

Behold 02-Alive for Evermore!

by Neil Dougal

The Lord Jesus Christ is a tender plant, a burning bush, and an apple tree, representing His willingness to yield to God, His voluntary death, and His supremacy and majesty.

Duration: 48:11

Topics: "Faith In Jesus", "The Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a little boy who wants to see the Queen but is stopped by a guard. However, an older boy comes along and takes him to meet the Queen, who comforts him and sends him home happy. The preacher uses this story to illustrate how the law says we cannot enter heaven, but Jesus, the royal son, can take us in if we have faith in him. The sermon also emphasizes the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and the love and compassion he showed towards people in need.

Transcript

Isaiah chapter 53, 5, 3, and verse 1. Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dried ground. He hath no form that cometh, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Second scripture, please, and the book of Exodus, the third chapter of the book of Exodus, and verse 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called him unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here am I. Our third scripture is in the song of Solomon, chapter 2 and verse 3. Of the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the suns. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Our final scripture in the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, chapter 1, and verse 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead, or became dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.

And have the keys of hell and of death. God will bless to us again this reading from his precious work. This morning we examined a section of the word of God dealing with the wonderment of salvation.

Tonight I want to talk to you about the men who make salvation possible. Our Lord Jesus Christ. The great Leonardo da Vinci once went to visit an art student, and the art student was absent from his studio, but he noticed a blank canvas.

And he took a piece of chalk and he drew a circle on that canvas and he left. When the art student returned, he looked at the canvas and the circle, and he ejaculated, Da Vinci has been here. He has left his mark.

And beloved, we can say this evening that the Lord Jesus Christ has been here. He has left his mark. There only can the spirit trace a perfect life below.

Our God uses many ways and many methods by way of instructing you and me in his word. Sometimes he uses similes and metaphors in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. There have been occasions when he has selected illustrations from the feather kingdom and applied these to our Lord Jesus.

In Psalm 102, he is like the pelican of the wilderness. He is like the owl of the desert. He is like the lone sparrow upon the housetop.

And the Lord Jesus himself said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wing, but ye would not. Selections from the feather kingdom. Then God uses other language and he makes selections from the vegetable kingdom and also from the animal kingdom.

Those memorable words by the Baptist, as the Lord Jesus walked the banks of Jordan, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. There he is seen as a lamb. And you will remember in the Revelation, he is depicted as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Selections from the animal kingdom. But this evening, we have read three scriptures in relation to the Lord Jesus and selections from the vegetable kingdom. In Isaiah 50, there we have the Lord Jesus on the tender plant.

In Exodus 2, there we find a bush that was burnt, but not consumed. In the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, we find there the language, as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the suns. And I have selected my fourth scripture as the key verse this evening, I am he that liveth, the tender plant.

And became dead, the bush that was burnt, but not consumed. And behold, I am alive forevermore as the apple tree among the trees of the wood. So is my beloved among the suns.

In Isaiah chapter 53, the prophet says, for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant. The Lord Jesus here is seen in contradistinction to the natural man. The natural man is depicted like the oak of Bashan, the oak that is unbending and unyielding.

But here the Lord Jesus is presented to us as a tender plant. And God's heart was moved, God's heart was thrilled as He observed the movements of our Lord Jesus Christ. After almost thirty years of apparent obscurity down in Nazareth, the Lord Jesus commenced His public ministry.

And that was a great moment to our God. And His heart pulsated with a newfound joy as our Lord Jesus identified Himself with the faithful remnant in the waters of baptism. And God spake from heaven, This is

my beloved Son, in whom I find all my delight.

He was ever fresh, He was ever green, He was ever yielding to the claims of Jehovah. Then one day He stood with the favored disciples and joined by Moses and Elijah. And again God speaks forth His appreciation of His beloved Son.

To Peter, to James and to John. Peter, of course, as he invariably did, outstepped himself that day, suggesting to make three tabernacles. But God intervened and He said, This is my beloved Son, hear Him.

