

Tired People

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas's sermon 'Tired People' explores the weariness of individuals, particularly Christians, and emphasizes the need for spiritual renewal through the resurrection of Christ.

Duration: 49:15

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 11:28, John 10:10, Romans 8:11, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 1:27, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Weariness", "Resurrection Life"

Description

Major Ian Thomas addresses the overwhelming tiredness of people in the world, emphasizing that many are weary from trying to justify their sins and live without the true life found in Christ. He highlights the alarming statistics of population growth and the youth demographic, pointing out that many are lost and searching for meaning. Thomas shares personal stories of individuals who, despite their long service in ministry, have not truly experienced the resurrection life of Jesus within them. He encourages believers to stop striving in their own strength and to allow Christ to live through them, leading to a vibrant and fulfilling Christian life. Ultimately, he calls for a rediscovery of the power of Christ's resurrection as the source of true life and purpose.

Transcript

I'm sure there are some folk here this afternoon who had the privilege that was mine to to be a delegate to the World Congress on Evangelism that was held in the city of Berlin two or three years back. And you will remember that there in the entrance hall there was the big backboard with circles carved out of it and in those circles the faces of little children from different parts of the world. And a time clock that registered the net increase of the world's population.

Not just how many babies were born, but the net increase after the number who had died had been subtracted from the number who had been born. And this clock ticked out relentlessly throughout the whole of the Congress, which lasted nine days and 13 hours, so that at the end of the Congress we might become aware of how much bigger the task had become since the Congress began. And at the end of the Congress we were informed of the net increase of the world's population during the course of our deliberations.

Throughout the whole of the period the world's population had increased by 2.14 every second, by 128 every minute, by 7,704 every hour, and by 184,896 every day. And the population had increased through

the period of nine days 13 hours by one and three quarter million. It's quite fantastic.

You know that there is something like three and a half billion, million, million people in the world today, and it's estimated that that will more than double by the end of this century. Between seven and eight billion people. And the amazing thing is this, that even now of the three and a half billion people that walk this planet, and this is something that's hard to credit, more than half of those who have been born into this world since Adam was created are still alive.

Did you know that? Of all the people born into the world since Adam was created more than half are still alive. And in 30 years the number is going to be doubled. Well people don't die at the age of 30.

Some do. Depends how well they drive. But can you imagine if more than half the population of the world that was ever born since Adam was created are still alive.

Imagine what proportion it'll be by the end of the century if Christ doesn't come. Of all the people in the world today more than 50 percent are under age of 21. And by the year 2000 if the Lord has not returned, two-thirds, two-thirds of the world's population will be under the age of 15.

This world is going to be run by teenagers. Do you know that the number of children in China under the age of 10 at this moment is greater than the whole population of Russia? The children under the age of 10 in China more than nearly 200 million. It's incredible.

People. There are people everywhere. They're oozing out of our ears.

But you know if it's people that overwhelms me that there's one thing above everything else. No matter where you look and no matter where you encounter them and no matter what their pedigree or background by and large the people you meet and no matter where you meet them are tired. Have you found that out? Tired people.

I'm tired. Tired of pockets instead of people. Of crew cuts and tweed coats and pipes and Picasso buttons.

Of people who drop soliloquies carefully labeled intelligence. I'm tired of people who play the dating game like Taos at the racetrack. Tired of seeing people used because it is only a game.

Of people who turn making out into a social grace. Of watching sincerity fester into smoothness. I'm tired of cynics who call themselves realists.

Tired of minds rotting in indifference. Of people bored because they're afraid to care. Of intellectual games of ring around the roses.

I'm tired of people who have to be entertained. Tired of people for looking for kicks with a bottle in each hand. Of girls proud of knowing the score and snickering about it.

And a girl's intent on learning the score. I'm tired of sophisticated slobs. Of people who tinker with sex until it's smart.

Of people whose understanding goes as deep as neat. But won't leave it because they're lazy. Tired of people with nothing better to do than to glue their days together with alcohol.

I'm tired of people embarrassed at honesty, at love and at knowledge. I'm tired, yes. Very, very tired.

