

The Perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ

by Major Ian Thomas

The Lord Jesus' humanity was perfect in person and vocation, and his life and ministry were guided by his relationship with the Father and his desire to fulfill God's redemptive purpose.

Duration: 32:51

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 8:29, John 13:4-5, Romans 11:36 - 12:1, Hebrews 10:5, Hebrews 10:7

Topics: "Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the divine objective of preaching the word of God. He explains that just as Jesus was sent by the Father, Christians are also sent by Jesus to fulfill the purposes agreed upon with the Father before the world was created. The speaker highlights the importance of presenting one's body as a living sacrifice to God, following the example of Jesus offering his body to the Father. He emphasizes that Christianity is about living in and through Jesus Christ, leaving no room for self-pleasing. The sermon references passages from the book of Hebrews and the book of Romans to support these teachings.

Transcript

In the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in verse 5, Hence, when he, Christ, entered into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, But instead you have made ready a body for me to offer. In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no delight. Then I said, Lo, here I am.

Come to do your will, O God, to fulfill what is written of me in the volume of the book. This was the word of the Lord Jesus. You have made ready a body for me to offer.

Here I am. Come to do your will, O God, to fulfill what is written of me in the volume of the book. To offer to the Father the body that the Father had prepared for him, that in this body, his sinless humanity, there might be fulfilled everything that was written in the volume of the book concerning him.

For he was the Lamb's slave from the foundation of the world. And the office of the Lord Jesus as man was to present back to the Father the body that the Father had fashioned for him miraculously by conception of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, that in this perfect humanity there might be brought to its glorious, triumphant consummation that purpose for which he was God incarnate. How did the Lord Jesus offer his body to the Father that in this body there might be fulfilled all that was written in the volume of the book concerning him? In other words, that the story of redemption might be told in terms of his

humanity in those 33 years that he was here on earth.

In the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, we're told how it is that he offered this, his body, to the Father. And this, of course, will be essentially relevant to you and to me. Because the Lord Jesus declared that as the Father had sent him, so he sends you, so he sends me.

In the 57th verse of the sixth chapter of John he says, As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me. Our walk on earth as redeemed humanity, if redeemed we be, is to be on exactly the same terms in relationship to Jesus Christ as his walk in humanity on earth 1900 years ago by virtue of his relationship to the Father. So it is therefore all essential that you and I should understand his relationship to the Father and that we may understand our relationship to him, how he walked then, so that we may know how we are to walk now.

Hebrews 9, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God. The Lord Jesus offered himself without spot to God through the eternal Spirit. The body that the Father prepared for him and with which he was presented as a little baby on that first Christmas day 1900 years ago was offered back by him to the Father through the eternal Spirit.

For the eternal Spirit was the divine agency whereby the Father indwelt and worked through the Son. In the thirteenth chapter of John's Gospel, and the third verse, it says, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, that through the eternal Spirit the whole plenitude of deity was incarnate in his sinless humanity. For we are told that the Holy Spirit was given to him without measure, that in the person of the third co-equal member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, his sinless humanity was inhabited on earth for the Father.

And by virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit, by whom he, Jesus Christ, as man on earth was filled twenty-four hours in every day, there was vested in him all things. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and that he went to God. He riseth from supper, laid aside his garments, took a towel, girded himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet.

Comes almost as an anticlimax. He knew that the Father had given all things into his hands. He knew that he had come from God.

He knew that he was going to God. He was cognizant of his divine origin, and he was cognizant of his divine destination. He puts it in this way.

In the sixteenth chapter of John's Gospel, in the twenty-seventh verse, the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am coming to the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.

I came from the Father. I'm going to the Father. In the meantime, I'm in the world.

The Father has given all things into his hands. He came from him. He's going to him.

One might imagine that we are poised now upon the threshold of some sensational event, some startling utterance. Not a bit of it. He girds himself, gets down his hands and his knees, pours some water into a basin, and washes his disciples' feet.

He does the one thing all of whom, all of his disciples, were too proud to do. Lest they should lose face. Lest it should be considered undignified.

Lest they should lose prestige. Lest they should be considered to be subservient. You see, it takes God himself to get on his knees, incarnate in the sinless humanity of his sinless Son, to wash the disciples' feet.

This was the nature of his perfect humanity. We learn a tremendous lot, of course, from this. For the Lord Jesus was always, at all times, filled with the Holy Ghost.

Folk tell us sometimes what we ought to be doing if we're filled with the Holy Ghost. What ought we to be doing if we're filled with the Holy Spirit? What ought Jesus Christ to have been doing if he was filled with the Holy Spirit? Well, he tells us in John's Gospel, chapter 8, verse 29, I do only, always, those things that please my Father. That is what a man always does when he's filled with the Holy Ghost.