He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant. On the third occasion, the Lord Jesus, anticipating the sorrows of Gethsemane and what would be involved at Calvary, He said, What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.

And a voice was heard from heaven, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. God ever found His supreme delight in that tender plant. His subjection to the Father indicated His willingness to yield like a tender plant.

When we think of the Savior and the tenderness of His heart, it is a source of awe and amazement. We think of Him as He dealt with the rich young ruler who came seeking everlasting life. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? And the Lord Jesus Christ, we read, and beholding Him, He loved him.

And the man went away with his treasures and failed to respond to the invitation to be a genuine disciple of the Savior. But he loved Him. We see that occasion when He was passing through the city of Nain.

And there was that widowed mother and her heart was broken. She had lost in death her only boy. But passing through that city was the Savior, that tender plant.

And the timely intervention, He stopped that funeral procession and He restored that young man back to his mother, the tender heart. We sometimes sing that tender heart that fell for all. For all its livelihood gave, it found on earth no resting place, save only in the grave.

I am He that liveth, the tender plant. We observe the Savior standing there on the slopes of Olivet, ears coursing down His cheeks, as He looked over that captious and critical city of Jerusalem. Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen doth gather her brood under her wing.

But He would not. Think of Him, beloved, as He came in contact with children. The stern disciples would have driven them away.

But He says, Suffer, little children, to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven, the tender plant. But surely our hearts are moved when we see the Savior carrying His cross and going towards Golgotha. He observed the mothers of Jerusalem and they were weeping.

And He turned to them and He says, Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. He had a tender heart. But surely the acme was reached at Calvary, for there He hung in agonies and blood.

And as you observe that bloodthirsty mob, we have the very exhibition of a wonderful Savior and His heart of tenderness. He says, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He never fostered an angry thought against those wicked perpetrators.

He loved them. God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And the peak of His love was reached right there at Calvary.

And on that discussion during those moments with the thief on the cross, when He turned to them, He says, Lord, remember Me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And that tender heart, He says today, shall thou be with Me in paradise. He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant.

Now, a plant is universally attractive. No matter which part of the universe you may travel to, you will always find plants. There is a peculiar attraction about plants.

It has been my privilege to have visited the Boucher Gardens in Victoria and also the National Arboretum in Washington. And there's something fascinating about plants. A friend of mine who is an expert, an authority on rhododendrons, he tells me that even rhododendrons can be found in the Arctic Circle.

The universality of plants. And tonight we present the Saviour who has a universal attraction and an appeal to those who are willing to recognize that He is Lord. It was one of my privileges in World War II to have visited the city of Cairo.

It was there I first met our brother Willie as a priest at a conference in Alexandria in the land of Egypt 29 years ago. And sitting there in the remembrance meeting in Cairo, I scanned the audience. And I was absolutely thrilled at the universality of that little group represented right there.

There were servicemen and ladies from every country in the British Empire. There were souls from South Africa. There were Anzacs from Australia and New Zealand.

There were converts from Islam. The Hebrews were represented. And we all had one objective.

The Lordiness. Different walks of life, different backgrounds. But we had one thing in common.

We loved the man of Calvary. He is universally attractive. And no matter where we go, north, south, east or west, we find there are those who love the Lord Jesus.

He is taking out a people from every kindred, town, people and nature. And he is going to populate heaven with sinners saved by his precious blood. Blessed be his name.

He is universally attractive. And plants, as I have mentioned, are accessible everywhere. And we discover this connecting our Lord Jesus Christ with this tender plant.

And right here in this gospel auditorium this evening, the Lord Jesus is available. If you have not embraced his love and availed yourself of his death, he is available right now. He says, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me. And so the seeking soul will always find the seeking Savior. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And he is available right now for you if you are not yet in the family of God. The same applies to the Eskimo or those behind the iron and the bamboo curtain. Jesus Christ is available tonight.

He is the Savior of sinners. And John, I depend those memorable words, surely had this in mind when he says, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And with a plant, there is invariably, I know there are exceptions, Brother Milligan has informed me of this, there are exceptions, but invariably we find an aroma associated with most plants.

