

Transformed Characters

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Christ that can change even the most depraved individuals into new creations through faith and the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:00:59

Scripture: John 7:38, John 14:6, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:24, Philippians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Redemption", "Transformation"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the transformative power of Christ in the sermon 'Transformed Characters', recounting the story of Kimo, a man who murdered missionary Nate Saint, and later became a pastor after accepting Christ. Thomas illustrates that true transformation comes from being in Christ, where old things pass away and all things become new, highlighting the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus. He encourages listeners to recognize their need for redemption and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to maintain purity in a corrupt world. The sermon calls for a genuine acceptance of Christ, leading to a spiritual resurrection and a new identity in Him.

Transcript

Transformed Characters So very glad to know that the Reverend Geoffrey King will be in Newcastle on Wednesday. He is a member of the Council of the Cape and Ray Missionary Fellowship in England and a lifelong friend and one whom I respect very sincerely in the Lord Jesus and I'm sure that you'll be much enriched by his ministry on Wednesday that has yet to come. So if you see him, and I don't between now and then, please give him the warm greetings and love from myself and my wife and from Torchbearers in Australia.

As many of you know, in connection with our evangelistic outreach worldwide in the Cape and Ray Missionary Fellowship, which is the main object of the exercise to reach young folk and men and women too with the claims of the Lord Jesus, and to see every week all over the world those come into Christ born of his spirit added to the Lord, there's a Bible school program. I suppose since the war in England alone we've had close on 100,000 young men and women and boys and girls staying with us in the various evangelistic and Bible conferences, but we've had several thousand also in our short-term Bible schools. I trust that there may be young men and women here who will take the opportunity of going to Cape and Ray Lodge, Wonga Bryan, Moss Vale, I know one or two have already done so, and profit from that investment of three months or six months or even maybe nine months.

In fact you could have a three-month period here in Australia and then go for three months to New Zealand and end up with three months in California, how about that? Or if you like you could come to England and spend the winter with us and don't spend the spring in Sweden. All the schools are integrated and many of the teachers travel from one to another on the different continents. That's exciting to think that there are thousands of young men and women just waiting to invest that amount of time, not to become missionaries or preachers or pastors or evangelists, but to learn what it really means to be a Christian, to come into that vital relationship with Jesus Christ that actually and effectually allows God to be God in the man.

We have 400 young men and women right now in residence in the different Bible schools and another 200 before the twelve months is out will have been added to that number. But several years ago we had in one of those Bible schools a girl whose father was murdered in South America 17 years ago. And the following summer we had the joy of entertaining her younger brother Kathy and Steve.

During the time that Kathy was with us in England in our Bible school I met in Germany the man who killed her father. I met him in Berlin. It was my privilege then as it may well have been that of some of you folks here tonight to participate as a delegate and as a speaker in the World Congress on Evangelism in the Congress Hall in Berlin.

And numbered amongst the delegates from some hundred different countries, 1,200 of them all together, was the man who murdered Kathy's father. To many of you this is a familiar story for the man who murdered Kathy's father was a man called Kimo and Kathy and Steve's father was Nate Saint, Jungle Pilot. And Kimo was in Berlin as a delegate because by then he had become the pastor of the Christian Church amongst the Orca Indians.

You remember the story? The Orca Indians were a stone age tribe. One of the most depraved, most backward, most degenerate and savage peoples left on this planet. Nobody entered the Orca territory.

That was certain death. Oil prospectors who wanted to penetrate that region and prospect for oil went to the Ecuadorian government and asked them to liquidate them, exterminate them, move in with a military force and do them all to death. They said they're little more than animals.

And to the credit of the government of Ecuador they rejected the proposition. They said you're absolutely right they are little more than animals. But we've still got to credit them with being human beings and we'll just let them die out and become extinct.

