

Christ, the Demander

by Rolfe Barnard

The sermon emphasizes the importance of total commitment to Christ and the demand for repentance, highlighting the radical nature of the Christian faith.

Duration: 49:45

Scripture: Matthew 24:30, Luke 9:62, John 20:31, Acts 14:22, Romans 10:9, Romans 10:13, Philippians 2:9-11

Topics: "Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. He uses the analogy of a rebellion in a sovereign's kingdom to illustrate the spiritual battle between the sons of the kingdom and the sons of darkness. The preacher urges the listeners to throw down their arms of rebellion and bow at the feet of the Master. He highlights the longsuffering and grace of God, who desires all men to come to repentance and receive pardon through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Transcript

We're under orders to preach the kingdom of God, all dead, to all men. And command all men in the name of the sovereign God, not simply invite them, not suggest to them, but to command them with a holy authority to repent, to abhor themselves, to take God's side against themselves, of all of their self-righteousness, and their love of sin, and their deep-rooted rebellion, and as beggars, bankrupt men and women, receive the kingdom of God as gospel. It remains true that the first time any human being hears the gospel as gospel, the first time you hear the announcement, God has invaded this universe, he's been here and he's here now, in Christ, he's come to rule, and he's going to bring on everything under his subjection.

And the first time you who are made to be governed, you hear about one who has the right, he has the right to totalitarian, absolute, despotic rule of the deepest recesses of your soul and heart. And that sounds good to you. That's when, for the first time in your life, you heard the gospel as gospel.

As long as that's not good news to you, why, of course, you haven't heard it, you've missed it. Men and women are to be commanded to believe this proposition, Jesus Christ is a lovely Lord, whether you are ever saved or not. Let me repeat it.

This bargain basement stuff they call gospel preaching. If you'll do this, I'll do it. I've seen multiplied thousands of XGIs finally get to God, and spider knees, when the bombs were bursting in proposition,

God, if you'll do so and so, I'll do it.

We've not yet learned that faith is utter commitment of myself. Into his keeping, no matter what the consequence. As long as you keep listening to this stuff that says that God will do so and so, provided you do so and so, you're making bargains with God.

You've never been able, by faith, to enter in. The big question is, have I embraced this lovely Lord? Where he is, he's on the throne, in a living, day by day, obedient faith. I want to speak tonight on Christ, the demander.

The demander. When my Lord came and visited this earth, on mission bent, not to try to do something, but to do something, he began the scripture saying, by making an announcement and promulgating a demand. His announcement was, I'm here.

From that time, Jesus began to preach, and his message was, repent! That was his demand. His announcement was, I repent, I'm here. That order changed every human being, topped his head to the bottom of his feet.

God visited this earth, God was manifest in the flesh, God was in Christ, reconciling the world. Great is the mystery of Godliness. Oh, this tremendous visitation of heaven to earth affects every human being.

For time and eternity, the very announcement, the kingdom of God, of heaven is at hand. Repent. Repent.

That's either so or it isn't so. This earth was actually visited by God, manifest in the flesh. God was actually in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world.

Great is the mystery. God was manifest in the flesh. The no ifs and ands and buts about it, that's so.

Or it's not so. He began his ministry by making a solemn announcement. The kingdom of heaven, the rule of God, has come down here to penetrate and attack and destroy and conquer the rule of Satan and sin.

His enemies are to be defeated. He will not stop, bless God, until his enemies have made his footstool. One day the victory will be final.

One day this world will be brought back under the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ. And when he does it, his work will be done. And in language that I cannot enter into the depth, he'll turn the kingdom back to the Father, that the Godhead, the Godhead may be all in all.

Today he rules by suasion. Then he'll rule by power. But praise the Lord, the future has been invaded.

His rule is now small. It's now secret. But even while we wait for that blessed time when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, me and right now may taste of the power of the age to come, may receive eternal life, may be translated from the rule of darkness to the rule and the sphere of God's dear Son, may come to know by obedience almighty God, may receive the life of the Spirit, glory, hallelujah.

