

The Jesus Way

by Roy Hession

This sermon emphasizes the importance of making Jesus the ultimate end and focus of our faith, rather than seeking revival or other blessings beyond Him. It highlights the need for true repentance, surrender, and a deep desire for Jesus alone, as seen through various biblical examples and personal testimonies.

Scripture: John 14:6, Romans 10:4, Luke 2:25, Isaiah 55:1, Psalm 51:10, 1 John 1:9, Philippians 3:8, Hebrews 4:16, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Jesus as the Ultimate Focus", "True Repentance and Surrender"

Description

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Transcript

I cannot say how important I think these days are. They're much more important than I thought they were going to be. Indeed as they've gone I've realized that this could be the watershed for something fresh and new and sweet flowing all over the southern states, all throughout the Baptist, well throughout the world.

And I'm so happy to know that I've been invited to join a bunch of preachers from this part of the world and also from Europe in Switzerland. You know the poor preachers are having a time in Switzerland. There's a conference for revival and I actually have the privilege of meeting some of them.

Brother Manley is organizing it and if you save your dollars you might be able to join too. And in February we're going to be, many of us, together again. Now that's a privilege to me and that's going to keep my, our links, our loving links with the folks down south fresh as we meet yet again.

And it's up to them to give you very full report back of how the Lord blesses us there in Switzerland. The purpose is not just to give ourselves a treat but that God should touch other parts of the world with a message of revival to those that gather there. They won't only be, as I understand it, from the states but from all over Europe and from the mission field.

And it's up to them to report back to you so that you can feel you were in on it too. So that's in February and I'm looking forward once again to renewing this link. Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer.

Lord Jesus, thank you for being with us. Thank you for inhabiting the praises of Israel. Thank you for being all that you are.

And we thank you for the Holy Spirit who's come to take the things that are thine and reveal them powerfully to our hearts. We praise you, dear Lord Jesus. Amen.

Amen. Now I want to turn you for a few minutes to John's Gospel, chapter 14. The opening verses of chapter 14 are the famous verses, Let not your heart be troubled.

Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. Now notice the next word.

And whither I go ye know, and the way you know. Thomas said unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way? Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

And if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.

Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. Jesus said to them, Whither I go ye know, and the way we know, you know. And Philip said, I don't think we do know those things.

We don't know whither you go, you're going, and we don't know the way. Oh yes you do, said Jesus. I'm the way.

I am the way, the way of truth, the way of life. And no man goes to the Father but by me. I am the way.

If you know me, Philip, you know the way. Well, he said, if we know the way, we don't know the whither. We don't know where the way leads us.

You know that truth. Because I'm not only the way, I am the whither. I've said no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

And if you had known me, you would have known the Father, for he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. And in those words, Jesus proclaimed, he was not only the way, but the whither. Not only the way, but the end.

And I want you to think with me about something which is very important, as I understand it. And as I trust the Holy Spirit will reveal it to us. Jesus, the end.

Not only the way, but the whither, the end. Now some of us, in these days, have been availing ourselves of Jesus as the way. It was moving to here.

People last night, sharing, how they found that there was a way, and Jesus and his cross and his blood was the way. And they were coming to him. There were very deep things shared, and there's many other deep things that have been happening, to which possibly there wasn't time to share.

And people have been availing themselves of this way, this way back to God. Jesus and him crucified. I must needs go home by the way of the cross.

There's no other way but this, the blood of the way. And I believe some of us have seen we've got to keep going that way. Because being human, and the devil being what he is, he knows only too well how to provoke something of the old man to act or react.

And you'll find that you can get out of step with God. Never fear, however, this way, this blood-sprinkled way is open. And we've been seen, we may often have to go back to Jesus, back to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness.

We've been saying that you needn't be down for any longer than it takes you to get to the cross. It's one thing for things to go wrong, but how long need it be ere you get right, no longer than it gets you to the foot of the cross. And he can make us whole again.

And you see, this is going to be a costly way for me. Because this is the way where a soul has to surrender its rights very often. The only reason why I'm jealous is that I want to be first.

It's no good me repenting of jealousy unless I'm willing to be last. And sometimes there's a big battle to fight before you can get to the cross. You were jealous because you wanted to be first.

