

# Robert Murray Mccheyne 1

by Michael Haykin

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*Michael Haykin's sermon explores the life and influence of Robert Murray McShane, emphasizing his journey from a worldly lifestyle to a profound faith in Christ and his impact on evangelicalism in Scotland.*

**Duration:** 48:44

**Scripture:** Psalm 26:2, Jeremiah 33:10-16, John 20:28, Romans 8:1

**Topics:** "Eternal Salvation", "Urgent Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the life and preaching of a man named Robert Murray M'Cheyne. The sermon highlights an incident in the 1830s where M'Cheyne engages in a conversation with two Scottish laborers about the importance of life and the fleeting nature of time. M'Cheyne is portrayed as a faithful and dedicated minister who takes the souls under his charge seriously. He emphasizes the urgency of seeking salvation and warns that time is short and everything in this world is temporary. The sermon also includes excerpts from M'Cheyne's own sermons, where he urges people to turn to Christ and make haste for eternity.

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## Transcript

In the Old Testament, to the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 33. Depending how we get along this morning, we may or may not get to looking at that hymn. I suspect though it'll be looking at that next week.

But Jeremiah 33 is the text that I think is quite appropriate to the life of McShane. And Jeremiah 33, and I'm going to begin reading at verse 10 and read down to verse 16. Thus says the Lord, again there shall be heard in this place of which you say it is desolate, without man and without beast, in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say, praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his mercy endures forever, and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise in the house of the Lord, for I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first, says the Lord.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, in this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all its cities there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowlands, in the cities of the south, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flock shall again pass into the hands of him who counsels them, says the Lord. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will perform that good

thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a branch of righteousness.

He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which he will be called, the Lord our Righteousness.

Well, we'll see as we get into looking at the life of Robert Murray McShane, how that text, the Lord our Righteousness, applies to his life. Scotland, and I'm shifting now because we've spent probably at least four or five weeks looking at America in the early 19th century, the revivals that came, particularly that revival known as the Second Great Awakening, and thinking about some of the key players in that, Asselt Nettleton, Charles Finney. And then moving on from that, looking at the Holiness Movement, and when we looked at the Holiness Movement, we kind of sketched all the way through the 19th century because we went all the way up to the 1890s really, and the emergence last day looking at what is known as the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, which is a precursor of Pentecostalism.

But the focus of the last few weeks really has been holiness, and the Methodist perspective on holiness, that there's a distinct second blessing that we, the Christians, seek and which is given, in which God removes, as it were, from you, the possibility of sinning in thought, word or deed, at least as long as you continue in that. If you, you could lose it, but at least while, for some anyway, there was the idea that they could attain this place of, not sinlessness, but entire sanctification is the way that they would describe it. And what I want to do today and the next couple of weeks is look at a very different view of holiness, and an alternative view of holiness, one that comes out of a Reformed context.

What does Reformed holiness look like? In some respects, very similar to the Methodist, the love for God and His Word and His people and His Church, etc., but theologically expressed quite differently. And I think in the long run, much more realistic about life, and most importantly, much more biblical. And I want to do so through a Scottish group of individuals, a group of friends, of whom the first that I'm going to look at is Robert Murray McShane.

Scotland is a fairly tiny country. The population in the 19th century would not have been more than 4 million, and yet has had a remarkable influence upon the shape of evangelicalism. Going all the way back to the Reformation, you have the establishment in Scotland of what we would describe today as a national church, a state church.

And we know that as the Presbyterian Church. It would be described as the Church of Scotland. What is critical to remember, and this will become part of not McShane's story, but the story of a couple of his friends who we'll look at in subsequent weeks, is that by establishing the Church of Scotland as a state church, it meant that the ministers were supported by the state to some degree.

The monies that they had for their churches came from taxation. Same with the Church of England. Same with all the state churches in Europe.

And it also meant that people who owned areas of land of Scotland, and by the late 18th century, as we'll see in a minute, Scotland was owned, large parts of Scotland were owned by fairly wealthy lords or lairs. And these men controlled the right of appointments to the churches that were on their land. So, let's say I own Milton, and there's 10 parish churches in Milton.

That means I own the appointment, and I can appoint whomever I want to those lands, to those churches. Now, if I'm an evangelical, for the congregations, it's great. If I'm not an evangelical, well, it could be a problem.

