

# The Awareness of the Presence of Christ

by Major Ian Thomas

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*The sermon highlights the transformative power of recognizing Christ's presence and the necessity of genuine faith for salvation.*

**Duration:** 1:08:13

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:3, Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:3, Philippians 3:11, Philippians 4:12

**Topics:** "Presence of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a week of fellowship and preaching in Adam. They express gratitude for the presence of the Lord Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their midst. The main message is that as believers, our faith is centered on Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith. The speaker emphasizes that once we have put our trust in Christ, we have everything we need, as God has given us Christ himself. They also warn against the danger of being deceived by mere knowledge or outward appearances of faith, stressing the importance of a true personal relationship with Jesus.

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## Transcript

Once more tonight on this closing service, I'd like to say how very deeply I have appreciated the gracious, loving welcome afforded to me by this church, its pastor, Mr. Alan Burrows, officers and members, to thank them for making it so easy for me to be here and speak night by night, and in thanking them, to thank also the co-sponsors of these meetings, the campaigners for Christ, and for all that Mr. Gordon Reimers and Mr. Bruce Bryson and others associated have done in organizing these meetings as they have. It's been certainly a very heartwarming week for me, and I've enjoyed enormously the fellowship with God's people here in Adam. I feel it's been a profitable week too, as the Lord Jesus has graciously presenced himself in our midst, as he always will, and always does, and always must, according to his wonderful promises, and by his Holy Spirit has led us through the Word into wonderful discoveries.

The greatest of all, of course, being that from beginning to end, start to finish, all that we have as the spiritual content of our faith is vested in himself. He's the author and the finisher, and everything that comes in between. The lovely thing to know is that once we have put our trust in Christ as Savior, God can't give us more than we have, for he's given us Christ, and we don't need to have less.

How wonderfully wealthy we become when we are truly born of God, of his Holy Spirit. Numbered, as Paul puts it, in the epistles of the Philippians, and in the third chapter, amongst those who, by a spiritual and moral resurrection, have been lifted out from among the dead, even while in the body. That's what

happens when you know Christ as your Savior.

That if possible, he says, Philippians 3.11, by my knowledge of him may attain to the spiritual and moral resurrection that lifts me out from among the dead, even while in the body. Not one day when I get to heaven. No, no, in the present tense, right now, with my two feet on the earth, lifted from among the dead, because unconverted people, those who have never received the Lord Jesus as their Redeemer, those who have never experienced the miracle of new birth, regeneration, the restoration of the Holy Spirit to the human spirit of a forgiven sinner, are dead, lifeless, uninhabited, without God.

Subhumans, as we have discovered this week. But when you come to Christ, and you're cleansed in the precious blood that was shed on that first Easter so many years ago, and you've been reconciled to God, and peace between you and him has been re-established, and he's sealed this wonderful transaction by the restoration to you of that which makes man, man, God's presence within him by the Holy Spirit, you'll lift it out from among the dead. You're born of God, you're regenerate, raised, alive again.

It's both the spiritual and the moral resurrection. Because the spiritual resurrection, whereby God the Holy Spirit comes to indwell you, is the one who now implements in you that moral resurrection that enables him in and through you to implement the righteousness of the law. And so we see what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh.

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemns sin in the flesh. That was Easter, 1900 years ago. The place not only where he died, but the place where he rose again from the dead.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk now, not after the flesh, our old, original, fallen state of bankruptcy, but after the Spirit, our illimitable, inexhaustible supplies of wealth vested in us in the person of the Spirit of the risen Lord who credits us with Christ for every step of the way. Now that's salvation. And because of that, Paul goes on to say in the fourth chapter and the twelfth verse, I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance.

I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and a spare, or going without and being in want. Listen to this lovely verse, Philippians 4.13. I have strength, not I hope to have, not I beg for strength, not I plead for it, no, I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me. I'm ready for anything and I'm equal to anything through him who infuses inner strength into me.

That is, I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency. The original word from which that expression is taken in our English Bible is the same word from which the English word autonomous comes from. What he's saying is this, in Jesus Christ I am autonomous, self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency.

Everything that Christ is in me makes me self-supporting. I don't need a crutch anymore. I'm not carried along by others.

I'm autonomous because Christ fills me with all the fullness of the Godhead body. He fills me and he floods me with God himself. You can't have more than that and you don't need to have less.

That's what it means to be a Christian. Not you struggling to delight Christ, but Christ just being himself as you place yourself at his disposal. Present your body, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.

These are some of the wonderful discoveries that we've been making. Some rediscovering. Blessings of the past have been quickened.

Memories have been awakened and the light has come back into the eye. Some making the discovery for the first time. Never realizing, never having dreamed before how much was involved in being converted, restored to God.

Little realizing that it was heaven on the way to heaven, not just heaven one day when you get there. And some may be having found Christ the Savior for the first time. Well, it's been a good week and we thank God for it.

And I've loved being amongst you. Little bit homesick. First time I've been away at Easter.

