

The Stamp of Reality

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being wholly available for God's divine activity and being re-inhabited by God, as the normality of being a Christian.

Duration: 45:54

Scripture: Acts 1:1

Topics: "The Body of Christ", "Genuine Faith"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes that the early church was characterized by joy, fearlessness, and a deep connection to Jesus Christ, who continued His work through them. He argues that the Book of Acts should be seen as the ongoing acts of Jesus through His church, rather than just the apostles' actions. Thomas highlights the importance of being fully available to God, allowing Him to work through us as His body on earth, and warns against the dangers of hypocrisy, as exemplified by Ananias and Sapphira. He calls for a genuine commitment to living out the Christian faith, where believers are not just seeking personal salvation but are actively participating in God's mission. Ultimately, he challenges listeners to embrace their identity as members of Christ's body, fully surrendered to His will and purpose.

Transcript

It's been said of the early church that they were incorrigibly happy, utterly unafraid, and nearly always in trouble. And that's a pretty accurate description of those early believers. And the record that is given to us in the book of the Acts is always refreshing.

In a sense, the title given to that book, as I'm sure has been pointed out to you on many occasions, is somewhat of a misnomer. It's titled the Acts of the Apostles. But the author, Luke, from whose pen, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we have received the Gospel of Luke, makes it quite clear that it isn't a record of the Acts of the Apostles, except incidentally.

It is essentially a record of the continued Acts of Jesus Christ. The former treaties, he writes in the first verse of the first chapter, the former treaties, that is, Luke's Gospel have I made of Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. And I'm going to write you another book in so many words, he says, and this book is going to contain the story of what the Lord Jesus continued to do and what he continued to teach.

The only essential difference is the humanity with which he clothed his activity. Luke's Gospel is the story of all that he accomplished as he walked this earth, doing and teaching. In the humanity that the Father provided for him, miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit and presented to him by the Father on that first Christmas morning, born at Bethlehem, in that flesh and blood in which then it beheld him in all points to be like unto his brethren.

For this record, Luke continues, is the story of what the Lord Jesus continued to do and continued to teach, but clothed now with that new body that was provided for him by the Father on the day of Pentecost. That new body which is his church. Initially 120 members, individual men and women who at his command were waiting to enter into the good of that for which he died.

Who gave himself for us, only that he might give himself to us. And on that day of Pentecost, the Lord Jesus in the person of God the Holy Spirit came to occupy that new body. 120 men and women to whom were immediately added on that first day of Pentecost, 3,000 other men, women, boys and girls.

So that the body enlarged almost immediately to 3,120 men and women. And thereafter the Lord added daily, such as were being saved. This was the new body.

In which the Lord Jesus was to walk again the streets of the city of Jerusalem. And wind his way through the village streets in the district around until not only in Jerusalem and in Judea, but in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. He would continue to do his ancient work seeking and saving that which was lost.

And to you and to me of course in the 20th century in 1974 has been given the fantastic privilege of being added as they were to that new body of Jesus Christ. So that he clothed with our humanity may continue today here in the city of Newcastle and elsewhere throughout this great continent to the outermost parts of the earth. Continue to do and continue to teach the things that he then began to do and began to teach.

What an amazing privilege it is to be a Christian. I don't mean by that just the comfortable feeling inside that one day you'll get to heaven and you won't go to hell. That's purely incidental as I trust we have clearly understood already.

Yesterday, for when God sent his son into this world it wasn't primary to get men out of hell and into heaven. Though that's gloriously true and we will never cease to be profoundly thankful. But primarily the purpose of God was to restore man to his true humanity and that a man might be restored to his true humanity was the purpose of God to get God once more out of heaven into men.

Whether in time or eternity becomes from that moment gloriously irrelevant. That's why of course the apostle Paul was in somewhat of a quandary as he indicates in the first chapter you will remember of his epistle to the Philippians when he says I'm in a strait for twigs too. Because to me to live is Christ and to die is gain because it will still be for me to live Christ except that I will be delivered from the disadvantage of being cramped by this physical body that learned so many bad habits before I was converted.

And is still subject to the corruption and mortality that was the unhappy consequence of man's fall. What a day in other words says Paul the apostle when I will continue to enjoy the life that I now enjoy the life of Jesus Christ but without any physical limitations that are imposed upon me by a corruptible body. Because in that day when I'm absent from this body and present with my Lord I'll have a new body that's incorruptible and immortal.

