

The Major Ian Thomas Story-02 Biography

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas's sermon highlights the necessity of rediscovering Jesus as the living Savior and the importance of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.

Duration: 51:28

Scripture: Exodus 3:2-4, Matthew 17:9, Acts 4:2, Acts 5:29, Acts 5:32, Acts 5:40-42

Topics: "Biography"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of believing in the resurrection of Jesus. He explains that the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, were deserving of sadness and misery. The speaker emphasizes that living in the power of a risen Savior is essential for Christians to experience true joy and fulfillment. He also highlights the transformation that occurred in the early church when they rediscovered the reality of a risen, indwelling Savior. The sermon concludes with a warning about the signs of the last days and the need for believers to hold onto the power of God rather than just having a form of godliness.

Transcript

This morning, we are tremendously privileged to have Major Ian Thomas coming to share the Word of God with us. He's the founder of Torchbearers, and as I mentioned this morning, he has had a tremendous influence on my life and on countless, countless other lives, literally across the ends of the earth. I mentioned this morning a book that I'd like to just make a quick plug for this evening called *The Saving Life of Christ*.

I said this morning, when I started growing as a Christian, it was the very first book I ever read, and it laid an incredible foundation for me. Eileen Kent was telling me tonight that she read it when she was in church a number of years ago and realized for the first time that she wasn't really a Christian, and this is what caused her to come and to know Christ for the first time. My favorite chapter in this book is called *Any Old Bush Will Do*, and over the years, I've referred to it many times in preaching.

It's a wonderful portrait of Moses walking along the backside of the desert, seeing this bush burning, and he turns aside to see this great sight. What caught his attention was not the bush, but who inhabited the bush, and that was God himself. It's a marvelous portrait of the normal Christian life, Jesus Christ blazing forth through us.

Again, we are so privileged to have Major Thomas come and to share with us. Let me pray for him as he comes up. Father, we just ask now that your Spirit would just mightily anoint this great man of God.

What a blessing to have him. Father, we just ask that you would say through him to us all that we need to hear tonight, in Jesus' name. Amen.

I appreciate the mention that the pastor has made of that book, *The Saving Life of Christ*. Maybe you thought you were saved by the death of Jesus, but that isn't what the Bible says. You may be redeemed, reconciled to God by the death of Jesus.

That's why in the sinlessness of his humanity he was born nearly 2,000 years ago. But it's not his death for you that saves you. It saves to reconcile you to God and qualify you to become the recipient of his saving life.

He came to restore man to function, to make it possible for a holy God, without doing violence to his own righteousness, to restore to man the life that man forfeited in the day that Adam fell, and all mankind. The Lord Jesus said, I'm come that you might have life. Not just a new destination when you're dead and buried.

I've come to restore you by resurrection to that quality of life that God always intended. A miracle. All of deity enclosed with man's humanity, so that we become his hands, his feet, his lips, his eyes and mind and heart.

God in action. And that's what it means really to be a genuine Christian. Part of the action.

Letting Jesus Christ be to you all he allowed the Father to be to him. God in a man. And inevitably, of course, if I preach the gospel, that's what I've got to talk about.

Jesus. The author and finisher of our faith. The Alpha and the Omega.

The beginning and the end. The first word, the creative word, and the last word. Because God is going to judge this world in righteousness.

And the 17th chapter of the book of Acts in the 31st verse tells us by whom he's going to judge this world. Jesus. Whereof he's born testimony.

Whereby he has raised him from the dead. It's the risen, living Christ who's going to come again. And I'm looking forward to that.

I think he's a little bit overdue. I remind him of that. Because I don't anticipate going to heaven by underground, I'm going by air.

That'll be fun, won't it? And I hope I'm home when he comes, because I live in Estes Park, Colorado. And that's 9,000 feet up. So I'll have a 9,000 foot start on most of you folks.

Hope you catch up in time. Not to miss the boat. I was mentioning the saving life of Christ, and what the pastor said was his favorite chapter.

Any old bush will do. And my wife, who's not unsmart, decided she'd send a copy of that book to the president. Any old bush will do.