I wish that every time I had a chance to address people these days, my old brain would click enough that if I didn't say anything else, I could say again and again and again, let us forever be done with that perversion of gospel preaching that has made religious America, the most godless nation this side of hell, to wit that men have been given the privilege of accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ. They have not. God almighty never did entrust his Son to people that way.

No, men are not given a choice. They're confronted. Men are not invited to repent.

They're commanded to repent. It's not a question, I repeat, of whether you bow to the Lord Jesus Christ. It's simply a question of when.

The very heart of our trouble is our refusal to face the fact that God's ordained that because his Son poured out his soul unto death on a glory tree, that everybody's going to bow in recognition of him. But for the glory of God. And that some of the urgency of the gospel of grace might dawn upon us.

The grace of God means nothing less that now, ahead of time, before he unleashes his power of his mighty arm and makes it bare, that God almighty, ahead of time, he could well wait, and everybody has to bow. But ahead of time, he proclaims the glorious message that ahead of time, men may enter heaven now, right here on this earth, and experience the joy and the power and the glory and the sweetness of being ruled by him in whose hands, down at the right hand of God, still to be seen the print of the nails, bloodied Jesus now enthroned. Hallelujah, what a Savior.

He came making an announcement and a demand. How does one enter the kingdom of God ahead of time? How does one receive eternal life, which is to know by experiencing his power, the only true God, and his son Jesus Christ? How may one obtain the righteousness that God requires? How may one find the life of the Spirit, which imparts the life of the future? These questions are important. At that time, Jesus began to preach, and he said, Repent, for I am here.

There are perhaps three verses of scripture. They all mean the same thing. That would be sufficient tonight to answer our question, How may one enter heaven right now? For where Jesus is, and where his rule is sweet, that's heaven.

That's heaven. Surely it is. That principle of the Bible, that what is begun in this life continues in the life to come, and that's so true.

How can one enter heaven ahead of time? Be a charter member, bless God, in the rule of God. Let us be definite that the commitment of oneself to Jesus Christ and a word that I scarcely use now because it's fallen in such bad company, but it's a good Bible word, in accepting him as Lord and Savior, the commitment of oneself in acceptance of him as my only Savior and my lovely Lord, surely is the place to start. I insist afresh that if it means that the preacher will go to hell himself and you too, faith is total commitment of myself with no reservation to him as my master.

But the initial decision, if I can use that much abused word, must be reaffirmed and implemented in the life which follows. And that's the reason this generation of church members are going to split hell wide open. As ye have therefore received Jesus Christ the Lord, says Paul, tell him goodbye and say, I'm saved, I'm going to get to heaven when I die.

No, no. So walk ye in him. We must day by day continue to choose between the Lordship of Christ and the Lordship of sin.

One or the other is going to rule your life daily. It never becomes true that we can somehow serve both God and man. It is still true though ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, his spirit, is the enemy of God. Let down the standards. All this in her own tongue.

And that's present day so-called Christianity. But we dare not lie to men, not face them with the truth that men and women cannot negotiate a special arrangement whereby we serve two masters, God and Christ, and man's true, total allegiance. Sarcastically almost he'll say, I am saved, and do not the things which I say.

He just won't pray that way. You can't carry water on both shoulders and get along well enough by doing your little bit for God while hobnobbing with the devil. You can't be a part of his people while giving allegiance either to the world or the flesh or the devil.

This is total war. Total war. And ladies and gentlemen, everybody that don't get in this, totally is going to miss it.

Going to miss it. There is no, nothing gray. It's black or white.

It's all out for Christ. No wonder we keep trying to recover the great doctrines of the word of God that has been the plot of the devil. No wonder your pastor runs around like a chicken with his head cut off nursing some of you folks who are having trouble bowing to God's word.

For the bottom of this thing is simply this. Leave out total commitment of oneself to the Lord Jesus Christ and your plans and your schemes and your perverted gospel can get men and women to go through the motions. But only a miracle of God's grace will ever enable any human being to survive or perish, sink or swim, turn oneself over utterly to the sweet rule of the bloodied Jesus.

It just isn't done by the power and strength or will of men. God has to do it. No wonder we try to strip you and rob you of your assurance and rob you of your faith and rob you of your righteousness and rob you of your possessions and rob you of your... For only those who are thus robbed will ever do the simple thing.

