

The Image of the Invisible God

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a Christian on God's terms, letting God be God in action, and sharing in the resurrection life of Jesus Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Duration: 52:12

Scripture: John 3:17, John 6:29, John 12:44, John 14:10, John 15:5, John 17:3, Romans 8:4, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:15

Topics: "Living in Christ", "The Image of God"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, highlighting that His life was a derived life, fully dependent on the Father. He explains that true righteousness comes from allowing Christ to live through us, making us vessels of His divine action. Thomas stresses that being a Christian is not merely about conversion but about living in a way that reflects Christ's life and character in our daily actions. He encourages believers to recognize their need for the Holy Spirit to enable them to embody the righteousness of Christ, thus fulfilling their purpose as created in God's image.

Transcript

The Image of the Unseen God Here's a little exercise. John's Gospel. We'll begin in Chapter 3. Hope you've got your Bibles.

And you'll need to lick your finger. I'm going to move pretty fast. And I'm simply going to to read a number of verses consecutively.

That is, one after the other, but not from the same context. I shall just flip the pages, I'll tell you where it is, chapter and verse, and you can follow if you like. I shall move fairly quickly.

It's a little treasure hunt. See if you can follow the sense. John's Gospel in Chapter 3. Verse 17.

God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Verse 34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

Chapter 4, verse 34. For Jesus said unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Chapter 5, verse 23.

He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. I cannot by myself do nothing.

As I hear, I judge. My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. 36.

I have greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. 37. The Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.

38. You have not his word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent, him you believe not. Chapter 6, verse 29.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 38. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up against the last day. And this, verse 40, is the will of him that sent me, that everyone seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. 44.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. Verse 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me even he shall live by me.

Chapter 7, verse 16. Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 18.

He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Look at verse 28. 28.

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am. And I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not, but I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 33.

Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Chapter 8, verse 16. If I judge, my judgment is just, is true, for I am not alone, but I am the Father that sent me.

Verse 18. I am one that bare witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bareth witness of me. 26.

I have many things to say and to judge of you, but he that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 29. He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone.

I do always those things that please him. Verse 42. If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself.

He sent me. Chapter 9, verse 4. I must work the works of him that sent me. Chapter 10, verse 36.

Save him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemous, because I said, I am the Son of God. Chapter 11, verse 41. They took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. Chapter 12, verse 44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. Verse 49. For I have not spoken of myself.

The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment. Chapter 13, verse 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me.

He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. 14, verse 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.

The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 15, verse 21. All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

16, verse 5. Now I go my way to him that sent me. I say, have you followed the sense? Have you got those underlined in your Bible, wrung round? Of course, chapter 17. We have nothing like exhaustion.

This, verse 3 of chapter 17, is life eternal. That they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. 8, I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.

They have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee. They have believed that thou didst send me. 18, as thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

21, that they may be one. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

23, I in them, thou in me. That they may be made perfect in one. That the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

25, O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. Sent. Sent.

If there is one claim the Lord Jesus made more than another, it was that he was sent. Sent. Somebody comes banging on the door of your house and you open, there is an excited boy, I have been sent.

What would be your first question? Who sent you? The moment he says, I have been sent, he immediately takes attention from himself and focuses the attention upon the person who sent him. You cease to be interested in the boy, the one thing you want to know is, who sent you? And the Lord Jesus said, Sent. Sent.

Sent. Sent. Sent.

Sent. Sent. Sent.

What is the first question to ask? Who sent you? He takes the focus off himself and focuses your attention and mine upon the person who sent him, the Father. I do only always those things that please him. I have been sent.

Why did you do that? Sent. What made you say this? Sent. What are you doing here? Sent.

What are you hanging on that cross for? Sent. And as my father sent me, so send I you. There was only one possible explanation for anything that ever the Lord Jesus did, said or was.

What was it? Send. Only that is valid in your life and mine, 24 hours a day, in any possible context. Domestic, financial, business, recreational, scholastic.

Only that in your life and mine is valid if the explanation is legitimately sent. Now this is being a Christian. I'm not talking about just getting converted.

I'm not just talking about playing church. I'm not just talking about running a religious organisation or an institution. I'm talking about being a Christian.

I mean on God's terms of reference. Not on denominational terms of reference, or organisational terms of reference, or evangelical terms of reference. I'm talking about being the Christian you've become, on God's terms of reference.