Somebody once asked him how he began the day. He said, I go downstairs to my study, and then I bend my knee and talk to God. It's a good way to start the day.

What a kind of a bush you are. A little over 2,000, no, a little over two centuries ago, General William Booth, who was the founder of the Salvation Army, said this. The chief danger in the 20th century will be religion without the Holy Spirit.

Christianity, the chief danger, but Christianity without Christ. Forgiveness, put on offer without the need for repentance. Salvation, without the need of a regeneration.

Spiritual new birth. Politics, without God. And a heaven, without a hell.

That was only two centuries ago. But in 1787, Gibbon, the noted historian, completed his decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Here's the way he accounted for the fall of the empire.

The greatest empire then in the world, and the mightiest military force that conquered even Great Britain. And that's something. But then I wasn't there then.

Nor the Royal Fusiliers. My regiment, City of London Regiment. Most famous regiment in the British Army, and though maybe nobody's ever told you, largely responsible for winning World War II.

Though we're thankful for a few friends who helped us now and again. Here's the way he accounted for the fall of the Roman Empire. The rapid increase of divorce, 1787.

The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society. The mad craze for pleasure and sports. Sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within. In the decadence of the people. The decay of religion.

Faith fading into mere form. Ritual instead of reality. Language instead of life.

Losing touch with life. Becoming impotent to warn or guide the people. Well that was 1787 and nothing has changed.

Because man learns nothing from history, he only condemns himself by repeating it. Let me read a cutting from a newspaper that was written nearly 2,000 years ago. In the second chapter, rather the third chapter of the second epistle of Paul to Timothy.

This know, in other words let it penetrate, let it sink deep in your heart and mind. This know, that in the last days, that is just before the Lord Jesus comes back again, perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents.

Break down of family life. Unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent and fierce. Despisers of those that are good.

Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. But they'll be in church on Sunday, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. In other words, an empty religion, with all the pious language intended to make it valid.

But empty of substance, a hollow mockery of the real thing. Noise, lots of it. But little knowledge of God.

Well that was written nearly two thousand years ago. Does it sound familiar? If it doesn't, then just read the newspaper today. Or listen to the news on television or radio.

We are right there, right now. That's what makes life for a real Christian exciting. Because this doesn't take God by surprise, it doesn't even shock him.

It grieves him, but doesn't shock him. The Lord Jesus said, When men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the world, He said, look up, your redemption draweth nigh. Exciting.

And I'm looking forward to that momentous day, when Jesus was born, he split history. B.C. and A.D., Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. And when Jesus returns, he'll split history again.

And he can't come too soon. In this sin-ridden world, full of broken hearts and broken homes. Nothing new in the depravity of a Christian religion that has lost its identity and validity.

Because the greatest need worldwide, right across the globe in the Christian church is to rediscover Jesus. Discover that everything that is valid and of lasting value must have its origin in God himself. In Jesus, the Creator and our Redeemer.

Ever taught a Sunday school? Or a Bible class? Or been on a platform and preached to a congregation? If you have, maybe sometimes you've been disappointed. Because nothing of what you said with great sincerity has penetrated. Well, that's the kind of Bible class that the Lord Jesus had.

Nothing sunk in. They were solid. As dull as they come.

No matter what he said. And when he told them the truth, they got mad. Read it for yourself in the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, commenced with the 60th verse.

When they heard this, Jesus speaking. They'd been listening for three years, but they hadn't heard anything. But when they heard this, what did Jesus say that they heard? Without me, you can do nothing.

They heard it. It wasn't the first time he'd said it, he'd said it many, many times. Not only without my Father I can do nothing, but by the way, without me, you can do nothing.

They listened, but they didn't hear it. Nothing made them mad about it. Until they heard it.

How do you think they reacted when they heard it? They were mad. That's what normally happens when people hear for the first time what Jesus has had to say. Something to which they've listened again and again.

They heard it. Let me read it out of the Amplified New Testament, which is a very accurate translation from the original, and an immense help if you want to understand what God has to say in his book. 6th chapter of the Gospel of John, 60th verse.