Only, always, those things that please the Father. Which of the activities of the Lord Jesus was the more spiritual? When he was preaching the Sermon on the Mount, raising Lazarus from the dead, or on his hands and knees washing his disciples' feet, which of those activities was the more spiritual? Well, of course, it's a stupid question, isn't it? For there never could have been, in the activities of Jesus Christ, any one that was more spiritual than the other. For his whole humanity, for thirty-three years, implemented the divine end.

I do always those things that please the Father. And if it happens to be my Father's good pleasure at one moment that I should stand upon the Mount and preach a sermon, that is my business. And if it happens to be the good pleasure of my Father at another moment that I raise a man from the dead, that is my business.

If it happens to be the good pleasure of my Father at any given moment to get down on his hands and knees and wash my disciples' feet, that is my business, as a man filled with the Holy Ghost. In other words, the spirituality of what you do is not defined by the nature of what you're doing. The spirituality of what you do is defined only by the origin of that activity.

The spirituality of Jesus Christ in all his activities was defined by the fact that at any given moment, at any time, day or night, what was being done was being done by the Father through him, through the Eternal Spirit. For his body had been offered. He presented his whole sinless humanity to the Father, that the Father might implement in terms of his humanity, the eternal purpose of an eternal God.

He didn't live his life hit or miss, trial and error. He didn't come to do his best. He didn't come to make the best of a bad job.

He didn't live experimentally. His whole life from beginning to end was a glorious fulfillment. The things he said concerning me have an end.

They're not coming to an end, they have an end. They have a divine objective. And my business as man is so to present my body to my Father that through the Eternal Spirit he may bring to fruition in glorious triumph every purpose that was agreed as between myself and the Father before ever the world was.

That's the nature of my humanity. This is to be the nature of your humanity, if you're a Christian. Because as the Father sent him, so he sends you.

You today are to be to Jesus Christ in 1960 what Jesus Christ was to the Father 1,900 years ago on the same terms and by virtue of the same relationship. Here are two rather startling passages from the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 2 and chapter 5. Hebrews 2, verse 9 and 10. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him, that is to say the Father. It became him, that means it was incumbent upon, it was necessary for, it beheld the Father. For whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

It was necessary for God the Father to make the captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, perfect through sufferings. Bearing that passage in mind, here's the 5th chapter and the 8th and the 9th verses. Though he, Jesus Christ, were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Just put those two passages together and what it says is this, it was necessary for God the Father to make him perfect and he being made perfect became the author of eternal salvation. Doesn't that strike you as a little bit quaint? In what sense was it necessary for the Father to make him, Jesus Christ, perfect? For we understand from this passage that his becoming the author of our eternal salvation was wholly dependent upon the successful conclusion of a process whereby he was made perfect.

When he was made perfect, and because he was made perfect, he became. And had he never been made perfect, he never could have become. Was he not perfect that he needed to be made perfect? Was there after all some blemish in the character of Jesus Christ that needed to be remedied? Well, you see, there are two perfections in the life of Jesus Christ.

There was the perfection of his person. Of that perfection, the Bible leaves us in no shadow of a doubt, he suffered the just, the just for the unjust. God made him to be sinful who knew no sin.

The Father could look down from heaven and say, this is my beloved son, in him I am well pleased. He could stand and challenge those who hated him most in public and say, which of you convinceth me of sin, and none dare accuse him. The Bible leaves us in no doubt that he is the utterly sinless one, perfect, utterly in his person.

But he had to be made perfect in his vocation. What was there between the time that he came from the Father and the time that he went to the Father? Thirty-three years between Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. Thirty-three years of divine end.

Thirty-three years of purpose. That there might, in terms of his humanity, be fulfilled all the things written in the volume of the book. As a little baby helpless in his mother's arms, was he perfect in vocation? Had he implemented the divine, redemptive end? As a little boy of twelve years of age in the temple when his mother found him and he said, Would you not that I must be about my father's business? Was he perfect in vocation? When he was standing preaching the Sermon on the Mount, was that all over? Was that enough? When he raised Lazarus from the dead, when he washed his disciples' feet, when he went into the garden of Gethsemane and sweat as it were great drops of blood, would he have had the right at that stage in terms of God's redemptive purpose to look up into the face of heaven and say, It is finished! He could have quit at any time.

At any time. And he would have been welcome. When he said before Pontius Pilate, You don't have power to do me to death nor to release me.

I lay down my life and I take it again. At one word from me, my father would send ten legions of angels. That was no idle boast.