A tired world. Wonder what it is that makes people tired. I thought there were a number of things that make people tired.

Of trying to forgive their own sins. Because they don't know how sins can be forgiven. And when you don't know how your sins can be forgiven and you get tired of trying to forgive your own sins, then you end up by trying to justify your own wickedness.

And the best way to justify your own wickedness, of course, is to blame somebody else. Find a scapegoat. And this is the world in which you and I live.

We're living in a world which is one vast combination of shattered human relationships. Where everybody is blaming everybody else. And there's only one thing about which we're all entirely united and in complete agreement.

And it's this. It's everybody's fault but mine. Of that we're all completely convinced.

That's the world we live in. Finding a scapegoat in whom I can justify my wickedness by pinning the blame on somebody else. So the boy blames the girl, you see, whose life he's wrecked.

And of course the girl blames the boy whose extravagance and excess she herself enticed. And deliberately inflamed. Of course parents blame their children for their own delinquency.

And children blame their parents for their own pig-headedness. The employer blames the employee for his own greed. And the employee blames the employer for his own idleness.

This is the kind of world we're living in. The capitalist, of course, blames the communist, but the communist blames the capitalist. The colored blame the white, but the white blame the colored.

The Arab, of course, blames the Jew, but the Jew blames the Arab. The faculty blame the student, but the student blames the faculty. The people blame the government, but the government blame the people.

The pulpit blames the pew, but the pew blames the pulpit. Congregation blames the pastor for its own lethargy and apathy and indifference. It's everybody's fault but mine.

Of course there's nothing new about this. Way back when as by one man's sin entered into the world and death by sin, death occurred, about which we have been talking. And God walked where he had always walked.

But it wasn't God that reacted first to sin, it was man. God was where man left him. It was man that hid.

Man's been hiding ever since. And I'm probably talking to some right here in this very building who are still running away from God. Hiding in a thousand and one different ways.

God said, where are you? There's no answer. Finally said, I'm hiding. Why are you hiding? Afraid.

God said, you've never been afraid before. This is a new experience. If you are afraid, you've sinned.

Because you see fear is the first child. Of a bad conscience. And the bad conscience is the inevitable consequence of sin.

And if the first child of sin is a bad conscience and the first child of a bad conscience is fear, that fear begets self-justification. And the first child of self-justification is to find a scapegoat. And so when God pointed the finger of accusation at Adam and said, you've sinned, he immediately said, oh no, you're wrong.

She did it. Don't blame me, blame her. And of course the moment God pointed the finger of accusation at the woman, she did exactly the same thing.

She said, no, the devil, the devil, he lied. He deceived me. Everybody's fault, but mine.

You tired of trying to forgive your own sins? Are you really tired of trying to prove that it was your husband's fault? Are you kids really sick and tired of trying to prove that your parents' fault? Are some of you students really sick and tired of trying to prove that it's the establishment that's wrong? What God intended them to be. In him was light, this life was the light of men. And until you and I found our way back to God our maker, and have had restored to us the only valid content that makes life add up, we won't even have a life to live.

And we get sick and tired of trying to live a life we haven't got. If you try to live a life you haven't got, you'll end up by trying to live somebody else's life. And if ever there was an age in which people lived other people's lives, it's the 20th century.

You see, if you haven't got the moral character, the person whom God intended you to be, then you're apes somebody else's existence. Slaves to servile colorless conformity. So you'll copy everybody else's hairstyle, and you'll wear the silly little miniskirts, and everybody will rush around in little white socks.

To be different and to be non-conformist, we all queue up to conform to their non-conformity. Isn't that right? This is the world in which you and I live. Nobody's got the moral courage to be different.

And if anybody happens to have the animal guts to be different, we admire them and worship them as though they were idols. Most extraordinary. This is the colorlessness of human existence without God.

You tired? Dead scared of being anything other than the mass, so that we excuse everything by saying everybody does it. So we'll all go to hell. That's the cry of the world today.

Others, of course, are tired of trying to make life add up to something intelligent and meaningful when most of the essential factors are missing. And when you get tired of making life make sense, when there's no sense to it, you find an awful lot of time on your hands. And when you end up with an awful lot of time on your hands, you end up by trying to kill time.