There are about 200 noisy brats in my home right now at this very moment. And I'd love to be there. We shall have about 650 of them this month.

And it's the first time ever that I've been away at this time of the year. But they're in good hands. And I rejoice to have the privilege of being away from them in order to be with you.

Now, my final word to you tonight I feel should be especially directed to any there may be amongst us who at the close of this week still are uncertain as to whether they have ever received Christ as their Savior. You see, you may be well instructed in many things concerning the Christian faith. Know the facts and still be denied the life.

Know the language, but without the experience of an indwelling faith. And the fact that you may know the facts, the very fact that you have been tutored, that you have been Christianized, that you know the language, that you may even have given mental consent to the basic tenets of the faith, may in itself deceive you as to the true situation of your own soul. I remember being at a boys' camp in England, about a hundred boys.

There was a family assisting with the chores, doing the cooking and various things like that. They were combining business with pleasure. And they brought their family too.

And they had a small boy about 12 years of age amongst several others. And he had heaps of fun in the local farmyard. Used to go and assist the farmer.

At least that's what he professed to be doing. He probably got more in the way than he assisted. But on one occasion he went out to assist to cut a hedge.

And in the process, a briar was drawn across his face and a thorn pierced one of his eyes. Now, he didn't take undue notice of it, nor indeed did his parents. It was a bit sore.

It rubbed it a bit. But about two days later it became highly inflamed and very painful. And he was brought to the camp doctor, a Mr. Virgin, who in the providence of God was an eye specialist and surgeon.

He'd been principal of the medical college in Dachau in India. And he examined the eye of the boy. And the strange thing was this.

When he examined the boy's eye, he discovered, even to the boy's surprise, that in the eye that had been damaged he was blind. He was blind and didn't know it. By a strange coincidence, being the damaged

eye, you see, and the one that hurt, he'd always either had the bad eye shut and the good eye open, or both the bad eye and the good eye shut, but he'd never had the good eye shut and the bad eye open.

Because that's the one that hurt. And so, without knowing it, he was blind. Because he could see through one eye, he didn't know he was blind in the other eye.

And that was a picture to me of what so often, all too often is the case, on the part of genuine, sincere, earnest, church-going men and women, boys and girls who attend Sunday school and Bible class, and because they can see as it were with their mental eye, and can appropriate certain facts with their mind, because they can give the right answer at the given moment to any given question, are still unaware of the fact that they are spiritually blind. In other words, the fact that you know what Easter stands for, the fact that you know what Christmas stands for, the fact that you know and may even believe and give full consent to the fact that Jesus Christ came into this world 1,900 years ago and lived a sinless life and died an atoning death and rose in victory from the dead to ascend into the presence and glory of God and lives there forever and is able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, that does not in itself mean that you're a Christian. You've been Christianized.

You've been tutored, in fact. But it doesn't make you a Christian. Any more than the fact that I know that tomorrow morning at ten minutes past seven a plane is going to leave Adelaide and fly to Melbourne and that it's got a comparatively good engine because it was made in England and that all the personnel have been teed up for that and I give consent to that fact.

I believe it. Confirmed it. I've got the ticket.

The price has been paid. That doesn't mean to say that at ten minutes past seven I shall be on that plane if I do no more than believe the facts that I've just recited. I've got to do far more than believe.

I've got to act on the facts that I believe. I wish I could get there by just believing. I wouldn't have to get up so early.

But if I want to get there because of the facts I believe, I've got to act on those facts and step into the plane. Now it may well be that some of you here know all the facts, some of you boys and girls I see about. You've been brought up by lovely Christian parents.

They've taught you from your earliest days the simple facts of salvation and you know all those facts. And yet if the truth were told, if God somehow could expose your heart, it would be discovered to be entirely empty of God because you've never acted personally, deliberately, intelligibly upon the things that you have believed. You can't have faith in a chair standing up.

You can believe it's a chair. You can recognize the purpose for which it was made, but you can't have faith in it. Not standing up.

You've got to sit on it to have faith in it and take your feet off the ground. Then you've got faith in the chair. That's what God demands of you and God demands of me.

Not just to stand and gaze with however much veneration, admiration, or even gratitude. Not just to stand and gaze at the cross and believe that he died for you, but to come to yourself and say, Lord Jesus, I'm one of the sinners you died to save. I'm one of those for whose sins you paid the price and I want to be numbered right now with those whose names are recorded forever in the Lamb's book of life because for

them the debts have been paid.

It is finished, he cried. A word that is still used today in the Middle East is when a bill is received. Go into a shop and buy something and ask for a receipt and instead of putting receipt with debt, you put, it is finished.

That's what the Lord Jesus means. It is finished. Paid in full.

No further demand to be entertained on this account. What a wonderful thing that 1900 years ago the Lord Jesus looked into the father's face and he said, Father, when a boy or a girl or a man or a woman on the 10th of April 1960 in Adelaide comes to you and claims the efficacy, the adequacy, the sufficiency of my death on their behalf for their sins that they may become forgiven. Father, I want you to reckon on that day when they come to you that it's finished.