But you know there were one or two men in Ecuador at that time who believed something that the Bible says. It's found as many of you will know in the seventeenth verse of the fifth chapter of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians. If any man, any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away and all things have become new. And the next verse that we so often neglect goes on to say and the all things that have taken the place of the old things are of God. For if any man be in Christ, cleansed in his blood, accepted in the beloved, reconciled to God, a forgiven sinner, a very marvelous thing has happened.

Something that we have been talking about, some of us, over the last couple of days. In the moment that a man has claimed redemption and is accepted by God in the beloved, the Lord Jesus risen from the dead comes by his Holy Spirit to invade that individual's humanity and from within the human spirit regain

access to the human soul and the all things that come from God replace the old things that pass away. He's a man under new management.

He's a new creation. There's oil back in the lamp, there's petrol back in the car, there's Christ in the Christian putting God back into the man. And these men believed it.

Any man, no matter how debauched, no matter how savage, no matter how ignorant, no matter how depraved, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. A spiritual resurrection takes place. So they decided that they would penetrate the orca tribe.

And as many of you will know, Nate Saint flew them one at a time on friendship missions over the orca territory. For several weeks nobody appeared, but finally the first few orca Indians exposed themselves. And before long still more would gather until they would be waiting for them.

A savage people where no boy graduated into manhood until he had killed somebody. And the more people he killed, the greater his stature in the tribe. They lowered a microphone and spoke to them through a loudspeaker in the hope that they might make friendly contact.

They dropped gifts. They lowered a model of an aeroplane hoping that they might understand that they should clear a strip so that the plane could land. They never got the message.

But after many months, when the folk would come out and smile and wave and shout, they felt that they had gained sufficient rapport to make the attempt. And so in the absence of an airstrip, Nate ferried the other men, four of them, one by one to the sandy bank of the river, which was the territorial boundary of the orca Indians. That was in 1956.

And when they had all landed, and their missionary colleagues and their wives and families were waiting anxiously at the other end of their radio net, Nate passed this message. January the 8th, 1956. Have just sighted a commission of ten.

And then half jokingly he said it looks like they'll be here for the afternoon service. Then rather more seriously he went on pray for us. This is the day.

We'll contact you next at 4.30. That too was a message that was never received. For at 4.30 that day there was radio silence. It was the silence of death.

When finally a military expedition entered the territory seeking their rescue, they found their bodies half rotted and half submerged in the river where they had been speared to death and the five men were dead. And it appeared that their experiment had been a tragic, pathetic, abysmal failure. But many of you will know that Nate Saint's sister, accompanied by her own little child and an orca Indian girl, Dyuma, who had escaped previously from the tribe, penetrated their territory.

And the miracle happened. One by one, these savage evil people, their souls awakened by the Holy Spirit to their need in humble repentance to ward God, obeyed the gospel and received Christ as their Redeemer. And that marvellous spiritual resurrection took place that leads to a moral resurrection.

And the Christian church amongst this half of the orca tribe was established. And one of the first to be converted and born of God to receive a new nature as by the exceeding great and precious promises to Peter 1.4 he became partaker of the divine nature as the Lord Jesus himself shared his resurrection life as

God with him as man, was Kimo. And he became the pastor of the Christian church.

And it was after this that I met him in Berlin. Marge Saint, being at the congress in Berlin and knowing that Kathy Saint, Nate's daughter, was in my home, introduced me to Kimo, a little difficult because the language is somewhat limited. They don't, for instance, have a word for chair, for a very good reason.

They don't have chairs. And there's not much point in having a word for what you don't possess. But Marge did succeed in indicating that I was the chief of the tribe in the northwest of England living in the village where Kathy was our guest.

So I did a little war dance and everybody was happy. It fascinated me to discover that when Kathy, who with Steve were only very tiny at the time their father was murdered, when they themselves convicted of the Holy Spirit as indeed had been Kimo and so many of his tribe, when they too recognized themselves to be the sinners that they were even though their parents were missionaries and their father had laid down his life for these people, when they too in obedience to the gospel received Christ into their lives and with Kimo became partakers of Christ's divine nature and wanted to confess this fact of their identity in spiritual union with their new found saviour in baptism. It was Kimo, pastor of the Christian church amongst the Orca Indians who baptized them on confession of their faith in the river where he murdered their father.