And billions of dollars are spent year after year to kill time. Somehow to occupy the hours of my existence until I die. Billions of dollars.

From our home in England, headquarters at Cape and Ray, we have a youth outreach, we base it upon what we call the warehouse. It was an old warehouse of great big old buildings which we've turned into a youth club. Has a nursery school there in the morning and every night of the week there are youth activities from which derive the outreach into the coffee bars and the dance halls and the public houses and the streets and the beaches.

And teams of youngsters go out and by way of introduction they use what is quite popular nowadays, a simple youth questionnaire. And this is directed by the wife of one of my very fine colleagues, Stuart Briscoe, whom I trust one day will come and visit you here perhaps at the end of the year, here in Australia. Jill Briscoe.

And she's just a slip of a girl really, but she's got the courage of a lion. Mind you she tries to persuade us that she's scared stiff and I think she is really, but you see you don't need courage if you're not scared stiff. Some people have got just sort of animal sort of courage, which that isn't real courage.

But she was telling how she wanted to penetrate one of the largest dance halls in Lancaster, 10 miles from my home. They had between 800 and 1000 youngsters every Saturday night. And she wanted to be able to penetrate that dance hall and somehow get to grips with these kids.

They wouldn't go to church, they wouldn't come to one of our meetings. So she wanted to take a team in and just begin to talk to them about the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what they quite often do.

She wrote to me some time ago and said, I've just written to the managers of 24 dance halls asking for 15 minutes on the microphone in the middle of the dance so that we can sing a few songs to them and then tell them about Jesus Christ. And she said, I'm terribly afraid that they're all going to say yes. And they did.

Anyway, she said three times she tried to go and see the manager of this particular dance hall and courage failed her. And she said, God, I've asked you for courage three times and you haven't given me, I'm going without courage. And that's how she went in.

And she saw the manager and she explained that she would like to bring a team of young folk and conduct a youth questionnaire. And she said, I'm going to leave you the questionnaire. It has some loaded questions and designed primarily to bring to the centrality of the Lord Jesus, the conversation that's being engaged in.

She said, I'll leave your question. I don't ask, I don't ask you to make a decision right now. Just look it through and I'll call back and let me know what you think.

When she called back two or three days later, she discovered the man had filled in himself. And this is what he said. He said, I know perfectly well that my life is utterly bankrupt, utterly empty, utterly meaningless.

I know that the only purpose I have in life is to try to help 800 to 1000 other people whose lives are equally bankrupt, equally empty and equally meaningless to fill in a few vacant hours. I have nothing for myself and I've got nothing for them. That's all.

And he said, if you can bring any young folk and introduce any of these boys and girls into a life that really makes sense, I'll give you 30 free tickets every Saturday night. Now that's it. The world knows it's bankrupt.

Youth Secretary of the United Nations over a year ago said this world has got 10 years, 10 years maximum. And that's an optimistic view, he said, 10 years. And he's got information from every country in the world at his fingertips.

He says if the world hasn't solved its problems in 10 years, there is no further solution and it will be too late. So we've got less than nine now. This is the world in which you and I live and by and large folk are tired, tired of trying to kill time.

And of course when you get tired of killing time, you end up by killing yourself. That's why last time I was in Canada, I discovered in the previous 23 months, the number of suicides increased by 25%. The largest single cause of death in the student world today is suicide.

Not car crashes, not marijuana, not alcoholism, not cancer. Suicide, self-destruction. This is true of every country, including yours.

Interviewed on television, a slip of a girl in her late teens, a drug addict in England at Christmastime, was asked, don't you know that this is going to kill you? She said, yes, I hope it does. Time. Curious sort of subject really for Easter Sunday afternoon, wouldn't you say? This is the world.

But the question I want to ask you is this, why is it, even though we can understand why the world is tired, that there are so many Christians who are tired? Weary Christians. I spend most of my life ministering to weary Christians, not the least on the mission fields of the world. And I have visited, I suppose, a very large proportion of the mission fields of the world in many different geographical contexts.

