

The Nature of Man

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dependence on God and the nature of sin as an attitude of total independence from God, leading to a state of lifelessness and separation from God.

Duration: 1:02:50

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:14

Topics: "Dependence On God", "Nature Of Man"

Description

Major Ian Thomas explores the fundamental nature of man, emphasizing that true conviction must lead to genuine cleansing and transformation rather than mere emotional responses. He warns against the danger of becoming accustomed to cycles of guilt and forgiveness without understanding the deeper issues of independence from God, which is the essence of sin. Thomas highlights that man was created to be inhabited by God, and true life comes from dependence on Him, not from self-reliance. He stresses that repentance involves a shift from independence to dependence on God, and that righteousness is only possible through God's presence in us. Ultimately, he calls for a life that reflects Christ's nature, urging believers to evaluate their worth based on how much they allow Christ to express Himself through them.

Transcript

I'm going to ask you this evening to follow me closely as we examine some basic principles. One of the greatest dangers in a convention such as this is the ease with which we may be convicted and, for that matter, the ease with which the preacher may convict. In other words, it's comparatively easy in the context of a series of meetings such as these to become thoroughly sorry and yet to be convicted without really being cleansed and not really because we don't want to be cleansed but sometimes because conviction is unmatched with an understanding of the basic issues that are involved so that you may be desperately sorry may humbly confess may claim and enjoy forgiveness and yet go out none the wiser as to how not to do and be the same again.

I wonder if that's been your problem. I wonder if you have not just attended conventions just such as these but meetings again and again in which you have been deeply convicted you've been genuinely sorry you've confessed and found forgiveness and yet gone out without still knowing how not to repeat the process and the result, of course, has been a constant up-and-down experience which, alas, is the plague of so many earnest Christians. Now this is what, as God enables us we would seek above everything else to avoid.

From the preacher's point of view where a number of folk who are obviously sympathetic and have open hearts to receive God's word it is comparatively easy to bring conviction. We can go down the line we can cover all the sins of the saints and almost every one of us would be hit somewhere and with all truth and feel that God's finger had been pointed at us as indeed, well may it have but that isn't adequate. In fact we may become so acclimatized to this process that you could be added to the classification about which we spoke for a moment yesterday afternoon of convention visitors and become not just a beekeeper but one of the weepers.

You know, there are some folk who like a good cry just about once a year a really good cry about their sins and having had one good cry then they go off again to be exactly what they were before. It sort of does them good to have a cry. Now that's dangerous very dangerous it's very dangerous to be sorry without really being saved in the fullest sense.

It's very dangerous to be convicted without really being cleansed because you'll become acclimatized to the process. The children of Israel for 40 years became acclimatized precisely to that process in the wilderness. Moses conducted, as it were, for 40 years a continuous cursing convention and he had them weeping and repenting time after time crying out to God for mercy and yet within a matter of days they'd be back at the old game.

He preached Canaan until they knew the story of Canaan inside out and could have preached it back to them. And yet they never went on and they never went in. They spent all their time alternating between being very bad and very sorry and they became accustomed to it and most of them died in that condition in the wilderness.

And you can become as familiar with the language of Canaan as did indeed the children of Israel for 40 years in the wilderness and die in the wilderness and never know what it is to live in the power of a risen Lord and enjoy the good of that lavish provision that God has made. And that's why I'm going to ask you to concentrate your thoughts upon basic principles tonight so that we may discover what it is that's gone wrong what it is that needs to be remedied the mechanics of it if you like to put it in rather a crude sort of way and the provision that God has so graciously made. Verse 14 The love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge that if one died for all then we're all dead that if one has died for all then all have died.

Now we need to pause upon that it's so easy to read a verse like that without thinking it through without recognizing the the tremendous significance of the word. What's the tense?

