

Cmml Missions Conference 1993-02

Committment to Christ

by William MacDonald

Commitment to Christ is the only reasonable service, the most sane, sensible thing you can do in view of all the mercies of God.

Duration: 52:33

Scripture: Ruth 1:16-17, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of total commitment to God. He shares the story of a young woman who held up a blank sheet of paper, signing her name at the bottom and allowing God to fill in the details of her life. The speaker warns against a life devoted to trivial matters and urges the audience to surrender their ambitions to God. He highlights the need for a crisis of commitment, where individuals put their lives on the altar and fully dedicate themselves to the Savior. The speaker concludes by encouraging the audience to love and serve God with their whole hearts, without reservation or holding back.

Transcript

Romans chapter 12. Monday night we spoke on commitment to the Bible. Last night on commitment to the assembly.

Tonight on commitment to Christ. They're really all bound together. They're not mutually exclusive at all.

They're all part of the same package. The Lord Jesus would like to have a personal meeting with some folks in the audience tonight. Perhaps you didn't know when you came to the conference that there would be a personal encounter with the Savior of the world.

That's what he would like. He has a message for you. Romans chapter 12, verse 1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. What is this commitment? It's giving your life to the Lord so that he can do whatever he wants with it. First of all, of course, in life there is such a thing as

commitment to the Lord for salvation, the new birth.

And I realize that in an audience this size it's quite possible that there are some here who are not decided Christians. And I'd just like to take a moment here to tell you what the Lord would have you do. First of all, he would have you acknowledge before God your lost estate, your lost condition.

Right now you have your back toward God and your face toward sin, and he would like you to turn around so that your face would be toward God and your back towards sin. He would like you to repent. He would like you, as Dr. Gooding said, to take sides against yourself with God.

Not to look at yourself as you see yourself or as your parents see you or your friends. So look at yourself as God sees you, lost, helpless, hopeless, hell-deserving. The second thing that he would have you do is abandon any idea of saving yourself or even of contributing to your own salvation.

This is absolutely basic. He comes saying, Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling. Could my tears forever flow? Could my zeal no respite know? All for sin could not atone.

Thou must save, thou alone. He would have you look to Calvary and see him dying there to pay the price of your sin and believe that he was there as your sin-bearer. Then by a definite act of faith he would like you to commit yourself to him as your only hope for heaven.

And when you do that in sincerity, from the depth of your heart, God saves you. You know it instantly on the authority of the word of God. Not on anything you necessarily feel, but on the authority of the word of God.

Then as time goes on, that assurance of salvation will be confirmed by changes in your life. If you've never trusted Christ as Savior, I'll be speaking to you tonight. It's possible to come to the Lord Jesus for salvation, turning your life over to him for salvation, without turning your life over to him for service.

That's what we want to talk about primarily tonight. Choosing his will for your life instead of your own. It means losing your life for his sake as the gospel.

It means giving him the devotion of your heart and the love of your soul. A Scottish preacher named James Stewart said this, once any man has looked into Christ's eyes and felt the magnetism of his way of life, he's never going to be content with the secular ideals and standards that may have seemed adequate before Christ came into his life. Christ has spoiled him for anything else.

The old standards of value have become cinders, dust and ashes. Thank God for that. Most of us here tonight have given our lives to the Lord for salvation.

The question is, am I willing to give my life to him for whatever he wants me to do? In the 1970s, the late 1970s, the United States Navy developed an automatic system for landing fighter planes on aircraft carriers. The pilot took his hands off the controls as his plane nosed toward the deck, lurching and shuddering as the computers corrected his course in sync with the carrier's flight deck. But the key to that little incident is the pilot had to take his hands off the controls.

And Jesus Christ is saying to men and women tonight, Christian men and women, you take your hands off the controls and I'll bring you in safely, successfully, and not a plane wreck. We have some beautiful examples of commitment in the Bible, and I think one of the greatest is found in the Old Testament, and

it's the commitment of a lady, a sister. Ruth chapter 1 verses 16 and 17.

I don't think I find anything any more beautiful than this in the Old Testament scripture. She said, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return, to turn back from following after you. For wherever you go, I will go.

Wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. But where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried.

The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me. That's lovely, isn't it? Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. We turn over to the New Testament, and we find the commitment of the great Apostle Paul.

This is interesting to me, because on the same day, at the same time, he trusted Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, as his Lord, he turned his life over to him completely. First of all, he said, who are you, Lord? And he got his doctrines straight. And then he said, what will you have me to do? And he got his duties straight.