And we thank God for the fragrance of our blessed Lord. All his garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. There is ever a fragrance about the person of the Lord Jesus.

I am he that liveth, the tender plant. But our second scripture is the burning bush. I am he that liveth and became death.

That's the more accurate translation of the verse. Because the Lord Jesus voluntarily became death. He could say, no man taketh my life from me.

I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received from my Father.

But observe in the second, third chapter, rather, of the book of Exodus, Moses, he turned and he looked at that great sight. It was a moving experience to Moses to see a bush that was burned. But not concerned.

And surely, friend, it is a moving sight when we behold the Lamb of God suffering under the fiery indignation of God, the burning. But he was not concerned. What a sight! If there's a verse of scripture that moves my heart more than any other, it's that verse in Isaiah 53.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Think of it, friend. This one who called himself Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts, angels and archangels, seraphims and cherubims, they pay their perpetual respect and worship to that blessed person.

And yet he so humbled himself that we find he was led as a lamb to the slaughter. On the great day of atonement, blood was sprinkled seven times before and seven times on the mercy seat. And it's significant to observe that there were seven phases of the Lord's civil and ecclesiastical trial.

And there were seven precious choice, weighty sayings by the Lord Jesus as he hung upon the cross. Think of him this evening in the garden of Gethsemane. There he sweated, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

And these disciples, these strong, rugged fishermen, were so overcome with sleep because of the transactions of the day that there, in spite of all his suffering, they fell asleep. But he is led across the river Kidron and to confront the men called Caiaphas for trial number one. This is time for the Sanhedrin to assemble and they must have assembled at the hour of midnight.

And they went through the preliminaries of that false, wicked trial. And then they retired to bed. And they delivered the Lord Jesus over to the soldiers.

And all during that night, his face became the target for their male fists. And they plucked the hair from his beard. And they mocked him.

They made comedy out of tragedy. All during the night. And then we read these words, and very early in the morning, Caiaphas assembled the leaders again together for phase number four.

And then with this equidistastical phase of his trial over, they send him to Pilate. Pilate went through all the motions of the fifth phase of that trial. And then he heard that the fox was in town, Herod, and he sends the Lord Jesus across the city to meet Herod.

And finally, back to Pilate for phase number seven. And then Pilate took that scourge and he smoked the back of the Savior inasmuch as he became like a plow field. And as blow after blow descended on his back, every muscle, every nerve, every bone of his body reverberated under the impact of those blows.

As those pieces of bone lifted the flesh from his lovely back. No wonder the poet says he gave his back to the smiters, the lowly son of men. And the smiters smoked till their work was done.

And the thornless field was plowed so deep that a golden sheaf of life, I read, he gave himself for me. He gave his brow to the thorn crowned, the holy son of God. And they smoked that face and they bowed the knee to the kingliest king whose love so strong fills my heart with joy.

My lips with a song he gave himself for me. He gave his side to the spear thrust, the mighty prince of peace. And water and blood poured forth in a stream whose cleansing grace makes sinners meet for the heavenly place.

He gave himself for me. He gave his heart to the judgment, the sinless judge of all. And the wrath of man and the wrath of God broke forth on a storm that raged until my debt was paid, my shameful bill.

He gave himself for me. My friends, he suffered excruciating pain. For you and for me, what a sight! Hark, I hear the dull blow of the hammer's swan dog.

They are nailing my lord to the tree and the cross they appraise as the multitudes gaze on the dear land of dark Calvary. The fiery indignation of God made that blessed man his target. And God's heart was pained because he loved him.

Unbroken fellowship for millennia. And now God knew that he must turn his back upon his son as he did bear our sins on his own body on the tree. And the crowning language of the cross was a Waco sword against my shepherd, against the man who is my Pharaoh.

And that sheath of that sword was sheathed in the heart of our beloved Lord when it should have been sheathed in your heart. And in mine, he was burnt. He could say in Psalm 22, My heart is like wax.