Send. 24 hours a day. Whence hath this man these mighty words? Whence hath this man this wisdom? Jesus Christ answers.

Send. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, the Father that dwelleth in me. He doeth the works.

Everything I say, my Father sent me to say. Everything I do, my Father sent me to do. Everything I am, my Father sent me to be.

So that everything I say is what my Father says, and everything I do is what my Father does, and everything I am is what my Father is. That's my office. Office.

As what? Office as man. Because this is exactly what God made man for. God said, let us make man in our image.

And remember, I reminded you last night, image is not a posture. Image is not a pious look. Image is action.

24 hours a day, God behaving, clothing his behavior with the yielded humanity of men and women who've made themselves available to him. Who've learned the moral relationship that links the life of God to the soul of man. That faith relationship that lets God be God in action.

That's righteousness. Righteousness isn't doing church work. Righteousness isn't even preaching.

Righteousness isn't distributing tracts. Righteousness isn't taking out your checkbook and giving \$50 to the local missionary society. That isn't righteousness.

It could be. But there might be a thousand and one wicked motivations behind all of it. Righteousness is Jesus Christ given the right to clothe his divine activity 24 hours a day with your flesh and blood.

As once the Father was given by him the right to clothe his divine activity with the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. That's righteousness. I do only always those things that please him.

Which was the more spiritual of the activities of Jesus Christ? When he was preaching the sermon on the mount, raising Lazarus from the dead, washing his disciples' feet or spitting on the ground. Which was the

more spiritual? Each was no more spiritual than the other. Of course not.

I do only always those things that please him. This is a man approved. You men of Israel, hear these words.

This was on the day of Pentecost. This was Peter's first apostolic address after he was indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit. Any doubts in his mind about the deity of Jesus Christ? None whatever.

None whatever. Any doubts about the resurrection? None whatever. Any doubts in his mind as to the atoning efficacy of his shed blood? None whatever.

Any doubts in the mind of Peter that the Lord Jesus had ascended to be with the Father to share again that glory which had always been his as God in his own right? None whatever. Well, wouldn't you have expected Peter on the day of Pentecost to have exalted Christ in his deity? In his first apostolic address? You might have imagined so, but the amazing thing is he didn't. He exalted him in his humanity.

Because you see, for the first time on the day of Pentecost, Peter was entering into the good of all that for which now he recognized Christ's shed his blood. To make him man again. Indwelt by the life of God and available to God to do what he pleased, as he pleased.

Verse 22 of Acts 2. Acts 2 verse 22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth.

Amen. This is Pentecost. Amen.

Of course he's God. Timelessly God. The word who was in the beginning with God was God and by whom all things were made.

But Peter is absolutely staggered now. The sheer humanity of Jesus Christ and the unspeakable privilege that is now to be his. To be the kind of man through Christ that the Lord Jesus was prepared to be through the Father.

This is what revolutionizes the Christian life. This is what makes you a real Christian instead of just a converted, forgiven sinner, destined for heaven. Ye men of Israel, hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth. A man approved of God. How do we know he was approved of God? Well he goes on to tell us.

He was a man God approved by miracles and wonders and signs. There you are you see, proves his deity. No they don't.

The miracles never prove the deity of Jesus Christ. Never try to prove the deity of Jesus Christ by the miracles he did. Otherwise you've proved that Peter's God too.

You've proved that Elijah was God. You've proved that Paul was God. You've proved that everybody who did a miracle was God.

The miracles don't prove Jesus' deity. The miracles prove his humanity. The perfection of his humanity.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth. A man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did.

By him. The man approved. So what is a man who is approved of God? A man who is approved of God is a man who is prepared to let God be God in action.

And the Lord Jesus as a man was approved of his Father because the Father at all times could do whatever he pleased as he pleased, where he pleased. Miracles, signs and wonders which God did by him. Amazing.

And of course it was on the day of Pentecost that for the first time they entered into the good of that for which the blood of Christ was shed. Reconciled to God that they might now be saved by his life. That the Lord Jesus in them through the Holy Spirit might play the role of the God he is as he had allowed of his own free volition to allow the Father through the Holy Spirit to play the role of God in him.