Paid in full. And for that boy, that girl, that man, that woman there's no further demand to be mourned. That's what took place at the cross.

And the Father from heaven said, Amen. Raised him from the dead. So it's possible to believe without being saved.

To believe without being saved. Because belief is not faith. Faith is belief in actuality.

And all too many churches are filled today with unsaved believers. Unsaved believers. Who have been taught believism but not faith.

There's a story given to us in the Bible of an unsaved believer. We read the account in the 18th chapter of Luke's Gospel but I'd like to draw your attention to the same story as recorded by Mark in the 10th chapter. Mark chapter 10.

And in the 46th verse it says, And they came to Jericho. And as the Lord Jesus went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the high roadside begging. I want you to notice in that verse 46 the groupings of people.

First of all, there was the Lord Jesus himself. Secondly, there were his disciples. Not very many of them, just a handful.

Thirdly, a great number of people. In other words, the crowd. So there was Christ, the disciples, and the crowd.

That's the setting. Now it doesn't matter where you go, that's always the setting. Christ, his disciples, and the crowd.

Usually, under normal circumstances, Christ, just a handful of disciples, maybe only one or two, and a big crowd, who are strangers to Jesus Christ. In a gathering such as this, the balance is readjusted, and there's the Lord Jesus without a shadow of a doubt. And there are rather more disciples than is customary in such a crowd under any other circumstances, on a football pitch, for instance, or a bus.

And far fewer of the crowd than would normally be the case elsewhere. But the proofing remains. For the Lord Jesus is here without a shadow of a doubt.

That there are many of his disciples here is without a doubt. And that there are representatives tonight of the crowd. A great multitude of unconverted, unforgiven sinners.

That is true without a doubt. But it isn't that grouping which in itself is the most important part of the scene. The scene is this.

That within that grouping, there was the immediate express object of Christ's quest. Lime Bartonnier. Lime Bartonnier.

He was the immediate express object of the quest of Jesus Christ. He was the prime reason why the Lord Jesus was passing that way. Bartonnier didn't know it any more than I knew it in the day that I was converted.

I didn't know that I, that night, was one of the express objects of Christ's presence and quest at that particular time. I wasn't the only object, as a matter of fact. Because when I was in New Zealand just a week or two back, in Auckland, a gentleman I hadn't seen for many, many years, indeed since the war, came to visit me and he said, remember the boys' camp that we were at together those years ago in 1927? He said, yes, his name is Donald Skegg.

He said, we were both converted on the same night at precisely the same time. So, I couldn't claim the monopoly of God's attention, that is. He had Donald Skegg in mind.

He's married and he's got a family of his own now, and an active Christian man in New Zealand. Haven't seen him for many years. The wonderful thing to know is this, that what happened in his heart then, is what happened in my heart now, with the same consequences.

And we can meet thousands of miles away from the spot where it happened and thank God for his mercy. But if there was nobody else that night in that tent, who were the immediate objects, the express purpose of Christ's presence, we were. And we've lived to tell the story, and we know it's true.

And on this particular occasion, the express object of Christ was to meet personally a man called Bartimaeus. He was blind, he was poor, and he was a beggar. He was a poor, blind, beggarly believer.

But he wasn't saved. Why should we call him a believer? Well, because the context of the story tells us that. When he heard, it says, verse 47, that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Half a minute, did you notice what it said? When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, that was his human title. Jesus, the street preacher. You know, the man who came from Nazareth.

That's what the crowd called him. They didn't recognize him to be the Messiah. They didn't recognize him to be the Christ, God's prophet, priest, and king, anointed to be Savior and Redeemer.

The crowd didn't call him that. No, no, no, the crowd said, he's Jesus, the man from Nazareth. But no sooner did blind Bartimaeus hear that it was Jesus of Nazareth, than he began to cry out and say, not Jesus, thou man from Nazareth, but Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And not only did he say, have mercy on me, but the actual tense used in what he said was, have mercy on me now. It was specific. It was imperative.

Have mercy on me now. Not tomorrow, not in a week's time, but now. Now, why was it that Bartimaeus recognized Jesus of Nazareth, the street preacher from Nazareth, how did he recognize him as the son of David? Of course, to all Jews, that was the expression used for the one who was to come as Messiah, the lion of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David.

He was not untaught. Somehow, we don't know how, but he was not untaught in the things of God. In the 55th chapter of the book of Isaiah, what a wonderful verse for a beggar.

Don't know who taught him this, maybe some disappointed Sunday school teacher years before, when Bartimaeus was there as a small boy only sticking pins in the chap in front of him. But somehow, he got to know all about it, and it was in his mind. He had been tutored in the facts.

He had been, if you put it this way, in the Christianity of the Jews, because remember, Judaism was Christianity gone wrong. Judaism was the religion of the Christ. Judaism became heathenism when they missed the Christ himself.

