

# The Scarlet Thread of Redemption

by Major Ian Thomas

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*Major Ian Thomas's sermon explores the essential role of Christ's life within believers for true redemption and functionality in their Christian walk.*

**Duration:** 40:18

**Scripture:** Leviticus 17:11, John 1:4, Romans 5:10, Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 5:7, 2 Corinthians 5:14, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:11, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 9:22

**Topics:** "Redemption", "Dependence on Christ"

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## Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the concept of redemption through the metaphor of a lamp, illustrating that while we are created with a body and soul, we cannot produce righteousness on our own. He explains that true functionality comes from receiving the life of Christ within us, which enables us to shine with His light. Thomas highlights the importance of both the death and life of Christ, stating that while His death reconciles us, it is His life that saves us and empowers us to live righteously. He warns against the danger of being a 'carnal Christian,' relying on our own efforts rather than allowing Christ to live through us. Ultimately, the sermon underscores the necessity of repentance and dependence on Christ for true sanctification and functionality in our Christian walk.

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## Transcript

I'm not going to stay long with this, just to remind you, if you were here last evening, beautiful picture of how God created man, with a body on the outside. That's where what is on the inside is communicated to the outside world, but the body doesn't produce light. On the inside there's a behavior mechanism, the filament.

That's the way the work's done, and that's where the light is produced. But even though the bulb has a body and a filament, it still doesn't produce light, because it wasn't created to produce light. It was created only to receive that upon which it must depend, if it is to fulfill the function for which it was made.

And that's how God made you and me. We've got a body and a soul, mind, emotion, and will, a behavior mechanism, but it doesn't produce the righteousness of God, because the fruits of righteousness, Philippians 1.11, and elsewhere called the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ. In him was life.

That life that was in him was the light of men. It's only the presence of Christ, the Creator, Redeemer, within the creature that enables us to function for the purpose which God made us. You and I were made not to produce righteousness, light.

You and I were created to receive that upon which we must depend, if he in us, Christ, can enable us to fulfill the function for which we were created. In other words, let me say it again, God himself, Christ, alive in you, the origin of his own image, the source of his own activity, the dynamic of his own demands, the cause at all times of his own effect. That's why the Lord Jesus, playing though the Creator, the role of preacher, though the God who made man, being the kind of man that he is God had made, said, without my father even I can do nothing, because I've been born a human being, and you can do without me no more than I as man can do without my father.

Without my father I can do nothing. The father who lives in me, to whom I make myself in totality available by his indwelling Holy Spirit, the father who lives within me, he does the work. So if you see me shine, says the Lord Jesus, with the glory of God, don't congratulate me while I'm here on earth as man.

Congratulate my father, because he that has seen me as man has seen my father behaving as God. Isn't it simple? Do you get it? Marvelous! But what happened? Well, when man fell, as by one man sin came into the world, dirt at the point of contact, because God created man just as he, as somebody, created Islam with a body and a behavior mechanism, totally useless, non-functional, dysfunctional, except that it was given a point of contact, the point of contact where it can receive what it takes to shine. But the contact's got to be clean, but when as by one man's sin came to the world there was dirt at the point of contact, and the moment the dirt comes in the light goes out and the light goes off.

And we described this last night, what's the only remedy? Get the dirt out. But that isn't adequate, because even though you get the dirt out and you've got a nice clean redeemed lamp, for dirt out is redemption. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, but that doesn't put the light on it, because Christ didn't just come to redeem us so that we might, being forgiven, have a place in heaven.

He came to restore us to function. So the fact that you've been to the cross and said thank you for dying for me is not going to make you functional. It will allow the Father to accept you in the beloved, remembering your sins no more, because they've been blotted out like a thick cloud, buried in the depths of the sea, put away behind God's back, as far as the east is from the west, eternity and infinity.

That's all gloriously true, but it doesn't make you functional. And that's the poverty of the preaching of the gospel today. You say the gospel is to come to Jesus, get out of hell and go to heaven, period.

Now you're saved. You're not, except from the penalty of a sin, but that isn't salvation. Because it doesn't take just the death of Christ to save you, it takes the life of Christ to save you.

Know where that comes in the Bible? You should. You should have it heavily underlined. Romans chapter 5 and verse 10.

If when we were enemies, dirty in, alienated from the life of God, dead in trespasses and sins, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, cleansed, forgiven, redeemed. Is that it? Is that the story? Is that all? If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, much more than knowing your sins, I thought that was salvation. Uh-uh.