You can't be cleansed of jealousy unless you appear to be last. Well anyway, that's the place that Jesus took. And the wonderful thing is when you're jealous, you want to go to the top of the line.

But when you repented it, you go to the back. And that's where you find Jesus. That's where he went.

And we can see this is going to be a blessed way. It's going to work. But it's going to be maybe costly.

And sometimes we may find we've got to put something right with a brother. We've got to eat humble pie. But this is the way.

I am the way. Nothing can keep us down for any longer than it takes us to get to Jesus and say this is it. You're right and I'm wrong Lord on this issue.

Now this is the point I want to ask. If I go this way, this blood sprinkle way, where will it lead? And very often it's the thought that's going to lead to somewhere very desirable that makes us willing to go this way. Well you see, if I go this way, the end will be that I'll be used of God.

At all to be used of God. How can I expect to be used unless I'm washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb. But if I'm willing to go this way, it will lead me to the end of being used of God in a way I've never been used before.

A preacher might well say, if I'm prepared to go this way, it will mean a new work in my church. The congregations will increase. People beginning to be saved.

And that's a highly desirable result. Another person will say, I can see from what I've heard, if I'm willing to be the one to be broken, it'll make for an easy situation. Because if in my home I'm prepared to repent and say I'm wrong, that's a big inducement for the other person to say the same.

And all the heat will be off. And it'll be so much happier situation. We might say too, that if I go this way, it will lead me into a better and happier personality.

Some of you the other morning heard Pam tell of how her problem in early days was reserved, which crippled her. And you heard her say how she learned to call it sin, at the inverse form of pride and unwillingness for other people to see the little us inside. And she went to Jesus and confessed it, and put it under the blood.

And the power of the blood was such that she was set free. And you say, I can see, this is the way for me to a released personality. How desirable then to start out on this blood-sprinkled way, which is Jesus himself.

Most important of all, knowing you as I've come to know and love you, you may well think this is the way to revival. If I'm prepared to be more deeply broken, more ready to bend my stiff neck and go to Jesus, that's bound to lead to that which my heart has been crying out for so long, the mighty moving of the Spirit in our church, in my life, in my home, and so on. And these then are the ends we may have in view when we are willing to avail ourselves of Jesus and his blood as the way.

But I want to say emphatically, those ends, desirable as they may be, are the wrong end. Jesus says, I'm not into the way, but I'm the end. And you are to take to this way when I show you you need to go to the cross for no other reason than you want me again.

You've slipped my hand, and you're beginning to repent and go to Jesus because you want that hand again. No other end at all. But so often there are these other ends lurking in the background of our minds.

And of course, they will add a little bit to the kudos, to the esteem that other people hold faith in. How nice to be used of God in a new way. That's worth paying a big price.

But who do you think is going to get the glory? Well, of course, you know. You will. And so it goes for many other things.

How much more convenient to me to have an eased domestic situation. And that's the end, maybe. And it really could be somewhat for our own convenience.

And I want to say even the end of being willing to humble oneself and pay the cost for revival. Revival is the wrong end. And it's because these things are the wrong end we don't get.

I've known people, I've known groups that have done everything they know that they might receive revival. As a result of Duncan Campbell, now in glory, going around England. He's been over here too.

Telling of the mighty things God did in the Hebrides some years ago, when God gave a great outpouring of his Spirit. I know a little of a group in a certain rural area who decided they were going to pay the cost. And they prayed half nights of prayer and longer, regular times.

They were prepared to surrender anything you liked. And if they were convicted, to confess anything that came. If only they might have that movement of the Spirit in their area.

But it didn't come. Because they were doing what they were doing for the wrong end. Jesus is the end and not even revival.

And again I say, I am to get right with God at whatever cost, for one reason only. I want Jesus. I've slipped his hand.

Yes, when you slip the other person's hand you slip his too. And it all costs. I want him again.

What does it really mean? I'm doing these things for ends other than himself. I'm using Jesus and his blood as a means to an end other than himself. And again I say, that's why we don't get those ends.

I remember years ago, after having long thoughts and discussions with my friend Ed Renault, feeling that I perhaps should embark on a revival ministry such as was his. I hadn't had any new experience of revival, but the way he put it to me, it seemed so right and proper and scriptural to handle things that way, so I said I would. And I had a group of young men working with me as a team on evangelistic campaigns.