At any given moment, Jesus Christ could have looked into his father's face and said, Father, it isn't worth it. I'm coming home. And he would have been welcome.

But he wouldn't have been perfect in that vocation for which he was incarnate. We're told that he set his face like a flint. He turned neither to the left hand nor to the right.

He set his face to the cross. And Philippians chapter 2 tells us that he was obedient. Obedient unto death.

Even the death of the cross. Wherefore, the Father hath highly exalted him. A nail to a cross made sin for man's iniquities.

In all his sinlessness in person. Made sin for us who knew no sin. The heavens were blackened for the space of three hours.

And then, with a voice that reverberated across the whole city of Jerusalem in victory, he cried, It is finished! And bowed his head and died. And in that moment he was made perfect in vocation as he was already perfect in his person. And became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.

That was his victory. His victory was not constituted by the fact that he was tempted forty days and nights without committing sin. He could have stayed in heaven and done that.

His victory was constituted by the fact that he positively implemented that purpose for which he was incarnate. That his body was totally dedicated to the purpose which had been presented to him by the Father. And we are told explicitly in the word of God how it was that the body was made available to the Father through the eternal spirit by the process of obedience through time in an attitude of absolute availability and unswerving dependence.

Some of us already earlier this morning have noticed the claims of the Lord Jesus as man. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself. For it is not my business to do, it is my business to be that human vehicle through whom my Father does.

I can of mine own self do nothing. John 14.10 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.

I came from my Father, I am going to my Father, and between my coming from the Father and going to the Father my Father dwells in me while I am in the world and my Father dwelling in me while I am in the world does the works. It is my Father working through the body that I have presented to him the body that he prepared for me miraculously in the womb of Mary and the true nature of my true humanity is that my humanity is wholly available to my Father who in dwelling me by his eternal Spirit has the right at any given moment, at any given time to do in me and through me what he wills whether it be to preach a sermon on the mount, raise the dead or wash my disciples' feet that is my office as man always to be available for my Father to do of him, through him, to him my Father, all things. I wonder if this will help you

to understand the last verse of the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans For the Lord Jesus said, as my Father sent me so send I you.

You are going to live your life as a Christian on the same basis. That is to say if you want to live your life as a Christian, maybe you don't want to but if you do want to, this is how you're living verse 36 of Romans 11 For of him, and through him and to him are all things to whom, of whom, through whom and to whom are all things be glory because there's nobody else left to give glory to of him, through him, to him all things so there's only one person who can get the glory Amen. That's the Christian life it is exclusive to you inclusive only to him it includes him and excludes you except in your office as redeemed humanity in being in a total attitude of availability Are you a Christian? Are you born again? Do you know what happened when you were born again? Could you define to somebody what happened when you were born again? I don't mean could you tell them that you believed on Jesus Christ and therefore you were born again.

That isn't defining what happened that simply tells them how it happened. What happened when you were born again? Titus chapter 3 and verse 5 says this Not by any works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing the re-impacting of the Holy Spirit whom God has shed a bore in our hearts abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior So new birth is the restoration to you and to me as redeemed sinners of that spiritual content that was forfeited in Adam when Adam repudiated God for in the day that Adam repudiated God, God went out and when a man is redeemed in the blood of Christ, God comes back and your redeemed humanity is re-inhabited by God for God through the eternal spirit to whom now your body is to be presented to Jesus Christ who is going to be the sole legitimate occupant of your redeemed humanity That is why in John's epistle chapter 5 he says this is the record that God has given to his eternal life, this life, eternal life divine life, spiritual life is in his Son He that hath a Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not life You have eternal life only in so far as you have Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is eternal life You don't have eternal life if you don't have Jesus Christ because there is no such thing as eternal life apart from Jesus Christ So eternal life is a person When did that person come to indwell you? By his Holy Spirit When you were born again, because you were cleansed in his shed blood. And the life that you possess if it is eternal, is of him.

Where is that life going to? The Bible teaches you that if you die physically you will be absent from this body, but you will be present with the Lord, to him. The Bible teaches us that if the Lord Jesus Christ were to come again tonight, as well he may we shall not precede them who sleep in Jesus, but we shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, to him So whether we are alive and remain or whether we die physically, the life that we possess, if it is eternal because it is Jesus Christ dwelling within us by his divine spirit it having come from him is going to him of him and to him. What is there in between? What was there between Bethlehem and Mount of Olives? Vocation.

The purpose for which the humanity of Christ was presented to the Father. What is there between your new birth and your restoration to the presence of Christ himself at your death or physical rapture? Vocation. The purpose which God created you and now has redeemed you.

33 years may well be. 50 years perhaps. 10 years.

