincere, they don't know any better.

They're trying to live the Christian life they do not have. And then the other reason is that countless millions have a life, they're born again, they've never lived. They've become a Christian without learning how to be one.

So, there are two all-sufficient reasons why millions try and fail those who try to live a life they haven't got, and others who have a life they've never lived. I'm sure I've told some of you in the past about a man who thought he was dead. It was a little unusual.

He was dead. Nothing would persuade him otherwise. His family, of course, argued with him and reasoned with him.

But he was unimpressed. He was dead. So, he was interviewed by psychiatrists, his pastor counseled with him.

All to no avail, he was dead. That's all there was to it. A doctor was interviewing him on one occasion and didn't convince him too much, but suddenly the doctor said, do you believe the dead man can bleed? So, he thought about that for a moment.

Can a dead man bleed? And so, after a bit, he said no, a dead man couldn't bleed. So, the doctor grabbed his hand and with a sharp instrument, taking him by surprise, he punctured the tip of one of his fingers. And on the tip of his finger there developed a ruby red bead of blood.

And the man looks at it in utter amazement. Couldn't take his eyes off it. He was mesmerized.

And finally, he said, that is incredible. I never would have believed it. Dead men can bleed.

Well, you see, a man in that condition is in a very sad way. That a man who's physically alive should be utterly convinced that he's physically dead, that's bad. There's something worse.

The millions of those who try to live the Christian life and fail, because although they're spiritually dead, somebody has persuaded them they're spiritually alive. That's worse, far worse. But there's something more pathetic even than that.

Pushing a car with a full tank. Those who've got a life, they've never lived. Who, although they are alive, go on living as though they were dead.

Bad when a man physically dead, physically alive, thinks he's physically dead. Worse when a man spiritually dead thinks he's spiritually alive. Overwhelmingly pathetic when a person who is spiritually alive goes on living as though they were still spiritually dead.

Because they've never learned that the Lord Jesus not only died for us, but rose again to live his life in us. Remember, the Christian life is the life that he lived then in his own body, lived now by him in your body and mine. The moment redeemed, we're born from above.

Regenerate by the renewing of the Holy Spirit through whom he now lives in us, as the father then lived in him. How stupid it would have been for the Lord Jesus on earth to try to live for the father, instead of allowing the father to live in him. It's the one thing he didn't do, because he was demonstrating man in normality.

Without my father I can do nothing. The father who lives in me, he does the work. Oh, by the way, he said as my father sent you.

So on his terms of reference, are you fulfilling the assignment that as a redeemed sinner God has given you, to allow the Lord Jesus himself, your God creator, resident within the redeemed sinner, to be that to

you as God, what he as man allowed the father as God to be to him? You fulfilling your assignment? You see, if you don't let him live that Christian life that you are living, then you'll only expect others to congratulate you, but they won't expect others to congratulate him. That's why we like it that way. It all stems from human pride.

We're not prepared to repent. Not just be sorry for what you've done because it's wrong, but recognize in true hilarious positive repentance that you can only be functional by virtue of the presence of the creator within the creature. I think I may have mentioned that before, but you'll need to hear it at least another 500 times before probably it sinks in.

Well, I thought in the few moments that I've got this morning it would be interesting to turn to the story of a man who tried to live a life he didn't have. He wasn't insincere and his name is very familiar to you. Turn to the 14th chapter of Mark's gospel.

Mark and chapter 14 and verse 26. When they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. And the Lord Jesus said unto them, verse 27 of Mark 14, All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered.

But after that I am risen, I'll go before you in a gallon. And they were pretty offended at the suggestion that they would quit. I mean, he was cutting them down, challenging their integrity, especially Peter.

Because, you see, he was very dedicated, affectionately, emotionally, toward the Lord Jesus. Full of energy, a big ambition, he was going to do things for God. He was always the first to stand up and say something, and nearly always everything he said was nonsense.