That's why of course you find on that first crisis conference that was convened in the city of Jerusalem about the need for circumcision. For salvation. Look at it.

Acts 15. Acts 15 verse 12. All the multitude kept silence and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul.

And what were Barnabas and Paul doing? Chapter 15 verse 12 of Acts. Barnabas and Paul declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. Acts chapter 2. The record of the gospels.

God by him. Acts 15 now. The new body of Christ inhabited by the Lord Jesus in all the fullness of his deity.

Now miracles, signs and wonders by them. That's why the Lord Jesus in John 14 said the things that I'll do you'll do also. Greater works than these.

Why? Because I'm going to my Father. I'm going back to enjoy with my Father the glory that had been mine with him in the co-equality in deity with him the Father and the Holy Spirit and myself in the eternal age of the past and because I'm going back to be God in action again as I have for 33 years been man in action you indwelt by me are going to do the things that I have done indwelt by my Father. He makes it very plain John 14.10 that the secret of his life as a man was the indwelling Father.

The Father dwells in he does the work. Now he says I'm going to be with my Father to indwell you by my Holy Spirit. I won't leave you comfortless.

I won't leave you orphans. I will come to you because I live you're going to live also. You're going to share my resurrection.

And I'm going to come and inhabit your humanity in the power and presence and person of my Holy Spirit and by his presence you're going to share my resurrection. You're going to share my life and the things that you've seen my Father do through me I will then begin to do through you. Except of course instead of being restricted in the humanity of one body how am I straightened? You remember he said how am I straightened? Limited to the activity of one human body.

Instead of being limited by one human body I'm going to have members of my body in particular all over the world out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue who will constitute my body in general of which I will be the head in heaven and the life content on earth through my indwelling Holy Spirit. And the amazing privilege that you and I have been given is to be members of his body on earth through which he Jesus

Christ the same Jesus Christ who walked this earth in his then body lives in our bodies. The same Jesus Christ.

Didn't you doing anything for Jesus Christ any more than then it was Jesus doing anything for his Father? He said he did nothing, absolutely nothing. Nothing but make himself available to his Father's activity. And he said all I want of you is your availability I don't want your sweat.

I want the sight. I just want your humanity. I want your body, soul, spirit, mind, emotion and will so that by my indwelling Holy Spirit I can get into action.

In other words, the life of the Lord Jesus quite obviously, so long as he was down here on earth was a derived life. It originated always in the person of the Father to whom he offered himself through the Eternal Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is the one through whom a man offers himself in his humanity to God and the Holy Spirit is the one through whom God offers himself in his deity to a man.

Nothing more complicated about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than that. The Holy Spirit co-equal in deity with the Father and the Son is that member of the Trinity through whom a man offers his humanity to God and through whom God offers his deity to a man. And of course apart from the Holy Spirit you can neither become a Christian nor be the Christian you become.

Pure impossibility. Because you become a Christian when as a forgiven sinner there is restored to you the life that was forfeited in Adam. And the restoration of the life forfeited in Adam through the gift to you of the Holy Spirit is called new birth or spiritual regeneration.

Actually it's a resurrection. That's why when you and I are born again we're lifted out from among the dead. I'm not waiting for the resurrection, I'm enjoying it.

I was raised from the dead at a quarter to nine Saturday night 13th of August 1927. I didn't deserve it. I was just a rascal, a young boy in a boy's camp.

I didn't go to that camp to get converted. I went to eat ice cream and play tennis and cricket and swim and ginger pop. I hadn't such pious ambitions to become a Christian.

But I was taken there by a friend of mine 13 years of age who one year previously had been born again. He was alive and I was dead and he knew it. And he didn't like the smell.

So he took me to that camp and in the goodness of God for the first time in my life I recognized that Jesus Christ came to this world to redeem sinners like me. And I'd never asked him to. Nor had anybody ever told me that I needed to ask him.

I was given the impression in a Christianized but unregenerate England that because my name was Thomas and my skin was white I was a Christian. We would have sued anybody for libel who said we weren't. Absolute nonsense of course.

We went to church respectably once every Sunday if it didn't rain too hard. We never went twice, that would have been fanatical but once was respectable. We all had Bibles but we never read them that would have been vulgar.

This is the pathetic condition to which our Christianized society has brought us. That's why we're morally bankrupt. Because there's no spiritual dynamic to all our professions of religion.