And I discovered that by and large, the average missionary, dedicated, loyal, marvelous people. I can't help but admire them, because they stick at it, doggedly. But the large majority of them, weary beyond description, tired beyond degree.

Why? Do you know that in the city of Los Angeles alone, and this is typical of countless others, there are over 200 evangelical pastors, missionaries, and preachers, and evangelists in the hands of psychiatrists. That's in one city alone. Now, let's not run away from the fact, this is hard-stuck reality.

And I counsel with such constantly, week after week. I can remember, after speaking in the church service during the Keswick convention in England, the following day a lady came to me and she said, I've been a missionary in South America for 30 years, and I'm due to go back in just about two months. And do you know, she said, until yesterday I dreaded the thought of going back to that country.

In fact, she said, in 30 years I've never once been on furlough, but I dreaded going back. Because for 30 years I've fought all my own battles, I've carried all my own burdens. I never discovered until yesterday that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead to live in me and share his life with me.

And she said, for the first time in 30 years, I can't get back quick enough. I can remember after preaching in Moody Church, that famous memorial in the city of Chicago to Dwight L. Moody, after the end of the morning service, I had invited folk who wished to talk to me personally, to meet me later in the vestry, and there were a number of folk there, and amongst them an older man. And as I chatted with them, and explained more fully how simply to appropriate the resurrection life of Jesus Christ, and then said goodbye to them, he was choking with tears as he went out, and gripped me by the hand, he said, I'd like to talk to you this afternoon, could I come and see you? Where's your hotel? I told him where I was staying, and he came to see me.

And when he arrived, I apologized for not knowing his name. He said, I don't want to tell you my name. He said, if I told you my name, you'd recognize it once.

For two reasons. He was a man well into his 60s. He said, for two reasons.

First, my father is internationally known worldwide, and I'm known all over the American continent. But I've traveled 250 miles this weekend to discover what you had to say about a living Christ. He said, I've been on the board of one of the largest Christian, evangelical, liberal arts colleges in this country.

I've been an evangelist, I've been a missionary, I've been a pastor, I've served on boards and committees. But I've never discovered the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. And you know, talking to that man who's typical of countless others that I could tell you about, I could have been talking to a little kid of 9 or 10 or 11 years of age, simply telling him that the Lord Jesus died upon the cross, that his sins might be forgiven, so that risen from the dead, he might come by his Holy Spirit and live within him and share his illimitable resources with him.

And he said, how could I have lived so long and missed it? Over 60 years of age, true-die evangelical, a Bible-believing Christian to the fingertips, assuming heavy organizational and administrative responsibilities, ministering himself the Word of God, and yet never, never having discovered the real spiritual content of the Christian life. Just two years ago, a man came to me and he said, could I talk to you privately? I said, I'd be happy to do so. He said, well, I'm the field director of my mission.

I sit on the committees and I send out directives and I believe sincerely, I serve my God as best I know how, and I serve my fellow missionaries. I believe that I'm being true and faithful to my board back in the home country, to the uttermost of my ability, I believe that I'm discharging my responsibilities. But do you know, as a man, as an individual, as a missionary, I'm absolutely I'm beaten.

Can you help me? Well, it's marvelous to be able to help a man like that. And of course you can. You've only got to talk to that man for five minutes to discover that he never knew that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead to live in him.

This is the crying need of our evangelical age, is to rediscover Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection. We've organized him out of existence. We've become so pragmatic in this age of hardware that whether Jesus were alive or dead, it wouldn't make the slightest difference to the average Christian organization or denominational entity.

Business as usual. And this, of course, is why we achieve nothing and why so many people are utterly exhausted, utterly exhausted, not with insincerity, but out of sheer misguided dedication, trying to do for God, God's job that only God can do. Well, if that sounds all very miserable, I've got some good news for you.

It was given to me. I get lots of poetry, at least it's called poetry, under my ministry. Some of it, some of it's good.

Rather like the man, you know, to turn to his friend and he said, he said, do you think there's enough fire in my poetry? And his friend said, I don't know, but I don't think there's enough of your poetry in the fire. And that was a little unkind, but I like this. Discovering daily who God really is, thanking him daily, he's mine and I'm his.