You mean much more than going to heaven when you're dead? Uh-uh. Much more. Being reconciled, dirt out, we shall be saved by his life.

Life in. Dirt out, what's that in the Bible? Redemption. What did it demand? The death of Christ for us.

Life in. What's that called in the Bible? New birth. Regeneration.

The renewing of the Holy Ghost. On the basis of dirt out, life in. On the basis of the redemptive act, the regenerated purpose.

Putting God back into a man. Because if when we were enemies, dirt in, when Adam fell, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, the cross, much more, being reconciled by his death on the cross, we shall be saved now by his life, because he rose again from the dead for the first time in all human history on the day of Pentecost to come and reinvade the redeemed humanity of 120 men and women who at last saw why Christ died for them. Not to get them out of hell and into heaven, but to get to him out of heaven into them.

Isn't that glorious? That's the Christian life. So, if it takes his life to save us on the basis of his death that reconciles us, what can we say? To me, to live is Christ. I am crucified with Christ, identified with him in death, judicially executed, God reckoning for his sake who died in my place that the debt's been paid, the dirt is out, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.

But please don't get me wrong, I'm not patched up, I'm not now as a forgiven sinner here on earth to polish my image and draw from the illimitable depth of my personality. I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I. Christ lives in me, and the life I live in this body, he operating within my soul, I live by that disposition, cold faith that lets him do it. I'm walking by faith, I'm living in the spirit.

This is the gospel. Marvelous. Well, dirt's out, that's redemption, life in, that's regeneration.

Now, when this lamp is screwed into the socket, the dirt out with the light in, the light goes on instantly, and the only evidence that the dirt is out is that the light is in, and the only evidence that the light is in is that the light is on, okay? So, dirt out, redemption, life in, new birth, regeneration, and light on, sanctification. Because we talked about sanctification the other day, to be sanctified means that you're intelligently used for the intelligent purpose for which intelligent creator intelligently created you. And when you put this lamp in the socket, you hope it'll going to be sanctified.

You see, all these lamps are being sanctified. None of these lamps would boast, I can produce light, just look at me, uh-uh. They're only producing light because they're in a state of repentance.

Repentance isn't just doing something wrong and being sorry that you did it, that's baby repentance. Anybody can be sorry for what they've done if it's wrong, but especially if they've been found out. But that isn't repentance.

You should be sorry if you've done something wrong, you should admit it, and claim that cleansing through the shed blood of Christ, the finality of the cross. But that isn't real repentance. Real repentance is hilariously exciting.

It's facing the facts of life. It's saying, I'm a lamp, I was never created to produce light, I was created to receive that upon which I must depend. And a Christian who is repenting is one who says, I can't shine for

Jesus, I can't do my best for God, I wasn't created to do that, I was created to receive the life of my creator so that he can live his life in and through me and communicate to the world his righteousness.

That was all brought to an unhappy end when Adam believed the devil's lie that he could be a man without God and stopped shining. Ichabod, the glory has departed, but Jesus came to take the dirt out, and I'm glad he's done so, but now he's come to live in me in the way that he first intended when he created Adam. But even though he lives within me, I can do no more for him now than I could before the dirt was out.

All I can do is let him live his life in me by his Holy Spirit, play that role in my soul, that instinct plays in the animal, teach my mind, so control my emotions, so direct my will in the fullness of the Spirit, so that he governs my behavior. And other people looking at me see Christ behaving, then I'm functional on the only basis that a man was ever intended to be functional, the presence of the creator within the creature, God in the man who is indispensable to his humanity. The problem is that even though we have been redeemed and come to the Christ who died for us, to have our sins forgiven so we can get to heaven instead of hell, we don't repent and admit that we can no more be the Christian we've become of ourselves, than we can become the Christian we're supposed to be of ourselves.

As you have received through simple childlike faith that takes and says thank you, so walk in him, because you're going to be saved by his life as you have been reconciled by his death. So where's the problem? No problem in this land. It's sanctified the moment it's redeemed and regenerated.

The moment the dirt is out and the light is in, the light is on. The problem with you and me is that the moment we come to Christ for redemption and instantly in that moment of time according to God's pledge we're sealed by the gift to us of his indwelling life in the person of the Holy Ghost, we lock him up in the cellar. Foolish Galatians, who's bewitched you? You've begun a brand new life by God's gift to you of the Holy Ghost, you ignore his presence as though Jesus Christ might just as well still be dead, or stay in heaven, and you try to be made perfect in the flesh.