I've got two or three cousins. They can't make their way in the world. They can't do anything as lawyers or doctors, or they don't want to join the army, which is the other great choice.

Hey, just put them up as ministers. And if any of you are familiar with the movie versions of Jane Austen's novels, this is a frequent kind of refrain in her novels, these clergymen who basically are put in places because of their wealthy connections. And that's an ongoing problem.

Nonetheless, when Reformation comes to Scotland, probably the key figure there is John Knox, quite a remarkable man who didn't fear man at all. And there are great stories of John Knox confronting the Queen of the land, Queen Mary of Scots, who was a die-hard Roman Catholic, and she'd be going in retinue from one palace to another, and suddenly Knox would be on the hillside, like one of these Old Testament prophets, preaching at her, and had no fear of the sort of powers that be in Scotland. And God owned his ministry, and Reformation came to the Scottish lowlands, not the highlands.

The highlands will remain solidly Catholic till the early 18th century. And then you have a succession of remarkable men, and it would take us too far afield to talk about them all, but in the 17th century, you've got a man like Samuel Rutherford. And if you've never read Samuel Rutherford's letters, you can pick it up in a little edition like this published by the Banner of Truth.

I remember reading it many years ago, and it's absolutely tremendous stuff. The insights that God gave this man regarding the believer's relationship to Christ, and quite a remarkable figure. Or in the 18th century, early 18th century, you've got a man like Thomas Boston.

Again, a minister in the lowlands, quite a remarkable preacher of the Gospel. And during the 18th century, you have revivals that come to Scotland, and there is, for the first time, a break in the state church. It takes place in the 1730s.

There had been no, basically up until the 1730s, there had been one state church and nothing else. Unlike England, which by the 1700s had, in addition to the Anglicans, the state church, and had Baptists and three variants of Baptists, General Baptists, Particular Baptists, and Seventh-day Baptists. You had Congregationalists, you had Presbyterians, you had Quakers, and then there was an odd group called the Muggletonians, and there might be a few others that are broken away from the Church of England.

But in Scotland, there was just the state church until the early 1800s, early 1700s, when finally the issue of the patronage of local parish churches came to a head. And a number of ministers felt it was unbiblical, rightly so, for a man who owns a parcel of land to be appointing the minister. The congregation should have the right to choose their minister.

And so there was a split in the 1730s. There would be a much bigger split in the year of Robert and Marty McShane's death, and we'll look at that in a week or so, but I'm just wanting to give you that background. And then in the late 1700s, you have a God raising up a couple of remarkable men, the Haldane brothers.

And it's the Haldanes, Robert and James Haldane, who begin to get a vision for God's work in the Scottish Highlands, which is pretty well solidly Roman Catholic. And they begin to take preaching tours up to the Highlands regularly. And all of that is very important for the present day, because today the lowlands, the

Scottish lowlands in Scotland are the place of worst attendance to church in the entirety of the British Isles.

It's probably somewhere between 2, maybe 3% of people in the Scottish lowlands go to church. Let's go to church. That doesn't mean they're evangelical.

Whereas the Scottish Highlands have been a bastion of evangelicalism since this period in the early 19th century. And the key church there will be, as we will know it, look at it in a week, the Free Church of Scotland. Again, it's very important if we had the time, the Haldanes, during their ministry, many of the revivals that God used, local revivals to be involved in, many of the men and women converted under their ministry came to Ontario.

The entirety of the Ottawa Valley from 1816 to about 1850 was mostly populated by Gaelic-speaking Scottish Highlanders, either Baptists or Presbyterians. In fact, Scots, Scottish emigrants had a major shaping of Ontario. Every university in Ontario founded in the 19th century was founded by a Scotsman.

In fact, every university founded in Canada before 1900 was founded by a Scotsman except for one, Acadia. All of the key banking institutions here in Ontario were founded by Scots. And the Scots had a major influence.

And for many of these men and women who came over were evangelicals, either Presbyterians or a very few sprinkling of Baptists. That's the background then and all of that in 10-15 minutes. You now know the history of the church in Scotland that we need to know a little bit anyway in terms of Robert Murray McShane.