And he was the one who reacted most fiercely. Peter said to him, Although also be offended, yet will not I. I mean, I could understand that some of these dudes might, you know, forsake, but there's one man you can count on. Peter is the name.

P-E-T-E-R. Capital letters, underlined in red. Here's my phone number, call me when you need me, I'll be there.

That was Peter, all over. Insincere? No. Putting on an act? No, not deliberately.

Wearing a mask? Not the one he didn't know was there. Religion. You see, he'd been reared as a Jew under the law that made nothing perfect.

And he didn't know anything better. He didn't know there was a better hope. By whom he'd drawn neither God.

He was still abysmally ignorant of where it was at. That's why the Lord Jesus, though he had affirmed his confidence that this Jesus was indeed the Christ, Son of the Living God, said, The Lord Jesus, now keep him out here. Tell nobody that I am Jesus the Messiah.

And you wonder why the Lord Jesus would call Peter to be his disciple, name him to be an apostle, and the moment he discovers that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus tells him to keep his mouth shut. Because the Lord Jesus knew perfectly well that Peter hadn't a clue what it was all about. It was on that occasion, you can read it for yourself, in Matthew 16, when the Lord Jesus said, I'm going to the city of Jerusalem and there I'll be delivered into the hands of wicked men and be done to death, but don't panic because the third

day I'll be risen from the dead and I'm going to appear in your midst and meet you where I have made the appointment, Galilee.

And Peter immediately stepped forward and said, not so Lord, that isn't on our agenda, forget it. That cannot, will not, must not happen to you and we're going to make sure it doesn't. And when later, after the resurrection, the women came and told the apostles, huddled together like frightened men in the upper room with the door barred and barricaded, and said, Jesus is alive.

Peter, with the others, said, idle tales. He's dead. We buried him.

That's Peter. Is it sincere? Well, no. In love with Jesus? Yes.

Dedicated to his cause? Right. But he hadn't a clue what the cause was. He didn't understand the end.

The things concerning me, said Jesus, have an end, an intelligent purpose. But Peter, at that time, didn't know what that end was. Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. In other words, flexed his muscles and was prepared to stick his chin out and do it all for Jesus.

Was the Lord Jesus impressed? The Lord Jesus said to him, verily I say unto you, this day, even this night, before the cock is crowned twice, you'll deny me three times. Peter, you're a dead loss. And you won't be any bigger failure than I expect you to be.

Because you haven't a clue what it's all about. And that made Peter mad. He spake the more vehemently, if I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.

But don't just be rough on Peter. Likewise, also said they all. Were they Christians? Well, of course not.

They were disciples. They were under instruction. But they weren't Christians because they'd never been raised from the dead.

Their sins hadn't been blotted out because Jesus was not yet crucified, something that they did not want. And Peter still stood between Christ and his cross. Not so, Lord, that must not, will not, cannot happen to you.

Nor was the Lord Jesus risen again from the dead to reinstate in them that life the Father had to restore to him in resurrection. So although the Lord Jesus didn't take Peter seriously, nor the others, he wasn't mad with them. They were simply mad with him.

And you'll find that religious people can get very mad if they're not saved, not redeemed, not born again. I remember being asked by a dear friend of mine, a Presbyterian minister who went to a very, very dead church. It was more like a country club.

And he was having a pretty tough time telling these very self-righteous, egocentric, self-centered Presbyterians they needed to be born again, needed to convert and be repentant and receive from God what they couldn't deserve. They didn't like it too much. So he asked me to give him a hand.

So one Sunday morning I preached, gave them very simply the story of God's dear incarnate Son, who in his sinlessness died in their place, rose again from the dead so that he by the Holy Ghost might come and share his life with them. And a lady afterwards came up to me and she was really mad. She had an umbrella in her hand and I ducked every time she waved it.

She said, how dare you? I said, how dare I what? She said, how dare you call me a double-dyed hypocrite? I said, I didn't call you a double-dyed hypocrite. She said, you did. You were looking at me the whole time.