Now, I'm not sure it's that way with most of us. Most of us are anxious to trust the Lord Jesus, save us from the horrors of hell. But sometimes it takes years for us to realize the full implications of what has taken place.

I think of a girl named Elizabeth Scott. She was Elizabeth Scott at that time, a student at Moody Bible Institute. One night she sat in her room, and she wrote in her Bible, Lord, I give up my own purposes and plans, all my own desires, hopes, ambitions, and I accept your will for my life.

I give myself, my life, my all, utterly to you, to be yours forever. I hand over to your keeping all of my friendships, my love, all the people I love are to take second place in my heart. Work out thy whole will in my life at any cost, got that, at any cost, now and forever.

To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. And you know the rest of the story, the triumph of John and Betty Stan, how they sealed their testimony with their blood in China. I think of William Borden, Borden of Yale, that he said, Lord Jesus, I take hands off as far as my life is concerned.

I put thee on the throne in my heart. Change, cleanse, use me as you shall choose. I take the full power of your Holy Spirit.

I thank you that it was the same man who said, no reserve, no retreat, no regrets. And more people have gone to the mission field as a result of that book, Borden of Yale, than if he had lived to be a hundred perhaps. It's interesting to me that as I read the biographies of men and women who have made an impact on the world, for Jesus Christ, every one of them had this crisis experience where they saw the Lord Jesus hanging there on the cross with all their secular ideals turned to cinders, dust, and ashes.

Thank God for that. C. H. Spurgeon said, in that day when I surrendered myself to my Savior, I gave him my body, my soul, my spirit. I gave him all that I had and all that I shall have for time and eternity.

I gave him all my powers, my faculties, my eyes, my ears, my limbs, my emotions, my judgment, my whole manhood, and all that could come of it. And A. T. Pearson said of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, of all the mind he had and all the chance that God gave him, he made the most. One day A. T. Pearson was with George Mueller, and he said to him, he asked him, what is the source of your great work and the wonderful things that God has done through you? Mr. Mueller looked up, and then he bowed his head,

and his head went down and down till it was almost between his knees.

He was silent for a moment, and then he said, many years ago there came a day in my life when George Mueller died. As a young man I had a great many ambitions, but there came a day when I died to all of those things, and I said henceforth, Lord Jesus, not my will but thine. From that day God began to work in and through me.

General Booth of the Salvation Army expressed it in a slightly different way. He said, when I was a lad of seventeen, I determined that God should have all there was of William Booth. And you can go through the biographies I say of men and women of God, and somewhere in that biography you'll find a time when they made this decision, either at the time of conversion or sometime afterwards, they said, O Christ, thy bleeding hands and feet, thy sacrifice for me, each wound, each tear demands my life, a sacrifice for thee.

What has happened to these people? Why do they think that way? This is the rationale of a commitment. Number one, if Jesus Christ died for me, the least I can do is live for him. If the Lord Jesus, if I hear the Lord Jesus say, this is my body given for you, the only sensible answer to that is, Lord Jesus, this is my body given for you.

Logic, reason leads you down a one-way street that ends a total commitment to the Savior of the world. Two, if the Lord Jesus is Lord, he has a right to all. We use that word so lightly, don't we? But my Bible says, to this end, Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord.

That he might be Lord. C.T. Studd said it, well, if Jesus Christ is gone and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. At the age of about 26, I read that one night in a barracks out in Honolulu, and it slew me.

And I got down on my knees, and I did something that night I had never done before. I was saved eight years previously. That thing just slew me.

I couldn't deny it. And I turned my life over to the Lord Jesus. Three, it's the only reasonable service, the most sane, sensible thing that we can do in view of all the mercies of God.

By me seeks you therefore, brethren. By the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. It's really the only sensible.

We're not thinking straight if we're not doing that. Robert Laidlaw pointed out how inconsistent it is to be able, for me, to trust Jesus Christ for my eternal salvation. And we do that when we're saved.

We trust him for our eternal salvation, and we don't dare trust him to manage our lives down here on earth. How I ask him, is that sensible? The rationale of commitment. Lady Powerscourt said it seems an insult to that love which gave all for us to say we love, and yet stop to calculate about giving our all to him.

Our all is only two mites. His all is heaven, earth, eternity himself. She says better not to love of all.

Better to be cold than lukewarm. Four, it's the only wise choice we can make when we see that God knows of options that we don't know anything about. We do not know what is best for us.