We had a big tent in an industrial area in the middle of England, and we had a three-week crusade. And I said to the fellows in the team, after talking as I had with Ed Renault, I feel the right thing for us to do is to spend the whole first week ministering only to the Christians and calling the Christians to repent. And then when God does a work in the church, he will begin to pour out his Spirit on the unconverted.

And we had a big slogan put up at the back of the platform. It was a slogan that was used years ago in the Welsh Revival, bend the church and save the people. And we told them, if the church would be bent, the people would be saved.

And that was a mighty motive for the church and the earnest Christians to be open to God. And we testified as best we could and ministered along those lines. And many people responded, Christian, to the invitation.

And sometimes the front of that tent was lined with dear Christians on their knees, and beautiful things seemed to happen. The second week, according to my theory, we turned our message to the unconverted. But there wasn't great freedom.

Really and truly there'd been a beautiful response among the Christians. Of course it wasn't total, but it was wonderful, and surely that was enough for a gracious God to bless us. But it wasn't like that.

And the meetings became hard and difficult. And when at last God did break through and save the lost, it was not because the Christians had repented. It was because we were desperate that he was gracious.

And we had to cry mightily to him. And we couldn't point to any reason why he should save the lost, saying that he was gracious and heard prayer. And I learnt from that, I was really, unwittingly but wrongly, giving the Christians another end.

That if they would get right, mum and dad might get saved. Neighbours might get saved. And really they were so earnest they weren't prepared to pay any cost, and their repentance wasn't phony, it was the real thing.

But there was the other end. An excellent end. But Jesus said, I'm to be the end.

And the only motive that I'm to take to the blood-sprinkled well is I want Jesus. And something's gone wrong, and I'm willing, because I feel so direct without him, and humble myself and go to the, by the way of the cross where peace and restoration and above all, I find him again. The truth is this.

Jesus does not say to you, if you will face up and be honest and let me show you your sins and get right with God, you will be used of God. I don't promise that. I don't promise your church attendance will increase.

I don't promise you an easier situation at home, nor a more released personality. And I don't promise you revival in the outward sense. All I do promise you is me.

Is that all, Lord? I mean, just have you. I thought we were going to have revival. I'm promising you.

And you know we can be guilty of being disappointed at the end that God offers us. How dishonest! He must have the other things as well. That's why we don't get the other things.

But God being the God he is, when he sees you making Jesus your end, not asking for this and that bonus as due to you because you started to repent, but making him the one you see, he is so delighted that he will give you him in abundant measure and on top of him a whole heap of things that you were not making the end. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the case of Solomon in his young days. Alas, he didn't continue as he began.

But how great was his relationship with God in his early days. And he had a dream one day, shortly after he'd ascended the throne. And in the dream the Lord appeared to him and said, Solomon, ask what I shall give you.

A blank check. What a chance. I believe that the answer to that, with all of us, will be very revealing.

Ask what I shall give you. Well, it was a wonderful thing that Solomon said. He said, I'm but a little child.

I don't know how to go out or come in. How can I leave this, thy so great people? Give thy servant an understanding heart, and the Hebrew word is a hearing heart, that listens from beneath. That I may have an understanding heart to guide thy people.

He didn't ask for long life. He didn't ask for the riches. He didn't ask for the neck of his enemies.

He asked for what was really broken in. He asked for the Lord. An understanding heart that listened from beneath, that was willing to be told.

He said, it's not like that. Naturally, but give me what I haven't got. And the Lord said of course, he didn't ask for the other three things.

But to ask for an understanding heart, I'm going to give you that understanding heart, so that it'll be the most conspicuous thing about you. And I'm also going to give you those things to which you haven't asked. Which you didn't make the end.

In abundant leisure, just as I will, without you having any claim on them at all, sure grace, grace. I'm going to give you long life. I'm going to give you riches.

I'm going to give you victory. And there then is the principle. When I make Jesus the end, that's what I'm after.

That's why I'm kneeling at the foot of a cross. Oh, it's beautiful. I've missed you.

I can't get on without you and all your fullness of love. You'll get it. And God will be delighted to give you those things that you have not made the end.

Which are not the real motive, more than you've ever thought. Quite obviously, such an one who finds Jesus again. We were thinking of that the other day.