But in the goodness of God for the first time in my life I recognized that the Lord Jesus laid down his life for my redemption and was waiting to share his life with me on earth. I didn't understand the implications of spiritual regeneration. All I knew in the infinite mercy of God was that I was one of the sinners for whom Jesus died.

And he was waiting for me to ask him to let him redeem me. And I didn't tell anybody. I didn't go to the front.

I didn't raise my hand. There was no after meeting. There was no counseling.

But at the close of that meeting in the silence of my heart I said, Lord Jesus nobody ever told me this before thanks for dying for me. Please be my saviour. Quarter to nine, Saturday night, 13th of August and God, though I never deserve it immediately received me for Christ's sake he must or he betrays his son and instantly sealed that redemptive transaction by restoring to me though I didn't know it then the Holy Spirit through whose presence within me I began from that moment to share the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

I was raised from the dead. That's what Paul means. You remember? I love this translation in the Amplified New Testament chapter three Philippians three and verse ten I must hurry because this is only the introduction.

Philippians three and verse ten My determined purpose is that I may know him. That I may know him. A personal acquaintanceship with Jesus Christ.

Why? Well because last night we saw the more confident you are of the object of your faith the less conscious you are of the faith you're exercising in that object. Faith comes from getting acquainted. And the more faith you've got the less conscious you are of the faith you're exercising.

This we demonstrated and we won't go over all again tonight. You only are conscious of your faith if you're uncertain about the object in which you're exercising that faith. When my hostess Mrs. Giltrus puts a plate of food I don't examine it with a microscope or a magnifying glass.

I don't analyze it to make quite sure she hasn't poisoned it. Never gave me a thought until tonight. Just came into my mind.

Why? Well because I've got complete confidence. I know she doesn't want to poison me at least up till now. Depends how long I stay.

But up till now I've had supreme confidence that when she sticks food in front of me it's good to eat. And I've proved it. You see no thought of faith where you're unshatterably confident in the object in which you're exercising that faith.

And faith comes by getting acquainted. My determined purpose is that I may know Him. That I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him.

Perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His person more strongly and more clearly. Getting to know in other words just how fantastic Jesus Christ really is. Then it's the easiest thing in the world to trust Him.

It's as easy as breathing. It's a way of life. That I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection which it exerts over believers.

The power that flows out from His resurrection exerted over believers. That I may so share His sufferings identification with Him in His death to all that I am apart from what He is as to be continually transformed in spirit into His likeness. How? Well by sharing His life and allowing what He is to be let loose through what I am.

That's His likeness. You see, when He tells me what to do and I do it who's behaving? Well He is. And He'll behave through me the way He always behaves in righteousness.

If He tells me what to say I say it. Who's speaking? Well He is. And He always says under those circumstances what He would say in righteousness.

So all righteousness stems from Christ. It's a derived righteousness. Do you get the idea? Everything He did He did because the Father told Him.

Said it. So who was behaving? His Father. Everything He said He spoke because His Father told Him to.

So who was speaking? The Father. As we saw last evening He that believeth on me believeth not on me but on Him that said me. Because what I am saying is what He said.

So simple. So gloriously simple. This is the profound simplicity of our faith.

But Jesus says as I so you. Well why not? That if possible verse 11 I may attain to the spiritual and moral resurrection that lifts me out from among the dead even while in the body. Do you notice what He says? If possible I may attain to the spiritual that comes first spiritual rebirth a spiritual resurrection a new birth the coming of the Holy Spirit whose presence reimparts to you and to me the life of God our Creator inhabiting actually inhabiting our humanity body soul and spirit flesh and blood indwelling by His Holy Spirit our human spirits.

That's the spiritual resurrection. That if possible I may attain one to the spiritual resurrection and two in consequence of the spiritual resurrection a moral resurrection. Of course if I was a liar before Jesus Christ came to occupy my humanity but I give Him right of way is He going on telling lies because I happen to be a liar? No.

When Jesus Christ who is the truth comes to inhabit my humanity and I give to Him the right to use my lips and make what He wants to say articulate I stop saying lies. So in consequence of a spiritual resurrection there's a moral resurrection. If I was an alcoholic before I was converted does Jesus Christ take up my alcoholic ways? When He comes and inhabits my humanity? Of course not.