Discovering daily God's great love for me, such mercy, forgiveness, amazingly free. Discovering daily that God really cares, discovering daily he does answer prayers, discovering daily what grace really means, unmerited favor beyond all my dreams, discovering daily God speaking to me. He speaks through the

Bible.

Once blind, now I can see. Discovering, discovering each day that I live that all that I need, he freely will give. Discovering daily Christ working through me, accomplishing daily what never could be.

Discovering daily I can't, but he can. Thanking him daily for my place in his plan. Discovering daily how real life can be when I'm living in Christ and he's living in me.

Discovering daily a song in my heart with anticipation for each day to start, delighting and basking in love so divine, securing the knowledge I'm his and he's mine. Besides mere contentment, excitement I see, a daily adventure, Christ alive and living in me. Now that's, that's the normal Christian life.

That's not just poetic, that's down-to-earth biblical historical Christianity. That's exactly what Christian, historical Christian experience of a forgiven sinner. That you and I might be caught up into this fabulous, fantastic adventure of proving daily that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, being himself the very dynamic of all his demands, the cause of his own effect, the source of his own activity, and the origin in us of his own image in action.

Yes, I like that, but I like it particularly because I know the girl who wrote it, Bonnie Hain, and I know the circumstances under which she wrote it. You see, about five and a half years ago, her husband called a friend of mine who is, or was, pastor of the church which they now attend. They didn't attend that church then because they didn't attend any church.

But her husband called this pastor, Bob Hobson, and he said, would you come round please, in a hurry, it's an emergency. And when he got round to this home, he discovered that the husband had returned home unexpectedly early when his wife thought he was going to be very late. And when he got back, he found his wife lying in the bathtub with both her wrists slit, bleeding to death.

And on the table in the kitchen, a little note explaining that she did it in the bathtub so he wouldn't have to clean up the mess. That at least was thoughtful. So tired that there was only one possible solution, finish it.

In the goodness of God, he arrived home just in time to save her life. Rushed her off to hospital, and when things had been tidied up, they were waiting for an ambulance to bring them home, and in the waiting room there was the television, and on it, the hour of decision. And Billy Graham was speaking.

Telling the simple story of a redeemer who shed his blood upon the cross, that guilty sinners, tired, tired, so tired, that they wanted to finish it, could find forgiveness. Well they went converted then and there, but instead of sending her away as he'd been told he should, to a mental hospital, he called this pastor, and he let them both to Christ. And I mean exactly that.

He didn't make them Baptists, or Methodists, or Anglicans, or even Brethren. He just led them to Christ. And I loved the lot.

But he wasn't interested. He was interested only in introducing them to that vital relationship to a risen Lord that would allow him to invade their personalities, and from then on, express himself in terms of their daily behavior. And that's exactly what happened.

And marvelous things have taken place as a result of the re-inhabiting of their humanity by the Lord Jesus. She wrote this for the daily broadcast. She writes one I believe almost every day.

And this simply expressed the new thrust that had come into their lives because they had discovered that the Lord Jesus who died for them rose again from the dead to share his life with them. And every day became the sheer adventure of stepping out into his timeless plan. Lord Jesus, we haven't a clue what you're going to do today.

We don't know who you're going to talk to. We don't know who you're going to raise from the dead spiritually. We don't know what weary Christian we're going to bump into who's just about to quit.

But it's going to be marvelous to know that it's our privilege to yield our humanity so that you can be in us where you please doing what you want, how you want to do it, anytime you like. Now that's the Christian life. Great, isn't it? Those who've come to a vital relationship to the Lord Jesus simply by the communication of his life through these two to them.

But you know, it is exciting to see God at work in lives like that. And I'm thrilled about this. I'm particularly thrilled because I know the past who led them to Christ.

Because you see, I first met him 15 years ago when he was as thin as a rake. And he was so depressed on the verge of a nervous breakdown that as pastor of a small church outside the city of Rochester in Minnesota, he was just about to throw in the sponge and quit. Had all his formal training, evangelical to the fingertips, loved Jesus Christ, could look back to the day of his conversion in his second pastorate, but just about to quit.