Isn't that amazing to think of God in heaven, and he has a plan for our lives. He has a plan for your life. It's not something that you would have ever come to at all.

It's wonderful. It's good and acceptable and perfect. It would raise you to such heights that would make reason dizzy.

And yet I go along and I think, well, this is what's best for me. I carve out my own career while angels above me are stooping with a crown. The rationale of commitment, number five, it saves us from wasted lives, from being occupied with trivia.

It saves us from being people whose main occupation is to sell balloons on parade days, or to sell dark glasses on days when there's a total eclipse of the sun. It saves us from giving the best of our lives to the study of sediments in Chesapeake Bay, or the mating habits of the Wyoming antelope, or the mineral deficiencies in the tomato and the cocklebur. Trivia is the light of eternity.

It saves us from giving our lives to the study of vitamins and minerals in the skin of a Bartlett pear. Something more important than that. Listen, when I turn my life over to the Lord and ask him to take control, I'll never be occupied with trivia again.

Wasted, trivial lives. Number six, the rationale of commitment, number six, the love of Christ constrains us. I tell you, that's wonderful.

Second Corinthians, chapter 5, verses 14 and 15. The love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead. And that he died, not that we should live our lives unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again.

I like to put it this way. The Lord Jesus didn't die for me on Calvary's cross so I could live my petty little life the way I think it should be lived. He died for me so that I would turn it over to him and say, Lord Jesus, I submit myself to you, whatever your will may be, for my life, that's what I want.

Number seven, we don't know what's best for us. We think we do. We do not know what's best for us.

And God has wonderful things, as I said before, that we could never imagine in our wildest fantasies if we'll just take our hands off the controls and turn our lives over to him. Number eight, the God of infinite love wants only what is best for his people. I like that.

The God of infinite love and wisdom wants only what is best for his people. Maya, look over this audience. I think if we were all really yielded to the Lord, if we were all obedient to Romans 12, 1 and 2, all the power that raised him from the dead would be unleashed in many, many lives.

Number nine, the Lord Jesus purchased us at Calvary's cross. We belong to him. If we take our lives and use them the way we want to use them, we're thieves, because we're taking something that doesn't belong to us.

If I could quote Stud again, he said, I had known about Jesus dying for me, but I never understood that if he died for me, then I didn't belong to myself. Redemption means buying back, so that if I belong to him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give everything to God. When I came to see that Jesus had died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all for him.

One day a village organist was practicing in the church, and a visitor came in and asked if he could play the organ, and he was refused on the spot. But he heard that organ, he really wanted to play it, and so he asked a second time if he could play the organ, and the answer was still the same, no. But he was

persistent.

And the third time he asked, and permission was given, the stranger began to pray, to play, and it seemed as if that building was filled with heavenly music. The village organist finally said to him, who are you? And he said, my name is Felix Mendelssohn. And the village organist said, what? Did I refuse you permission to play on my organ? You get the point, don't you? This organ belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

What inconsistency it is to refuse him permission to use it. Why do we hesitate? What are our reasons for non-commitment? Well, of course, one of them is fear of what he might ask. Whenever this subject is brought up, people immediately feel, it can only mean the mission field, and that can only mean snakes, scorpions, and spiders.

But if you notice Romans 12 and 2, it says that his will is good, and acceptable, and perfect. The Bible is true. There's nothing more wonderful than to be in the center of God's will, and to be able to say, good, acceptable, and perfect.

But I wouldn't want it any other way. When we're, when we hold back, we're only afraid of a blessing. I know it's hard to think of that, but it's true.

We're only afraid of a blessing. A young lady said to Dr. Graham Scroggie, I'm afraid to make Christ Lord, afraid of what he will ask of me. And wisely Dr. Scroggie turned to the story of Peter at Joppa, where the Lord told Peter, rise and eat.

And three times, Peter replied, no, Lord. No, Lord. No, Lord.

And tenderly, Scroggie said, you can say no, and you can say Lord, but you can't say no, Lord. Those things don't go together. And so he said, I'm going to leave my Bible with you, and here is my pen.

And he said, you go into the next room, and you sit there, and have a time with the Lord. And you cross out either no, or Lord. In a very short time, she came back, weeping with joy, peering over her shoulder, he saw the word no crossed out.

She was saying, he's Lord, he's Lord, he's Lord. Such is the stuff of holy dedication. Cross out the no, and say, he's Lord.

What are other reasons for non-commitment? Second, fear of what he might deny. Fear of what he might ask. Fear of what he might deny.