If one died for all in other words if it is true to say that the Lord Jesus upon the cross died for all men everywhere then the only inference that we can draw from that fact is that all were dead all were past tense dead the Lord Jesus Christ did not die because all men were in danger of dying the Lord Jesus died upon the cross because all men have died it's amazing really how many Christians imagine that death is the ultimate consequence of sin but that's not true death is the consequence of sin in Romans and chapter 6 and verse 23 the wages of sin is death not will be death it is something that has already happened and if the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to die for all men it is for one reason only that all men by nature are already dead in other words the gospel is God's

message to dead men when the gospel was preached to you and to me first it was preached to us as dead people now if we can once grasp that basic fundamental fact it will give us an entirely new concept of the Christian gospel it will eliminate from your mind the obsession that Christ's death upon the cross was

purely to save you from the punitive consequence of your sin in other words that you might not go to hell it's gloriously true that you will be saved from wrath through him but in a sense that's incidental purely incidental if the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was an imperative by the fact that all men were dead quite obviously his death will be designed in God's eternal economy to raise dead men from the dead in other words the ultimate purpose of God in Christ is that there might

be restored by God on the grounds of redemption life to those who are lifeless in other words to be converted to be redeemed to be born again involved a spiritual resurrection we are of this conviction that if one has died for all then all have died let me put it in a sentence for you if Christ died for all then all that men by nature are and all that men by nature do is worth no more than the sentence of death imposed upon Jesus Christ as man's substitute and savior do you understand that? if Christ died for all then the only inference that we can draw from that fact is that all that men by nature are and all that men by nature do is worth no more than the sentence of death imposed upon Jesus Christ who came to be man's substitute and savior in other words apart from what Jesus Christ

has accomplished on your behalf and apart from what Jesus Christ on the grounds of what he accomplished can come to be in you you're worth nothing but death now if that's a categorical statement of fact if I have the right to declare that dogmatically there must be good grounds for what I say and there must furthermore be good biblical, scriptural, Bible grounds for what I say and therefore we need to examine what it means when the Bible tells us that we are dead by nature in trespasses and sins one simple declaration of that fact may be found in the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians Ephesians chapter 4 and bear in mind that in this epistle as in all the epistles the apostle here is giving instructions to men and women and boys and girls who have been raised from the dead we

shall be examining that maybe later a little more closely but remember that having described the resurrection of the Lord Jesus in the first chapter and the mighty power of God that was wrought in raising him the son from the dead he tells these Ephesians Christians that this is precisely and exactly the nature of the mighty power of God which is at work in us who believe for as God the Father raised him the son Jesus from the dead and you he says chapter 2 verse 1 and you have he quickly you too have been raised from the dead who were dead in trespasses and sins and what I have to say to you Paul might go on what I have to say to you now in this epistle I have to say to you is those men women and boys and girls who have by God with the same mighty power that he wrought in Christ when he

raised him from the dead raised you from the dead what I have to say to you I have to say to you is those who have been resurrected this I say therefore verse 17 of chapter 4 and testify in the Lord that you henceforth walk and that word always means in the epistles behavior character conduct that you walk henceforth not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds having the understanding darkened through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart being alienated from the life of God in order to understand our fallen condition we need to understand at least in some measure the nature of man and the purpose for which God created man and although we shall not devote a great deal of time to this it's absolutely basic and something once grasped calculated to

throw so much light upon so much of the word of God that is otherwise somewhat confusing in the womb God created man to be inhabited by God for God and it is in point man's capacity to be inhabited by God for God that distinguishes man from animal if the nature of our birth were that which were to distinguish us there would be no distinction if how we were to feed were to be the basis of the distinction there would be no distinction or how we breathe or bleed or die man biologically is an animal this of course is the

hypothesis upon which the whole philosophy of God hating, Christ rejecting, communism is based today this is dialectic materialism this is humanism in its ultimate that man is no more than an animal but God declares that man was never created to be only and solely an animal

and that which distinguishes man from animal is that unique capacity that God has given to man when he first made him to become the recipient of the creator God who would indwell him and express his life through him the capacity that God has built into man which he did not build into any other form of created life that enables man to receive what God is to practice the presence of God and enjoy the presence of God is called in the Bible the human spirit the human spirit is the royal residence for the royal residence himself and only by the presence of God within the human spirit does man partake of spiritual life as by his natural animal birth he already partakes of physical life when God created man in his innocency he not only had the physical life with which God clothed him but he was