I'm going to talk a little bit about his early life, but I want to jump ahead to an incident that took place somewhere in the 1830s. Two Scottish labourers, it was a winter's day, and two Scottish labourers are working in a quarry, a stone quarry. And after having a break at one point, they're warming their hands by a fire.

And a man rides up on a horse and gets off and begins to speak to them. Engaging individual who they found themselves drawn out to speak to him quite easily. And then he begins to, the conversation begins to move in the direction of some very alarming statements he makes about life and comparison to the fire that they're warming their hands at.

And he starts to talk to them about the danger of hellfire. And the men were taking him back and one of them said to him, you're nay common man. Oh yes, just a common man, he said.

It was Robert Murray McShane. And those men never forgot that encounter with him and many in his own day found him a remarkable man. Here is one individual, a man named Robert Candlish, speaking of McShane.

I cannot understand McShane. Grace seems to be natural to him. That's a contradiction in terms.

It obviously wasn't, but just the holiness of the man. Andrew Bonner, who we're going to look at in a couple of weeks, who was one of his closest friends, said the impression left by McShane was chiefly that there had been among us a man of peculiar holiness. And one contemporary writer, a man named Michael John, has said, few ministers have so greatly influenced their own and succeeding generations in so short a life.

He died before he was 30. And I often think of how God has in, maybe not every generation, but often generations, an individual like this. In earlier times, David Brainerd is like this.

In later times, I think Jim Elliott is like this. And it's a shame, the recent controversy regarding the end of the *Spear* movie. And if you don't know about the conversation, you can go online and the way in which one of the men who was martyred with Jim Elliott was played in the most recent movie by a homosexual.

Because that's kind of tainted that story. But the story of Jim Elliott is just a remarkable story, dead before he's 30. Well, McShane was born in 1813.

He would die in 1843. And he was born in Edinburgh. In fact, we know the exact street, 14 Dublin Street.

It's never been to Dublin Street in Edinburgh, but I'm quite sure it still exists. You can go there and see it and see where he grew up. His parents had come to Edinburgh, like many in that period of time, moving out of the country.

They came from a county of Scotland called Dumfriesshire. And they had moved out of the country. They'd moved into large cities.

They were moving into the large cities in terms of hopefully social advancement, etc. And this will become a major problem in Scotland in terms of the poverty of many of the inner cities in which McShane will be involved. His parents, though, his father did very well, became a very prosperous lawyer.

And they eventually moved outside of the city where they could look across the Firth of Forth and see over to the county on the other side of this large river known as Fife. And so he grew up in a context of wealth and money and social influence. It was a church-going family.

Most families in Scotland at this point in time were church-going, but it was not evangelical. And his religion, as he would later realise, was the religion of a Pharisee, striving to live a good life, but not interested in the foundation of a good life, which is the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in him. And his family had been shaped by the liberalism of the day.

He went to high school in Edinburgh, Edinburgh High School, then eventually entered university there in 1827 to study classics and philosophy. The first two years of his time in university were one long round of parties. He loved playing cards and dancing into the wee hours of the morning.

This is what he later wrote in one of his poems. From morn till eve, from eve till merry morn, I kissed the rose, nor thought about the thorn. The next two lines are very powerful.

My eye, my ear, my taste, I live to please in one unbroken round of idle ease. He's supposed to be there obviously studying, but university affords a dangerous ground for often young men and women away from the home and supposedly preparing themselves for life's future, but hey, party time. And that's what he did.

Outwardly, he was still going to church. In fact, in 1831, he became a member of the Church of Scotland in that area, but he had no sense of guilt, no sense of sin, but then a change came. And the change was quite sudden.

And the change came through two aspects, one separation and the other death. His second eldest brother decided to go to India and suddenly the very close-knit family circle was broken and then the eldest

brother, David, died. But before his death, God had converted him and he had become convinced of the importance of faith in Christ and the things of eternity.

This is the way Robert Murray McShane would later recall the impact of his brother and he's writing many years later to a young boy who had a brother and McShane is thinking about his own brother who had died. I had a kind brother as you have. He taught me many things.

He gave me a Bible and tried to persuade me to read it. He tried to train me as a gardener, trains an apple tree upon the wall, but it was in vain. I thought myself far wiser than he and would always take my own way.