Had anything happened to Kimo? Yes. He'd become a new creation. For if any man, any man, any man be in Christ, he's a new creature.

All things have passed away. Everything has become new. There came a day in the life of Kimo, savage killer, in all his abysmal darkness and ignorance, in receiving Christ, God's incarnate son, as his saviour presented his humanity to be inhabited again as creature by God his creator.

The operation was launched from the Wycliffe Translator's base there in the jungles of Ecuador and it's been my privilege to visit these people and minister too. I learned from Cam Townsend, founder of the Wycliffe Translators, who do such a fantastic job all over the world and with whom it's been my very real privilege and joy to share fellowship in so many different countries. I learned from him that when the president of Ecuador was flying to that part of the country on official visits, because there was no airstrip adequate for the presidential plane apart from that which had been provided by the Wycliffe Translators at their jungle base, they offered to the president their hospitality.

And when the presidential plane landed and the president of Ecuador was at the jungle base, he said, I've heard strange things about the Orca Indians. I'd like to meet one. So they flew Kimo in and by interpretation the president of Ecuador asked him what had happened.

This is what Kimo said. He said, the blood of Jesus Christ, quoting the first chapter of the first epistle of John, the ninth verse, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanseth us from all sin. He went on to explain to the president that many, many years ago God, who created this world and the stars in the sky, came as a man and lived a perfect life to God's holy satisfaction.

And then at the end of that perfect life he bore our sins and allowed God to judge him as though he were as guilty as we. He laid down his life and shed his blood to cleanse our hearts and make them clean. But then he went on to say to the president that wasn't all.

Because, said Kimo, not only did he die for us that our sins might be forgiven and our hearts cleansed, but he rose again from the dead, ascended once more to be with his father as God, and then came he himself in the person of the Holy Spirit to live within our humanity. So that that Lord Jesus, he said to the president, who died for me so long ago, being risen from the dead and having come now by the Holy Spirit, lives within this body of mine. And these hands that once killed men are now the hands of Jesus Christ.

These feet that once tracked them through the jungle are now the feet of Jesus Christ. These lips that were once blasphemous and dirty are now the lips of Jesus Christ. My eyes are his to see with, my ears are his to hear with, my mind is his to think with, my heart is his to love with.

That, sir, is what happened. And from the lips of an ignorant stone-age savage, the president of Ecuador heard more clearly, maybe than any other man, the spiritual substance of biblical, historical Christianity. All that we've been talking about this weekend.

It takes God to be a man. That's why it takes Christ to be a Christian. Because Christ in the Christian puts God back into the man.

That's what transforms character. That's what makes a killer kind. That's what makes the dirty clean.

That's what makes the thief honest. That's what makes the liar truthful. Not reformation.

The restoration of the divine nature. Out of the heart, said the Lord Jesus, proceed lies, adulteries, unclean thoughts. That's the dirty well.

And no matter how clean the rope, no matter how new the bucket, no matter how sincerely you try, you will only get dirty water from a dirty well. That's why when the Lord Jesus Christ came to this world, it was not only to give himself for us. It was to give himself to us.

That from his indwelling through the Holy Spirit, there might be a well of water in us, pure and clean, welling up unto everlasting life. The fruits of his indwelling Holy Spirit. Could be that you're not a Christian.

Maybe that you have accompanied a friend tonight, and out of courtesy at their insistence, you're numbered amongst us. But it may well be that you don't know too much about what God was at when he sent his son into this world. Maybe that you're saying perhaps almost cynically, so what? I'm not an orca savage.

I could recognize that a sort of individual like that would need that kind of a crutch. I don't. Yes, it's true that he was an orca savage.