As Christianity becomes a heathenism, if it is a Christianity without Christ. You don't make Christianity Christianity by calling it Christianity. You can't just think up any kind of philosophy of life and say, we're going to build a church with a spire on top and we're going to put a notice outside and say, this is a Christian church.

That doesn't make it a Christian church. It's Christ that makes a church a Christian church, not religion. But however he heard it, he was tutored in these facts.

Verse 1 of Isaiah 55. And come unto me, here in your soul shall live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

This was the promise of God, that in the son of David, the Messiah, the Christ, there would come into the world salvation, forgiveness, soul peace. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Verse 6. Call ye upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon you. And to our God he will abundantly pardon. And Bartimaeus had been taught all this.

Isaiah 42. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighted. I have put my spirit upon him.

He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Verse 3. A bruised reed shall he not break. The smoking flax shall he not quit.

He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgment in the earth. Verse 6. I, the Lord, have called thee unrighteous.

Verse 7. To open the blind eye, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the Lord, that's my name. These are the sure mercies of David.

I don't know who taught him, but he knew it all. But all that he had ever known about the son of David and all the bright prospect for those who knew him had left him where it found him, in the gutter. Poor, blind, a beggar.

How did he come to identify Jesus of Nazareth with Jesus the son of David, the Messiah, the Christ? Well, he heard many things about the Lord Jesus that matched all that he had been taught in times gone by about what they should expect of the Messiah, the Christ of God, as the passers-by start to chatter in the marketplace. The merchants, squabbling over their deals, every now and again they're bursting with the latest about the street preaching, the indignation of the Jews, and the strange things that he was doing, and yet the wonderful things that he was doing. And he listened, and he put the pieces together until the picture was complete.

It may well have been that there came a day when a man sat down by his side in the gutter and said, Bartimaeus, I'll tell you this, I was a beggar like you once. I was as blind as you are. But I'll tell you what happened.

Jesus of Nazareth came my way. You know, he's the son of David. He's the Christ.

He's the Messiah. He saved me. I'll tell you what, I'll tell you what, Bartimaeus, if ever you got a chance to meet him, that would be the greatest day in your life.

Never miss it. And he remembered. But all that he had come to know, and all that he had come to believe, however he had come to know it, and however he had come to believe it, had left him where it found him, in the gutter.

A poor, blind, beggarly believer. But of one thing he was completely convinced, and that was this, Jesus of Nazareth is Jesus the son of David. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God.

He came to open blind eyes. He came to set men free, to take them out of the prison house. He came to feed the thirsty.

He came to feed the hungry. He came for those who had no money. He came for those who were poor and lost.

Of this he became completely convinced. He believed. But he was an unsafe believer because somehow the occasion had never occurred upon which he could translate what he believed into faith.

This is the impotence, the impotence, the powerlessness of an impersonal belief. I don't know how it is my unconverted, unsaved, believing friend, I don't know how it is that you have been Christianized, how you have been tutored in the things of God, how it is you know the facts you do know about Jesus Christ, but has it remained with you an impersonal and impotent belief? Has what you know and what you believe about Jesus Christ ever truly transformed your life? Has it given you the inward conviction of God the Holy Spirit to your spirit that you're a child of God? Do you have the unspeakable joy of which Peter speaks in the knowledge that your sins are forgiven, joy unspeakable and full of glory, peace that passes knowledge, love that passes knowledge, peace that passes understanding? Are you really experientially today more than conqueror through him that loved you? Have you a message for the world? Could you go out into the street and across the first man you saw looking miserable and say I've got the message of hope that your face needs? Because you know it's true. What do you say? No, I must confess I know all the facts, but to be quite honest in the presence of God himself I've never known experientially what it is to have Christ touch my life and transform it and flood it with glory.

I can't say, I cannot say tonight that I'm autonomous, that I'm self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency. I can't say that because of what he is to me personally I'm equal to anything and ready for anything. I can't.

I know it all. I believe it all. But it's never become experiential.

It's left me where it found me in the spiritual gutter of my own spiritual destitution and bankruptcy. The poor blind beggarly believer. I say what made the difference? What made him dissatisfied with being a poor blind beggarly believer? Not the facts, he knew them.

It wasn't the facts, it was the presence of Christ himself. The presence of Christ, that's what makes the difference. That's why the Bible speaks about those who simply preach the cold dead letter of the law that kills.

Preaching in anything other than the unction of the Holy Spirit so that people are tutored to facts but they never come aware of the presence. And there are many boys and girls going in and out of Sunday school never to come to Christ, never to be saved, never to be redeemed because they're only tutored with facts. And they never, never, never become aware of the presence.

It's cold and cheer, cheerless and chilling. And just as soon as they can escape they go, vowing never to come back. And yet they know the facts.

It was the presence of Christ. Do you remember what it says? In Luke's record? Hearing the multitude pass by he asked what it meant. And they told him.