When his disciples heard this, how did they react? Many of them said, this is a hard and difficult and strange thing, an offensive and unbearable message. Who can be expected to listen to such teaching? What did he say? Without me you can do nothing. And it was an unbearable message to disciples who thought that it was their duty to get God into business and keep him in business.

Jesus said, it is the Holy Spirit who gives life. God, the Holy Spirit. Not a vague somebody out up there in the clouds, but God himself.

Representing the triune deity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In man's experience of his Creator. It is the Spirit who gives life.

He is the life giver. The flesh, the old Adamic nature, conveys no benefit, whatever. There is no profit in it.

It is a dead loss, in other words. If there is no profit, it is a dead loss. And the words, the truth that I have been speaking to you, those words, this truth is life.

They didn't like it. Because they had become accustomed to a sterile, dead religion. And after this, verse 66, many, not just a handful, many of his disciples drew back, returned to their old associations and no longer accompanied Jesus.

They quit. Many went back and no longer walked with him. They said, we can't listen to that stuff.

We are going back to the church we go to. We are appreciated. And they expect us to do our thing, and when we do it, they congratulate us.

That was the early church, before something happened. And about that we talked this morning in the two services with which the day began. And the church then, in all its poverty, rediscovering Jesus.

Not as a dead saviour, but the living, risen, indwelling Lord. The one of whose life we become incredibly, in God's goodness, partakers. Partakers of the divine nature.

Allowing the Lord Jesus as our creator God to clothe his deity with our humanity, as for the 33 years he was on earth he allowed the Father to clothe himself and be clothed with the sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus. He that has seen me, said he has seen my Father. Something happened to the early church, and it's something that is desperately needed right across the church in the world today in which we live.

Every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue and race and creed and colour needs to rediscover Jesus. The risen, living, indwelling Saviour. Who is not only the one who died for us to reconcile us to a holy God, but who triumphantly rose again from the dead to indwell us, give his life to us, share that life with us and communicate that life through us.

It's exciting when you are a real Christian. Not just a churchgoer, not just a bundle of texts that you've memorised or songs that you sing. Somebody living in somebody.

The Father who lives in me, said the Lord Jesus, he does the work. Even the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself. I place my lips in the sinlessness of my humanity at my Father's disposal, so that through me he can give utterance to the truth that he knows you need to hear.

Never tell people what they want to hear. Tell them only what they need to know. And the church is in desperate need today to hear the voice of God again.

For that alone will revolutionise your life as a Christian and make it real. Not just language, but life. Well, in the earlier services this morning we talked about that day, apart from which the Lord Jesus said the church will remain a dead loss.

Busy, active, noisy, but a dead loss. And as a member of that early church, Peter, who knew the language, but hadn't a clue what it meant by what he talked about. Textually aware, but spiritually unenlightened.

It's very easy to become familiar with pious language. Very easy to set it to music and sing it. But language isn't enough if there's no life in the heart of those who use the language.

And that life, the only life, is Jesus himself. Did it make any difference to the early church when they rediscovered Jesus, as described for us in the 24th chapter of Luke's Gospel? A new joy when they rediscovered the risen Lord, thought he was dead and buried. When the women came and said they'd been rebuked by angels, because they were looking for the living among the dead.

And came and told the disciples, the apostles themselves in the upper room, he's alive. They replied, idle tales, he's dead. We were there when it happened, and he's buried.

Idle tales. That was their description of the gospel at the beginning of the early church. That they needed to rediscover Jesus alive and dead.

And it wasn't until then, said the Lord Jesus, that there's any validity to what you have to say, so keep your mouth shut. We spent a lot of time getting people to open their mouths. The Lord Jesus spent a lot of time in the early church telling them to keep their mouths shut.

Because they didn't know enough to talk sense. And if you don't know enough to talk sense, there's only one smart thing to do, keep your mouth shut. Until you can follow the instructions of God's word written for us in the Psalms.