And that will impose no limitations upon my full enjoyment of that which is now mine the restored presence of my creator God given back to his redeemed creature man. And of course this is what he meant in that lovely verse that was sent to us by Peter Banks in his greetings. This was the concern of the early church for all those who named Christ as their redeemer that they might enter fully into that for which the blood of Jesus Christ was shed.

I love the way that it's put in the amplified New Testament Paul's concern for the new converts in Ephesus was this. That you may really come to know practically through experience for yourselves the love of Christ which far surpasses mere knowledge without experience. That you may be filled through all your being unto the fullness of God that is that you may have the richest measure of the divine presence and become a body here on earth physically alive a body wholly filled and flooded with God himself.

Amplified New Testament more strictly rendered from the original his concern as it was the concern of all the early church was that every boy, every girl, every man, every woman who in repentance toward God received Christ as redeemer should have the fullest possible measure of the divine presence and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God himself. So that it became patently obvious 24 hours every day and 7 days every week and 365 days every year that this individual as creature has been re-inhabited by God his creator and by his own free volition has become wholly available for his divine activity. Because that's normality that's to be restored to our true function so that in our flesh and blood God's mind will and purpose once more becomes incarnate translated into reality.

This of course was underlined in the 5th chapter of the book of the Acts if you have your Bibles open turn to the 5th chapter. And in the 12th verse, the 12th verse of the 5th chapter of the book of the Acts and by the hands of the apostles, by the hands of the apostles, their hands yes, but Christ's activity, his activity clothed with their humanity, their hands, their feet, their lips, their eyes, their ears, their minds, their hearts. But wholly filled and flooded with God himself.

Individual members in particular of that new body corporate of which he Jesus Christ is the head, the life content and the only one exclusively who has the right to call the shots. This was marvellously appreciated by the early believers. They recognised that as a member of the body of Jesus Christ he is God and head of that body was the only one who had the right to tell them where to go and what to do and what to say.

And they did as they were told. That's why they were so marvellously affected because their activity was simply the divine action of the one who now inhabited their bodies with his divine presence. What fantastic things the Lord Jesus Christ could do in the city of Newcastle and this surrounding district if each individual member of his body was truly available to him for him to call the shots, be told what to do and do as they were told.

All God would be let loose. Of course he would. And that's what it means to be a Christian.

Wouldn't it be embarrassing if every morning your hands had a committee meeting under the joint chairmanship of the thumbs to decide what they were going to do on your behalf for the rest of the day. Wouldn't you find that very embarrassing? With the best will in the world it would be a source of unparalleled embarrassment to you if every individual member of your physical body decided that they had the right to do what they considered was in your best interest. And yet tragically enough that's how we behave as members of the body of Jesus Christ.

No challenge so often to our sincerity or our enthusiasm or our good intentions. But we're just completely missing the point. If you had hands that decided to do what they considered to be in your best interest you'd find they're blowing your nose when you wanted to scratch your back.

Your legs would be sitting down when you wanted to go for a walk. Can't you imagine how very embarrassing it must be for the Lord Jesus as the head of the body when we get into committee and decide what we're going to do on his behalf. Little wonder he's so disinterested so often in what we are promoting in his name.

Not so in the early church. By the hands of the apostles. Hilariously excited about all that God was accomplishing in spite of them but because of who he was living where he did.

In them. And by their consent let loose to do his ancient work in the world in which they lived. Little wonder therefore that it goes on to say in the 14th verse that believers were the more added to the Lord.

Multitudes both of men and women because that was his business. The Lord Jesus is the son of man who came into this world to seek and to save that which is lost. What do you imagine the Lord Jesus would do through you and me if we were constantly available for his divine activity as the one who came to seek and save that which was lost.

Well of course daily they would be added to the Lord such as are being saved. Added to the Lord beautiful expression it's used more than once here and elsewhere. Because this is exactly what they understood by becoming a Christian added to the Lord.

Not becoming Baptists or Methodists or Presbyterians or Plymouth Brethren. There are many members of his body in all those distinct denominational groups but that wasn't their primary purpose in those days. As a matter of fact they didn't have that disadvantage because the church of Jesus Christ wasn't splintered then as it is now.