And this is what they told him. Jesus of Nazareth passes by. And there was a light even in his sightless eyes.

The man about whom I believed, about whom I know everything but who's never touched my life and never healed me and never saved me. He's here, he's here, this is my hour. And suddenly he became acutely aware of the presence of the living Christ.

And suddenly in the very presence of the living Christ he recognized the sheer bankruptcy of beliefs that don't say. Knowledge that doesn't redeem. Oh my, my, my Christian friends this is the desperate need of the world today.

This is the desperate need of our churches today. The presence of the living Christ that unforgiven men and women desperate men and women hungry hearted men and women seeking men and women folk groping in the dark may suddenly become acutely aware but he is there in all his mighty power to say this is what's missing. This is what the folk in the office miss when you maybe give your testimony.

They listen to your words but they don't become aware of the presence. Maybe this is why your testimony hasn't cut much ice in the university or cut much ice in your school. Maybe it's why the neighbors aren't particularly impressed.

They've listened to all you've had to say they've learned it all you've suited them until they're sick of what you have to tell them but they've never become aware of the presence. It's because maybe you only yourself as a Christian knew the dead Christ. And you never knew the living one.

You knew there was a good pride but you never realized not entered into the good of that resurrection Sunday morning. It's only when the Lord Jesus and the power of his resurrection lives out his life through you that you being entirely unconscious and unaware of the past he makes himself unmistakably known. And so stop listening to what you have to say and they become strangely aware of him.

This is what brings conviction. Not your language not your arguments not your persuasiveness not your personality but the presence of the living Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost released through your redeemed humanity Jesus of Nazareth is passing by Jesus the son of God the son of David the Christ clothed with sheer humanity. And Christian friend that's why he wants your humanity.

Not because of what you are but because of what he can be in you. That's why we read let me quote it to you in the 2nd of Corinthians in chapter 2 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 14 This should be the hilarious language of every forgiven sinner who knows not only that Christ has died to redeem but rose again to re-inhabit occupy flood and fill with God the humanity of a forgiven sinner. Verse 14 of 2 Corinthians 2 Thanks be to God who in Christ always leads us in triumph as trophies of Christ's victory and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere.

That's normal Christianity. This isn't to be reserved for special weeks and special speakers. Don't please imagine that at the end of this week it's all over.

It isn't my dear friend it isn't all over unless Christ is all over. I want to tell you this that if you have Jesus Christ living in your heart as a forgiven sinner you have all that I ever had. You can't have more and you don't need to have less.

It isn't all over tonight. This has just been an incident this week just an incident in your life and an incident in my life. This is to be normal for all of us every day of every week until we see him face to face just the Lord Jesus being himself who are the trophies the trophies of Christ's victory that through us he may spread and make evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere.

I wonder Christian friend Christian boy, girl the folk amongst whom you live your own family become acutely aware of the fact of Christ because you're around. You never said a word you just passed through the room and yet they were strangely aware of the presence of Christ. That's what you were redeemed for that's why the blood of Christ was shed to make your humanity transparently available to declare what God is.

For we are the sweet fragrance of Christ verse 15 which exhales unto God discernible alike notice this discernible alike among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing we're a sweet fragrance of Christ so that wherever we go we have one of two effects verse 16 to those who are perishing an aroma wafted from death to death a fatal odor the smell of doom to the other those who are being saved an aroma from life to life a vital fragrance living and fresh wherever you go as a Christian you should have this effect one way or the other the acute awareness of the presence of Christ in you will either be a smell of doom to the damned awakening them awakening them to the fact that they're dead that you have what they don't have and they'll want to know why it is that you have

what they don't have the life of Christ will be there to them the aroma, the smell of doom and to the Christian it'll be fresh and fragrant deep calling to deep spirit answering to spirit and to the exhausted and the tired and the weary and the discouraged your presence will be an undergirding of their faith an awakener of hope within their heart the light of battle will come again into their faith that's what your life should be as a Christian that's what the life of Jesus Christ was 1900 years ago when he clad himself with his own humanity there was always a division and today he gives to you and to me the privilege of being that humanity with which he clothed himself again it was the acute awareness of the presence of Christ that exposed to Bartholomew the emptiness of his beliefs the

uselessness of his beliefs the futility of his beliefs the impotence of his beliefs and by virtue of the presence of the living Christ himself he was saying in his own heart I dare not I cannot I must not go on living in the gutter when the Christ who can save me is at hand why should I have impersonal beliefs that lead me where they find me when faith can take what God provides and he began to cry out Jesus thou son of David have mercy on me now I'm tired of the gutter I'm tired of being an unbelieving believer and the impotence of an impersonal belief was turned into the importunity of a living faith and you know what happened don't forget the grouping Christ, disciples and the crowd and the crowd had got completely accustomed completely acclimatized to seeing Bartholomew sitting in the