When as an alcoholic I claim redemption through the blood of Jesus and the risen Lord Jesus comes by His Holy Spirit to reoccupy my humanity He no longer behaves in me like the alcoholic I was but in righteousness. This is the moral resurrection that is inevitable when there's a spiritual resurrection but of course what the world is trying to do is to lament its moral depravity and produce a moral resurrection without a spiritual resurrection. Sheer impossibility.

Sheer impossibility. You might just as well try to get the leopards to change its spots. Quite impossible.

If possible I may attain to the spiritual and moral resurrection that lifts me out from among the dead even while still in the body with my two feet on the ground. This is what is going to characterize the regenerate boy, girl, man or woman. That even though others unregenerate may sincerely try to improve their ways they'll fail pathetically but the boy who is spiritually regenerate indwelt by the Lord Jesus discovers by His presence within him the dynamic of a new life.

If any man be in Christ new creature. All things passed away everything has become new. That isn't just a little bit of evangelical patter.

That's a glorious statement of fact. That when Jesus Christ comes to inhabit your humanity and mine we are morally once more competent by who He is in you and me. And He fulfills in us by His indwelling Holy Spirit every demand that the law makes upon us.

So what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and force in condemns sin in the flesh to what end? That the righteousness demanded by the law might be fulfilled in us who walk no longer after the flesh in all its inherent weakness but who walk after the Spirit. Sharing the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. And when the resurrection life of Jesus Christ is let loose in terms of your humanity and mine He in us today fulfills the law now as once two thousand years ago He fulfilled the law then.

And the quality of the righteousness that He produces by our faith that lets Him be who He is in us is exactly the same quality of righteousness demanded by the law. Because He who produces it in us is the one who wrote it. Anything complicated about that? In other words the one who wrote with his finger don't lie living in me doesn't lie.

That's all. The one who wrote with his finger in the law don't steal living in me doesn't steal. It's just as simple as that.

So the simplest way to be restored to righteousness is to allow Jesus Christ who is righteousness to be who He is in us in action. And all that demands is the moral relationship the Bible calls faith. A derived life.

To live through Christ today on earth as He lived through the Father then. Now we call that a derived image. Derived righteousness.

And the Bible gives us some very marvellous illustrations of a derived righteousness. Because of course the world has repudiated man's relationship to God and God's relationship to man we're on the threshold of nuclear disaster. Everybody knows perfectly well there's no future for anybody in the world today.

Anybody with any sense that is we can take a bit of dope and live so high and live in our hallucinations but it doesn't alter the facts. You don't alter facts by running away from them. We're on the threshold of nuclear annihilation of anarchical destruction self-destruction.

That's inevitable. Because of the sheer crass stupidity of man who insists on trying to be a man without God. Sheer impossibility because we were made that way.

To be men through God. I may say why does that lamp need electricity? It was made that way. That's all.

You can deny that lamp electricity it'll still be a lamp but it won't function. It'll simply be part of the darkness. That's all.

It'll still be a lamp but don't expect it to behave like a lamp. You may say why does a car need petrol? Well it was made that way. Now you can try to run a car without petrol most of us have done it one time or another.

And it's usually the most awkward place. Multiple crossing or on the motorway or something. But you try to run a car without petrol you've still got a car just the colour you chose.

Plush seats beautifully sprung but it's very exhausting without petrol because you've got to push it. It's still a car but it's just so much junk without what makes it go. A lamp without electricity is still a lamp but it won't behave like a lamp.

A car without petrol is still a car but it won't behave like a car. And a pony without God is still a man but he doesn't behave like a man. And he doesn't even behave as well as an animal because he can't.

He behaves a million times worse than an animal. And that's the world that's the society in which you and I live today. That's why it's so frightening.

That's why Hugh Thant General Secretary of the United Nations told us over a year ago that the world has ten years at maximum the most optimistic view. He said ten years and if the world hasn't solved its problems in ten years and he's got information from every nation in the world on his desk he says if the world has not solved its problems in ten years it is too late. Of course it is.

Everybody knows. Gustafsson went to fifty different countries to interview politicians in and out of office in opposition and in government to know their views of the world's situation and not one single one in office or out had any glimmer of hope for the world in which you and I live. He crossed the threshold of Winston Churchill's room just a moment ago and Winston Churchill knew why he was coming.