We defined the Bible as simply Jesus found again. Quite obviously, happy, satisfied, emancipated Christians are going to be an attractive witness to the lost. And God is likely to use their testimony.

And it's going to have an effect. But that's not what they were after. They saw Jesus was not into the way, but the wither.

Not only the wither, but the easily acceptable way to that wither. For this is the blood-sprinkled way. Which means it's available to me as a sinner, as a failer.

When you get off the highway of holiness, the devil says you can't get back. You've got off, now what are you going to do? You can't make it, you've turned your back. But if you look carefully, you'll see it's blood-sprinkled.

Which means that highway of holiness is sanctified for sinners, for failures. It's available for us. It only needs the acknowledgement of where I am and what I am.

And I'm on that highway of holiness as surely as there's power and efficacy in the blood of Jesus. And the end? I find Jesus. And in him, everything else.

A devotional life, why about that? A devotional life is not the way to Jesus. How can a man who's cold in heart have an adequate devotional life? He needs Jesus in his need. And he's only going to cry out when he finds him.

And then Jesus is the way to a devotional life. He moves, the emancipated one, into the place of prayer and the scriptures, and as we've heard, they leap at him. So he's the end.

Now I have talked about ends sought of Jesus, which we can have in mind. You know there are also ends beyond him that we may be seeking. We may come to the cross.

We may come and turn to him and be washed and made clean. But having done so, we may still be thinking the real blessing lies beyond that. This is just a qualification for something else.

I told the story yesterday, I'll tell it again, of that dear friend of mine, Ernie Gilmore. He was a missionary in Brazil. He's now a Presbyterian pastor in Bradenton, Florida.

And I remember hearing him to give that testimony, how the Lord had been dealing with him, and how he'd been humbling himself over many things that were wrong with him and his mission station. You know on that mission station, when they made their statistics up to send them in to the home board, they couldn't tell of one person saved, or perhaps just one, in a whole 12 months. And the Spirit seemed to withdraw himself.

And he told how God had begun to convict him of things wrong in his relationship with his fellow missionaries, and even an outstanding case where he'd acted in the most ungracious way to a local shopkeeper, and had never called it sin. But as God dealt with him, he swore them to be sin, and he saw

the fountain open for sin, and he washed, and was made clean. He told us this.

And he said, already sweetness is coming back to our fellowship again. He said, of course, I can't say I'm filled with the Spirit yet. I've eaten the cross.

I'm not yet filled with the Spirit, but that's something yet to come. And I said to him, dear Ernie, I'm so sorry to hear you say that having come to Jesus, and being washed and made clean, you're not filled with the Spirit. As if coming to Jesus is one thing, but you've got to go still, after all, there's something beyond.

He's not quite the end, but it's there. And we're still left seeking, still left hoping, revival of something beyond. But Jesus says to us, I that speak unto thee, and he, and revival are all you need.

That's what the woman said to him at the well. I know that when Messiah comes, he will tell us all things. He says, I that speak unto thee, and he.

I remember when revival comes, the situation will change. I remember what famous preacher giving a tremendous sermon to which the Christians gathered in London years ago, and it was entitled, When Revival Comes. Oh, what wonderful results would come, and how things would change when revival comes.

No one heard Jesus say in that meeting, I that speak unto thee, and he. Oh, they all knew Jesus. There might have been some of those who knew what true repentance was.

I don't know, there might well have been. But revival, that was their heart. Mostly it was something beyond Jesus.

We can have ends short of him, we can have other ends beyond him. Last night I quoted Phillip's translation of Romans 10.4. Christ is the end of the struggle for righteousness, the right relationship with God, to everyone that believes it. And it's not only the end of the struggle for righteousness, it's the end of the struggle for peace.

Oh, peace, I can't do this and that. If you've gone back to Jesus, he's the end of that struggle. He that speaks to you is that peace.

And it goes to everything else. Can we really believe it, that Christ is the end of the struggle for revival to everyone that believes it? It's as if this isn't revival, what in the world is? Yes, pray. But don't pray as if revival hadn't begun.

If you have this experience, you've been humbled before God and he's washed you and you're prepared to go whenever needed, you're going to Jesus. And that Jesus is the end of the struggle. You don't need to go anywhere further than the cross.