Open your mouth wide, I'll fill it, God said. It isn't until you let God fill your mouth with what he knows others need to hear, that you've got a valid ministry. Otherwise you'll just engage yourself in pious platitudes with no spiritual substance.

So did it make any difference? Let me read it to you. I quoted it already today, and we'll quote it maybe again before we've finished in these one or two days that we are going to spend together. Matthew 17 and verse 9. They were coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration.

And as they were coming down, the Lord Jesus had something to say to them. Matthew, chapter 17, verse 9. I'm nearly there. Ran out of lick.

As they came down from the mountain, the Lord Jesus charged them saying, Tell the vision to no man. Anything and everything that you've seen up in the Mount of Transfiguration. Not a word about it to anybody.

Tell the vision to nobody. Nothing of what you've seen, nothing of what you've heard. Until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.

Your Christianity won't be valid, and you'll have nothing to tell the world around you until I'm risen from the dead. So what's the heart of the gospel? A cross with a dead man hanging on it? That isn't the heart of the gospel. The heart of the gospel is the resurrection of our once crucified but now living Savior.

Because he's the only one who can live the Christian life for a very simple reason. He is the Christian life. I am the way, how to become a Christian.

I am the life, how to be the Christian you become. That's the truth. So keep on telling the truth, which means keep on talking about Jesus.

The beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. The first word. By whom all things were made, and without whom not one thing was made that ever was made.

He was in the beginning with God, was God, and he's the last word. Very simple. When you preach the gospel, as God has provided it for us in his inspired word, authored by the Holy Spirit, you just talk about Jesus.

And the Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth, convicts the hearts of men, awakens their souls, and leads them to Christ. So did it make any difference to the early church as to how they went about their ministry? Oh yes. What was the message of the early church once they'd rediscovered Christ? The risen, living, indwelling Savior, whose life we share by his indwelling Holy Spirit so that he can clothe his deity with our redeemed humanity.

That's what it means to be a Christian. Restored to function. Let's discover what the message of the early church really was, to which the church today must return if it is to be of any value to a lost world.

Acts chapter 1 and verse 16. Sixteenth verse, first chapter of Acts. Men and Brethren, verse 16.

Acts chapter 1. Who's speaking? Peter. Peter of all people, who didn't want the cross, didn't believe in the resurrection, who promised that he'd die for Jesus if needs being ended up blaspheming, cursing and swearing, and repudiating the idea that he ever had known Jesus. Peter.

Men and Brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David, God speaking through a man, spake before concerning Judas. Judas Iscariot, who was guide to them who took Jesus, and he was numbered with us, named to be an apostle, had obtained part of this ministry. But this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, thirty miserable pieces of silver, the price of a slave.

This man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, burst asunder, died. He was known unto all the apostles and all the dwellers of Jerusalem, insomuch as that field is called in the proper tongue, the field of blood. It's written in the book of the Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, let no man dwell therein, and his bishopric let another man take, to be replaced as an apostle.

Wherefore, David continued, Of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he, John, was taken up, Lord Jesus was taken up from us, must one be ordained. Criterion of ordination of an apostle then, of anybody who ministers the word of God today, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. The criterion of apostolic office then was that he would stand shoulder to shoulder with those who were prepared unashamedly and unafraid to proclaim the fact that Jesus, God raised from the dead, alive and well.

Message of the early church, first be convinced of the truth of it, Jesus is alive. Acts chapter 1. This was Peter talking. The one who said, not so Lord, that's not going to happen to you, forget it.

And we're going to make sure it doesn't happen to you. And Jesus said to him then, Get thee behind me, Satan. Anybody who denies the need and fact of Christ's death and resurrection is in the devil's business.

Get thee behind me. You savour not the things that be of God, said Jesus to Peter, but the things that be of man. Your theological proposition is of the earth earthy.

And it has no validity. But now Peter's speaking, something's happened. He's rediscovered Jesus alive.

That's Acts chapter 1. Acts chapter 2, 22nd verse. You men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God. A God-approved man.

By miracles, signs and wonders. Some people believe and teach that the deity of Jesus is demonstrated by the miracles that he did. But that isn't true.