gutter indeed if he had had a bad cold one day and stayed at home and he wasn't in the gutter they'd have felt it rough they'd have thought that's funny I'm sure there was somebody there yesterday oh yes of course it's old Bartholomew he's missing they'd have got completely accustomed completely acclimatized to having a beggar on the street and probably a good many beside and they didn't question his belief they didn't mind a bit what he believed about Jesus at Nazareth he could believe what he liked as long as he stuck in the gutter a sort of waste paper basket feather on chain it gave them a good feeling inside you see they could do a little philanthropy but if there went a beggar to throw something at they wouldn't feel so good and when he began to cry out that Jesus the son of David

might have mercy on him then there and then it says verse 48 Mark 10 verse 48 many charged him many of the crowd great multitude there weren't many disciples there were only many in the crowd many charged him what did they charge him all they came along and said that's right they patted him on the back and they said that's it this is the man you need is that what they said oh no many charged him that he should hold his peace they told him to keep quiet they told him to keep his mouth shut they said we don't mind what you believe but don't make a fool of yourself we don't mind what you believe but don't for goodness sake act as though you mean what you believe now isn't that extraordinary and yet you'll discover that this is true no matter where you go in the crowd and you don't have to be

outside a church fellowship to be in the crowd lots of the crowd go to church and they won't mind you singing in the choir they won't mind you singing I know that my redeemer lives so long as you don't act as though you believe they won't mind a bit they'll pat you on the back and shake you by the hand and say that was beautiful but I say don't act as though you need a redeemer and don't act as though you know he lives and as though he had any claims upon you that would be fanatical and they get terribly disturbed if you begin to act as though you really believe and mean what you think they think you've got religion a bit too bad you see you can come to church and nobody minds you singing man of sorrows what a name for the son of God who came ruin sinners to reclaim hallelujah what a

savior makes a beautiful crescendo at the end you know what crescendo is it's bash at the end though you go along they don't mind a bit it makes a good song but you dare to go home you dare to go home and tell them that you as a ruin sinner have repented toward God and you've converted toward Christ you've put your trust in Him and you've been gloriously saved they'll throw up their hands in holy horror we don't mind you singing about a savior who saves ruin sinners but don't behave as though you're one of the ruin sinners that needs to be saved strange isn't it you can sit and beg in the gutter as long as you like and believe what you may like but don't act don't act don't act intelligently you can sing about a savior but don't let him ever save you God commands all men everywhere to

repent and be converted believe in God but don't obey Him because if you obey Him you'll get converted you'll repent but He cried them all a great deal Thou Son of David have mercy on me now oh yes when an

unbelieving sinner who only believes facts but has never turned those beliefs into faith becomes acutely aware of the presence of the living Christ it takes thank God it takes more than the crowd to keep Him away from Christ I didn't get much encouragement when I got home my parents went I'm sad to say Christians nor my brothers and sisters but they couldn't keep me away from Christ they thought I was quaint I began to read my Bible now isn't that a terrible thing to do in a Christian country I actually began to read my Bible well they were sincerely worried about my mental condition a

boy of twelve reading his Bible every night by his bedside there'd be whispered committee meetings between others of the family do you know what he's doing he's reading his Bible now I was a good Anglican I'd been well baptized as a baby and I was accepted my family were in high esteem within the church we always did the refreshments at the bazaar and I actually began to read my Bible well what a terrible calamity to fall over a respectable home now that may sound exaggerated but believe it or not that was the reaction and they called me Bible Bill because as a boy of twelve in Christian England in a respectable church going family I had the fanaticism to want to read my Bible every day but you see I had become acutely aware of the presence of the living Christ and every page of my Bible

told me about him I saw him on every page and it'll take more than the crowd to keep you away from Christ once you become acutely aware of his presence that he's alive and not dead you see if Christianity is turned just into entertainment just a song salvation will become as static as a stained glass window and as cold and empty of life you can see right here for it's lifelessness unsaved beliefs there are some of you here tonight you're poor blind beggarly believers you know it all in your head you've never once obeyed God stepped out by faith acted intelligently upon the facts that you know you're satisfied to be Christianized religionized to be called this or called that that's the tragedy of our day I was speaking to a man who had just come back from Formosa and he says the most

bewildering situation on the mission field today is that Formosans in that particular area don't see why they should become Southern Baptists they just don't see why they should be Lutherans and they can't understand why they should be Methodists there are over 33 different missionary societies operating in Formosa and the inhabitants are completely bewildered because they all say they're Christians but this lot want to make them Lutherans and this lot want to make them Methodists and they want to make them fancy a Southern Baptist in Formosa well thank God for every wonderful Christian I've met many of them it's been my privilege again and again to minister in their fellowships and their churches but sinners don't get their sins forgiven by becoming either Methodists or Presbyterians or