Many a time I can remember I saw him reading the Bible or shutting himself up to pray in his room when I'd been dressing to go to some dance. Well, this dear friend and brother died and through his death made a greater impression on me than ever his life had done. And he would later remember the day his brother died and he'd mark it, once he's converted, he'd mark it every year to remember.

And the last time he remembered it, before his own death, he could say to his church that he was pastoring, this day, 11 years ago, I lost my loved and loving brother, began to seek a brother who cannot die. And this experience of his brother's death, suddenly now, he's broken out of his worldliness and the realization that this round of parties is one day going to come to an end. This would eventually give rise to his hymn which is known as Jehovah Sidkenu, Jehovah Our Righteousness.

When free grace awoke me by light from on high, then legal fear shook me, I trembled to die. No refuge, no safety in self could I see, Jehovah Sidkenu, my Saviour. And he came to see that what many in his day thought was religious, outward morality and respectability was not enough.

It was merely the cold religion of a Pharisee. What he needed was a heart salvation. He needed his heart converted.

And he became to be aware of his own simpleness as he looked at his outward righteousness, he began to realize it really didn't amount to much because inwardly, no matter what he did in terms of his going to church on Sundays, inwardly he was not right with God. And he began, he shifted his church, he began to sit under an evangelical ministry. And you can track in his diary, I'm not going to read all of it, how God began to work in his life.

And probably an excellent way, by the way, into McShane's life is this little book, which is an abridgment of a much bigger book, The Life of McShane by his friend Andrew Bonner. And Bonner quotes fairly copiously from McShane's diary. But you start to find things like this, March 10, 1832, I will never play cards again.

And again, you need to remember the background out of which he comes and what this meant for him. April 10, 1832, I did not go to the dance. And God's at work in him showing him that certain things that he had plunged his life into were things that were hindering him from knowing God.

November 12, 1831, reading Henry Martin's memoirs. Henry Martin was a missionary who went to initially India and then Afghanistan and died in what is now Iran, seeking to win Muslims in Iran to Christ in the 1820s. Would I could imitate him? And here God is using examples from his recent history.

Would I could imitate him? Giving up father, mother, country, house, health, life, all for Christ. Or March 20, 1832, reading the life of Johnson Edwards. How feeble does my spark of Christianity appear besides such a son.

But even his was a borrowed light. And the same source is still open to enlighten me. By 1832, he's converted, as you probably can get from some of these remarks.

And has passed from death to life and has sensed the call to ministry and he entered Edinburgh University, their divinity college. And the key man who was the professor of the divinity college at the time was a man named Thomas Chalmers. And Chalmers was both a remarkable preacher in many ways but also a man who deeply impressed Christian teaching on a wide number of young men who came under his tutelage during the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s.

It would be Thomas Chalmers who would be the leader of those who would break with the state church in 1843 where one third of the ministers of Scotland would leave the state church to found what is now known as the free church. And it wasn't McShane but one of his close friends, Andrew Bonner. His older brother, Horatius Bonner, said he had never met as Christ-like a man in his life as Thomas Chalmers.

And Chalmers had an enormous influence upon McShane. And again you can trace through his diary McShane's growing sense of what God was calling him to be. June 22, 1832 Truly there was nothing in me that should have induced him to choose me.

I was but as the other brands upon whom the fire was kindled, which shall burn forever. And he's thinking of that passage in Zechariah 3 where God says to Joshua, the high priest, I have plucked you as a brand out of the fire. And in fact, this will be a theme that comes up quite a number of times in his sermons when he's preaching.

And you'll compare people. What you're like, you don't realize what you're like. You're like sticks of wood.

And you're about to be put into the fire. Oh, that you might flee to Christ now. And be like a brand as it were plucked out of that fire.

August 15, 1833 Awfully important question. Am I redeeming time? I think this is one of the great things that comes to us from McShane's life is a statement he will make later. Oh, to make haste for eternity.

Or from the 23rd, 1834, Sabbath. So, the Lord's Day. I rose early to seek God and found Him whom my soul loved.

Who would not rise early to meet such company? Or this statement. This is a great statement for students and the importance of studies. He's writing to a student at the time, a fellow student.