Because he didn't do the miracles. God did. You 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. Because in the person of the Lord Jesus, the Father in heaven had a real man on earth who had led him, the Father, be God in the man. Who raised Lazarus from the dead? God did.

Who fed the 5,000? God did. God by him, Jesus. That's a Christian.

The life of the Lord Jesus was miraculous because he allowed God to be the exclusive cause of his in him divine effect. And a Christian is a miracle if he's genuine. Because the only explanation for what he does, says he is, is Christ alive clothing his deity with that forgiven sinner's humanity.

What a marvelous privilege to be a member of the body of Christ on earth which is called the church. Not a system, not a man-made organizational entity but a fellowship of redeemed sinners reconciled to a holy God by the blood that Jesus shed and indwelt by him in the power of his resurrection. So that their hands have become his to work with, feet to walk with, lips to speak with, eyes to see with, ears to hear with, minds to think with, and hearts to love with.

So that you can say to me to live is Christ. Fantastic. That's the gospel.

There is no other. Pentecost. When God for Jesus' sake restored to man the life he lost in the day that Adam was stupid enough to believe the devil's lie and die.

And all mankind. Thereafter be they born dead and to stay dead save God's divine intervention on his terms redemption through the shed blood of Jesus when he restores by the gift of the Holy Spirit to man the life he lost in the day that Adam fell. Born dead.

Aborted. Spiritually. Physically alive.

Spiritually dead. This Jesus, 32nd verse of the same 2nd chapter of the book of Acts This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we all are witnesses. Chapter 1. Witness to the resurrection.

Peter. Chapter 2. Pentecostal. Witness to the resurrection.

Convinced of the truth of it. They entered into the good of it. That's when Peter first discovered what it really means to be a human being.

Inhabited by his creator. Or her creator. Sharing the life of one who brought this testimony.

Revelation 1.18 I was dead. That's the purpose for which I was born. To lay down my life.

A ransom for many. I was dead. Past tense.

But I am, present tense, alive again. Forevermore. Acts chapter 1. Convinced of the truth of the resurrection.

Acts chapter 2. A witness to the truth of the resurrection. Pentecost. Acts chapter 3. Convinced of the truth of it.

Entering into the good of it. Pentecost. Sharing the life of a risen Lord.

Demonstrating the fact of it. First verse. Matthew 3. Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, and a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which was called beautiful.

He was carried to church. Lots of people will be in church property today who are carried there by somebody in spite of their unwillingness to be found in church on this Sunday day. So here was a man who was carried to church dumped at the gate so that he could ask alms of them that entered into the temple.

Went to church so he could ask alms. Somebody said this is the story of a man who asked for alms and he got legs. He was lame from his mother's womb.

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple he asked an alms and Peter fastening his eyes on him with John said look on us. And he gave heed unto them expecting to receive something. When all that Peter and John had to offer was some body.

Silver and gold have I none said Peter but such as I have I give you. I want to share with you the name and the life of Jesus. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Took him by the hand, lifted him up. Immediately his feet and his ankle bones received strength. Leaping up he stood and walked and entered with them into the temple walking, leaping, praising God.

All the people amazed saw him walking and praising God. They knew that it was he who sat for alms to beg at the beautiful gate of the temple filled with wonder, filled with amazement at that which had happened to him. And when Peter saw it he said don't be so stupid.

He answered unto the people you men of Israel why marvel you at this? Why do you look so earnestly on us as though by our own power or by our own holiness we had made this man to walk? Don't be that stupid. I neither have that kind of holiness nor John nor that kind of power nor John whereby this man born lame from this mother's womb could be healed. It's the God of Abraham.

It's the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. The God of our fathers hath glorified his son Jesus because it's he that did it. Whom you delivered up.

You denied him in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let him go. But you denied the Holy One. You denied the Just One.

You desired a murder to be granted unto you. And you killed the Prince of Life whom God hath raised from the dead whereof we are witnesses. Chapter 1, convinced of the truth of it.

Chapter 2, entered into the good of it. Pentecost. Chapter 3, demonstrated the fact of it.