It was just one corporate body of which the Lord Jesus was the head. And their primary concern was not to say if you are one of us you must be one of his. Their primary delight was to say if you are one of his you must be one of us.

Added to the Lord. One small boy said to his friend why doesn't your dad come to the same church that my dad goes to. And his friend replied he belongs to a different abomination.

Well the one thing we can be absolutely certain that the different abominations will be with us until the Lord comes just like the poor. So there is no point in trying to get rid of them. Just let us recognize that throughout the world in every distinct religious group there are those who are in the invisible church of Jesus Christ.

Which is his body on earth which he inhabits by the Holy Spirit the temple of the living God and through which he now accomplishes divine ends. And let it be our cherished ambition 24 hours a day to be in such sensitive relationship to our Lord Jesus that he at any given time can give us his instructions and know that we'll do as we're told. Multitudes were added to the Lord.

They got excited when a boy professed conversion. When that boy accepted Christ as his Redeemer in genuine repentance toward God and humbly thanking the Lord Jesus that he died for him. They got excited because they said the Lord Jesus has got a couple of hands more.

He's got two more feet to walk with. He's got another pair of lips to speak with. He's got another mind to think with.

He's got another heart to love with. Two more eyes to see with and two more ears to hear with. He's been added to the Lord.

And they knew perfectly well that that boy understood clearly what it meant to be converted. It wasn't just escapism. He wasn't now going to use Jesus Christ simply as a doormat to wipe his dirty feet on so that he can get out of hell and into heaven.

No, to come to Jesus Christ and claim him as Redeemer meant to that boy that 24 hours every day he would be introduced to the hilarious adventure of letting the Creator God who threw the universes into space to clothe himself with his humanity and accomplish those divine ends which would have their worth on and into eternity and forever. He was added to the Lord. And they got excited when a boy was added to the Lord.

That boy wouldn't need religious entertainment. That boy was enjoying the sheer hilarious adventure of being available to God for his divine ends. Added to the Lord.

And of course the gospel they preached made it abundantly clear to all who heard them that that precisely was what involved. They were God's terms of reference. That's why there was no misunderstanding.

That's why there was no easy believism. That's why their primary concern about getting converted was not a change of destination. Heaven one day when I'm dead.

But please till then get off my back. I've got other things to think about. And ambitions to achieve.

And hobbies to enjoy. And money to spend. And places to go.

Get off my back. I'm on the way to heaven. I am saved.

That alas all too often is the attitude that kids adopt today when they're told that they come to Jesus and have their sins forgiven. That's simply an insurance policy. But please don't make any demands upon them that might involve their humanity 24 hours a day.

This alas is all too often the attitude that's adopted by the businessman who's busy making his way in life. I am converted. I'm a good faithful attender at my church.

But don't meddle with the things that are while I am still on earth of prime interest to me. Nothing like that in the early church. They recognized by the message that was proclaimed that any boy, girl, man or woman who claimed redemption through the blood of Jesus instantly sealed by the coming of God the Holy Spirit became from that moment on by their own free option the purchased possession of Jesus Christ.

And anything less than that was pathetically, tragically inadequate. Result? Well it tells us in the 13th verse that I deliberately omitted to read. Of the rest does no man join himself to.

Of the rest. What does he mean of the rest? Well it means those who weren't prepared for God's terms of reference. Those who weren't prepared to be the Christians they said they had become.

Of the rest does no man join himself to. Nobody in other words in the early church ever professed conversion. Who wasn't prepared to be wholly abandoned to Jesus Christ 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with all that they were and had.

Because that was the gospel that was being preached. They went invited to come to Christ simply to escape the punitive consequence of their guilt. Though that was part of the message.

They were invited to come to Jesus Christ because that was obedience to the command of a creator God. Who commands all men everywhere to repent and be converted so that he has created God. Can once more apply his creature man.

Cleansed from sin restored to life by the gift of the Holy Spirit. For that intelligent purpose for which is an intelligent God. He intelligently created them.

And anybody who wasn't prepared for that. Actually to let God be God in their lives. Anybody who wasn't prepared for that.

Does not join himself to them. You see what it involved. It meant that Jesus Christ was going to be God in the home.

Jesus Christ was going to be God in the business. Jesus Christ was going to be God when they planned next year's vacation. Jesus Christ was going to be God when they decided what they were going to do next Saturday.