He says, Do get on with your studies. Remember you are now forming the character of your future if God spares you. If you acquire slovenly or sleepy habits of study now, you'll never get the better of them.

Do everything in earnest. Above all, keep much in the presence of God. Never see the face of man till you've seen His face who has our life.

And that will become one of the key aspects of his life in terms of his prayer life. The last entry of his student days is this one, March the 29th, 1835. College finished on Friday last.

My last appearance there. Life is vanishing fast. Make haste for eternity.

And during these three years, from 1832 to 1835, when he took what we would describe today as a Master of Divinity, but in those days would be described as a Bachelor of Divinity, built on a BA. God's preparing him in this period of academic study, not only in terms of equipment for a preaching ministry and a teaching ministry, but also spiritually. And he has the time to build solid habits, as it were.

We'll do him in very good stead in the brief years that remain to him. 1835, he would only live eight more years. 1835, July of that year, he was licensed to preach in the state church, a presbytery, in which his first charge was as an assistant to a man named John Bonner, who I'm not sure, but I assume is a relation to this particular Bonner, Andrew Bonner.

And he was the minister of a place called Larbert. And the very important thing to remember when we're dealing with McShane and the Bonners is that their early ministry, being in the state church, meant that everybody in a parish was expected to go to church. Now, by the 18th century, 19th century rather, there was no way that was going to ever happen.

In the 16th and 17th century, you could use taxation or even harsher methods, namely fining people if they didn't turn up at church. But by the 19th century, things are breaking down in the parish system. But McShane is convinced that this is the way that God works.

And so, the parish of Larbert, where he was the assistant minister, had 700 families. And it had grown hugely in the previous 30 years because this was an area where one of the first major industrial plants was built. It was a steelworks built in this area.

And a lot of men who were out of work in the countryside flooded into this area to work in this large factory complex. This is the beginning of the Industrial Revolution of which we are major beneficiaries today. But in that period of time, the 19th century, it often produced horrific scenarios in town.

Men and women working in these factories, sometimes 14 hours a day, maybe 16 hours a day. There were no child labour laws. So, factories would employ, you know, if you've got 3 or 4 kids, there isn't an extensive school system to some degree.

So, you just take the kids of you to the factory, might as well get them working too. And so, you'd have kids 8, 9, 10 years old working in these factories. And probably our most vivid depiction of it is Charles Dickens.

And Dickens had his own slant on things. And that's important to remember. But he does visualize for us a lot of what these major urban centres were like, the horrors of them, of child labour.

And this area where McShane is, and then initially, and then the area where he will go to, namely Dundee, are both like this. They're places of booming industrial advance and the poverty that comes of it. 700 families in the parish, he's responsible for them all, in his mind.

Most of them don't come to the church, but he's responsible. He's going to go house to house visitation. And we have a number of letters of this period of time from McShane.

On one occasion, one sister, Eliza, mentions in a letter how she had gotten a note from her brother saying that he had visited 28 homes that day. It couldn't have been long visits. But in his mind, everybody in that

parish had to be visited, whether they wanted to come to church or not.

In 1836, in the autumn of 1836, when he was 23, he accepted a call now to move from being an assistant minister to being the parish minister of St. Peter's, Dundee. And he was installed there in November of 1836. Dundee, even more than the area where it had been, was a typical industrial town.

In around 1800, it would have been a few thousand people. In 1836, it was 57,000 people. It had grown enormously.

And what that meant, there was not enough housing. There was housing shortages. The public works, that is the piping that brought water to homes, was inadequate.

Many of these places, therefore, these industrial centers, became centers of typhus and cholera during the 19th century because the water system was completely inadequate. The housing couldn't cope. It was an urban planner's nightmare in the British Isles in this period of time.

And along with that, the poverty. You've got the poverty, you've got people, their whole lives are in the factory. Not surprisingly, from a human point of view, they try to escape their misery in drink, which only makes their situation worse.

In the parish of St. Peter's, which is where McShane will be, it is estimated that there were 11 shops where you could buy bread, 11 bakeries, and 108 pubs, or public houses. That figure alone tells you there's something dreadfully wrong in this place. McShane, it's been estimated, and again, our figures are fairly, the historians who study this have fairly good figures to work from.