a partaker of the very life of God himself so that God by his spirit could behave in terms of human personality when we read in the book of Genesis in chapter 5 that Adam was made in the image of God I don't think it means that God looks exactly like Adam or that if you were to look at Adam he would look exactly like God this is the book of the generations of Adam in the day that God created man in the likeness of God made to him it means simply that God created man in such a way that all that God is could be expressed in terms of human behavior that God gave to man not only a human spirit that enabled him to receive the presence of God but that his whole human personality which constitutes his soul or his heart his mind, his emotion and his will would become available to God so that

every activity expressed physically in terms of the movement of his body everything that man was in action everything that man was in behavior everything that man was in terms of character everything that man was in terms of his relationship to his fellow man would all be an absolute and unsolid and unsoiled expression of the nature of the God who first made him, now inhabits him and expresses himself through him so that as you look at man in his perfect innocence you see only God behaving He, the Son, is the sole expression of the glory of God He is the light being He is the out-raying of the divine He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world He came in the very image of God displayed in terms of his sinless, perfect, matchless

humanity so that when Philip asked Him show us the Father and it suffices the Lord Jesus could say have I been so long time with you and hast thou not known me Philip He that hath seen me in my humanity hath seen the Father yet no man hath seen God at any time We may only reconcile those two statements Now here's another simple statement It is only what God is in man that enables man to behave as God intended man to behave It is only what God is in man that enables man to behave as God intended man to behave In other words, without God a man can only behave as an animal Now that may sound pretty startling but it's true every other form of animal life behaves without God and a man without God will behave like any other form of animal life without God And that is why as we were reminded

this afternoon the term given for the unregenerate man who is alienated from the life of God means animal The natural man, if you happen to have a French Bible in your possession and you were to look up the first epistles of the Corinthians and the second chapter and the fourteenth verse instead of the natural man received as not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned you would find in the French Bible l'homme animal the animal man received as not the things of the Spirit of God in exactly the same way when James in the third chapter of his epistles speaks of that wisdom which is sensual it's the same word This superficial wisdom is not such

as comes down from above having its origin in God but is

earthly, unspiritual, animal, even devilish It is the very life of God himself imparted by the Holy Spirit of the human spirit that adds to man that spiritual quality of life that enables him to behave as God intended what would that demand then of man if he were to behave as God intended man to behave only by what God is in him can he so behave therefore it will demand of man total dependence upon the God who in him alone by his presence gives him that spiritual and moral capacity to behave as man as God intended man to behave so the first requirement of man in his relationship to the God who made him is dependence a dependence that will only be expressed in terms of total obedience dependence and obedience are one and the same thing in terms of man's relationship to God I am only

dependent upon God in the measure that I am totally obedient to God for my obedience to God is an expression of my attitude of dependence on God whatever God tells me I do it because I have adopted the attitude I do not have what it takes apart from what God is in me therefore I must be totally obedient that I might be totally dependent but another factor entered in into God's creation of man and that was the very nature of God himself and God is love and when God created man he didn't want a puppet he didn't want just an impersonal robot he didn't want just a colourless non-entity an amoral cog in a machine in his innocency man was in a very real sense alive to God in the life of God but something happened and what happened is described for us in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the

Romans Romans chapter 5 and verse 12 as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin so death passed upon all men for all men sinned something happened in the first Adam sin entered through this man and as a consequence of the entry of what is here called sin death came in when our death of course is the absence of life death can't occur where life doesn't exist that would be stupid I couldn't pick up a piece of steel and say to you what a pity it's just died or I might say to you I used to have a wheelbarrow but it died well you'd be rather sorry for me wouldn't you you'd think that I'd been overworking needed a rest probably under lock and key death cannot occur where life does not exist and God had told Adam that the Christing place the symbol of his relationship to God his

maker was the tree see that tree so long as you want to continue to enjoy the relationship that now exists between you and me a faith love relationship that makes you a partaker of what I am enables you to draw upon the limitless resources of deity that means that you are incessantly the human vehicle of my divine life so that all that you are is an expression of all that I am if you want to remain in this relationship to me then do not touch the fruit of that tree for if you have the capacity to choose there must be a point at which choice can be exercised and that is the point and at that point you will demonstrate your love to me which will be expressed in obedience to me because of your dependence on me and God said if ever the moment in your life comes when you want to repudiate this