Look. For there's life in a look. Three scriptures in Romans 10.

But what says it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and thy heart. What word? The word of faith. What is salvation by grace through faith? Why do we preach? Grace is the word of faith.

Paul said which we preach. Thine, if thou shalt confess. Now mark it.

Confession is always to God, never to men. Testimony is to men. It may be true.

It may not be true. I say I love Jesus. That may be so.

It may not be so. But confession is never to men. It's to God.

And if we confess, we stand upon our hind legs in a godless row enough to uncover... Stand up and tell... That's what it means. If thou shalt confess, if you're able to make a good confession, you'll not be able to apart from the Spirit of God. Thou shalt confess.

Jesus is Lord. And shalt believe in thine heart the thing that proves unto the Lord that God... Mercy upon mercy, grace upon grace, although he don't have to do it. In wondrous grace and promise and mercy, he says thou shalt be saved.

In the same chapter, he'll say, he whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. That's not a different way. And in another place, the 13th verse of that chapter, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord,

that's not a different way.

And what in this being able to make a good confession is who shall believe that God gave him the job, whether they believe it or whether they bow to it or not. No man may... And to be saved means to agree with God gladly ahead of time, before he makes you. Involved in that is a calling and a believing.

These things are written unto you that you might believe the impossible. Now get... These things, John concludes his glorious gospel. I could have read a whole lot of other things, but these things, separated and elected and selfish, and depend upon one thing, that you might believe something that no human being, apart from the work of God's regenerating Spirit, can possibly... These things are written... You boys and girls, you've made a half a dozen professions, you go and sleep on me now, listen to me.

These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ. Nobody but a fool or somebody that's been operated on by the Holy Spirit could possibly believe that that fellow Jesus, who was born in an insignificant little town called Bethlehem, nobody that was anybody to have anything to do with him. Every committee that went out to examine him from the religious world found him wanting and turned from him.

He wound up being crucified between two malefactors as a common criminal on a gory tree. He was put in a grave and as far as this world knows, his body is still resting over yonder in that grave. And you mean to tell me you believe Jesus is the Christ.

You ain't got sense enough coming out of the rain. Arrgh! You've been born from above. There it is, folks.

That little old, I accept Jesus as my Savior business, that wouldn't save a flea. Rather it takes a miracle. Why, anybody that's got any sense knows that that fellow Jesus isn't the Christ of God, except somebody that's tarried as a seeker until a sovereign God has opened your blind eyes and by a flash of revelation you've found out who Jesus is.

And God says, well, Brother Barnum, if that soul fellow can't get saved apart from a miracle, that's what I've been trying to get you to face. That's what this religious world fights till it's blue in the face. But that's the God's truth.

Oh, soak your soul in this word and cry to God to make Jesus Christ leap out from the pages and be confronted with him in his reality. And there you can say with a certainty I've met him. And he loved me and he conquered me.

And I'm his forevermore. Now, thank God, this is not simply a verbal confession. It's not to take his name on our lips.

It's not to have a creed and be orthodox and say, I believe he's Lord. No, sir. This repentance, this confession, this calling, this believing is total, it's utter surrender.

And the thing that makes you high is standing up on your hands and every time in the new testament that the word, the command, the repentance is giving us an imperative food rations. We on earth, for you to get under conviction is to try to repent. I doubled all day to get the job done.

You just can't do it if God Almighty has quit barking at your door. And you must get to the place that you become a caller. So thou, you demand from me a purpose in the world.

I know you can do for me what I can't do for myself. The one who shall judge you tomorrow confronts you tonight with his command. Will you have his rule in your life? Five times in the new testament the two words Lord and Savior occur in the same verse.

Only five times in the same verse. In all five times. It's always the reverse of our vocabulary.

It's Lord and Savior. No human being is ever able to claim him as Savior apart from a willingness for his rule to be in your life. His sovereign demands will be settled or you're going to go to hell.

Now bless God. It's not demanded that I produce my own righteousness. It's demanded that I repent of mine and receive his.