Ever felt like that? Well, I said, madam, I have to protest. I did not call you a double-dyed hypocrite. She said, you did.

I said, I didn't. But I know who did. God.

And I'll tell you why. Because you're a double-dyed hypocrite. And she was.

But within a few minutes she was on her knees in tears, admitting to God that she was a double-dyed hypocrite. Because she was trying to live a life she hadn't gone. So she dressed herself up on the inside to disguise her bankruptcy.

That's how God goes about his business. Well, what happened? Look at verse 66, same Mark's gospel, 14. As Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest, just a slip of a girl, and when she saw Peter warming himself at their fire, she looked upon him and said, thou also was with Jesus of Nazareth.

And immediately Peter denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. What a liar. He went out into the porch, and the cock crew.

But that didn't faze him at first. He didn't recognize the symptoms. And a maid saw him again, verse 69, and began to say to them that stood by, this is one of them.

But he denied it again. And a little while after, they that stood by said again to Peter, surely thou art one of them. Thou art a Galilean.

Thy speech agreeth thereto. We can tell by your accent. And then Peter began to curse and swear like the Galilean fisherman he had been to add weight to his denial.

He said, I know not this man of whom you speak. And he was within touching distance of Jesus. Big deal.

What was his problem? Trying to live a life he hadn't got. Substituting enthusiasm, dedication, commitment, zeal, bravado. For that relationship between man and God that derives from true repentance and childlike faith.

That is, prepare to come and say, Lord Jesus, thanks for dying in my place then so that you can live your life in me now. And the second time, verse 72, the cock crowed. And Peter remembered.

Call to mind the word that Jesus said unto him before the cock crowed twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept bitterly. And imagine from that time on, the Lord Jesus would never look at him again, let alone talk to him.

But Jesus is the good shepherd. And we're never a bigger failure than he expects us to be. So he's never shocked.

You may be shocked sometimes when you do something which you know is wrong, but Jesus isn't. You say, fancy me saying that, and he says, fancy you saying anything else. It's an inverted form of pride.

Fancy me, of all people, me. God says, I know your heart better than you know yourself. So Jesus didn't trash him.

When the women came and the Lord Jesus told them, go tell my disciples that I am going to meet them in Galilee. They've missed their appointment, but tell them I will be there. And he added, and Peter.

He was the only one he named. Don't forget to tell Peter. Wasn't that nice of the Lord Jesus? You may feel a hopeless failure, but I want to tell you something.

He doesn't trash you, because he knows the worst about you and loves you just the same. There's only one who loves like that, and Jesus is his name. If something happened to Peter, turn with me to see what it was that happened.

You'll find it in his epistles, and in the first epistle of Peter, in the first chapter, and the 18th verse. 18th verse of the first chapter of Peter's first epistle. This is the conclusion that Peter has come to after something happened.

Verse 18, for as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold, or anything that money can buy from your vain behavior received by tradition from your fathers. You see, you think you're a Christian, maybe simply by tradition. Tell me this, why are most Baptists Baptists? By conviction? No, normally by tradition.

Dad was a Baptist, and Grandpa too. Point of fact, my uncle was a minister. Why are most people in Scotland Presbyterians? By conviction? No, it's a God culture, characteristic of Scotland and the north of Ireland.

Why are most people in the south of Ireland Catholics? Conviction? No, God culture. Why are Methodists Methodists? God culture, they were reared in that culture. Episcopalians, Lutherans, whatever it may be, we simply belong to the God culture in which normally we're reared, that's all.

And Peter, with the others, of course, was reared in the Judaistic culture, an apostate form of Christianity, who waited the Messiah, but when he came, he came unto his own, and his own received him not. Vain tradition, received by tradition from our fathers. But, he says in verse 19, but with the precious, precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, manifest in these last times for you.