relationship then eat of the fruit of that tree and in the day that you eat thereof you will die you will suffer the forfeiture of life in the very day that you eat thereof you will die did he die physically in the day that he ate thereof? no when Adam awakened the next morning he was very much alive physically the birds were singing and the wind whistled through the trees and the sun shone and the skies were blue physically he was still alive he had not forfeited physical life and the devil told him that you will not die the devil said, hath God said that if you eat the fruit of the tree you will die? has he forbidden you? well you need to take God seriously because it isn't true you will not die and when Adam awakened the next morning he found that what the devil had said was true he

hadn't died in spite of the fact that he had challenged God to his face and repudiated his dependence upon God and had deliberately transgressed a specific command given to him by God he had not died physically how did he die on that day? in that he was alienated from the life of God he forfeited the divine presence he became spiritually destitute of that for which man was created he was empty of God and his mind and his emotions and his will the whole of his human personality was no longer available to the one who previously had inhabited that which God had given to man to be inhabited by God for God and by this one man sin entered into the world and death, a state of lifelessness entered and passed upon all men now it is important for us at this point to pause again because we need to

get our definitions right as by one man sin entered into the world what is sin? in a sense we have reduced sin to a shadow with its real self we think of sin in terms of sins we think of sin in terms of telling lies or losing your temper or unchastity of stealing of being slanderous about somebody else or unkind or irritable but those are only sins sin is something infinitely worse than any of those things we think of murder, that sin, that's a terrible sin it isn't as bad as a wicked tongue it doesn't do as much damage as the cataness that is on the lips of many Christians murder is infinitely preferred to that but even so if we think of sin in terms of sins we're missing the mark by a million miles the Lord Jesus in the 16th chapter of John's Gospel didn't say that the Holy Spirit would

come into the world and He would convict the world of sins the Lord Jesus Christ said that when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come He will convince the world of sins and when sin entered into the world through one man it was the adopting by that one man of an attitude which had already been adopted by the devil himself sin in its final essence is an attitude within the heart of man of total independence of God that's the nature of sin sin as a principle is hostile to every suggestion that man is dependent upon God his maker that's the nature of sin sin is an attitude that repudiates man's need to maintain this relationship of faith and of Eden faith, love, that's sin and it was when man adopted this attitude of independence that he forfeited the presence of God and he became empty of God

and died and ever since Adam adopted this attitude his seed down all human history of which you and I, the representatives in the 20th century have been born by natural birth uninhabited by God they have been passed on to you and to me by nature this hostile attitude towards God that's the nature of sin it was an attitude that had its origin in the devil himself for in man's forfeiture of the divine content that made him spiritually bankrupt and destitute of the life of God that was not the worst calamity that befell him the greater calamity was that in his destitution his life mechanism, his soul, his mind, his emotions and his will, his heart became available with vacant possession to the devil himself so that instead of man being the human vehicle of the divine life and his behavior,

God's behavior clothed with man's humanity man became the human vehicle of the devil himself and man's behavior was the devil's behavior clothed with man's humanity that's why John says in his first epistle, chapter 3 in verse 8 he that committed sin is of the devil in other words, never minimize the nature of sin if you tell a lie, don't please imagine that you're telling that lie it simply means that you of your own free volition are allowing the devil to prostitute your humanity so that he can be through you what he is a lie that's the nature of sin said the Lord Jesus to the Pharisees ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you will do in other words, your humanity is available for the devil to behave in did you know that? whosoever committed sin is of the devil

he sinned from the beginning and the devil is only able to behave in terms of your human personality by virtue of the fact that in Adam, man was sold out to the devil in a repudiation of his dependence upon God

we have been sold under sin now, remember this all righteousness has its origin in God alone he is righteousness and all righteousness in man without exception is God behaving in man there is no such thing as righteousness that does not have its origin in God himself so that all righteousness in man is what God is in man that is why of the regenerate born again Christian we read in the first epistle to the Corinthians of God is he Christ made unto you righteous made unto you righteousness you didn't have any before Christ was made unto you righteous it's only because of what he is