It's not demanded that I give myself life. It's demanded that out of death I cry and he gives me life. It's received the blessed It's time now and receiving this is grace.

You receive life and blessing forevermore. Ladies and gentlemen this demanding Christ this demanding Christ I get so sick and tired of all this foolishness going on today. Bless God there's a revival worldwide of getting back to the gospel.

It's still small but it's getting bigger. And those who hate this gospel I know a little bit about what I'm talking about. That tongues are bitter phone calls are made letters are written everywhere I ever go to hold a meeting.

I never get anywhere that somebody doesn't want. Oh, but they can't stop it. Not just me, but it's everywhere.

I get so sick and tired of all this foolishness about fatalism and loss of passion and all of that. Brother, if you ever face the fact that men or women are going to be plunged into hell unless they're able to make total their commitment. If you've got a heart that's as tender as steel you have a passion to put your arms around men and women unable to do what they must do shut them up if you can or they'll look for somebody else to do for them.

But all their lives they've been taught they did for themselves. But if you put your hand on it, you will ruin it. Salvation is of the Lord.

My Lord said, I'm here, repent. How radical, how resolute, how costly, how eternal this demand. This demand from bloodstained Jesus is no less than a demand for a resolute surrender.

Not with one hand behind your back, see how it comes out but sink or swim, no bargain business. Here I am, Lord. Whatever you do, that's your business, but I turn myself over to you.

I still believe that you'll never get saved until you forget all of this business by what you're going to get out of it and turn yourself over to the Lord. He's got a perfect right to damn you while you're pleading for mercy. That's what they say we preach.

Well, there ain't too much wrong with that. He's got a right to send you to hell. If you were screaming, of course you're not doing it.

And he doesn't do it, but he's got a perfect right. He'd be just if he sent the whole outfit tonight to hell even though we turned this into a giant prayer meeting and begged and pleaded for mercy. He's under no

obligation whatsoever.

But he demands a resolute surrender. And it came to pass that as they went in the way a certain man said unto him, Lord, he is orthodox, I will follow thee. Oh, boy, I will.

Just look at me. I will. That little old well of yours worth about 15 cents on the market.

I will. Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests. But I don't have any place to lay my head tonight.

You come back, great big you, you'll go with me. And he said to another, follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

The old man died. Jesus said unto him, let the Quran declare. Physically dead, let the society.

Let them take care of that business. And you go and preach the kingdom, the rule of God. And another also said, Lord, I'll follow thee.

I've seen a few of them. Oh, boy, but let me first go bid them farewell. We need you.

We're suffering for Sunday school teachers, and we need some more deacons. No, he didn't say that. He said, no.

Ain't no room to turn back. He is set for the kingdom of God. He demands a resolute surrender.

He demands a radical surrender. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. Or Luke says, the Lord and the prophets were until John.

Since that time, the kingdom of God is free. And every man presses into it. What kind of language is that? You dictate Jesus.

Just believe, dear one. Oh, no. Roll up your sleeves.

Spit on your hands. Get in, boys. Only the violent do.

I'll put what my Lord set up against all of this stuff they call gospel preaching. Now, this is it. This is radical.

Stand to your end and shall not be able. This is a radical thing. And if I offend thee, That's radical language.

It's better to go to heaven with one eye than to go to hell with two. Not that I am come to send peace on earth. Not to send peace, but to bring a surrender.

My Lord demands a radical surrender. My Lord demands a costly surrender. You know how much it costs to be a rich young ruler? Get sick.

Everything you have. No wonder he went away. You know how much it's going to cost you? Everything you've got.

I get sick and tired. These people think they're doing God a favor if they give a time. That's all.

You've got any money, you're just going to have to go to hell. You own that home of yours, you'll just have to go to hell. No, sir.

You're just a steward. The Lord's just letting you occupy that home and use that money. That's what the scriptures teach.

How much does it cost to make this total commitment? Everything you've got. How much does it cost? It may cost you life. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life for my sake.

Better folks than you have paid for their faith with their lives. A Christian is a martyr. He's a potential martyr.

A few more years, we may learn how to spell that word. Oh, a costless surrender. I'm aware of the fact that I'm going against the grain of popular preaching tonight.