He was advised in advance and before ever the man got into the room he said Mr. Gustafsson there is no hope no hope no hope for this world. That was Winston Churchill. Why? Well because men insist on trying to be men without God.

It's a sheer impossibility. Because God created man to be inhabited by God for God and without God you can only prostitute your humanity your misuse and abuse that's all. That's the world in which we live.

And don't you see the cross wasn't designed to just get you and me out of hell and into heaven. The cross was designed to get God back into the man to restore man to his true humanity. The gospel isn't designed to get people converted but make disciples.

It isn't just a question of a decision escape the punitive consequence of your guilt. The preaching of the gospel is designed to let Jesus Christ as God be God in you and me 24 hours a day. I've derived it.

The bible gives us some marvellous illustrations of this. We're going to conclude just by a brief glance at one and we shall probably pick it up from there tomorrow night and conclude. But you'll find it in the second epistle to the Corinthians in the third chapter and again I'm going to read this to you the last verse the 18th from the Amplified New Testament because it's rather more lucid than you would find in the authorised version to Corinthians in chapter 3 verse 18.

We won't be able to examine fully the immense implications of the whole of this verse but let's just look at this.

All of us as with unveiled face because we continue to behold and to reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord are constantly being transformed into his very own image in ever increasing splendour and from one degree of glory to another for this that is the glory the image comes from the Lord who is the spirit marvellous verse marvellous verse all of us because we continue to behold recognise the connotation of beholding to look to look in the bible always means the exercise of an active faith not just believing text or believing verses or believing doctrines but faith that acts upon what you believe look I suppose the most vivid illustration is that used by the Lord Jesus himself in John chapter 3 when he said as Moses lifted up the serpent and the wolf even so must the son of man be

lifted up that whosoever believeth on him actively rests the whole weight of his need on the adequacy of his vicarious sufferance should not perish the only alternative but have eternal life share the life of God which is the only life which is eternal what did the Lord Jesus say as Moses lifted up the serpent and the wolf even so must the son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him you know what happened in the wilderness they sinned God sent fiery serpents and here they were writhing in agony dying like flies and Moses interceded and God in his mercy said alright take a brazen serpent a symbol of their sin and their guilt and hang it to a tree beautiful foreshadowing of the death of Christ upon the cross in whose matchless sinless person your sin and mine was condemned

vicariously said God to Moses take that brazen serpent nail it to a tree and tell the people if they will look they'll live here's a man writhing in agony just about to die and the good news comes all you have to do is look and he's intelligent enough he's wise enough to look and live did his look save him no God saved him God saved him his look couldn't save him his look couldn't cure him God moved into his knee God healed his body but his look let God that's all his look let God his look was the affirmation of his faith his look was the appropriation that let God in fulfillment of his pledge move into his knee and deal with him now that's the connotation of looking and we said Paul continue to behold we continue to look why do we continue to look and who do we look at we look at Christ

because our look invokes his activity we recognize that as it was the father acting in his humanity nearly two thousand years ago on earth now it has got to be Jesus Christ by his Holy Spirit indwelling us acting and clothing himself with our humanity so I look every step I take no matter what the situation may be of threat or promise or temptation or opportunity or bewilderment I now look to Jesus Christ and I say Lord Jesus you have the right to vindicate your deity in this situation in terms of my humanity I make my body soul spirit mind emotion and work available to you you are in business I remain at the receiving end of your instructions if there is anything I am to do or say anywhere I am to go I am available I will do as you tell me but you call the shots well then who is in

business under those circumstances Jesus Christ that is what it means to look not just memorizing a verse of scripture but acting intelligent on the assumption that Jesus is alive at this moment and alive in me as looking then he is in business and under those circumstances whether it is preaching raising the dead washing a person's feet or spitting Christ is next we continue to behold and reflect like mirrors reflect like mirrors did you look in the mirror this morning I am sure you did engaged with wonder love and praise you probably thought to yourself I haven't seen anybody quite as handsome that for a long time probably took a bit of effort expenditure but whatever you saw in the mirror this morning when you looked whose fault was it can you blame the mirror no you can't blame the