in you it's only because of what he does through you that you have now as a regenerate sinner any capacity whatever for righteousness apart from what he is and apart from what he does through you all your righteousnesses are a filthy rag because such righteousnesses as they may appear are simply cheap shabby imitations of the real thing produced by the perverted bent within the flesh for simulated righteousness which is always self-righteous so that all righteousness is God and righteousness in man is what God is behaving through man what is unrighteousness? all unrighteousness is what the devil is in man all unrighteousness in man is what is produced by Satan behaving through man by the exercise of his satanic agency called the flesh nothing to do with your human body this sin principle

of satanic hostility to the law of God how then can you ever produce righteousness? only by an attitude of dependence upon the only one who in you is capable of righteousness who's that?

God now maybe you'll understand what it means when it says in the Hebrew epistle chapter 11 that without faith it is impossible to please God without faith it is impossible to please God it doesn't say barely possible impossible Hebrews 11 says without faith it is impossible to please God why? because righteousness is God in action and God in action in and through a man demands of that man that dependence upon God that finds his expression in obedience to God which is Bible faith if therefore you are not living moment by moment step by step breath by breath incident by incident in an attitude of dependence by faith upon God you cannot please Him no matter what you do therefore the righteousness of what you're doing will not be determined by the nature of what you're doing it will be

determined by your attitude to God and that's why your relationship to God your relationship personally to Jesus Christ is a thousand million times more important than the program that you display to the world around you because you may be implementing that program other than in dependence upon God and if you implement that program in other than dependence upon God Christianized as it may be within the contents of evangelical activity it will still be of satanic origin does that sound too strong? then turn with me to the 14th chapter of the epistle to the Romans and you discover the converse Romans chapter 14 and of course throughout the chapter the apostle has been applying in detail this principle in general the latter part of verse 23 of the 14th chapter of the epistle to the Romans

whatsoever notice the word whatsoever no limitations, no buts, no ifs no ambiguity whatsoever is not of faith is what? sin the minister who is prepared to go up into his pulpit and preach other than independence upon Christ is committing sin in the very act of preaching did you know that? because whatsoever does not stem from divine activity released by man's obedience in faith can only stem from carnal activity which is of satanic origin and there's nothing that the devil more delights in than that a man should engage in Christian activity in the energy of the flesh because it's death to be carnal in mind it is death for the flesh profiteth nothing without faith it's impossible to please God and whatsoever is not of faith is sin now that doesn't leave much margin does it? bring those two

things together and what have we got left? without faith it is impossible to please God and whatsoever is not of faith is sin now this is giving us an almost terrifying definition of sin for without faith it's impossible to please God and if I'm not exercising faith I'm committing sin in other words in any area of my life in which I am not pleasing God positively by faith I'm committing sin that goes a long long way beyond telling lies doesn't it? this has something infinitely more to do with your relationship to God than simply things that you do and say this goes far deeper than the surface that other people can notice this goes deep down into the very center of your heart and soul whatsoever is not of faith is sin all your behavior which is not God's behavior is sin now what does this

teach us? well of course it teaches us that there is only one quality of Christian life that God recognizes and that's his own in other words to talk about a victorious Christian life is a misnomer and a very dangerous misnomer because if we talk about a victorious Christian life we are suggesting that there is a quality of Christian life which is not victorious in other words that it's optional as to whether you as a Christian should live victoriously or not victoriously I want you to know this that so far as God is concerned there is no margin that if you are not living victoriously you are not living the Christian life you may have the Christian life but you're not living it so don't delude yourself and don't deceive yourself don't persuade yourself that you have opted to have a quality

of Christian life which is less than victorious the moment you opt, the moment you decide, the moment you reconcile yourself to living a quality of Christian life which is less than victorious you are in so many words repudiating the Christian life and saying I don't want it I want to get to heaven, I want to be converted, I want to be numbered amongst the redeemed I want to know that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life but I only want to be fit for heaven but I do not want to be fit for earth now we've come to understand, I trust in some small measure at least what it means to be dead numbered amongst the dead lifeless uninhabited by God inhabited only by a sin principle of satanic origin that is hostile to God that repudiates dependence and lives in faithlessness independence