The only difference, of course, between Kimo as an orca savage from that primitive tribe, and our sophisticated society, in all its godlessness, is that we are a million, million times more dangerous. After all, the orca savage could only spear a person to death or smash him over the head with a stone age axe. Today we can send an intercontinental missile with an atomic warhead, which within a split second will blast into eternity all the labors of countless generations, and leave their mangled bodies twisted round.

The mangled wreckage of their cities. We're a million, million times more dangerous. Three men, after breaking the record in space, have just splashed down and gone home.

None of us, I suppose, need to be told that if you can orbit a space station around this earth, and bring the men who are in it back just exactly where you want them, when you want them, and remember when the ship isn't exactly where they land, it's not the astronauts who've missed their target, it's the ship. Of course, we recognize that it's just as easy to bring an atom bomb with the same accuracy as an astronaut. So the first nation that has got a space station with a hundred hydrogen bombs has got the world at its mercy, for at a press of a button, anywhere, at any time, day or night, sudden destruction can blast us into eternity.

In the British Isles we have three minutes warning of total annihilation. In the United States, they're more fortunate, they have thirteen minutes. I'm not quite sure how long you have here in Australia, it might be sixteen.

Doesn't leave you too much time. We're not orca savages, we're just sophisticatedly that much more dangerous. Because you see, the cleverer a man gets without God, the more dangerous he gets.

I was ministering in a church in Palo Alto, the Peninsula Bible Church. Pastor's a good friend of mine, Rev. Ray Steadman. I met him first in Formosa, Taiwan, when we were both ministering at the same Christian conference.

And we discovered that he had four daughters and I had four sons, so we thought we'd get together. As a matter of fact, nothing came of it. Seldom does, when dads and mums get together.

But during the course of the series of meetings that I had in his church, a gentleman came to me and he said, could I invite you out to lunch? And I thought that was an excellent suggestion. He said, I'd like to tell you how I became a Christian. Because so much of what you had been talking about matches my experience.

His name was Dr. Gerhard Dierks, D-I-R-K-S, of German origin, now living in the United States. Had a magnificent home and a man who is incredibly clever. And I discovered, as he began to tell me his story, that he was one of the pioneers in the electronic computer, the memory storage system.

He told me how being born in Germany and growing up as a young man in scientific research, it was his great ambition to produce what we today call a computer, a memory system. He said I wasn't a Christian, nor was I an atheist. I was too intelligent to be an atheist.

Because I recognised that there was so much that could never be explained apart from a first cause. But I suppose if you would describe me as anything, you would have said that I was an agnostic. That is to say, I recognised there was a supreme being or first cause somewhere, but that he was totally impersonal to me and I was totally impersonal to him.

Furthermore, I didn't consider that I was in need of any closer relationship than that. Not, he said, that I despised those who were religious. I didn't.

I was too intelligent for that too. Because I recognised that there were lesser human beings than myself who needed that kind of a crutch to lean on. And I didn't begrudge them what they needed.

It was simply that I had what it took. So I didn't need the crutch. And I embarked upon my experiments and I recognised that there was already a computer in existence and all I had to do was to discover how it worked and copy it.

The human brain. So for a long time I studied physiology and applied my mind to the human brain. And all the inspiration that finally sparked my inventions and discoveries, and he has some of the earliest patents in this field.

I derived from my research from a computer that already existed. And he said this is what began to bug me. Because I realised that I was a plagiarist.

I was constantly being congratulated. I was awarded all kinds of honours and distinctions because I achieved so much success in this particular field. And yet deep down in my heart I knew perfectly well I was a cheat.

That if anybody did this in any other field they'd go to jail for it. I was copying somebody else's work and claiming the credit for it. And the somebody else whose work I was copying was a first cause.

A god whom I didn't want to know. That bugged me. But he said there was something else that bugged me.

And he said it was the relentlessness of my own research in this field that finally put my back against the wall until I had to look God straight in the eye. And then he tried to teach me how a computer worked. And you can imagine that was pretty difficult.