mirror anything you saw in the mirror this morning when you looked is your fault nobody else to blame but you because all that mirror can do is give you back what you've given it that's all a mirror can do and Paul

says when we continue to behold look we reflect like mirrors this is what is called a derived image the mirror doesn't produce the image you produce the image the mirror reflects it that's why of course it's so restful being a mirror have you ever seen a mirror sweating trying to produce your image if you see a Christian sweating you know perfectly well they may have become a Christian but they've never learned how to be the Christian they've become because you can't copy Christ all you can do is continue to look invoke his activity let him be the God he is in action to look I

might say to one of my boys I've got four sons 26, 22, 21 and 5 and they're all marvellous boys they take after their mother that's what gave them a start in life but I might say to Peter my third boy say when I leave home for three or four months Pete do you remember what I asked you to do while I was away I'm looking to you what do I mean by that when I say I am looking to you do I mean Pete when I get back I'll do it myself is that what I mean when I say Pete I am looking to you it means when I get back I will expect you to have done it that's looking that's looking and you continue to behold you say oh Jesus I haven't a clue how to handle this situation I just don't have what it takes but you do all the fullness of the Godhead bodily all the wisdom all the treasure wisdom and

knowledge are hidden in your person you are mine you live within me you inhabit my humanity and I give myself in totality to you so that you can act in this situation through me and then you reflect like a mirror in action again a reflection isn't it a study in still life it's action action he moving into action and you closing that activity with your humanity so that people see Jesus Christ behaving that's a derived image in other words listen to this very carefully it isn't complicated it sounds complicated but it isn't it's obvious when you stand in front of a mirror you are not only the object of the image is that true you are the object of the image what you see is what you are reflects you are the object of the image but you are not only the object of the image you are the origin of

the image of which you are the object you are the origin of the image of which you are the object in other words apart from your presence would there be an image no are you quite sure about that maybe you are not quite sure will you practice when you get back home you put it to the test stand in front of the mirror right bang in the center and keep dead still don't say a word and when the mirror least expects it jump quickly on one side and see if you can leave your image behind well you say that man's crazy no I'm not as a matter of fact because I don't believe it you can't do it you are not only the object of the image you are the origin of the image of which you are the object in other words your presence is imperative to the image now you know what Paul meant when he said in

Colossians chapter 1 Jesus Christ himself living alive active resident president in your heart is your only hope of what? glory what's that? heaven? no likeness righteousness image Christ living in your heart isn't your only hope of getting to heaven that isn't what he's saying it is of course but that would be elemental what he's saying is that Jesus Christ as God taking up residence by his Holy Spirit within your human spirit and given free access to control your mind your emotions and your will invading and flooding and monopolizing every area of your personality is your only possible hope ever of reproducing on earth in your flesh and blood his likeness it takes Jesus Christ himself not only as the object of the image but the origin of the image of which he's the object that's why you

cannot detach your Christianity from Christ without killing him Christianity without Christ is a dead religion as impotent and powerless and as boring as any other philosophical creed or political idea or theological concept Christianity without Christ is no more effective than any other kind of dead religion you cannot detach Christianity from Christ because Christ is Christianity his presence alive in residence and in action

is imperative to the image as the father's presence in the son was imperative to the image that the world saw in him of the father so the presence of Christ within you and me is imperative to the image that the world is to see in or out of him the origin of the image of which he himself is the object that's derived image you can't detach Christianity from Christ

it'll be a dead religion you can't detach God from Godliness otherwise you'll produce a nice list of do's and don'ts and throttle people with a legalistic straight jacket and half the evangelical kids that I've seen grow up rebellious and kicking over the traces and ending up on the gutter are those who've been pressed into a mould without the dynamic of Christ's life within to make it a working proposition they've been throttled by a legalistic straight jacket that has tried to house train them into the evangelical camp without ever telling them that Jesus is alive he's the only person who makes it a working proposition and I've got all the sympathy in the world I know we've had nearly 100,000 kids in my home in England and the worst we've ever had come from evangelical homes where they

from their earliest days been schooled in all the tenets of a fundamental faith without ever once being introduced to a living Christ as somebody who makes life fantastically exciting and the adventure that God always intended it to be Christianity without Christ a dead religion Godliness without God a legalistic straight jacket and of course spirituality apart from the Holy Spirit and nauseating fraud worse than the light reflecting like mirrors all the mirror's got to do is look in the right direction and keep clean that's all when you look in the mirror you're never preoccupied with the mirror unless it is dirty look in a clean mirror you don't even you don't even know you're looking in the mirror you're looking at yourself you're preoccupied with the image but if it's a dirty mirror