Something's happened to Peter. He said, when the Lord Jesus was born and lived and died and was crucified, he was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, verily foreordained before ever the world was. I realize now that Peter, he didn't drift to disaster, he wasn't just a noble idealist who lived ahead of his peers, and died at the end of a beautiful life as a martyr, verily foreordained before ever the world was.

If he had had it, he would have seen it in the book of the Revelation 13, but he didn't have the book of the Revelation, because the only Bible Peter had with the others was the Old Testament, of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Something's happened to Peter. He's recognized that the Lord Jesus was not just another prophet, another teacher, founding a religion called Christianity, he was the Lamb.

The seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, and the house of David, and the city of Bethlehem, verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, but a plan, fashion of the heart of God,

that was relentlessly implemented by a God who knows where he's going, and has got what it takes to get there. You're on solid ground when you put your trust in Jesus. Verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and your hope might be in God, a better hope.

This is Peter who ridiculed the women and said idle tales because they believe that Jesus rose again from the dead. Something's happened to Peter. What happened? Well he tells you verse 23, being born again, born again, raised from the dead, restored to life, invaded by deity, born again, not a corruptible seed, not on the basis of some human philosophy or man-made theological proposition, but not a corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which lives and abides forever.

And you can spell that word with a small w, the written word, or a big W, the living word, because there's no dichotomy between the written word, the scriptures, and the living word, Jesus. For he said, rebuking the theologians of his day, you search your scriptures, you think in them, you have eternal life, but they, these scriptures, are they that testify of me, but you will not come to me, that you might have life. The written word and the living word, the written word, scripture, gospel, the living word, Jesus, gospel.

No dichotomy between the one and the other. Born again, by the ever-living and the ever-lasting word. And in the last sentence, for the last verse of that, his first chapter, he says, this, this, this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

You're redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish, verily foreordained before ever the world was, and you're born again by the same Lord Jesus. Now what did Peter mean by that? When was he born again? He obviously wasn't a Christian when we meet him, you know, in the gospels, because he didn't want the cross and didn't believe in the resurrection. Can anybody be a genuine Christian who says the cross is totally unnecessary and the resurrection didn't take place? Christian, how about inviting somebody like that for your next summer school? Would you be in agreement? You'd say, not on your life.

When was Peter born again? Well look, in the same chapter, verse three, he tells us. Third verse, first chapter, the epistle to Peter, of Peter, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the day. When did the Father beget the Son? Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee.

Psalm 2, verse 7, well we trace that through to the 13th chapter of the book of the Acts, where he said, God raised Jesus from the dead and fulfilled the promise he gave unto our Father, saying in the second Psalm, Thou art my beloved Son, this day, resurrection, I have begotten thee. Peter says, I've been begotten, the way he was begotten. The Father begat him by restoring to him that life that he, Jesus, has now restored to me, the life of God, born again.

You see, what Peter had discovered, that there was not only a better hope, by whom now we draw nigh unto God, because the law, the Mosaic law, totally valid, authored by God, given only as a temporary expedient, makes nothing perfect. It can only describe the righteousness of God that derives from the life of God, but cannot restore to man the life of God from which righteousness derives. So the law makes nothing perfect, but the better hope did.

The bringing in of the better hope. And Peter has discovered the better hope, Jesus, by whom now we draw nigh unto God. But he discovers there's not only that better hope, but the better hope demanded a

better sacrifice.

Not the blood of bulls and goats and heifers and lambs and doves that can never take away sin, but the precious blood of God's dear Son. This man, after he had offered, not many, but one sacrifice, a dual sacrifice, spiritual death and physical death, sacrifices to death, but by one man. Dual sacrifice, forever.

Our sins to be remembered for his sake, no more. Marvellous. Peter has discovered the better hope that demanded a better sacrifice, because the blood of bulls and goats, that was animal blood, they never were restored to life, nor could they restore anybody to life.

The blood that James shed when his head was cut off, Peter crucified upside down, Stephen stoned to death, Paul the Apostle executed by a Roman officer outside the city of Rome. Did their blood cleanse us from sin? Well, of course not. That was animal blood.