Because I don't know the first thing about computers. I just had this slight advantage that in New York State at a place called Kingston I had visited the IBM factory where they were making the early warning radar system that warns the North American continent that unfriendly missiles are on their way. I'd seen one completed being tested by federal requirement under war conditions.

And it was a fascinating experience. Because I learned that when the big red lever labelled war is pulled across in the final emergency man bows himself out and the machine takes over and the war is fought by machine. Because everything will go far too fast for the human mind to calculate.

In the factory there were other items that were only in the process of being manufactured with all their sort of guts hanging up. Hundreds and hundreds of miles of wires. They're much more sophisticated now as I've learned because I've been back to that factory and seen some of the latest model.

But in those days there were banks and banks and banks and banks and still more banks of tiny little pinheads. And so recognising my ignorance and my simplicity Dr Gerhard Dierks picked up the story from there. He said well imagine that every one of those little pinheads is a brain cell which is interlinked with all the others.

And I'd noticed that. They were all interlinked with an amazing complex wiring system. And he said on each of those little pinheads can be recorded electronically four messages which will be retained.

That's the memory. So they're the brain cells upon which can be electronically recorded the information that you want to store. And he said when we first began to make an electronic computer like that, a memory storage system, we would feed information into it and the messages would be electronically stored in the brain cells.

And then we had what we in those days in a very primitive kind of way called the word button. We gave it the word. And when we gave it the word with the information that we had fed into it it had to draw a

conclusion.

Come up with an answer. And when we gave it the word and on the basis of the information we'd fed into it it came up with a conclusion. We said that was an experience.

And when it drew that conclusion, its first experience, that experience was electronically recorded into the system. So we then fed some more information into it and on the basis of the new information, the past experience, we gave it the word and it had a second experience. It drew a second conclusion.

And that second conclusion, its second experience was also automatically electronically recorded. So now we had a machine with a certain amount of data and two experiences. So we fed some more information into it, he said, and on the basis of two past experiences and the new information, it would have a new experience.

It would draw a third conclusion. So now it had three experiences and then we'd feed some more information and on the basis of the new information and three past experiences it would draw a fourth conclusion, have a fourth experience. And you see, before long we'd have a very experienced machine.

Do you get the idea? Well, very vaguely I got the idea. But he said this is what bugged me. When we had finally got a machine which stored an immense amount of information and which had had many, many experiences, the consequences of which had been stored into the system and which were built into its capacity to deduce, and somebody by carelessness or stupidity or ignorance fed it in false information, and we gave it the word, on the basis of all past genuine experiences but now on the basis of the added false information, almost with a smile on its face, it would come up once more very sincerely with a conclusion, it would have a new experience and it wouldn't even know that it was wrong.

But we knew that from that time on, because that false conclusion based on false information fed into the machine by ignorance or carelessness, from then on every conclusion, however sincerely the machine would produce it, would be wrong. Sincerely wrong. And we called it a dirty machine, because it had had a bad experience.

And as its creator in those early days I knew perfectly well that that machine could do absolutely nothing about it. It would behave, it would function. We could go on putting information into it and we would press the word and it would come up with the answer and every time it would be wrong.

I knew the machine could do nothing about it. I knew as its creator I was the only person that could cleanse the record and give it a clean start. And that's what began to get underneath the skin.

Because I knew perfectly well, though I hadn't lived all that long, as I look back over my life I'd had many, many, many bad experiences. I was a dirty machine. And I knew that all kinds of false ideas and false concepts and dirty ideas and dirty concepts had been fed into my computer.

And yet I dared, I dared to believe that in things eternal, in things about God and the spirit and morality I could come up as a dirty machine with the right answer when I knew deep down in my heart I'd be wrong every time. That worried me, because I knew that I could do absolutely nothing about it. I got so worried I finally had to take leave of absence.

And I booked into a hotel. And when I arrived at that health center I discovered to my surprise that there was a conference in session, a number of people had booked into the hotel and they were being

addressed by a man whose name I immediately recognized because he was a well-known Christian author and a man of considerable scientific standing. Dr. Arthur Richter.