Well anybody who wasn't prepared for that wasn't going to stick their neck out far enough. To be exposed for the phonies they were by pretending they were Christians. Of course not.

Of the rest does no man join himself to. There were just a few. Just a handful.

In the early church. Who tried it on. We're reminded of a couple at the very beginning of this chapter.

Do you remember? In the last verse of the preceding chapter. We're taught of a certain gentleman. Who was genuinely related to the Lord Jesus.

In such a way that he by his Holy Spirit. Actually had the right to exercise his total jurisdiction. King in his kingdom.

Nothing ostentatious about him. He wasn't putting on an act. He wasn't trying to be pious.

He was a completely natural. Normal. Joyful.

Child of God. Who recognized that in accepting Christ as Redeemer. He was acknowledging that he as creator God.

Compassionately forgiving his sins. Would now have the right to inhabit his humanity. And exercise total control.

Over everything he had and was. Or ever was likely to become. And he felt under a strong compulsion.

By the Holy Spirit. To sell his property. And make the proceeds available.

To the church fellowship. No advertisement. No ostentation.

He didn't expect to be congratulated. Because this to him. Was the most natural obvious thing.

For any child of God. Not that everybody had to sell their property. And everybody had to give the proceeds to the local church.

That he would never have insisted upon. He simply insisted upon the fact that any individual. Of the member of the body of Jesus Christ.

Would have at any time to expect to be told. By the head what to do. And without question do as he was told.

That was perfectly natural. That was obvious. That was normality.

He had become a Christian. A real Christian. So of course when the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

Told him to sell his property. Realize it and give the proceeds to the early church. Without a murmur.

Without complaint. Without boasting. He did the most obvious natural thing as a Christian.

Did as he was told. But there were a couple. Who were mentioned for us in the fifth chapter.

In the first verse. By the name of Ananas and Sapphira. Who wanted to gain stature in their religious club.

Who wanted to earn the reputation. For being totally dedicated. But who made one miscalculation.

The miscalculation they made was this. That they were answerable to their fellow men. And not to God.

That it was only a question of earning other people's. Applause. Other people's respect.

Other people's congratulations. As though God had absolutely nothing to do with it. It was just a question of climbing the ladder.

A sort of social status. Within their own religious society. That was the miscalculation they made.

And when they saw. With what genuine respect. Other folk looked upon.

This man. Barnabas. They thought we'd like to be held.

In that kind of esteem. So they worked out the little plot. There was a certain man named Ananas.

With Sapphira his wife. Who sold a possession. And kept back.

Part of the price. It doesn't say they sold all their possessions. It says they sold a possession.

In other words they looked around. And said now what could we really spare. What don't we really need.

And they sold that. And then having sold that. They kept back part.

Of what they realised from it. And stuck it under the floorboard. And then Ananas.

His wife being privy. To it. In other words in the plot.

Brought a certain part. And laid it at the apostles feet. With a sort of sweet.
Dedicated evangelical smile on his face. And then waited for everybody to gasp. In wonder love of praise.
And offer their congratulations. Total dedication. What generosity.
Here for God's dear sake. And in the name of Jesus. We've sold our possessions.
Here's the money. We want to invest it in God's work. We want to make it available to God's people.
And they waited. For breathless admiration. And Peter said.
Who you kidding. Who you kidding. Doesn't put it exactly in those words.
In the authorised King James. But that's exactly what he meant. Peter said.
Ananas. Why has Satan filled thine heart. To lie to the Holy Ghost.
We are unimpressed. Why has Satan filled thine heart. To lie to the Holy Ghost.
And to keep back part of the price of the land. Why has it remained. Was it not thine own.
Did anybody demand it of you. No of course not. Because no one member of the body of Jesus Christ.
Has the right to tell any other member of the body of Jesus Christ what to do. Only the head of that body
Jesus Christ. So long as it was yours.
It was yours on trust. Subject to his direction. Not ours.
And when you sold it and realised the amount. And you got the money. You could have put it straight in
the bank.
There was not one of us who would have had the right. As other members of the same body. To tell you
another member of that body.
What to do. Only Jesus Christ. The head of the body.
You could have kept it. You could have sold it. Nobody demanded it.
So who are you kidding. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart. Thou hast not lied unto men.
But unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down. Gave up the ghost.
And great fear came on all them that heard these things. He dropped dead. And it says in the next verse
that some young men came in.
Wound him up. Carried him out and buried him. That didn't take too long did it really.
Just a few hours later. Three hours. His wife came in.
Not knowing what had done. Not yet aware that her husband was buried. And said Peter tell me whether
you sold the land for so much.