A few days. God only knows how long you have between the time his life comes back to indwell you by the Holy Spirit at your new birth and your call to be in his gracious presence forever. God only knows how long

you have.

We only know this, that however long it may be, however short it may be it is for one purpose only that on earth our humanity may be so presented to Jesus Christ that he may implement in us and do through us that purpose of God as he once 1900 years ago presented his humanity to the Father for the Father to implement and bring to pass through him his eternal purpose. I am crucified with Christ. The person that has no legitimate right to occupy my redeemed humanity.

I am crucified with Christ. I was taken with him in all my guilt and shame to the place of execution and buried. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, now Christ liveth in me.

He has come to re-inhabit by his divine spirit my redeemed humanity, to live his life through me. So it is of him, it is through him, and it is to him. All things to me to live literally is Christ.

Christ in the present tense. Christ saying every step of the way, every moment of time as it dawns I am. So what's your business and mine? Tells you in the next verse.

Shouldn't be a chapter division there. Verse 1 of chapter 12 I beseech you therefore therefore is a word you always use at the conclusion of an argument. I arrived at the station ten minutes after the train left.

Therefore what? I missed it. That's the word therefore. Therefore I beseech you therefore brethren, wherefore herefore of him, through him to him, all things, therefore present all you've got left your body, a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God as he the Lord Jesus offered his body to the Father offer your body to Jesus Christ.

So that as the Father lived in him and through him, Jesus Christ may live in and through you. I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercy of God that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. That's all you've got to do.

Your body then with all its powers, your motivating mechanism your mind, your emotion, your will, your whole human personality is given over without reserve, without question, without challenge the totalitarian sovereignty of the indwelling Christ in the power of his resurrection. And he is the one now who thinks through your mind, reacts with your affections loves with your heart and wills with your will. Your whole being is given over to him in totalitarian sovereignty.

He monopolizes your humanity as the Father monopolized his humanity and you will not be conformed to this world, you won't ape this world you won't try to be fashionable in this world, you won't try to be patted on the back by the world, you'll not be conformed to this world any more than he was to the world in which he lived but you will be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove as he did then what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God and every day of your life as a Christian becomes the glorious fulfillment of a divine end for you are created, recreated in Christ Jesus being his workmanship unto good works which God hath before ordained that you should walk in them. You were redeemed into a program you were redeemed into that purpose which God has saved you to fulfill a story that this story might be told that was written in the eternal age of the past because you are available. Now that's Christianity and Christianity is Christ inuity as the father lived in and through him so Jesus Christ lives in and through you of him, through him, to him, all things this left him with no margin for self-pleasing, this leaves you no margin for self-pleasing Romans 15, 3, even Christ pleased not himself.

If you live by Jesus Christ as he lived by the father, how much will you have the right to please yourself? You will have no right to please yourself. That's why 95% of churchgoers who are born again Christians are not prepared for the kind of life that God declares to be the minimum expectation of God in the forgiven sinner for true discipleship for there is always alas within us that resisting God, Christ hating and repudiating self that says I will do as I please then do as you please but you won't please God and in the last day you'll stand before him redeemed in the blood of Christ to spend eternity with him standing in the heap of ashes of that wood, hay, and stuff for which you expended a wasted life, perfect in person because you're clothed with the righteousness of Christ redeemed forever never having fulfilled that vocation for which you were redeemed for there is a cross not only for Christ who gets you to heaven there is a cross for you which alone makes you fit for earth. He died for you that you might get to heaven.

You die with him that he may make your heart heaven on earth on the way to heaven the place where he exercises his unchallenged jurisdiction in total sovereignty. These are God's terms for discipleship. This is genuine consecration my willingness for Jesus Christ to be himself exclusively day and night clothed with my humanity recognizing full well that this involves for me a cross not on which he dies but a cross on which by my free consent I die.

Is that your quality of faith? Is that your quality of Christianity? In God's estimate there is no other. Let us pray. Enable us we pray thee Lord Jesus to understand the true implications of the cross that whosoever there be among us that taketh not up his cross and followeth thee to the place of execution can never be thy disciple that whosoever there be among us who does not forsake all that he has in his heart including the right to please himself never under any circumstances can be thy disciple.

Save us we pray thee from being forgiven sinners who never became disciples. Forgive us we pray thee from getting self-centered and save us from the awful shame of getting to heaven without ever having been useful on earth of claiming our inheritance in Christ without ever once giving him his inheritance in us. Our bodies wholly presented as his body was wholly presented.

Save us in other words dear Lord we pray thee from this anemic shallow conception of the Christian life that only serves self-interest and never enthrones deity within human personality. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

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