But all are witness to the fact that this Jesus whom they crucified, God, raised from the dead. This is the message of the early church. They couldn't talk about anything else because there was nothing really other than this to talk about.

Jesus, God, our Creator, Redeemer, alive and well. This is the heart of the church. This is the gospel.

That Jesus is alive. Chapter 4. Don't get worried, there are only 28 chapters in the book of Acts. As they spake unto the people, verse 1 of chapter 4, the priests, the professionals, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them.

You know about the Sadducees. They didn't believe in the resurrection. That's why they were Sadducees.

Anybody who doesn't believe in the resurrection has the right to be sad. They deserve to be miserable. And if you're not living in the power of an indwelling, risen, living Savior, you deserve to be miserable too, and you probably are.

Because you haven't discovered what it means to be the Christian you said once you became. You need what he did for you because of what you've done, but you need who he is in you to take the place of who you are. So that others as they were then in Jesus saw the Father, others now in you will see Jesus, alive and well.

You've just been part of the action. The redeemed humanity with which the Lord Jesus today still goes on doing and teaching the things that he then began to do and began to teach. What an exciting thing it is to be a Christian, a member of the body of Christ, a miracle, the truth on legs, when you make your humanity available to the one who created you, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and to whom alone be glory.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, Romans chapter 12, verse 1, present your bodies to him as he presented his body to the Father, and prove every day that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. The adventure of being part and parcel of God's divine, redemptive, and regenerative plan, hatched in the heart of God before ever the world was. Fantastic.

This is Christianity, Christ in unity. They spake to the people, the priests and the captains of the temple, came and the Sadducees upon them, being grieved, this is verse 2 now, chapter 4, being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. That was their message.

This is the message of the early church. Is this what you hear when you come to church? Remembering that church isn't a building, it's a fellowship of forgiven sinners, redeemed, sealed by the presence within them of a risen Lord in the person of the one whom God gives in the moment of redemption to restore to man the life he lost in Adam. Rebirth.

The beginning of real life. You stop existing in that moment and begin to live. Fantastic.

How did it go on? With great power, verse 33 in the same fourth chapter, with great power, gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace, God's riches at Christ's expense was upon them all. This is the gospel. From the time of their rediscovery of a risen living Lord with a new joy and a new Bible and a new message and a new responsibility and a new enabling, Pentecost, the gift

from God back to man of the life he lost in the day that Adam fell.

The church was revolutionized. When anybody ever went to a gathering where the early church, then after their rediscovery of Jesus for witness, they heard about a risen living indwelling Savior. Is that what you expect when you go to a church meeting? That's all they had to talk about.

Because there was nothing better for them to talk about. Jesus is alive. And not only is he alive, because he's alive, we're alive.

And he is our life. The way, the truth, and the life. How to become a Christian, the way how to be the Christian you become, the life, that's the truth.

Gospel truth. Reality. Marvelous.

Why did they go to jail? Preachers in jail. Well, they were arrested. Look at the fifth chapter.

Brought before the captain and high priest and charged. What was the charge that was leveled against them? Did not we straightly command you that you should not teach in this name? And behold, you filled Jerusalem with your doctrine. The whole of Jerusalem is a god with what you have to say.

Would it be true that you filled this city with your doctrine? What was the doctrine with which they filled the city of Jerusalem? Jesus is dead. We stuck him on a cross in the market square and said, everybody knows he died. We were there when it happened.

And he is buried. Is that the doctrine they filled the city of Jerusalem with? Jesus is dead. The doctrine with which they filled the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus is alive. Peter and the other apostles, verse 29 of the fifth chapter, answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men. We are not particularly interested whether you approve or disapprove.

That is irrelevant. We ought to obey God rather than men. Because he has, as God, exalted with his right hand the Lord Jesus, whom you hanged and slew on a tree.

And we, verse 32, message of the early church, are his witnesses of these things. But not only are we his witnesses, so also is the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to them that obey him. This is the early church in action, convinced of the truth of it, entered into the good of it, Pentecost, demonstrated the facts of it, preached in the power of it.