Oh yes she said that's right. We felt so strongly moved of God. To devote this to his service.

And we want you to know how. How much we love him and how dedicated. And how totally available we are.

Yea she said for so much. Peter said how is it that you have agreed. Together to tempt the spirit of the Lord.

Behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband. Are at the door and they'll carry you out. And she dropped dead.

And they buried her. Say little wonder that of the rest. No man joined himself to them.

There wasn't too much room for phonies in the early church. Say. What do you think.

What effect do you think it would have upon the church of Jesus Christ. Worldwide today. If during this morning service whenever it may be held.

In any kind of denomination or group. Everybody who was a phony dropped dead. Don't you think it would be tremendous.

Don't you think it would have a fantastic effect. Upon the church of Jesus Christ. Look supposing next time your youth group.

Meets together all of whom profess conversion. They all raise their hands at camp. Or went to the front at some evangelistic crusade.

But suddenly in the middle of it all. God by the Holy Spirit strikes dead. Every kid.

Every boy. Every girl. Every young man or woman who's a phony.

Who's just putting on an act. Wouldn't that be tremendous. Wouldn't that have a startling effect on the church.

Our buildings would be a bit too big of course. We'd have an awful lot of real estate on our hands. But I can't think of anything that would be more salutary.

I can't think of anything that would be more cleansing. I can't think of anything that would set. The church of Jesus Christ.

Once more back on it's spiritual seat. Terrific. Huh.

If there was one thing that characterized the early church. It was the stamp of reality. Mind you it disturbed.

You know the powers that be. The ecclesiastical hierarchy. It didn't go down too well with it.

It rocked the boat. Here were men, women, boys and girls. Who was actually entering into a hilarious, adventuresome, full-blooded, robust relationship with God.

Who knew where they were going. And had all that it took to get there. And they weren't going through the normal channels.

Result. The high priest it says in the 17th verse of the 5th chapter rose up and all they that were with him. Which is the sect of the Sadducees.

And they were filled with indignation. And they laid their hands on the apostles. And they put them in the common prison.

Jail. Mind you they were accustomed to that accommodation. Saved expense.

They were entertained by the government. And you know they were never in jail but they didn't have a whale of a time in joyful anticipation of all that God had in mind. You remember when Silas and Paul were in jail? They sang so loud the other prisoners couldn't get to sleep.

And I can imagine Silas looking across at Paul and saying what do you think God's got in mind? Paul would say I don't know but he doesn't usually stick his in a place like this unless he's got something very important in mind. Because on that occasion they went only in jail. They were in the innermost part.

That's the one that stunk most of all. And said Paul let's have another song. So they had another song and woke the prisoners up again.

And then suddenly Silas said look out Paul and they ducked because God threw an earthquake in for full measure. And when the roof had collapsed and the walls had fallen sideways and they were rubbing their eyes and the dust had settled. They looked up and Paul said to Silas look over your shoulder.

And there was a man in the inquiry room. The jailer says what must I do to be saved? That was New Testament evangelism. We don't have that kind of New Testament evangelism today by and large because there aren't too many others who are prepared to go to jail.

And the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth. And these were the instructions that the angel gave them. He said go stand speak all the words of this life.

Go stand speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. That's how the angel described the message of the gospel. Marvellous description.

All the words of this life. Not that life one day when you're dead. This life.

Go and tell them that it's open to any boy, any girl, any man any woman who really means business who isn't a phony and doesn't want to be a phony. It's open to any boy, any girl, any man, any woman who in repentance toward God recognizing just how dirty sin makes anybody and who are prepared to be cleansed and who will claim that cleansing through the blood of Jesus tell them that it's open to them to share the life of God on earth on the way to heaven. That the Jesus who died for them is the Jesus who rose again from the dead who will come by his Holy Spirit and fill their humanity so that they become bodies wholly filled and flooded with God himself.