You try to polish your own image, when within you is the only source of life. That's a carnal Christian. And when I talk about a carnal Christian, I'm not talking about somebody who's on the bottle, or run away with the neighbor's wife, or gone on drugs.

I'm talking about 95% of churchgoers who are truly redeemed on the way to heaven. I'm talking about church deacons, I'm talking about pastors in the pulpit, I'm talking about missionaries on the field, I'm talking about evangelists, all of whom are polishing their image, trying to shine for God with no little sincerity, because they don't know anything better to do, and they burn out. You see, it's like an oil lamp having oil in the lamp, but the wick isn't in the oil.

What would happen to an oil lamp that was regenerate, it's got oil in the lamp, but the wick isn't in the oil? What happens to it? All it can do is burn out. You try to get light from an oil lamp with oil in the lamp, but no wick in the oil, and all you'll find is that the wick burns and ends up in a heap of ashes. That's the wood, the hay, and the stubble of a baby carnal Christian lamp.

But of course, that isn't the Christian lamp, because there is only one Christian lamp, Jesus. But if you haven't got the wick in the oil, you'll burn out. Sincerely trying to produce light, but all you produce is a cloud of smoke.

Simple, isn't it? So, dirt out, redemption, life in, regeneration, but there's a resistance. Where's the resistance? Well, we've talked about it. Ego, self, the flesh, that is still there even though you've been redeemed.

Never let anybody persuade you that the moment you've accepted Christ as your savior, that sin principle's been eradicated. It hasn't. Don't kid yourself.

Don't try to kid anybody else. The spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh lusts against the spirit. Walk in the spirit, keep the wick in the oil, and you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

What does that presuppose? That if you don't keep the wick in the oil, if you don't draw upon the life of Jesus, you will fulfill the lust of the flesh. Don't kid yourself. And everybody knows if you don't.

I've seen a woman stand up in a meeting and say, since I was born again I've never ever sinned. Was anybody impressed? No, least of all her family. So, don't try to kid yourself that all the dammock nature is going so long as you're here on earth to plague you till the day you see Jesus face to face, but then you'll be delivered not only from the penalty of sin by what he did for you, in measure on earth from the power of sin because of who he is in you, in that day you'll be delivered from the presence of sin, and then you'll shine in such a way that seeing him as he is once more you will be like him.

Then you've been evangelized. So, dirt in, life out, life off, dirt out, life in, life on. So, repentance is a procedure.

It's moment by moment, walking in the spirit, coming to every situation, recognizing that you can't, only he can, bowing yourself out, bowing him in and saying, Lord Jesus, thanks. You always said you would, and does. And you reign in life by one Christ Jesus.

You walk in the spirit. In every situation, pausing long enough to say, Lord Jesus, I can't, you never said I could, you can, always said you would. So, the smartest thing for me to do if I can't and you can is to let you do it.

Thanks, you're in business. And others at last see not what you can do for Jesus, and you hang around for them to congratulate you, pump you on the back and say, my what commitment. Instead of that they'll see Christ himself behaving as then two thousand years ago they saw the father in the son behaving.

And then you'll know there's only one person to be congratulated. Jesus, our Lord. For of him, through him, and to him are all things, to whom alone be glory.

Romans 11, 36. If it's of him and through him and to him, to whom alone be glory, where do you come in? You don't, that's where you go out. That's why the next verses present your body, a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God.

It's your only smart, reasonable, intelligent service. Just be a good lamb and let the power be revealed. Christ in you, your only hope of shining.

Colossians 1, 27. Christ living in your heart, your only hope of being restored to glory, because he's the source of glory. The origin in you, as the father then was the origin in him, of his own image.

The source in you, as the father then was the source in him, of his own activity. The dynamic in you, as then the father was the dynamic in the son, of his own demands. God working in you, both to will and do

his good pleasure.

Marvellous. The cause in you, as the father was the cause in the son, of his own affair. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.

Do it. Faithful is he that calleth, what does he call you to? Holiness. Well you can't produce holiness, you can't polish your own image, you can't try to keep the law or copy Jesus.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who has called you to holiness, who will also do it, because he in you will be the source of holiness. What would be illogical about anything to which he calls you if he, having called you to it, is prepared to do it? Well, nothing. But if you try to do it, you blew it.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it. So what's the best thing to do? Let him. And that in the Bible is called faith.