Anglicans or Southern Baptists or Plymouth Brethren sinners get their sins forgiven when they come to Christ and have their sins forgiven thank God for every company of God's people who meet under any name they like to choose but let's keep first things first and realize that it is the presence of the living Christ himself who bears still the hallmarks of his saviourhood the wounds in his hands and feet the marks of his death and the crown of his victory when he rose again from the dead he cried so much the more Jesus thou son of David have mercy on me now and Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called of course he did because he was the specific object of his quest that's precisely why Jesus Christ was there at that particular time on that particular stream and that is just why the

Lord Jesus Christ is here tonight because there's a reason a man a woman here tonight and you are here by divine appointment and the Lord Jesus is here precisely and specifically for you that's why you're here he stood still and commanded him to be called and they called the blind man saying unto him be of good comfort rise he calleth these of all people of all the crowd here these who passed on the message the

crowd oh no the many charged him to shut his mouth and keep quiet not to make a fool of himself they told him to stay in the gutter where his beliefs had found him and left him this was the language of discipleship this is the language of discipleship arise be of good comfort he personally call it thee personally just between you and him that's the language of discipleship did you

ever hear the language of a disciple oh I grant you that many of us are pretty clumsy I grant you that we blurt out the wrong things at the wrong time all too often I grant you but I say you don't often meet disciples you're always rubbing shoulders with the crowd you don't often meet disciples you don't know how much courage that it took them to to master before they blurted out the wrong thing at the wrong time will you believe they meant it was all their heart for your good will you believe that clumsy as they may have been at that time they were trying to be disciples to pass on to you the good news that somebody loves you that somebody's right there for you in all the power and saving energy of his resurrection that he's got something to say to you personally from himself personally

and he casting away his garment rose and came to Jesus he listened and he obeyed the voice of a disciple he threw off his beggars rags he threw away his garments patched and torn the hallmarks of his poverty listen the only rags he ever had in his back was second hand he was a beggar the only coin he ever put in his pocket was second hand he was a beggar the only crust he ever stuck in his mouth was second hand he was a beggar and I want to tell you this all you may know and all you may believe and all you may sing about Jesus Christ if you've never heard his voice and come to him and thrown away his garments and throw away your beggars rags all you know and all you believe and all you ever sang is second hand you're a poor blind beggarly believer but as best I know how tonight I want to

be to you a disciple I want to bring you his message personally to you be of good comfort he calleth thee and be as wise as Bartimaeus and Jesus answered he said what wilt thou that I should do unto thee strange question to ask and he said what he must have known yes but you see from the impotence of an impersonal belief to the importunity of a saving living faith the Lord Jesus wanted to steer him past the dangers of impressionable emotions he wanted the man to know the implications of what he was doing he said what do you want me to do for him Bartimaeus I want you to pause and think I want you to understand the intelligent implications of what you're doing you're coming to me and don't you see if you come to me I'll heal you I'll save you I'll touch you I'll make you a new man and

maybe that isn't what you want maybe all you're coming to me for is a little bit of sympathy you don't want to be anything more or better than what you are a beggar maybe you don't quite understand don't you see Bartimaeus if you come to me and I touch your sight and I give you eyes that can see you can never be a beggar again you can't sit there in the gutter and get people to throw coins at you or crusts of food they can't eat themselves don't you see Bartimaeus if you come to me you're going to be a completely new creature you're going to be a completely new man you're going to have entirely new responsibilities you're going to have to work maybe you didn't understand maybe all you've come to me for is just a little bit of sympathy and maybe a nice soft cushion so you can sit down more

comfortably in bed you know lots of people get religion for that they don't want the implications of discipleship they don't want to live the kind of life where Jesus Christ has totalitarian jurisdiction they don't want the kind of salvation where Jesus Christ risen from the dead occupies your humanity wears you like a suit of clothes so that your hands are his hands your lips his lips your feet your feet so that the money you have in your pocket is his to spend the time that you have to spare is his to use oh no you see I don't want a salvation like that I still want to be a beggar I don't want any of the implications of discipleship I

don't want any new jobs or new responsibilities but I do want to sop them a bad conscience I'm sorry that isn't in the book that's not in this book there

is a message that calls itself a gospel but it's not in this book that will sop your conscience and excuse your conduct but it's not in this book this book is a book that invites you to come to Jesus Christ first to know that your sins are forgiven through his atoning death and then to present your body to be re-inhabited by the risen Christ in the power of his resurrection so that he may expend you for God and for man for eternity as when and where he will you can never be the same again if any man be in Christ Jesus he's a new creature all things have passed away all the beggars rags have gone behold everything has become new and said the Lord Jesus to Bartimaeus are you quite sure that this is what you want and the blind man said to him Lord Lord that's the word Lord what you say goes