what therefore do you imagine will be God's purpose in Christ who died for all because all were dead well it seems pretty obvious that God's purpose in Christ will first to make it possible for the guilty sins to be reconciled to God in such a way that there may be restored to him the life that man through sin through this attitude of independence has forfeited but if man has forfeited this life, God's life through independence under what circumstances do you imagine God will restore life to man only when man's attitude of independence has been reversed to one of dependence and by this means of course we are arriving at a new definition maybe for some of you of repentance maybe in the past you thought that repentance was being sorry because you lost your temper maybe you thought that

repentance was being sorry because you've been neglecting your Bible sorry because you've been irritable at home or discourteous to other people maybe you thought that was repentance well of course it is in a sense but it's very baby repentance because these things being disagreeable and grumpy and dishonest or lying or neglectful of your Bible or your prayer these are simply symptoms only of a deeper disease man's sin is independence basically and from this attitude of independence came all the sins of commission and omission for it is only man's independence of God that licenses him to commit acts of aggression against God's will and if sin is man's independence what will repentance demand repentance will mean repudiation on the part of man for his attitude of independence in other

words repentance demands dependence and if you want to know to what degree you have repented then you need only to examine your own heart and discover to what degree you are dependent and as you look

back over your life even over the past 24 hours and think of all the activities in which you have engaged all the decisions that you may have made all the letters that you may have written all the plans that you may have conceived just think back only over the past 24 hours and decide in how many areas you have acted in other than a conscious attitude of dependence upon Christ whereby you relentlessly reckoned with him and with him alone and in every one of those areas you will know that those are the areas in your life as a Christian in which you have not repented if you can bring up your

family, you parents, without an attitude an unrelenting attitude of dependence upon the Lord Jesus then in the process of rearing a family you are an unrepentant Christian if you're a businessman and you think that you can run your business other than in a constant unrelenting attitude of dependence upon the Lord Jesus it's precisely in the area of your business as a successful businessman that you are unrepentant if you're a Christian minister if you lead a Bible class if you're an evangelist if you're a preacher or a missionary and you imagine that you can embark upon projects for God other than in dependence upon God through Jesus Christ then these Christian activities in which you are engaged are the very areas of your life as a Christian in which as yet you have not repented for

repentance demands that I step back into my faith love relationship to God through Jesus Christ the love of Christ controls and urges and impels us because we are of the opinion and conviction that if one has died for all then all have died everything that I am and everything that I do by nature is worth no more than God's sentence of death passed upon Jesus Christ my substitute but verse 15 goes on to say this and he died for all to what end so that all those who live might live no longer to and for themselves but to and for him who died and was raised again for their sake in other words when the Lord Jesus Christ died it was to pay the curse the consequence of man's sin he was made sin for man God in heaven in all his righteousness dealt with the Lord Jesus as though he himself had

abducted this satanic attitude of total independence isn't that terrible God's judgment upon the Lord Jesus upon the cross was such as all man's accumulative guilt demands and deserves and this was executed in the person of another for though a man repents though a man repudiates his independence and wish to step back into an attitude of dependence the guilt of the past must be acquitted and so on the basis of redemption by his vicarious substitutionary and atoning death the Lord Jesus Christ by his death has reconciled those who repent toward God to the end that they might become the recipients of his resurrection life that the divine nature might be reinstated to the human spirit so that man's mind emotion and will might no longer be in orbit around the sin principle of satanic origin

which is hostile to God and not conformable to God's laws but now mind emotion and will might once more go into orbit around the new center Jesus Christ himself who being crucified for you and for me reconciles us to God by his death and who comes by his gracious Holy Spirit to indwell us and re-inhabit us in the power of his resurrection life I suppose in a gathering such as this or maybe in your church at home I might come as a visitor I might look across the building and I might point at some rather distinguished looking gentleman and I'd say who's he? and you tell me and if I was very naughty I suppose I might say to you how much is he worth? oh and you'd say well I couldn't rightly tell you but he's got two cars and one's a Bentley and I know that they've made him chairman of the