Now it hurt my pride to think that he could possibly help me. But I was almost on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I didn't know then what was happening to me.

I do now. I was under conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit was graciously taking my own research and awakening my soul to the fact that I was a dirty machine, incapable of the right answer.

So I swallowed my pride and I made an appointment with Dr. Richter. And when we got together I told him what I'd been telling you. I explained to him how I had produced a computer that was a dirty machine that couldn't cleanse itself and was totally unreliable and I couldn't trust it.

And I'd come to recognize that I was just like that computer. I was totally unreliable, I was a dirty machine and I knew perfectly well I could never honestly come up with the right answer. And I said, Dr. Richter, if there is a God who made the computer inside my head that I've been copying to produce my computer, would you tell me this? Has he provided any means whereby a dirty computer can be made clean and given a clear start? And Dr. Richter said, yes sir, he has.

And he quoted the ninth verse of the first chapter of the first epistle of John. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. He told me how long, long ago, God who created this world and the universe, stepped out of eternity and came into time, walked this earth as perfect man.

Man as he is God created man to be. Man to the Father's total satisfaction. Who then looked into his Father's face and said, Father, you can dub on me, just as we might dub one program from one tape to another.

Father, you can dub on me all the guilt and dirt and shame and sin of a fallen race of fallen men. Father, there'll be boys and girls and men and women out of every race and kindred, tribe and tongue, and creed and class and color. And when they look around in the world in which they live, they'll see nothing but sadism and hate and greed and selfishness and lust and pride and jealousy and man's inhumanity to man.

And they'll cry out for help. They'll feel dirty and they'll want to be clean. They'll ask for forgiveness.

And Father, we won't have the right to forgive them. They're dirty, but we want to forgive them. And you know the plan, Father.

I'm the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And you're going to make me sin for them who knows no sin, that they might become the righteousness of God in me, that I being dubbed with their guilt, they may be dubbed with my righteousness. Thank you, Father.

The moment has come, and he died, that we might be forgiven. Yes, sir. And the promise of God is this, that the moment you repent toward him and put your trust in Jesus Christ, he'll remember every last one of your sins, forgive and remember them no more.

Blotted out like a thick cloud, as far away as the east is from the west, buried in the depths of the sea, put behind his back, though red like crimson, to be white as wool, though scarlet, whiter than the snow. Yes, sir. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

Dr. Dix said I blubbed like a child. I dropped on my knees, I didn't know how to pray, I'd never prayed in my life, but Dr. Richter helped me to pray, and I said, Jesus Christ, I don't know you, I've never wanted to know you, but if it's true that you died upon the cross and shed your blood to cleanse my heart from sin, clean the record and give me a clean start, you're in business. And when I got up, he told me, I was a Christian.

I'd been converted. I was redeemed. And my sins were gone.

Then he added this. He said you'll recognize that if you've spent millions of dollars and thousands of man hours in feeding data into a storage memory system, and then somebody through their stupidity or ignorance or negligence were to feed in false data and make it dirty so that it became an unreliable machine, that would be an immense loss. So he said it was right in the early stages of our experimentation that we introduced a means whereby we could recover the usefulness of a machine that had become inadvertently dirty.

He said in those primitive days we called it the repudiator button. Now I believe they call it draining off the waste. But in those days, he said, we gave it the repudiator button, and the moment we did that, knowing that some false information had been fed in inadvertently, immediately there would be a message flashed throughout the whole system.

Reject! Reject! Reject! Reject! Reject! Reject! And no matter how dirty the information put in, the machine would reject and remain clean. And we discovered a means whereby a machine could be kept clean in the face of dirt. And excitedly, he told me this.