We've been told that there's a difference between being saved and being committed. But there isn't. We've been told that Bill's a Christian.

Of course, he's not serving the Lord, but he's a Christian. But he's not. He's not.

No, my Lord was honest with folks. Brother, this is total war. He came to bring us over.

You may yet find out how much it costs to be a child of God. America may yet contribute to the seat of the Church by the blood of men and women. Nothing but the grace and spirit of God keeps this mad house, Houston, from mangling God's people now.

And God help us, my Lord, demands an eternal surrender. Brother, the consequences of it are eternal. Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men and tell the truth, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God.

For he that denies me before men, get what he says, but he denies the Lord's rule in his life and he does it publicly, shall be denied before the angels of God. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels. Man's future destiny is rested whether or not he's able to make it.

God won't make it for him, but he enables some to do it. Whether he's able to turn himself over now, his time, when it's not popular to do it, when it's going against the grain, when it means goodbye to family lots of times. Man's destiny is wrapped up in repent now, surrender now, radically, cautiously, resolutely, no man looking back.

One day my Lord will appear as the Son of Man in glory to bring final, full salvation to the sons of the kingdom, with the plums saved then, and at the same time to bring a just condemnation to the sons of darkness. Meanwhile, sinner, throw down your arms now, come under his rule, bow now. But Lord, nobody much doing it, bow now.

Through much tribulation we shall enter the kingdom. Come on, you say it'll kill me, yes, yes. It's utter abandonment, utter commitment.

It's nothing more, but God help you, it's nothing less. I think I told it before, but I'll repeat it. A rebellion broke out in a sovereign's kingdom.

He sent out his army and crushed the rebellion, restored his sovereign rule. But many of the rebels escaped, some to the mountain fastnesses and some to the shrunk lands. And the king put a giant candle up in the window of his castle and lit it, and sent messengers throughout his kingdom, crying with a loud voice, Throw down your arms and come and bow to the rule of the sovereign, and you'll be received and parted at grace.

As long as the candle burns, the candle of God's long-suffering, and that's the only reason it burns, so he can get just as many converts if he wraps this thing up tonight and forces all men to bow to him. But it's his grace, it's his long-suffering, it's his patience. No man knows how long that candle will burn.

It's still burning now. And the gospel comes and says, The great martyr of the universe, whose kingdom has been assaulted and threatened, but blessed God, when Jesus Christ hung on the cross and was raised from the dead, the war was won, brother, there's no doubt about the issue. And now you're fighting a losing cause, you can't win, my friend.

Throw down your arms, throw them down, throw them down, and bow at the master's feet, as God is my judge. That's salvation by the unalterable, glorious grace of God Almighty. My message is done, our Father.

Press the radical, resolute, costly, eternal demand of your Son on men and women right now. And we'll just be happy, Lord, if one more time somebody here is faced with this demand. They may walk through it and go on to that time when by force they'll be made to bow.

But Lord, be merciful tonight and face them once more in the power of the Holy Spirit and hold back the powers of hell and enable eternity-bound men and women to throw down their weapons of rebellion and doubt of the Lord. He's the one that was made sin for us. A young woman came to the moment of crisis and she went out alone.

So many have been doing that these days, fighting this battle out. That's good news. It is a battle.

She went out and sat on a bank of a little flowing creek. She picked up a pebble and threw it in the creek. She said, There goes my pride.

That's why she picked up another pebble and threw it in the creek. She said, And on and on. And finally, with some hesitation, she knew this was it.

She picked up a great big pebble and threw it in the creek. She said, That's it. There goes my self.

I die to serve that he may be enthroned as Lord of my life. I beg you, as the Holy Spirit may have spoken to you, press these demands upon you. If he's speaking to you, that's God's enabling grace.

And you can do what he demands you to do as he deals with you right there. And we're standing. And the invitation is total surrender to Jesus Christ.

If you can do it, come and tell us about it. If you can't, come and prostrate yourself and cry for mercy that you can. Cry in your heart.

Pass me not, O gentle Savior. Hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.
Whatever he's saying to you tonight, do whatever he's telling you to do.

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