It is melted in the midst of my bowels. The Savior, he died of a broken heart. He was burnt, bearing shame and scoffing ruined.

In my place condemned he strewed. He sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah! What a Savior! He was burnt.

What a sight! But thank God he was not consumed. The devil thought that he was the victor. He had tried for four thousand years to destroy the sea royal.

But God mentioned in his word, the seed of a woman would bruise the head of a serpent. And he tried everything in his policy was to destroy the seed royal, the royal seed. When the Savior was born, this he attempted through Herod.

When he gave the injunction that all the male children would be put to death. But here at Calvary, he's breathing a sigh of relief. The Savior is now in the tomb.

And he made sure that he would stay there. At least he thought so. And he sealed that tomb.

Death could not hold its prey. The Lord Jesus was the victor. Satan was the vanquish.

Death could not hold its prey. Jesus, my Lord. He tore the bars away.

Jesus, my Lord. Up from the grave he arose with a mighty triumph for his foes. He arose a victor from the dark domain.

And he lives forever with his saints to reign. He was burnt, but he was not consumed. He said to his father, Father, thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol.

Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to seek corruption. And on the third and the appointed day, in keeping with God's calendar, he rose. Triumphant from the grave.

I am he that liveth the tender plant. And became dead the bush that was burnt, but not consumed. And behold, I am alive forevermore.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood. Here the bride is dealing, first of all, with the supremacy. Of the Lord Jesus.

The apple tree among the trees of the wood. We do not worship a Christ that is dead, but one that is alive forevermore. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, approached an old lady in the city of Boston.

And she tried to inject into her something of her theory. So they spent a long time, and finally, they decided to have a recess, and have a cup of coffee. And so they began to resume again the discussion, as Mary Baker Eddy was having difficulty getting through to this old lady.

Finally, she said, to this lady, God is not a person, God is an influence. Ah, said the old lady, you took a long time to get to your point. He is not an influence.

He is a person. He lives within my heart. We thank God that we have a living Savior.

And we can say with Job this evening, I know that my Redeemer liveth. And on the latter day shall stand upon the earth. And it seems to me here that the apple tree is depicted in all its supremacy, its distinctiveness.

The apple tree is the domestic tree. There are tours throughout the area in New England in the springtime. People go to see the blossom and the aroma, the fragrance of the apple tree.

And when we think of our Lord Jesus, He stands out without rival, without compeer. And I bemoan the fact in these days in which we live, that there are those who bring Him down to our level. Let us never forget that in God's divine program, He's far above all, far above all.

Thrones and dominions before Him will fall. God has exalted Him far above all. The great British Prime Minister, William Gladstone, went to visit Dr. Chalmers, outstanding theologian and man of God, in my native city of Edinburgh.

And after spending some time in his company, Dr. William Gladstone, he made this observation about Chalmers. He said everything about him was massive, magnificent and monumental. I cannot find language adequate to describe the Lord Jesus.

He defies vocabulary and rhetoric, for everything about Him is massive, magnificent and monumental. He supersedes, He surpasses, He transcends everything that has divine beauty. He is on a plateau, apart from all other men.

And then the bride is occupied, not only with His supremacy as the risen Christ, but she's occupied with His sweetness. His shadow was great, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. Those of us who know Christ, perhaps all of us tonight, we can say truthfully, there is no one, there is nothing, more sweet, more precious, than the Lord Jesus Christ.

His name is sweet. We cringe, we are appalled when men take that name in vain, but surely we sing with pride, there is a name I love to hear, I love to speak its words. It sounds like music in my ear, the sweetest name on earth.

His name is sweet. And I'm happy to say that I believe that we'll walk down Redemption Avenue in glory, and we're going to have on our forehead His name. Men will walk the streets, but we'll name Him in glory.

That name is sweet, but so is His friendship. One day the great Chrysostom was brought before the emperor Archidius, who demanded that he repent, and repent, and give up his Christianity. Says the emperor to Chrysostom, he said, unless you give up your Christianity, I'll put you in exile.