But the blood that Jesus shed was God's blood. The blood of God. Acts, remember, 20, 28.

The life of God. And the only one who could shed that life was the one who possessed that life, and the only one since Adam fell who possessed that life was God's dear incarnate Son. From the moment of conception, indwelt and sharing the life of the Father through the Holy Spirit.

And so that was the life that had to be laid down. It was his blood that had to be shed. He was the seed promised in faithful Abraham.

So Peter had discovered that Jesus was the better hope that demanded a better sacrifice, but he learned also, and this is in Hebrews in chapter 8 and verse 6. We've just a moment to glance at it, and in this last session we're fighting a little bit for time, but we'll make it. Hebrews in chapter 8 and verse 6. Now hath he, that's the Lord Jesus, obtained a more excellent ministry by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant. Because he was the substance of the shadow.

The pledge that God gave when he rebuked the devil, Genesis 3 15, a woman is going to conceive and bear a little boy, and the seed of that woman is going to destroy you. In the process you'll bruise his heel. Remember that? And then the scarlet thread.

But that was the shadow of good things to come. And the better hope which demanded the better sacrifice introduced the substance of the shadow, the better covenant. What was the better covenant? Well it goes on to tell you, we won't read it, but it's almost an exact quote from the 31st of the Jeremiah, and the 31st verse on, and Ezekiel 36 verse 26.

Those next few verses there in the 8th chapter of Hebrews, whereas the law was written by the finger of God on tables of stone, this new and covenant was going to allow God to write his law on the fleshy tables of our hearts. This is the covenant, verse 10 of Hebrews 8, that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I'll put my laws into their mind. I'll write them in their hearts, and I will be to them God.

Not a religion, God. And they shall be my people. Better covenant.

But what does it say next in that 6th verse of the 8th chapter of Hebrews? A better covenant which was established upon better promises. What were the better promises? Well Peter tells us about that in the 3rd and 4th verses of the 2nd of his two epistles, and he says this, according as God's divine power, he's

given to us all that pertains to being alive. Life.

God's divine power, that's what Paul said, the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe, according to the power that God released when he raised his son Jesus from the dead, and you, happy quickens. And Peter says, Amen. It was according to God's divine power.

He has given to us all that pertains to being alive. Life. But that life that he gives us, he goes on to say in that verse, pertains to God-likeness.

Because the likeness of God derives from God himself. Righteousness is God behaving. And the law couldn't give us God's life, but Jesus did.

And that life God gives us when he, having given himself for us, has now given himself to us, pertains to God-likeness. Because when you allow the Lord Jesus to use your hands, when you allow him to walk with your feet and speak with your lips, others see him behave as others then saw the Father behave. That's God-likeness.

It's restored to image. How does God do it? Well, by verse 4, the exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature. Those are the better promises that are offered to us by the better covenant that demanded a better sacrifice in the person of the one who was the better hope.

Simple, isn't it? It's illogical. The Lord Jesus died on the cross so that he could come and live his life in us, so we in him should share his divine nature, and others in us see him behaving as others in him saw the Father behaving. Glorious.

When did all that happen to Peter? Well, when he was born again. When was that? When he was raised from the dead, on the basis of Christ's vicarious sacrifice. Pentecost.

Pentecost. When the church was born. Quickly turn to Acts and chapter 2 and verse 22.

Acts chapter 2 and verse 22. And this is the day of Pentecost, and Peter tells us what happened. 22nd verse, 2nd of Acts, human of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man.

A man? Well, yes. Peter has discovered the humanity of the one who, though God played the role of man, though the creator played the role of creature, he suddenly realized that this is what the Lord, he's been trying to teach us all the time, that we are as dependent upon him now as men, as he as man was dependent upon his Father. He as God is as indispensable to us as the Father as God was indispensable to him.

I see it now. He was a man. What kind of a man? Approved of God.

A man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him. Who raised those from the dead? God did by him. Who fed the 5,000? God did by him.