He said, you know, having discovered that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died for my sins and his blood cleanses me and gives me a clean start, I discovered that he was risen from the dead by his Holy Spirit. He comes to live within us, occupy my humanity, so that, although in a dirty world, there's a Holy Spirit within my human spirit, who by my free consent, given access to my soul, will keep a man clean in a dirty world. So that when I go down the street and see some suggestive placard outside a cinema, there's a little voice inside that says, reject! Reject! Reject! Reject! When I turn over the paper that I'm reading, the daily news, or maybe some magazine in the waiting room, and I see something at once suggestive and rotten, there's a little voice inside, deriving from God himself, the Holy Spirit says, reject! Reject! Reject! Reject! When I overhear the filthy conversation of men who call themselves gentlemen, but don't know how to behave like it, there's a little voice inside that says, reject! Reject! Reject! Reject! And I discovered that by his indwelling Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus, my once crucified but now risen Lord, as God, works in me both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

To keep a man clean in a dirty world. The Apostle Paul, in the second chapter of his epistle to the Philippians, puts it this way, it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, that you may be, not just become, that's a thing of the past, he's addressing himself to those who are already Christians, having become, become the children of God, he says, now by his indwelling Holy Spirit, as God works in you, that you may be blameless, that you may be harmless, that you may be the sons of God, without rebuke. Where? Wrapped up in evangelical cotton wool and tucked away, insulated and isolated from the naughty world in which you live? No, that you may be blameless in the process of time, that you may be harmless in the nitty-gritty of living seven days a week, that you may be the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and a perverse nation, right in the middle of a nation of crooks, and right in the middle of a nation of perverts, among whom you will shine as lights in the world, right in the

middle of a permissive society, where all standards of right and wrong have long since been jettisoned, you will shine as lights in the world, because in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

By Him all things were made, and without Him was not anything made that was made. And in Him the Word, who gave Himself for us then, that He might give Himself to us now, in Him was life. And this life that was in Him, and now ours, is the light of men, that will keep you shining in the dark, and keep you clean in a dirty world.

A stone-age savage, or a brilliant electronic engineer, consultant to the federal government of the United States, on their space program, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. And the one who lay down His life then, the one who by His Holy Spirit shares His life with you now, that's what God puts on offer. It's called the Gospel, it's the Good News, and nothing has ever changed, either the need, or the remedy.

Do you know Jesus Christ? Has this ever happened to you? If any man, any man, stone-age savage, electronic engineer, any man, be in Christ, He's a new creation. All things have passed away, and everything has become you. Has it really happened to you? You may have been brought up in a Christian home, but you don't know Christ.

You may be a church member, already baptized, or christened, or confirmed. You may be a church officer, not insincerely, but you don't know Christ. You've got religion, yes, but you haven't got life.

Spiritual resurrection has never taken place. The King Himself is not yet in residence. How about tonight? How about now? I'm so grateful that it's so simple to enter into the good of all that a holy God in infinite compassion purposed in His Son.

I was just a boy of twelve. Nobody knew when I accepted Christ. It was at the close of the third meeting of a boys camp.

I was utterly pagan. I was brought up in the city of London, and I knew just about as much of what it meant to be a Christian as Kimo, the orca savage in the heart of Ecuador. But on the third night of that camp, in the goodness of God, the Holy Spirit ministered Christ and showed me that He died for my sin.

And unknown to anybody, in the silence of my heart, I said, Lord Jesus, I never knew this. Nobody ever told me. But if you died for me, I want to thank you.

If you want to come into my life, I never knew ever that I had to ask you. But you're welcome. Quarter to nine, Saturday night, 13th of August, 1927.

It's the only reason why I'm here tonight. Well, it may be that you don't know quite what to say or how to say it. The last thing I want to do is embarrass you or make it difficult.

I want you to know the full implications that having given Himself for you, He will claim the right to share His life with you. 24 hours a day, we've talked about that. But if you're willing to know Christ as your Redeemer, gladly, maybe this is the moment you've been waiting for.

You've been too shy to talk to anybody about it. I'd like to give you the opportunity right now to put your trust in Christ. The way I'm going to do it is this.

There are many, many, the vast majority of the folk in this church tonight who are already born again. They already know Christ as their Redeemer. And they would more than gladly help me help you.