And the end of this fifth chapter, they lived in the joy of it. Daily, verse 42, and in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach that Jesus is the Christ. What did they do? Teaching and preaching.

That's evangelism. You can't preach with anything worth saying to say, unless you learn to teach. Where are you going to learn from? The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus said, will lead you into all truth, and take the things that are mine and reveal them unto you.

Teaching and preaching. That's evangelism. Teaching is explaining the facts clearly until they're fully grasped.

And preaching is then exhorting those who've heard the facts to mix those facts with faith and let God translate it into the flesh and blood of your humanity. Every new day is the adventure of sharing the life of your creator, God. And every day then is as big as God himself, so long as you're prepared to let him be God in action.

And give you the incredible privilege as his child, as a member of his body, to be the one through whom he, Christ, who walked this earth 2,000 years ago, may walk this earth again. And your kids, if you're in a family, can look into your face and know what Jesus is like. The first Bible they should ever read is you.

Clothing the deity of a risen, living and indwelling Savior so that in the most natural way your kids come to know Jesus. I'm profoundly thankful that it's been my joy to lead my kids to Christ. That's normal.

And I've got four sons, and all my sons are boys. Real boys. Because if you wait long enough, boys grow up to be men.

Men of God. They'll be, when they grow up, what they were when they were kids. And what they were when they were kids is largely dependent on what they've seen of Jesus in you.

Seen him behave. Heard him speak. As others, in the presence of Jesus, heard God speak through his lips.

And saw him accomplish in utter obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, the purpose for which he was born at Bethlehem. What an exciting thing it is to be a Christian. Not just become one.

Because salvation was never designed just to change your destination, but change your destiny. Every day, the unfolding of the divine plan of which you're part of the action. Isn't that hilariously wonderful? That's what it means to be redeemed, reconciled to God, and born again, restored to life.

Sharing the resurrection of the one who gave himself for us then to give himself to us now. So how big's tomorrow? As big as Jesus. What will you expect tomorrow? What you can do for him or what he's going to do in and through you? What will the world see? What will your family see? Your brothers, sisters, workmates, fellow students? Are they going to see you busy for Jesus? Or are they going to see Jesus busy in and through you? Living miraculously.

That quality of life that has no possible explanation but Christ as God in you. As his life had no possible explanation but the Father as God in him. This is the gospel.

It's the sheer, glorious simplicity of the gospel. Don't let anybody make it complicated. You can step out and do every new day knowing that that day is going to be big as God.

You don't have to know what he's been doing or what he has done or what he had in mind. That's not your business. That's his business.

But you can be part of the action. A member of the body of Christ. Alive and well.

And kicking. What was the message of the early church? Stick him on a cross, he's dead. Uh-uh.

Jesus is alive. And lives in you. If you'll let him.

Lord Jesus, thanks for making it all so simple that even the youngest child can understand. From that we may recognize the adventure of getting up every morning and saying, Lord Jesus, thanks for what you did then so that you can be who you are now in me. Lord Jesus, I want you to know that my hands are available for you to work with.

I want you to know that my feet are available for you to walk with, to cross the road, to knock on the door, whatever. And be in the place where in your divine providence you've chosen to put me. Where blessing is inevitable because I'm part of the action.

A forgiven sinner indwelt by a risen Savior. And thank you, loving Savior, that everything that's happening in the world around us, the fear in the hearts of men, foreshadows your return. And we look forward to that day when you come back and we'll see you as you are.

And we will be like you. Restored to function. Restored to image.

Reflecting the glory of a Savior who's not a big bang out there, but somebody living in our hearts every moment of every day. Thank you for all these men and women in this building here tonight. Thank you for little boys and girls and men and women who are going to come to know you as their Savior, because you're going to reach them through these men and women gathered tonight in this building.

Thank you that tomorrow is as big as God. We can't have more. We need never enjoy less, because in you dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And we're complete, though none of us deserve it, because of who you are, living, Lord Jesus, now where you do. For to me to live is Christ. Wonderful.

Thank you, dear Lord, in your own fearless, precious name. Amen.

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