Go and tell them all about the words of this life. Go and tell them that they can be caught up into body membership and know that each individual one of them will be added to the Lord and Jesus Christ as God creator will take their hands and feet and lips and eyes and ears and minds and hearts and he'll invest them for time and for eternity said the angel. Go and tell them all the words of this life.

Go and tell them just how fantastic it is that men born dead in trespasses and sins alienated from the life of God tell them how fantastic it is that such can come alive and begin on earth on the way to heaven to

share the life now that they're going to enjoy there and then forever. Go and tell them. Go, he said, stand and speak.

Go where you're sent, stay where you're put and give what you've got. Go where you're sent and stay where you're put. You see if you're sent and you went you're put.

Who put you? The person who sent you. And the moment you know that it's God who sent you and you went where you were sent then you know you're put and God put you and when God put you nothing can frighten you because you know perfectly well that if God put you all the limitable resources of deity are now yours to accomplish the job for which he put you there. That's why let me know at any given moment that I'm in the place right now where he put me and it would be sheer stupidity to ask God to bless.

He'd simply reply, what do you think I put you there for? Don't you credit me with any intelligence? You never have to ask for blessing in the place of obedience all you have to do is be told what you told what to do and do as you're told. Blessing then is inevitable. You let all God loose and he takes the consequence.

Sent, went and put. Do you remember the testament that Paul gave in the first of his two epistles to Timothy? This is the testament that he gave. He said I was before a blasphemers, I was a persecutor, I was injurious.

And he was all of that. He was soul of Tarsus, arch enemy of the early church. He blasphemed the name of Jesus.

He believed together with theological colleagues as in the 20th century that Jesus Christ was the illegitimate child of a faithless, lying, ignorant peasant girl from Galilee. He was not only a blasphemer he was a persecutor. He was hell bent on destroying the early believers, stamping them out like so much vermin.

He was injurious, he was dangerous. He stood by consenting to the death of Stephen, he saw him dying, bleeding in the gutter, he heard his bones snap as he was stoned to death. Little kids would scatter in the street when they saw soul of Tarsus.

Women whose husbands were converted would go as wide as a sheet, rush home, warn the husband, slam the door and ram home the bolt and tell the husband to hide in the linen cupboard. He was dangerous. But you know what he says? He said I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in my unbelief.

He said then as the blue-eyed theological big boy of my day and generation I thought I was demonstrating the fact that I was smart. I discovered in the day that I met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus that I was only advertising my ignorance. I obtained mercy.

And he says this, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me hath enabled me for I can do all things now through Christ who is my strength, chief of sinners, least of all the saints but I am crucified with Christ for all that I was then, apart from all that he is now, crucified. That's all I was fit for. Nevertheless I live yet not I don't get me wrong, please don't get me wrong not I, Christ lives in me.

The life that I now live in this body, I simply live through the disposition that allows Jesus Christ as my creator God to be who he is in me, cleansed and redeemed all unworthily as his creature man. He enabled me. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me for that he counted me faithful.

Listen to what he says, putting me, putting me, putting me into the ministry. Excuse me Paul, why are you in the ministry? Put. What do you mean put? Oh he said I was sent and went.

God put me. Three times he bears his testimony recorded fully in the book of the Acts and in the 26th chapter of the book of the Acts where Paul on that occasion bears his testimony. This is what he says.

Acts 26 and verse 14 When we were all fallen to the earth I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue, soul, soul why persecutest thou me? It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks and I said who art thou Lord? He said I'm Jesus. Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise stand upon thy feet I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee delivering thee from the people from the Gentiles unto whom now I send you.

You're sent.

And this is why I'm sending you to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light from the part of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me and looking into the face of King Agrippa before whom he stood on trial for his life he said whereupon oh King Agrippa I was not disobedient under the heavenly vision God sent me and I went and King Agrippa when you're sent and you went you're put that's why King Agrippa you don't frighten me I could only wish that you were converted and you knew as I do that Jesus is alive he was sent and went and put only one explanation Paul legitimately could ever give at any time for being where he was doing what he did put what do you mean put I was sent and went say

are you put you business men why are you in the business you're in simply because God didn't call you to the past it didn't call you to be an evangelist didn't call you to the mission field so because he didn't call you you can do as you please God help you and your family little wonder if you bring up a bunch of rebels you've got to be called into business you've got to be called into an accountant's office you've got to be called into the surgeon's consulting room you've got to be called to be a motor mechanic just as surely as you've got to be called to be a missionary because you're a living member of the body of Jesus Christ if you mean business as a Christian he's the head you're a member of his body in particular and only the head of the body has the exclusive right to give his