And I'm going to ask them so to do. I'm going to pray very simply, sentence by sentence. As once I prayed in the heart of a boy and found Christ.

And Christian folk are going to pray aloud after me in the same words. Not for themselves, because you can only pray once for yourself. But if you've never received the Lord Jesus and don't know quite how to do so, would you take this opportunity and add your voice to ours? Just as though nobody were here but just you and the Lord Jesus.

I'm not asking you to do anything more than that. Don't be frightened. I'm not going to take advantage of you.

I just want to make it just so simple that there's nobody could go away with any possible excuse. And as you pray, adding your voice to ours, maybe for the very first time in your life, just thank the Lord Jesus as we do. And receive him gladly into your heart.

Then we'll sing a song. I'll pronounce the benediction. And as you go out of that door you can say, Lord Jesus, thank you.

You're my Saviour. Now and forever. I'll never ever ask you into my life again.

Because you've come to stay. I'm redeemed. I'm a Christian.

I'm born again. I'm a child of God. I've been acquitted.

I'm clean. Great. Alright, let's pray.

Christian folk, because they love the Lord Jesus, and because they love him, they love you, because he loves you, very gladly are going to pray after me, very simply, sentence by sentence, in the same words. Without any embarrassment to you, you can add your voice. You're not talking to us.

You're not just saying a prayer. You're talking to the Lord Jesus, who is present, and invites you, lovingly, to come to him. Let us pray.

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I know that you died upon the cross to redeem sinners. You bore their sins. You paid their debt.

Your blood was shed, to cleanse us, and make us clean. Lord Jesus, I'm one of those sinners. For whom you died, and I am sorry, that my sin added to your load.

But I'm thankful too, that you died for me. I receive you gladly into my life, as my saviour and my Lord, to cleanse my heart from sin, to give me peace with God, forgiven, a child of God, forever, born again, as your Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus, comes now to live in me, to share your life with me, and to keep me clean in a dirty world. That's what I want.

That's what you've promised. And that's all I need to know. Now I am redeemed.

You're my saviour, forever. I'm God's child. I'm a Christian.

I'm clean, forever. Thank you Lord Jesus for those who, in the sincerity of their heart, in all childlike simplicity, because they wanted to, have added their voice to ours. You know them, I don't.

But we lovingly commend them, that small boy, that girl, or man, or woman. We lovingly commend them, into your greatest care, knowing that you will be as faithful and wonderful to them as you have been to us, as you have been to me. Give them that inexpressible joy, Lord Jesus, as they go in the knowledge, witnessed by the Holy Spirit to their spirits, that they have been born of God, redeemed, forgiven, never to perish, nobody ever to pluck them henceforth out of your hand, and give them the unspeakable privilege now of sharing that life that you share with them, with others.

Thanks for the blessing they'll be to their family, their friends, this church, or some other church. Thanks for those who through them one day will find you too, as their saviour. We thank you dear Lord, with all your heart.

Amen. If you made that the language of your heart, great, God bless you. Go home, rejoice in the knowledge that he has responded in faithfulness to your faith.

Before you sleep tonight, sit down by your bedside and say Lord Jesus, I can thank you now, I don't have to ask you, I thank you now that you're my saviour. And when I get up in the morning it's going to be such a joy Lord Jesus to give you my hands, my feet, my lips, my mind, my ears, my eyes. For you to live in.

That others may know through me that you're alive. Great. I'm sure you have some Christian friend, identify yourself, it'll be such a joy to them, and it'll be such a joy to you.

For not only will they minister to you, but you have a positive contribution now to make to them. If you belong to some other church family, make yourself known to your pastor as one who loves the saviour. If you belong to this church family, identify yourself at once.

Give the pastor a call. If you don't have any church home you couldn't have a better one than this. You'll find true friends and those who love you in the saviour's name.

And learn to love this book that tells you about the one from whom now you derive your life and through whom you live. The Lord Jesus.

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