

# A Living Lord

by Rolfe Barnard

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*Rolfe Barnard emphasizes the necessity of knowing a living Christ for true salvation and a genuine Christian life.*

**Duration:** 11:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Romans 6:23

**Topics:** "Jesus Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing a living Lord rather than just experiencing relief from guilt through knowing Christ. He argues that Christianity is not just about believing in doctrines, but it is a way of life that requires self-discipline and complete commitment to God's will. The speaker warns that those who only know a Christ that relieves guilt but do not have a personal relationship with a living Lord are deluded and in danger of damnation. He also highlights the need for churches to be evangelized before addressing the Antichrist spirit of the present age. The speaker quotes from the Bible and references the teachings of Henry Drummond to support his points.

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## Transcript

Some time ago I got a letter in my home in North Carolina from a dear, beloved brother in the Lord, and in that letter these words came or appeared on the letter, and these words are as follows. The business of men knowing a Christ which has relieved them of their sense of guilt, but knows nothing about a living Lord, is a delusion. Whatever errors you and I might be guilty of, we must be sound on this.

You know, this statement or this quotation from this brother in this letter lingers with me. It haunts me as I go up and down the land seeking to preach the gospel to men. This letter states both an accurate description of what passes for salvation in our day, and it presents a challenge that we dare not ignore.

As to the latter, the challenge, one thinks of the errors of one's life and ministry. You know, with a 20-20 vision of hindsight, how could we have been so sincere and yet so dumb and wrong in so many instances? Thanks be unto God for his mercy. Rejoice again that God can and God does draw many a straight line with a crooked stick.

We must all be reminded that after we've done the best we can, we're all unprofitable servants. God is ever the God of a new start. As to the form of the statement of this brother, this passes for what salvation is called today, I wonder deeply if that description doesn't pretty well pinpoint the status quo of present-day

Christianity.

Somebody, the old colored brother, I think, said that the expression status quo is Latin for the mess we're in. And God help us, we're in a mess now when a polluted, perverted, mixed up stuff that's called Christianity has taken the place of that which Christ died for and is now yonder at the right hand of God interceding for, namely, eternal life. Let me read this statement again to you over this radio this morning.

This business of knowing a Christ which has relieved men of their sense of guilt but leaves men knowing nothing of a living Lord, oh, surely that is a delusion. Surely such a Christ is the creation of a perverted and a watered down gospel which is not the gospel of God. Surely such a gospel and such a Christ has no word and no healing for a world being rent asunder from all directions by reprobate men and reprobate forces.

Surely we're at the very heart here of the reason what passes for Christianity of the 20th century brand is gasping for breath and anybody can easily hear the death rattle of the patient. From a Roman Catholic layman writing in the Saturday Evening Post of recent date come these words, I quote, there is always the danger, after all, that the concept of God may wither away altogether in this country, not under attack but from sheer disuse. Modern American disbelief has crept like a white fog throughout churches.

In fact, churchgoing is quite irrelevant to it. Such disbelief is not incompatible with a mild assent to religious truths or even a mild religious revival. This man is saying that our nice little patronizing of God, he's saying that religion is a handy convenience on a par with the Chamber of Commerce or the Bridge Club, he's saying that our tidy little beliefs and our nicely packaged fire escape from hell salvation, to be preached this stuff with a nation headed for the dunghill, he's saying that it'll never do.

And to my way of thinking, it all leads back to a Christ who is not real in men's experience. It leads back to a Christ of a creed, but not to a Christ in you, the hope of glory. And there is no such Christ in the Bible or in history or in men's hearts.

The Christ of the Bible is Lord of all, and a salvation that does not so enthrone him is not God's so great salvation. In other words, a Christ who men believe in and their sense of guilt is thereby relieved, but leaves men knowing nothing experimentally of a living Lord, is not the Christ of the Bible. The Christ of the Bible must reign.

R-E-I-G-N. All hell can't stop it. He must reign in human hearts as he must reign the world wide around some of these days.

Now, my friends, I believe that the issue of all issues and religion in lost American Christian entity is this. I believe that churches must be evangelized before they speak to the Antichrist spirit of this hour. Surely a church or an individual not bearing about the marks of the Lordship of Christ can only mark time as we seem to be doing now, as the battle is being won on every side by the spirit of Antichrist.

One is reminded of the message of King Henry sent to Creton. Hang yourself brave Creton. We fought at Arcus and you were not here.

Henry Drummond of old said that most of the difficulties of trying to live the Christian life arises from attempting to half live it. His statement prompts the assertion that living a Christian life is not simply difficult, it is impossible. The New Testament emphasis is Christ living in you, not you live in a Christian life, but Christ manifesting his life in and through you.

William Law, that saint of old, said, A Christ not in you is a Christ not yours. And he said right. A Christ not in you is a Christ not yours.

A man or a woman must know experimentally the living Lord. Anything short of this experimental knowledge of a living Lord who died on a cross but he didn't stay on the cross and God raised him and put him on a throne and gave him the very reins of men's hearts, that is salvation. And anything that short of this fails to be New Testament salvation and there's none of the kind that's any good.

It is surely true that knowing a Christ which relieves men of their sense of guilt apart from knowing the living Lord is a delusion. And it is further true that whatever errors we may be guilty of, we must not err here. It is time to demand not only that men come to Christ with an open empty hand to receive his mercies, but it is time that men must be bidden and demanded to come to Christ on bended knee with surrendered lives.

In a recent issue of the popular Christian magazine, Christianity Today, seven questions about evangelism are asked by a Maryland pastor. I want to call attention to two or three of his insulated statements. First, he says evangelicals rightly insist that before a man can follow the ethics of Christ, that is the teaching, moral teachings of Christ, before a man can do that, he must accept, in the my Bible way, he must accept Christ as his gracious Lord.

It would seem then that proper evangelistic methods would be one of our greatest concerns, but is this so? Again, he says, can we assume that we have adopted evangelistic methods that are adequate for our age? Still one more time, he asks the question, invades all who will listen, whether or not the converted man will have a new life, a new purpose, a new set of standards, and a new philosophy of life. This man says the Bible says yes. My observation to you this morning is that the Bible tells the truth.

It does say yes. Maybe it's time for us to make sure that our converts are really converted before we take them into our membership, before we hold them up to the unconverted as examples of what Christ does for a man. Maybe it's time we stress emphatically that the Christian life is more than an intellectual acceptance of Christ as Savior.

Christianity, we must insist, is more than a creed or belief in a set of doctrines. Christianity, we need to remind men everywhere, is a way of life. It involves men in more than public professing faith, in being publicly baptized, in accepting a box of church envelopes.

It involves a life of self-discipline. It involves a complete commitment to the will of God. This business of men knowing a Christ who has relieved them of their sense of guilt but leaves them knowing nothing about a living Lord is a delusion.

And if you have this sort of experience, you'll split hell wide open. Do you know experimentally the power of a living Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in your daily walk is my question as I ask you to give faithful attention to this dear man as he tries to acquaint you with what is going on in his congregation and enlist your prayers and your support for Jesus' sake and soul's sake. Amen.

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