instructions where are you living who told you where to live why do you live in that district what do you say it looked nice the money was just about suitable to my pocket no I didn't like the district we were in before did it never occur to you there's only one person who can tell you where to live if you happen to be a real Christian the head of the body where did you go last vacation where do you plan to go next vacation why with a broad grin on your face can you say put we always make this a matter of prayer we know that the Lord Jesus has the right exclusively as the head of the body to put us as members of his body on vacation he knows we need vacation but we give him the right to put us where he knows he on vacation can live and share his life through us without it that's why every

vacation we go on is a sheer adventure it's absolutely magnificent to see what God does is that the quality of Christian life you're living and when you're out on a shopping expedition if somebody came up and said what are you doing here you say put because you see everything I possess every penny that I possess belongs to Jesus Christ he knows that we need groceries he knows that we need this that and the other but the lovely thing is this that he is the head of that body and there's never a day dawns that we don't present our body to the Lord Jesus as the suit of clothes that he wears and we say Lord Jesus here is the

body that you're going to inhabit have a good day because that's the Christian life put excuse me are you Paul the Apostle yes I mean are you the pioneer missionary who

founded the church in Colossians Galatians in Philippi yes I mean are you the one under God who inspired by the Holy Spirit has given us so much of the New Testament yeah now what I mean is are you the Paul the Apostle the great missionary statesman yes then what are you doing in that basket do you remember the occasion with assassins waiting at the gate of the city warned of God by the Holy Spirit he's lowered in a basket over the wall of the city of Damascus and half way down you say what are you doing in that basket do you know what Paul would say with a grin on his face he would say put what do you mean put I was sent and went a bit undignified for an Apostle wouldn't you say looks like a dozen eggs but the marvelous thing about the Christian life you see if you know you're put it

doesn't matter too much where he put you so long as you know who put you and the ship was sinking they'd already jettisoned the cattle and now they had jettisoned the cargo all hope that the vessel would be saved was lost and finally in sheer despair suddenly suddenly remembers Paul Paul Paul the Apostle's on board Paul Paul the man who knows God where is he and they hunted everywhere for Paul and do you know where they found him down in the hole do you know what he was doing eating his sack lunch and they said man don't you know the ship is sinking he said so what what do you mean so what he said I'm put what do you mean you're put he said I was sent and went but man the ship is sinking we're all going to go down we're going to drown he said I'm not God said I was going to Rome and now

I'm going to preach the gospel I was sent and I went so nothing frightens me you can sink the ship will sink I can't sink I'm the unsinkable saint I'm on my way to Rome and he preached the gospel in Rome that's why you have the epistle to the Romans do you know anything about the hilarious adventure of the Christian life that every moment every day in the fullness of his divine spirit who reasserts the sovereignty of Jesus Christ and gives him the right restored as king to his kingdom to call the shots puts you where he wants you and accomplishes those divine ends so that now no matter what the threat or the promise no matter how heavy the responsibility or the open door of opportunity nothing frightens you you say Lord Jesus I can't you never said I could but you can and you live within

my heart and you always said you would that's all I need to know let's go are you Jesus Christ yes I mean the word of God incarnate the word who was in the beginning with God and was God and by whom all things were made the creator of the universe yes I mean do you claim equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity of the Godhead did you make this world yes then what are you doing on that cross that's a Roman gallows that's where criminals are executed do you know what he would say put what do you mean put I was sent and went God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life that quality of life which man was made our life I was sent and went and by the way as my father sent me so send I you

to be put any questions now let's pray are you willing to be put or have you just settled for playing church is the one characteristic in the world of your life the world in which God has placed you the stamp of reality is the language of the gospel simply on your lips or has it been woven to the fleshy tables of the heart is Jesus Christ still somewhere in heaven the distant object of your occasional adoration but otherwise irrelevant to the stern business of living on earth until one day you get to heaven have you really come to grips with all that God was at when he sent his son to redeem you that he risen from the dead might by the Holy Spirit monopolize your being until you become a body again wholly filled and flooded with God himself

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