He said, sire, this you cannot do, because the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Well, said the emperor, this is what I'll do, I'll take your life from you. He said, sire, this you cannot do, because my life is hid with Christ and God.

Well, said the emperor, I'll confiscate your property. He said, sire, this you cannot do, my treasure is in heaven, where no one can break through. He was absolutely infuriated.

Well, he said, I've got the solution, this is what I'll do, I'll put you in confinement. He said, sire, this you cannot do. I have a friend which sticketh closer than a brother, and he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

His friendship is sweet. Our beloved brother, Mr. Archanaeus Smith, has a very choice little illustration in his book Notes, Quotes and Anecdotes. About a gentleman that came into a church building every day at noontime.

And he came to the front pew, and he got down on his knees, and he prayed. He said, Jesus, it's journey. The next day, the same procedure, day in and day out.

Finally, the man was very, very ill, and was in a hospital. In fact, he was seriously ill. But every day at noontime, the man's countenance changed.

To the amazement of the attending nurse, and she said, how come every day at noontime your countenance changes? Well, he said, every day at noontime, I have my daily visitor. Oh, but she says, no one comes in to visit you. Oh, yes, he says.

Every day at noontime, my friend, he comes to the foot of the bed, and he says, Jim, it's Jesus. His friendship is sweet. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so does the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel, said Solomon.

And then, as time was almost gone, the bride not only is occupying with his supremacy as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and his sweetness, but she thinks volumes of his sovereign day. He brought me to the banqueting house. I would be elated if President Nixon sent me an invitation to come to one of his presidential breakfasts.

But who am I? A sinner worthy of hell, and yet the sovereignty of our Savior. And with all of God's people, he has brought us to the banqueting house. We attribute to him alone this glorious work of salvation.

When the great Queen Victoria was ruling over England, a little lad thought that he would like to see Her Majesty. And so, with his dirty face and his clothes tattered and torn, he approached the entrance to Buckingham Palace. And as he was passing through the gate, he suddenly was interrupted in his movement by one of the grenadier guards.

Where are you going? He said, I want to see the Queen. He said, you cannot see the Queen. Get out of here.

The little lad was retreating, very disappointing, and tears running down his cheeks. When suddenly an older boy came along and he said, what is your problem? He said, I want to see the Queen. But this fellow, he won't let me in to see the Queen.

This lad says, come with me. He took the boy by the hand and as they were walking through the gate at Buckingham Palace, the grenadier guard, he saluted. It was the Royal Prince.

And he took that little fellow in to meet his mother. She took him on her knee, wiped away his tears, gave him a good meal, straightened out his clothes and sent him home a happy boy. The law says you cannot come in.

But the Prince, the Royal Prince said, I will take you in. We thank God that sinners worthy of everlasting judgment. The law says you cannot get in.

But the Royal Son says, I will take you in. And if we only exercise simple trusting faith in him, he'll see us home to glory. He's the God that cannot lie.

He brought me to his banqueting house. And here's the security. His banner over us is love.

And who can measure, who can comprehend the love of Christ? It surpasses knowledge. Well might we sometimes think, could we with ink the ocean fill? Or were the skies of parchment made, were every stock on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry. But could this scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky? He is, in his supremacy, far above all.

And if you do not know him personally, and you want to go to heaven at the end of life, he's the one that can take you in. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved.

You trust Christ tonight, and you know something of the loveliness and the sweetness and the majesty of our blessed Lord. May it be so, for his name's sake. Shall we pray? Our Father, we thank thee again for the Savior.

We bless thee, he is the object of thy love. Thou hast highly exalted him. Thou hast given him a place far above all.

We do pray, our Father, thou shalt indeed draw our hearts closer to him. Help us to appreciate more and more the Lord Jesus. We think of the Apostle.

We would like to be like him tonight, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, and being made conformable unto his death. If there be a friend here this evening unsaved, still in their sins we pray, O God, that tonight they will find him, whom to know is life eternal. These things we ask, giving thee thanks again for a day spent in thy courts.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, amen.

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