Well, it just so happens I had been invited to speak in a church in Rochester. And the pastor just before I arrived, resigned. And I don't blame him for that.

I think if I knew I was coming, I'd quit too. But actually, it had nothing to do with my arrival. He suddenly got the opportunity to do some postgraduate studies and he accepted the opportunity, but it left the pulpit vacant just at the time when I was supposed to be coming for a Bible conference.

And the officers of the church decided to go ahead, but they had in the meantime got in touch with this young pastor, Bob Hobson, and invited him to take care of certain matters in the interim period while he was still running his own little church about 20 miles out of town. And he was doing this on top of the other load. But he was living on his nerves.

If you don't live through Jesus Christ, you'll live on your nerves, there's no alternative. And when you live on your nerves, you live on everybody else's. And of course, everybody else lives on yours.

And when I arrived, I was invited to speak at the morning broadcast at the radio station. And they forgot to tell him, and they told him he was going to do it. You see, so now two were going to do it.

I was going to do it, and he was going to do it. And when he arrived to do it and found I was going to do it, he wondered who really knew their own minds. You know how you get when you're living on your nerves.

Strictly correct, but I could hardly say overwhelmingly warm. And he marched me off to the radio station, introduced me to the manager, he showed me where the record library was, and he was just about to leave me to stew in my own studio juice. When for some reason or other he decided to remain.

And afterwards over a cup of coffee we began to talk. And as I began to share with him the thrilling adventure of being caught up into Christ, and just allowing him day by day to unfold his plan, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. You see, there's nothing for God to settle about your life or mine.

There are no issues to face, no decisions for him to make. We are recreated in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Just like the Lord Jesus when he was born in this world, he didn't come into this world to do his best for God.

He didn't come into this world to do his best to redeem humanity. It wasn't somehow, it was triumphantly. Every step he took and every word he spoke and everything he did, every decision that he made was a divine fulfillment of a plan agreed as between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the eternal ages of the past.

It was simply that the Father had his yielded humanity in which to tell the story. Until he could cry triumphantly, it's finished. Story told.

Bow his head and die and the Father say amen and raise him from the dead and exalt him now at his own right hand. Now the marvelous thing is this, that that same Lord Jesus has his own program to fulfill through you and me and all he's waiting is for our humanity to be yielded to him today as his humanity was yielded to his Father then. It's just as simple as that.

And the moment you and I become available for Jesus Christ to be who he is in action, we are caught up into that predetermined purpose for which you and I first created have now been redeemed and we prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God. And I began to share these things with just how simple it was to say thank you Lord Jesus for every step you take, for what you are in me for this next situation. I shared with him some of the things that I shared I believe when I was here eight years ago.

I was a young fellow of 19 studying medicine preparing to go to the mission field. I was utterly thrashed, completely beaten, so discouraged, never having led a single soul to Christ in my life in all the frantic endeavors in which I had engaged as a crusader leader and a member of the intervarsity fellow and leading CSSM's on the coast. I never led anybody to Christ.

But it was then that in the goodness of God, in tears of despair that he showed me that he was alive and just waiting to move into my bankruptcy and make perfect his strength in my abject weakness. What a marvelous discovery that was when I decided to quit and thought God was going to be so disappointed and found that he was unspeakably overjoyed. Never I chatted with Bob about these things.

Do you know he was just at that stage where the moment of truth could dawn upon his soul. By and large it isn't until we're scraping at the bottom of the barrel, it isn't until we're flat on our backs, it isn't until really we've jettisoned the last vestige of self-confidence, it isn't until then that we see the significance of Christ's resurrection. We can talk about it, we can sing about it, we can celebrate Easter Sunday, but it's all academic, all academic.

Just as countless millions of people today will talk about the cross and will have been to church today and practiced religion but they're not redeemed, not redeemed because they've never really been convicted of their sin and have never really seen any redemptive significance in the cross. It's simply a beautiful sentimental symbol, that's all. But convicted of sin, trying to find your way back to God your maker.