Now we've got to race on, because I've already almost eaten up the time to which I'm limited this morning, so we can get all these last three sessions on the one video. Having leaned against the other one, I'll probably tread on that one. So we're going to take a panoramic view, and this is exciting.

I mean, we're just getting to the exciting part of the gospel, not that Jesus died for us, marvellous, absolutely imperative as that was. But that isn't exciting, except that that was the price he had to pay, for which we can only be profoundly sorry. My sin added to your load.

The exciting part is why he did it, and the consequence is that you and I can enjoy it, because he did it. So, very quickly, turn to Hebrews in chapter 9, and I'm going to move pretty swiftly. Chapter 9 of the epistle of the Hebrews, in verse 22, almost all things are by the law purged with blood.

Without shedding of blood, no remission. No remission. Now, what law is this talking about? Almost all things are by the law purged with blood.

Well, the Mosaic law. The law that God gave to Moses, etching it with his own finger on tables of stone when he was on Mount Sinai. The Old Testament law.

Perfectly valid, divinely authored, and according to that law, without the shedding of blood, no remission. Sin cannot be covered. And you see that scarlet thread weeding itself right the way through the Old Testament scriptures until it comes to its glorious consummation in the one whom John the Baptist describes as the Lamb of God, who doesn't cover sin, remission, but takes it away.

Redemption. Reconciliation. And we need to recognize the difference between what was demanded by the law then, according to the Mosaic code, and what the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross that entitled him to say when he had done it, it is finished.

It's all over. So there's a scarlet thread. It begins in Genesis chapter 3, 15.

You may or may not have time to follow me, but here it is, Genesis 3, 15. This is the first utterance that God gave to a plan that was fashioned in the heart of God before ever the world was, because Revelation chapter 13, the Lord Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. In other words, what happened when the Lord Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose again was simply the implementation of a plan that God had settled in his heart in the eternal ages of the past, before ever this little planet was put into space, and before man was created to walk on it.

Genesis 3, 15. First public utterance. And it was made on the occasion when man sinned, which demanded the introduction of the plan that God had already conceived, for it was on the day that Adam fell, when the dirt came in, and the light went out, and the light went off.

Genesis 3, 15. Addressing the devil, this is God's first covenant, said he to the devil, I'll put enmity between you and the woman, her seed and your seed. It, the seed of that woman, Jesus, to be conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of Mary, it, that seed, will bruise your head, he'll destroy you.

But in the process, that verse continues, your seed will bruise his heel, he'll hang on a cross. So, the bruised head and the bruised heel, where through death the Lord Jesus would destroy him that had the power of death. Through death he'd kill, death, death, and bring immortality to life.

So, that was the first utterance that God gave, the shedding of the blood of the seed of a woman, whose heel would be bruised, on a lonely hill outside the city wall. All those millenniums later. Then, in the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis, Cain and Abel, and they were both religious.

They both would have been in church last Sunday, they both would be in church next Sunday. They both brought their offering to the Lord. They didn't deny the existence of God, but to one, Cain, who brought his offering, God said no, and to the other, Abel, who brought his offering, God said yes.

And Cain was man, as all religious people are, who are too proud to come to God, God's way. It was the first murder committed in the history of the world. It was committed by a religious man too proud to come to God, God's way.

What was God's way? Abel, because God told him to, brought a little lamb and shed its blood. So, in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 4, you read, Abel brought a better sacrifice than that of Cain, and for that reason was accounted righteous. And he, though physically dead, still speaks.

In other words, Abel still has something to say to you and to me today. Religious as you may be, fanatically religious, as Saul of Tarsus was, and the early Pharisees who crucified God's son, fanatically religious. But Cain was rejected, because Abel listened to what God had to say, took him seriously, acted on the assumption that was true, and God said yes.

Cain said, stuff and nonsense. I'll come to God any way I please, and I'll worship God any way I please. He can take what I give him, and God said thanks for nothing.

He brought all the food to the ground, because he happened to be a farmer, and it was more convenient for him to do that, and so his religion was the religions of convenience. That's Christianity without Christ. The world's riddled with it, and it's a dead, sterile imitation of the real thing.

And of course, as you know, Cain murdered Abel. And first epistle of John, chapter 3, verse 12, meet and turn to it, not as Cain, he's using him as an illustration, so that you're not proud and religious as he was, not as Cain, who murdered his brother Abel, because his own works were evil in the practice of religion, and his brother's righteous, because he, by faith, in other words, God said something to him, and he acted on the assumption that what God said was true, and had the right to say it. Cain murdered Abel because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

He was of that wicked one. He was motivated by the devil in the practice of religion. Incredible.