One quarter of working class income would be spent on drink, which is only deepening their poverty and their problems. McShane would say, Dundee was a city given to idolatry and hardness of heart. It was a godless town, a dead region, where the surrounding mass of impenetrable heathenism would cast its influence even on those who were Christians.

In St. Peter's, the parish, there was 4,000 people and the church had just been newly built. It could hold about 1,700 people. It would eventually, during the times of revival that would come under McShane, it would be filled with about 11 or 1,200 people.

In the early days, though, there was hardly anybody going there. So, McShane would do what he had done and how he had been trained. He'd start to go from house to house.

What is amazing, I've never seen them, but apparently in the Free Church College in Edinburgh, there are in the archives there his notebooks that he kept. And what he'd do is he'd write down in his notebooks every family he visited, every day. And sometimes he'd write little kind of maps on how to get to the house, because the heart of Dundee was dating back in the medieval period.

And so, these little windy streets and back alleys, it was not always easy to find your way around. So, he'd write little maps on how to get to houses. And then he'd always note the Scripture text he read.

And if they talked to him about Christ, as he opened up, then he'd put that in red, the words he said to them. And as far as I know, they've never been published, but they'd be a fabulous kind of insight into MacShane's visitation. Let me read to you two sections of little bits that have been published.

Died the 8th of June, the year's not given, at 2 o'clock. And then the name in the published thing is omitted. It is to be feared as he lived.

O Lord, lay not this soul's blood to my charge. Truly, I might have seen him oftener, spoken to more plainly, more affectionately, and less stiffly. His hard-hearted wife reviled me coming.

Often. She said, are they going to make him a minister? Well, this is a long one. This one is January the 4th, 1837, where he begins to enter it.

It's very moving. Sent for by Mrs. S. Very ill. Asthmatic.

Spoke on no condemnation to them that are in Christ. He'd spend maybe 15 minutes talking to her about that verse. She said, but am I in Christ? Seeming very anxious.

She said she had often been so, that is anxious, but let it go. January the 5th. Still living.

Spoke to her of Christ and of full salvation. January the 16th. Much worse.

Not anxious to hear, yet far from rest. A dark, uneasy eye. I'm not sure what that's referring to.

Asked me, what is it to believe? Spoke to her on, God who made light shine out of darkness. She seemed to take up nothing. Lord, help.

January the 17th. Still worse. Wearing away.

No smile. No sign of inward peace. Spoke of, remember me.

January the 18th. Went over the whole gospel in the form of personal address. But she was drowsy.

January the 18th. Quieter. Spoke on, my Lord and my God.

She spoke at intervals. More cheerful. Anxious as I should not go without prayer.

Has much knowledge. A complete command of the Bible. January the 19th.

Spoke on convincing of sin and righteousness. That's from John 16. Rather more heart to hear.

January the 17th. Psalm 51. Her look and her words were lightsome.

That is, she was sloughing it off, but not taking to heart. January the 23rd. Faintish and restless.

No sign of peace. Spoke on, I am the way. In Psalm 25-24.

Still silent. Little sign of anything. January the 26th.

Psalm 40. The fearful pit. Very plain.

Couldn't get anything out of her. February the 1st, 1837. She died at 12 noon.

No visible mark of light or comfort or hope. The day shall declare. Now what you've got there, as you track that through, is here is a man who is very faithful.

Who takes very seriously the souls under his charge. Some might disagree with him as to whether or not he was right to think of everybody living in that parish, all 4,000 people, as his personal charge. Our perspective today is congregational.

Those who come to the congregational meetings, worship and so on, that are part of that church. But he sees it a bit differently. Here we've got a man who is very serious about the importance of issues of life or death to the point that he's regularly visiting on this way.

He often disregarded his own physical welfare. And we'll see that this will be problematic for him. Along with visitation, he labored in preaching.

It was the other area that men would remember him for. He was convinced that before the gospel and all of its goodness was prevented, men and women had to be told their desperate state. And so he would preach the law.

He would give people the bad news first. Before people can be awakened to the good news, they need to know the dire state they're in. There's a very powerful truth in that.

He could say this, men must be brought down by the law to see their guilt and misery or all our preaching is beating the air. A broken heart alone can receive a crucified Christ. The most I fear in our congregations are sailing down the stream into an undone eternity, unconverted, unawakened.