Then suddenly you see a deep significance in the precious blood that was shed upon the cross that reconciles us to a holy God and pronounces our acquittal, though we never deserved it. And you see it isn't until you and I are convicted of our own sinfulness, not just the sins we've committed that needed what he did, but the sinfulness that we are, what we are from which derives what we do. That in our flesh dwells no good thing, that we're rotten through and through, that we're fit for nothing but the dump, that our noblest, our best and our highest is only a filthy rag, until at last we've recognized our own inherent destitution.

It's only then that we realize that we need not only what he did when he died, we need who he is now that he's alive. What he did because of what we've done, we now need what he is to take the place of what we are. It's just as simple as that, that's gospel.

This is just plain biblical, historical gospel, designed to restore a man to his true humanity. My colleague Stuart Briscoe, whose wife I was telling you about, I remember talking to some of our teenagers one day, and he said it's marvelous to discover why he is, who he is, where he is. Why he is, who he is, God, where he is, in our hearts.

That's the greatest discovery you can make as a Christian. Well why is he who he is, where he is? Well because that's exactly what it takes to be a man, because God created you and me to function only by virtue of what God is in us. So if it takes God to be a man, what will it take to be a Christian? Christ.

It takes Christ to be a Christian because it takes God to be a man. And you see Christ in the Christian puts God back into the man. And that's the meaning of the cross.

We've seen this all through this weekend. He died for us, only that risen from the dead he might come and dwell in us and live his life through us. Well Bob, he just embraced it.

Out of his sheer despair, out of his destitution, out of the bitterness of self-discovery, he kicked himself. How domestic that Christ is alive in me and I've been sweating it out in my pulpit Sunday by Sunday with those poor people listening to him. Carrying all the burdens, making all the decisions, facing all the responsibilities, trying to unravel all the problems, when all the time Jesus Christ dwelling in me has been waiting to get into action.

I never gave him a chance. He didn't walk home, he didn't ride home, he didn't fly home. He floated home.

And he burst into his house and he said to his wife Nina, I've made the most marvelous thrilling discovery. And she was a sweet Christian girl, but just as weary and just as depressed as he. And he simply led her to the same glorious appropriation of a risen Lord.

Now don't misunderstand me. Neither of them will receive one single thing more than they've always had from the moment of their regeneration. God can't give you more than he gave you when Christ came to live in your hearts.

When you were redeemed in the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit came to presence within you, the resurrection life of Jesus Christ, God gave you all that heaven could afford. In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When God gives you Christ, he gives you with him embraced by him all things.

God can't give you more. There's not one single boy, girl, man or woman who's converted who does not have dwelling within their humanity all the illimitable resources of deity. But the tragedy is we can sit on it

for 50 years and never know it's there.

If we don't appropriate the life of Christ. Rod held high, letting God move into action. Well it's been fascinating to watch him over the years.

And you know six years ago he was preaching in the Midwest at the close of the message. And they said we wondered whether you would be interested in becoming our pastor. Well he said tell me something about your church.

You know you had a great big church, lovely building, you know, great crowds of people, you know, big stipend, all the rest of it. Well they said as a matter of fact we've been in existence eight or nine years. We don't have a church building.

We meet in a school classroom of a local high school. And our numbers get less every week. As a matter of fact he said we're so depressed, we're so tired, we're so weary, we're so discouraged that we wonder whether you'd like to be our pastor.

Well he said yes I'd be delighted. You see one of the beauties of taking over a dying church is you don't have to kill it. I was in that.

I was in that. They had a beautiful new Sunday school block which we crammed to capacity. And the foundations had already been laid for, not a great auditorium, one that seats about 500.

Marvelous. Bonnie Hayne was there and a crowd like her. I was back in that church just 18 months ago and it's crammed twice every Sunday morning.

And they've got to decide now whether they have three Sunday morning services, because they've already over a thousand attending their morning service, or whether they build a new church. In fact Bob when I was talking just a few months ago said he overheard one of his church officers saying to somebody on the phone, do you want to buy a church? Because we're building another. That was the first he was told that.

And do you know what is exciting about that church is this, that 85 percent have been converted in these last few years. At the invitation of the Sudan Interior Mission. Several years back it was my privilege to be in Somalia, met one of the dear folk whom I met there just this morning.