So that was the blood for the individual, Abel. But then you turn to Exodus, chapter 12, and you'll find there that God commands Moses to take the blood of an unspotted, unblemished lamb, a male, and in verse 46 of Exodus 12, not a bone of its body is to be broken, because you see, when the Lord Jesus hung on the cross, they came to smash the legs of those who were being crucified, so they wouldn't desecrate Friday Sabbath, which was a Sabbath before Saturday Sabbath, two Sabbaths in a row. Christ was crucified on Thursday.

Well, they didn't break his legs. Why? Well, one of the soldiers said he's dead. The other said, don't be so stupid.

Nobody's dead that soon. Not by crucifixion. But they looked more closely.

He was dead. Because Jesus said, no man takes my life from me. I'll lay it down.

So they didn't smash his legs. That's why Exodus, chapter 12, verse 46, says of that unblemished lamb, not a bone of its body was to be broken. Who was it for? Well, every household head had to take the blood of that unblemished lamb, a male, a bone of his body was not to be broken, and paint the doorposts and the lintel.

And God said, when the angel of my judgment comes, he will pass over when he sees the blood. So 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 7, says Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us, because that was a shadow only of the good thing that was yet to come, the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of the tribe of Judah, the house of David, to be born yet in the city of Bethlehem. But that was the shedding of blood for the family.

Now you go to Leviticus, chapter 16, and you find Moses giving instructions to Aaron, his brother, who became the head of the Levitical priesthood, who was allowed alone, only once a year on pain of death, to go through the veil into the holiest of all, first taking a blood sacrifice for himself, a bullock, and for his family, because they were all sinners, and then to take the blood sacrifice, the scapegoat, for the nation, for the sins of my people. Leviticus 16. So you get Genesis 4, shedding of blood for the individual, Exodus 12, shedding of blood for the family, Leviticus 16, shedding of blood for the nation.

Here's the scarlet thread that runs all the way through the Old Testament, until finally John the Baptist says, Behold the Lamb of God. Who crucified him? The common people on the street? No, they heard him gladly. It was the theologians, the religious leaders of his day, they crucified him.

They incited the crowd to mill around that Roman cross, and gaze at him, and shout away with him, crucify him, we'll not have this man to reign over us, fill our stomachs, yes, feed us, heal our aches and pains, yes, any day, put on a miraculous show, we'll be there, but reign over us, never. Crucify him. Who incited them? The religious leaders of his day, who claimed the right to reinterpret the Bible, to make it say what they thought it ought to have said, said, Jesus, had you believed Moses, you'd have believed me, he wrote of me.

So the first murder in the history of the world was committed by a religious man, Cain, too proud to come to God's way, and the worst murder in the history of the world, when men crucified God's son, was committed by religious men, too proud to come to God's way. Are you just religious? Are you saying? Is your name Cain or Abel? Well, that was the scarlet thread that found its consummation at last, in the birth of a little baby at Bethlehem, just signed in the eternal purpose of God, slain before the foundation of the

world, to be the one in whom your sin and mine would be judged and executed in the person of another. Now, that's the scarlet thread, that was the Old Testament law that demanded the blood of bulls and goats and heifers and doves and lambs.

All right, now get back to the epistle of the Hebrews, if you're not still there, and look at chapter 10. The law having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of those things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the commas there unto perfect, can never, can never, not even the blood of Abel's lamb could make him perfect or take away his sins. Not even the blood of the Passover lamb could take away their sins.

Not even the blood that was shed and painted upon, sprinkled upon the mercy seat in the holiest of all by the high priest, not even that could take away sins or blot out our transgressions. It was a shadow only of something good to come. In those sacrifices, verse 3, there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

But God's good news to you and for me is that, for Jesus' sake, he'll blot out our transgressions and remember our sins no more. So, verse 4 of chapter 10, it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Not possible.

And for that reason, verse 11, every priest standeth daily ministering, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. Well, you say, that must be an exercise in futility to demand the sacrifice of these birds and beasts that can't take away sin. But here's the good news.

Verse 12, but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice, how many? One, for sins forever. He sat down on the right hand of God. There was no chair in the holiest of holies.

That's why the high priest could never sit down, because his work was never done. But when the Lord Jesus accomplished the one sacrifice for sins forever, he sat down, because he could cry and know that it was true. Tetatespieae, paid in full.