you start being preoccupied with the mirror instead of the image your responsibility in mind is to keep beholding and keep clean and if we keep beholding Christ will reflect his glory this image comes from the Lord who is the Spirit and the world will be preoccupied in us with Christ if we are dirty the world will become preoccupied with us instead of Christ alright got the idea of what a derived image is just to eliminate any possibility of ambiguity image by imitation as opposed to image by derivation I might say to you I fancy myself as an artist and I I specialize in portraits I don't but supposing I did and I say to you I wonder if you would do me the kindness of coming round tomorrow I'd like to paint your face I mean a portrait of your face and you're kind enough to

say I will and so you come round and I sit you down and pose you and I take out my paints and brushes and my canvas and I go to work and about two hours later I say thank you very much that was most kind I think I can finish off the last final touches and show you the you know the completed work later on but you've been very kind it was very tedious and boring sitting there almost motionless but you've been most patient most courteous thank you very much and I bow you out and as you go through the door what happens to the image does it rush out after you no it's left behind on my canvas because you see although you were the object of the image you're not the origin of the image of which you're the object who's the origin of the image I am I am so your presence is not imperative to the

image it's image by imitation not image by derivation and if somebody were to come in and looking at my canvas and say my that's that's Mrs.

Soames I say yes I'm glad you recognize thought you might think it was the cat oh no no it doesn't look like the cat a bit mind you she is a little peculiar but it doesn't look like a cat no well I feel pretty flattered and if that person thought it was a really good picture what do you think they'd do rush out into the street

and chase after you and thump you on the back and say I'd like to congratulate you on that marvellous portrait you've produced well of course you wouldn't you wouldn't congratulate them this lady who sat while I worked she didn't lift a finger she sat there like a like a sack of flour she didn't contribute one single thing to the image except just to sit there I did it I did it you wouldn't congratulate her you'd come and congratulate me you'd say I didn't realize

you were such a gifted artist that's it that's image by imitation you see image by imitation the only person to be flattered is the imitator not the imitator this is the basis of all self-righteousness this is the basis of all self-righteousness in the unregenerate the unconverted this is the basis of all self-righteousness in the regenerate in the converted it doesn't matter whether you're lost or saved it doesn't matter whether you're on your way to hell or on the way to heaven if you think you're doing it that's the basis of all self-righteousness and carnality this is a perpetuation of the Adam creed of self-sufficiency that was first first introduced when Satan pronounced his lie that a man can be a man without God that's what Adam believed like God without God can be morally good

without being spiritually alive he's got what it takes and there's absolutely no difference between a Christian who thinks he can be a good enough Christian without Christ than the first Adam who thought he could be a good enough man without God what's the difference? none more than when a Christian tries to live the Christian life without reckoning every moment and for every step upon the person of Jesus Christ within him he's simply perpetuating the Adam creed of self-sufficiency and that is the very heart of carnality and the Evangelical church is saturated with this pragmatic view of Evangelicalism that puts God out of business and puts us on the map and that's why the church has no cutting edge because all that can be accomplished by a church in that condition is the best that man

can do and Jesus Christ said without me you can do nothing so everything you do without Christ is nothing and it's amazing how busy you can be doing nothing running around in circles image by derivation image by imitation when you and I try to create image by imitation it always produces self-righteousness self-righteousness is always self-conscious righteousness and self-conscious righteousness of course is always full of self-approval self-praise it must be recognized applauded smiled bowed down down to consulted it produces the extrovert and when you fail in the procedure you become the introvert full of self-pity instead of self-praise and the devil doesn't care two hoots whether you're an extrovert or an introvert so long as you're egocentric not Christocentric self-centered not

Christ-centered Christ himself alive living in your heart in action with your free consent through the faith that lets him be the God he is in action is your only hope exclusively of being restored to that image in which God made man and it's the biggest single contribution that you could ever possibly make as boy girl man or woman to the well-being of your home your city your country or the world in which you live your personal relationship to Christ you then become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem

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