And in the Sudan, in Ethiopia itself, where I met Dr. Davis in Addis Ababa. And also I was in Aden, in the South Arabian Peninsula before the independence was gained. And a fine missionary of the Sudan Interior Mission, Bud Acord was his name, who together with another missionary had been laboring in that field for 10 years, in the Hamilton field of course.

But unknown to me they were terribly depressed and terribly discouraged. Later on I learned that in the solid 10 years that they'd been there, they had known of all missionary activity of all denominational groups and fellowships, only 10 professed conversions in 10 years. And he said when I came back from my second fellow, most of those had backslidden.

I've been talking about here, but it didn't really make sense to him. Until they had a little prayer meeting on the Monday. And just on take and say thank you.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? And the psalmist hasn't got an answer. He's too rich, I'm too poor. What shall I render unto the Lord? He answers finally, I'll take.

Take the cup of salvation. And offered him the sacrifice of thanksgiving. The only way I can require God is to take what he offers and say thank you.

Take and say thank you. Take and say thank you. Take and say thank you.

And this of course is the Christian life. God's too rich, you and I are too poor. All we can take is every step into every new situation, take and say thank you.

Take and say thank you. Lord Jesus, I can't, you can, that's all I need to know, let's go. You see, that's the Christian life.

Later on in December that year in California, I thought it was still in Aden. But owing to the riots, the British government finally had told all institutions to go. The Red Sea Mission team building had been burned down to the ground alongside the Sudan Interior Mission headquarters.

And so all missions had to get out. But he called me when I was in Los Angeles and said, I'd like to come and tell you what happened. And he told me how he and his colleague had got together after I left.

And they discussed this. They said, now we've been wearily sweating it out for 10 years. Temperatures 100, 120 degrees and awfully humid.

He said, again and again, we'd have packed our bags and gone home. But he said, we chatted this over. Here's a man who comes and tells us all we've got to do is quit.

Just get out and let God get in. Well, they said, we've nothing, absolutely nothing to lose. Maybe there's something to gain.

So we decided to get down on our knees and we prayed. And this is how he said we prayed. We prayed like this.

We said, God, there's been a man here who says that if we'll get out, you'll get in. If we quit, you'll take over. Okay, we quit.

And if nothing happens now, we all quit. Later, there was a knock on the door. And there was an Arab outside.

He said, could you tell me how to become a Christian? He said, this sort of thing had happened in the past. So I went through the normal routine. I said, I'm sorry, I don't have any food to give you.

And I can't give you any money. I can't arrange transportation to the United States or to England for education. I can't get you housing.

What is it you really want? And the Arab looked at him amazed. He said, I didn't ask for any of those things. He said, I asked you to tell me how to become a Christian.

I'm sick and tired of being a Muslim. And he led him to Christ. And he said that happened for almost three weeks.

Day after day. He said they were queuing up to get saved. Until he said, he said it wasn't even funny.

And so we got down on our knees again. We said, God, this is ridiculous. He said, we've been here for 10 solid years and this sort of thing does not happen in Asia.

But we haven't seen any women converted. Please start on the women. And he said, next day, knock on the door and there was a lady.

And he said for six months, it was just as though the windows of heaven had opened. And then when we could hardly believe it, we were told to get out. Now he said, under normal circumstances, we would have been absolutely heartbroken.

But the marvelous thing was this. We knew that we had absolutely nothing to do with what had been happening. And when we were told to get out, we couldn't have cared less.

We said, if God wants us to get out somewhere else, it's simply because he wants to do something through us somewhere else. And he had a marvelous time in the church there in California. Then he went to Liberia with Elva.

And today he's in the Lebanon preaching a hundred times in Arabic to all the Arabic parts of the world. And he wrote just the other day. And of course, he's hilariously happy.

Things are always marvelously happening. He said, I had a letter the other day with a cabinet stamp from Lebanon. One of the cabinet ministers says, I am one of the sinners for whom Jesus died.

I believe it. Now, this is life, real life. And it's the life that's to be found in Jesus Christ.

That's exactly what you've got. Easter Sunday afternoon is that Jesus is alive in you.

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