Father, mission accomplished. It is finished. Verse 14, for by one offering he had perfected forever them that are sanctified.

It was one sacrifice for sins forever, the finality of the cross. The Lord Jesus will never shed his blood again, his body will never be broken again, he's alive forevermore, and his priesthood for us is the priesthood after the order of an endless life. He never has to be replaced.

He is our advocate now forever at the Father's right hand. Marvelous. Well now, how is it that the blood of the Lord Jesus could do forever what the blood of bulls and goats and rams and doves and lambs never could? Well we understand, we have to understand the significance of the blood, and the Bible makes it abundantly clear.

I have to rattle it out to you in a hurry, note it down if you'd like, but it's Leviticus 17 11, the life is in the blood. Leviticus 17 11, Genesis 9 4, the life is in the blood. Genesis 9 4, Deuteronomy 12 23, the life is in the blood.

Deuteronomy 12 23, and that's only just a handful of the passages that declare to us that the significance of blood in the Old Testament was life, not death, life. The life is in the blood. It's the shedding of blood that spells death, the forfeiture of life.

Just as darkness, as I told you last evening, is the absence of light, so death is the absence of life. So if you're involved in a nasty car wreck and you see somebody badly hurt, bleeding to death, you rip your shirt off, make a tourniquet, and you keep blood in the body, and that'll keep life in the body. But if that person is taken to hospital, they've discovered that person's lost so much blood already, they're on the threshold of death, what do they do? Borrow life from somebody else, and give a blood transfusion.

And in that, of course, you get a glorious picture of God's perfect salvation. Reconciled to God by his death, blood transaction, saved by his life, blood transfusion. The blood transaction took place on the cross.

The blood transfusion took place at Pentecost. And by that spiritual new birth that takes place instantly when any boy, girl, man, or woman claims cleansing through the blood transaction, his death for them, immediately they receive his life in them. Marvelous.

This is the gospel. That's why it's only Christ in you that is the hope of glory. He himself, the origin in you of his own image, the one who alone can make you shine.

Not with your glory, but with his. Well, the life within the blood. Well, what was the difference between the blood that was shed in the Old Testament and the blood he shed? Well, you'll find that very quickly.

Acts 20 and verse 28. Wish we had more time, but we don't. Acts 20 and verse 28.

Paul is admonishing the spiritual leaders of the church in Ephesus, and he says there's one thing more important than another that you explain to them. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. There's only one person who has ever ordained a person into ministry, that's God the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has made you overseers not to entertain the church, or please them, or tow the party line, or play to the gallery, uh-uh, to feed the church of God, which he, God, hath purchased with his, God's, own blood. So, whose life was shed on the cross? God's life. Not the blood of bulls, and goats, and heifers, and lambs, that can never take away sin, but God's blood.

What blood did the Lord Jesus shed? Not animal life. It wasn't just a physical death, that never would have redeemed us. That's neo-evangelicalism.

That would make him nothing more than a martyr, just a beautiful life, who paid the price of being too progressive for his day and age, offended his peers. That's all sentimental nonsense. When Jesus died, the blood of God was shed.

He forfeited that life that he alone of all mankind possessed, and therefore the only man on earth of all mankind who could die, you and me. Turn to 2nd Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 14. 2nd Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 14, and this verse maybe will have a deeper significance for you.

Paul says, the love of Christ constrains us. I'm overwhelmed that it ever could have happened. The love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, who was that? Well, the Lord Jesus.

He was the one who died for the all. If one died for all, then were the all for whom the one died, dead. One died for the all who were already dead.

Now, I asked you the other day, have you ever seen a dead man die? We say, well no, of course not, because a dead man can't die, because he hasn't got any life to lose. But one did. One died for the all who were already dead.

Who were the all who were already dead? Well, the whole race of fallen man, for in Adam all died. They were all born the heirs of a fallen Adam, destitute, alienated from the life of God. But one had that life to lose, and that was Jesus, because he was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

He was God's incarnate Son. It was God in Christ who hung on that cross. That was the price that had to be paid, and that was the life, the life he laid down, that the Father restored to him, God's life.

And that is the life that he, by his presence in you, restores to you, the life of God. So that by his presence you become a partaker of the divine nature. Born from above, alive again, re-inhabited by deity, the creator within the creature, Christ in the Christian, putting God back into the man.

So then you can say, if I'm alive at all, from God's point of view, to be alive for me now is Christ.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32248.mp3>

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