And this is again the state church where people went out of habit or out of outward morality. Here's a portion of one of his sermons. God help me to speak to you plainly.

The longest lifetime is short enough. It's all that is given to you to be converted in. In a very little time, it will all be over.

And all that is here is changing. The very hills are crumbling down. The loveliest face is withering away.

The finest garments are rotting and decaying. Every day that passes is bringing you nearer to the judgment seat. Not one of you is standing still.

You may sleep, but the tide is bringing you nearer death, judgment, and eternity. But Shane could say on his diary, I think I can say I've never risen a morning without thinking how I can bring more souls to Christ. That's what he'll be remembered for, his own personal walk and his passion for salvation of sinners.

Just a few remarks to close, and we obviously are nowhere near finished, but let me just pick up a few remarks to close on this emphasis of his to be like Christ. Here he is writing to a fellow minister. Above all things, you must cultivate your own spirit.

Your own soul is your first and greatest care. Seek advance of personal holiness. It is not great talents Jesus blesses so much as great likeness.

It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. And then these words would be remembered by many. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.

And you see this in his diary. I ought to spend the best hours of my day in communion with God. It's my noblest, most fruitful employment.

Now remember again, he's coming at it from a minister's point of view who had that time, and obviously the whole focus is somewhat different for those who have a regular employment and who have to be up early and to be at work for 12, 14 hours a day. But there is even for that context still much that can be gleaned here. He made it a rule that he must see the face of God before he would undertake any duty.

In other words, pray before he would do anything in the day. It was also McShane's desire, despite the fact of his visitation schedule, he also strove to live life that was not a hurried life. And he's got a lot to say to us, I think, in this.

He often talks about the calm working of the Spirit on the heart. The dew comes down when all nature is at rest, when every leaf is still. A calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with man.

Many of those who knew him said that in his latter years, he seemed to have a heightened awareness of God and eternity. One man said, I sensed in him a fragrance of loveliness that was breathtaking in power. This is what, and I'll close with this, what the source of that is, is love for Christ.

If there were 10,000 other ways of pardon, I would pass them all by and flee to Jesus. Christ held down his head for shame on account of my sin, so I might hold my heart up in peace on account of his righteousness. You that are in Christ, prize him.

You that are in doubt, solve it by running to him. You that are out of him, choose him. Now, well, next week I want to pick up looking at McShane's last years and the revival that comes to the church in which he is in, in St. Peter's Dundee.

And as I said, God raises up men like this and women in one or two in a generation that become known anyway. And their lives have enormous impact. I don't know how many biographical studies I've read of the late 19th, early 20th century and people who said, I was reading the life of McShane and the impact it made on him or on them.

And the elements of that spirituality are his hunger for God, his hunger for Christ, his passion to exalt the Christ who dies for sinners, his love for sinners. And there was a winsomeness about him that he could draw. Remember the story we started with the two Scottish workers warming their hands by a fire.

And McShane had never been in that whole class of society. He came from wealth and money, had gone through university, but his ability to draw alongside these workers and speak to them and impact their lives. Well, we have time very quickly if you want to ask a question or two or a comment and then we'll close in prayer.

1835 to 1843, eight years. The first church was a year and then 1836 to 1843 at St. Peter's. And even that, he was away from that for two years because by 1841 he's got a significant heart problem.

He's got tachycardia and a significant problem. And it's his schedule. And he goes to Palestine to recover.

So, in the actual church of St. Peter's Dundee, maybe six years. Melancholy? No. No, there's no evidence that McShane wrestled with depression, which Brainerd definitely did.

Yeah, you don't have that at all. I think, alongside the deep sense of the plague of his own heart, there is a rich sense of joy in God for what Jesus has done. And he didn't have that melancholy element, which is part of Brainerd's character.

Well, let me close in prayer. Father, we remember such a man, not to exalt Him, but to encourage us in our walk. Grant to us a like love of Your Son and like opportunities to share Christ and what He has done for us to others.

Grant us a like sense of the fleeting nature of time and eternity that stretches ahead of all of us. And help us to redeem the time and indeed, as McShane, to make haste for eternity. We ask these mercies with your prayer for blessing upon the hour to come.

For Jesus' sake, Amen.

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