Who healed the blind beggar? It's outside Jericho. God did by him. Who preached the Sermon on the Mount? God did by him.

That's a man approved. Peter suddenly realized it. Jesus was real man, and he kept telling us that he's come to restore us to our true humanity, so that as the Father as God by him, he now as God can by us do

anything he pleases so that we live to the praise of his glory.

Peter's discovered what it means to be Christian. God in the man, Christ in the Christian. As in him, in the sinlessness of his humanity, it was the Father in the Son.

Transformed his life, of course, instantly. Peter could stand on the day of Pentecost after this revelation and preach with such power, clarity, unashamed, unafraid, that 3,000 others were saved that same day and received the same Holy Spirit, and then daily such as were being saved. Has anything happened to Peter who said, not so Lord, that's not going to happen to you, and as for this resurrection stuff, forget it.

Women, you're hysterical. Anything happen to Peter? Yeah, he's been born again. He's become a Christian.

Simple, isn't it? How did the Lord Jesus draw upon the illimitable resources of the Father? How did he raise Lazarus from the dead? He looked up his eyes to heaven, John chapter 11 said, Father, thanks. You're in business. I'm not going to raise Lazarus from the dead, that's not my business.

My business is to be man so that you as God can do it by me. Thanks. How did he feed the 5,000? Took the five loaves, two fishes from an unnamed boy, looked into his father's face and said, thank you.

I'm not going to feed the 5,000, that's not my business. My business is a man to let you as God do it. Thanks, Father.

Went to the cross, took the bread, broke it, passed the cup, what do you do next? He said, thank you, Father. So how are you and I going to live by Jesus? Well, by the way, he lived by the Father. As the living Father sent me, I'm going to send you.

As the living Father sent me, John 6, 57, and I live through the Father, he that eats me, appropriates me, is going to live through me. How the Lord Jesus lived through the Father. He exposed every situation one step at a time and said, thank you.

How are you and I to live now through Jesus? In every situation, no matter what, threat, promise, opportunity, responsibility, we stand back and say, thank you. Fantastic. Is that the way you live? This is where the rubber hits the road, and I've found it very helpful as well, indicated to some of you in the past.

Here's a man who has rediscovered Jesus. He wrote to me. He says, it's been approximately seven months since I heard you speak in Oklahoma City, but the truth and simplicity of it are still ringing in my heart.

I have preached for 25 years and pastored for 10 of those, but never knew the excitement I have known the past seven months. Thank you for sharing the fact that Christ is alive. He was a good, sound, evangelical, Bible-punching preacher.

Didn't even know that Christ was alive, except academically, theologically, in heaven, whom he'd see one day when he got there. I knew it in my mind, of course, he says, but somehow I had not appropriated it in my life. But as you presented the gospel, it became so clear.

I had never been able before to grasp the meaning and the purpose of the Christian life, and had been a preacher for 25 years and a pastor for 10. Can you understand that? Now I have peace. I don't have to worry.

Just allow him to be in me the origin of his own image, the source of his own activity, the dynamic of his own demands, and the cause of his own affair. Has he learned anything? Here's another one. Thank you for your most helpful letters.

I've used and reused your statement from your letter dated November 25, 1989. And he quotes, the secret of appropriating the life of Jesus is to thank him for who he is in us, in every situation, as once we learned to thank him for what he did for us. I've been a minister since 1964.

He sent this letter to me in 1990. 26 years. Frankly, that statement has been the key to open a whole new way of approaching life and ministry.

In the past, I memorized passages like Galatians 2.20, I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, and so on. I read books like Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret. I did want the reality of Galatians 2.20. I agreed with what the books I read said, yet somehow I kept missing the practical application in each event I face in life.

Thanking him for who he is in me, in every situation, has opened a whole new way to live. Fancy wasting 26 years as a pastor before discovering what it means to be a Christian. Christ living his life in us now, as the Father once lived his life in him then.

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