finance committee in our building project that's always a pointer I wouldn't rightly say how much he's worth but I wouldn't be surprised if he wasn't worth half a million and I would say to you I didn't ask you that you tell me that you have a new minister oh yes you say we're very pleased about it you know we only had a student pastor before but now we've got a real one oh really that's fine how much is he worth? oh well he's

both got a DD and a PhD looks wonderful on the new notice board we've got out oh but I didn't ask you that I would say I didn't ask you that I just asked you how much he was worth I didn't ask you to tell me his decoration I just asked you to tell me how much he was worth to what extent will Jesus Christ be preaching through his lips? to what degree did Jesus Christ

behave in that man? that's how much he's worth just how much are you worth tonight to God? because just as much as you're worth to God you'll be worth to your fellow man and I'm not asking how much money you've got and I'm not asking what kind of scholastic record you may have I'm not asking how far your chin sticks out farther than anybody else I'm not asking what strings you can pull by virtue of the influence that you have in town I'm not asking you any of these questions I'm simply asking you one basic spiritual question how much are you worth? to what degree does the Lord Jesus now act as the sole nucleus of your human personality so that what he is alone is expressed in terms of what you are that's how much you're worth no even though we once did estimate Christ from a human

viewpoint and as a man yet now we have such knowledge of him that we know him no longer in terms of the flesh do you understand what Paul means by that? he said there was a time when I as Saul of Tarsus had my own estimate of Jesus Christ as a man as indeed my ecclesiastical colleagues and our estimate of Jesus Christ as a man was simply this he was born a peasant in Galilee he was no more than a carpenter's apprentice until at last he became a qualified craftsman and then he took up preaching and he became a fanatical street preacher how much did we consider him to be worth? he was worth nothing he had no scholastic background he had absolutely no theological foundations he was worth nothing and he was to be exterminated because he was a heretic Messiah that's how much he was worth how

much was he worth for three years to the disciples? in their mistaken, in their mistaken ideas he was worth to them the one who as the Messiah would come and deliver them as a Jewish nation from the Roman yoke would reinstate them once more as an influential power in the world that's how much he was worth now Paul says we know enough about Jesus Christ to have an entirely new estimate of his worth I wonder how much Jesus Christ would be worth today in our universities amongst our noble theologians how much would he be worth? oh they'd probably complain that he presented an immature theology because he had no scholarship how much would he be worth to our financiers who had to borrow a table to be born in and borrow a tomb to be buried in do you know how much the Lord Jesus said he was

worth? and this is one of the most enlightening things that I've discovered in the word of God in recent months the Lord Jesus Christ as a man walking this earth for 33 years although he was God and was in the beginning with God and was God and by him all things were made although God himself he became incarnate and walked this earth for 33 years as a man and he said I do not demand that you believe what I say because of who I am I demand only that you believe what I say because of what I do because to you if you look at me I'm just a peasant from Galilee my authority is not who I am as a man my authority is what my father does through me Jesus said if my father sent me so send I you what's your authority? you parents have you labored under the delusion that your children should believe

what you tell them about God because of who you are you say to your child you have to believe me because I'm your father you have to believe me because I'm your mother nonsense your child has to believe nothing because of who you are you fancy yourself because you're the pastor of the church and you go around and you tell people I'm the theologian I'm the man who's trained you believe what I say about God and you believe what I say about the Bible and you believe what I say about Jesus Christ because I'm your minister do you understand? poor wretch that's not your authority that's not your

authority not even if you're the Archbishop of Canterbury himself how dare you claim that your authority is who you are when Jesus Christ God's own dear son never claimed that authority as a man neither

your age nor your position nor your money nor your learning nor your ecclesiastical position nor any of these things give you any authority at all the only thing that will ever give you authority amongst men is your relationship to Jesus Christ that allows him to behave in terms of your humanity apart from what he is and apart from what he does to you you are nothing you have nothing and you can do nothing

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