Lord that I might receive my sight only give me eyes that can see and your Lord to tell me what to do as when and where you want it done that's conversion that's genuine salvation that's when a man really gets somewhere with God and Jesus said to him go thy way thy faith hath made thee whole and immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus in the way thy faith said Jesus has done what your beliefs never did your beliefs left you in the gutter but the faith that said have mercy on me now has saved me and immediately he received his sight and followed him and glorified God and all the people when they saw him gave praise unto God they rubbed their eyes and the object of pity suddenly became a source of wonder past the peril of impressionable emotions into the pathway of impassioned

allegiance redeemed saved remade recommissioned to a life that he had long since despaired of this is God's word this is Easter what's Easter going to mean to you is it going to mean this Richard Weaver drunken fighting brawler dragged his mother by her hair round and round the kitchen floor because she dared to pray for him any hope for a man like that humanly speaking none a drunken son an alcoholic with nothing but his animal passion to advertise his lost estate there came a day when Richard Weaver became acutely aware of the presence of a living Christ he'd known it all from his mother's lips since his earliest childhood he'd known it all he'd been Christianized from the start but his beliefs had left him for years at least that day that he became acutely aware of the presence of the

risen Lord and said have mercy on me now the miracle took place he became a new creature he went up and down the mining fields of Yorkshire and he proclaimed the emancipating unsearchable riches of Christ big tough blasphemous men would fall to their knees in tears of repentance and be raised from the dead and the object of pity that could pull his mother by her hair around the floor became a source of wonder an unsaved believer became a regenerate spirit whose humanity cleansed in the blood of Christ blazed with the glory of the risen Lord tonight boy girl man woman poor blind beggarly believer Jesus of Nazareth is passing by I want to bring you his message to you personally be of good comfort arise he call if you want him then why not come as Bartimaeus did with nothing but your pocket

to receive his wealth and I'm going to suggest tonight without any outward display I somehow don't think that it's cold for now in a few seconds we're going to pause and pray but I want to give you a deliberate opportunity to put your trust in Christ without embarrassing you in any sense without confusing the issue the issue is will you come to Christ will you take what grace provides that's the issue that's the only issue so I'm going to ask Christian friends here and there are many many many disciples tonight very few of the crowd many disciples I'm going to ask them to help me to help you as I lead you in prayer sentence by sentence Christian folk are going to pray after me in the same words just sentence by sentence and if you've never come to Jesus you've never come to Christ you've

never acted upon what you've known for years I'm going to ask you deliberately right here and now to mingle your voice with ours and speak to Jesus Christ as though nobody here but you and he get it out of your mind that you have to attend an after-meeting or walk to the front or put your hand up or do anything else to get saved you don't that's a helpful thing sometimes but the way you get saved is when you come to Jesus Christ personally in your heart when a man believes in his heart he believes into salvation later your mouth will confess to the fact you won't be able to prevent it so right now say to the Lord Jesus thou Son of God Christ my Savior have mercy on me not someday but now and go home and rejoice never to be the same again to glorify God and to leave the crowd staggered

amazed wondering baffled at the grace of God now let's bow our heads and pray I'm going to pray sentence by sentence the simplest language possible a language that I used in so many words as a boy and found life in Christ Christian folk in the same simple words will pray immediately after in a sentence by sentence and as nobody were here but you and Christ himself will you add your voice to ours and speak to him receive him trust him now once and for all and forever to go out of this place redeemed saved and knowing let us pray dear Lord Jesus Christ I know that I'm a guilty sinner and sin cuts me off from God because of sin I was born spiritually dead but thou didst die to me thy precious blood was shed to cleanse my heart from sin and I thank thee now for thy invitation to me just as I

am without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to thee O Lamb of God I come because thou has promised I know I am received and eternally redeemed I know that thou would never leave as thou dost dwell within by thy Holy Spirit teach me what I don't know lead me into paths of righteousness display thy glory through my humanity to the blessing of my fellow men my family my neighbors my country it needs be for the world I am glad to be expended for God and for thy names amen and Lord Jesus thou gracious loving Lord present now in our midst we thank thee for those known only to thee for whom thou didst come tonight the express objects of thy gracious quest who having heard thy voice have come to thee bless them beyond their asking flood their souls with

untold blessing and joy witness by thy Holy Spirit to their spirit in such a way that no doubt can ever array remain upon any horizon of their life that they have become children of God save forever born of thy spirit numbered amongst the redeemed written in heaven and heaven back and heaven on the for thy name's sake amen I need only say to you this that if that was the language of your heart in Christ's name I have the right to say to you your sins are forgiven because he's able and he's willing he's as good and as great as his name he says him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out if you've come you receive thank him for it go home and rejoice get down by your bedside and say Lord Jesus for the first time I can look you in the face and say my Savior and when you arise in the

morning thank him again and remember that your body tomorrow will be at his disposal for him to live his resurrection life in you and through you to the amazement of the crowd and they will glorify God because of you our closing hymn a very lovely one 641 omitting the chorus not the chorus just the words I am trusting the Lord Jesus trusting only the notice this isn't just a hope it's a categorical statement of fact sing it tonight as you've never sung it before knowing it's true trusting thee for full salvation great and free for thy grace and tender mercy trusting now 641 Oh

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