For at Calvary, Jesus himself is made to us all we need, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, in that place. I do not have to go to the cross and then think, well I've got to go a bit further, I've got to go from Calvary to Pentecost. You get everything at Calvary.

There's only one Jesus and he's found as sinners find him there, so available, so near at hand to the broken in heart. Years ago, I went with some of my friends from East Africa to a conference in France, in Alsace. I myself had just begun to understand and taste some of these things.

And they invited me to go along and join the team of four of us. The first time I'd ever been in a team like that. And we saw God do extraordinary things.

I regarded myself just as a junior member of the team. And I watched my dear African brother. He knew where to put his feet.

He knew the ways of God. And it was such a blessing to be in a team together. And when the time came for testimony, we had to give four hours to testimony.

We had to give another second meeting. The first was two hours and the next one was two hours. It poured out from all directions.

It was very interesting. Earlier in the conference, after one of the meetings where we'd been conscious of God working, we were about to close it when a man stood up at the back and said, please may I give my testimony. And my friend Dr. Joe Church, he was the one in Africa in whose heart God first began revival.

Incidentally, I was saved in a Bible camp he led before he ever went to Africa as a medical missionary. He looked at his watch. He said, no, I don't think we've got time, perhaps another time.

And I said to him, I said, Joe, what are you doing? I said to him afterwards, God's giving liberty. I'm the great coming brother. He was about to share.

He said, Roy, you needn't worry. The time for testimony is when they are blessed if they don't share and give their testimony. So he went on and bursting time came.

And as I say, we had to have two meetings. And you know, it was amazing. There was a man came on the campground with a gospel caravan, car or something with tremendous text written all over it.

He said, God's shown me, God's shown me that it was pride that I wanted to show off. He was broken but cleansed. Another man got up.

He told us he was a Prussian. It was all in German, French and German, two languages. And someone was whispering the interpretation in our ears on the platform.

He said, I fought under the Kaiser years ago, and I learned to say, Gott, Strasse, England. God punished England. But that war ended, and that feeling left my heart.

But then under Hitler, I fought again, and again I said, Gott, Strasse, England. But that war is over too. And that seemed to pass from my heart until that man came on the platform.

And to me, he looked exactly like Winston Churchill. He was saying to me. And when I saw a man who looked like Winston Churchill on the platform, I found that hatred coming to my heart.

He said, Gott, Strasse, England. I confessed it. And he walked up the aisle, and he put his arm around us Englishmen, he gave me a bristly kiss, and the whole meeting went up in song and praise for God.

This was the sort of thing that was happening. And the time came for all the crowd to go. And they got in their big coaches in France, huge coaches, all the guests were going off in their coaches, waving, singing, praising God.

What wonderful things had happened in our lives. And then a group who lived in the next door town, quite near at hand, came up to the four of us, and said, would you please come tomorrow to our prayer meeting. For three years, we have prayed three times a week for revival.

And tomorrow is our next prayer meeting for revival. Would you please come? So we said yes. And when the day came, it was held in a room over a garage.

And we were downstairs, about to go up, when the Africans suddenly said to us, do you realize the situation? They'd been praying three times a week, for three years for revival, and they're going to go on. They hadn't seen that Jesus was saying, I will still come to thee, and revival. There stood one among them, there stood one in the midst, the revival went on for, and they were still praying, because they had a mental picture, and they were seeking an end beyond Jesus.

And that African brother gave a message, without preparation, so beautiful, so Christ-exalted, where we saw Christ was the end of the struggle. What would have happened if that wasn't it? By all means, pray for that which we're experiencing, to spread to others. But they were praying as if nothing had happened, as if who wasn't the end of the struggle for them.

The last thing I want to say, is to turn you to a very touching little incident, about Simeon, that old aged prophet, who was in Jerusalem when they brought Jesus up, as a little child, to be circumcised. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, waiting for the revival of Israel. I believe that's a beautiful definition of revival, the consolation of Israel.

Israel needs that consolation. We're sometimes down and discouraged, oh, the consolation of Israel, and he was waiting for that. Of course, it means the Messiah.

But I like that phrase, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him, after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now that is thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy words for mine.

I have seen thy salvation. I've seen the consolation of Israel. He didn't look at a little baby, but he didn't stumble.

He dared to believe, and you know, he was holding in his hand the consolation of Israel.

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