I want the will of God, but I want to get married first. It's real, isn't it? I want the will of God, but I have this career staked out for myself. And I'd like to just carry on in this career, and then on retirement, listen, God doesn't want the fag end of a wasted life.

He wants you here and now. In this evening meeting, Admissions 93, I like that hymn that says, Lord, in the fullness of my might, I would for thee be strong. While runneth o'er each dear delight, to thee should rise my song.

I would not give the world my heart, and then thy service prove. I would not feel my strength depart, and then profess thy love. I would not with swift winged zeal on the world's errands go, then labor up the heavenly hill with wearied feet and slow.

O not for thee my weak desires, my poorer, baser part. O not for thee my fading fires, the ashes of my heart, all choose me in my golden time. In my dear joys have part, for thee the glory of my prime, the fullness of my heart.

God deserves the best. We have to decide tonight, is he going to get it? Why do people hold back from committing? Fear of loss of security. Almost as if when you turn your life over to the Lord, you're going to be a pauper or on dole the rest of your life.

It's such a ridiculous thing, isn't it? We fear those things. Fear of the loss of comforts. After all, when you think of the comforts in a country like this, in Canada, and then you think of the conditions that Brother Nicholson was telling us about in Russia.

Why do we hold back from turning our lives over to the Lord Jesus? Stinking pride. I'm too good for that. It's okay for other young people to choose that course, but I have other ambitions and I have other plans.

I call that stinking pride. No wonder Jim Elliot said, Lord deliver me from my sweet stinking self. And we need that deliverance.

We fear that it will inevitably mean the mission field. Boy, we're not like one man who was saved for two weeks, only two weeks. And he said, I couldn't understand the slowness of omnipotence that here I am, saved two weeks and I'm not in Africa.

Boy, that's the spirit, isn't it? That's the spirit. Those are reasons why we hold back from commitment to the Savior. What are the alternatives? I've already told you.

A life devoted to trivia. Groping in the muck while above us burns the vision of the Christ upon the cross. A saved soul and a lost life.

What a tragedy, huh? A saved soul and a lost life. The Lord deliver us from it. An entrance to heaven empty handed.

What a tragedy. What a tragedy. I think the Lord is saying to some people here in the meeting tonight, give up your small ambitions.

I've got something better for you, but you won't know it until you turn over the controls to me. There has to be a time in our lives that I call the crisis of commitment. A time when we put our lives upon the altar in total commitment to the Savior.

A time when we go to the door and put the earlobe to the door and become earmarked for the Lord. When they all go through, when you say, I love my Master, I will not go out. I often think of that passage in Gethsemane where it says, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.

And his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And he went a little farther. He went a little farther.

The Lord Jesus is asking you here tonight, will you go a little farther tonight? A little farther than you have been to the place of surrender, to pay the price of surrender and find the peace of surrender. I wonder if somebody here tonight is willing to say, Jesus, Lord and Master, love divine has conquered. I will henceforth answer, yes, to all thy will.

Free from Satan's bondage, I am thine forever. Henceforth, all thy purposes in me fulfill. Dear friend tonight, give him all there is of you.

No half measure, no broken pieces, no reservations, no keeping back part of the gift and pretending that the part is the whole. There's an impressive unity and simplicity about the life that undistractedly loves and serves God with the whole heart. Such a life will not be easily seduced from its first love.

Say tonight, I love my master. I will not go out for you. Say, what will it be? An emotional experience? Not necessarily.

It doesn't mean there'll be flashing lights or bells ringing or anything of the sort, no shivers in your liver, nothing like that. It's just a simple turning over of your lives to him. And then the quiet assurance of being in his hands.

And there will be the sense of giving up what you've ceased to love. Poor is our sacrifice, whose eyes are lighted from above. We offer what we cannot keep, what we have ceased to love.

I say, there has to be that crisis of commitment in our lives. But there has to be more than that. There has to be a day by day renewal of that commitment.

I like the words of Anne Grannis. She said, I want my life so cleared of self that my dear Lord may come and set up his own furnishings and make my heart his home. And since I know what this requires, each morning while it's still, I slip into that secret place and leave with him my will.

He always takes it graciously, presenting me with his. I'm ready then to start the day and any task there is. And this is how my Lord controls my interests, my ills, because we meet at break of day for an exchange of wills.

Try it as a day by day experience. Get up in the morning, get down on your knees and exchange wills with the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Taylor Smith, a man of God, used to kneel by his bed every morning when he got up, and he would say, Lord Jesus, this bed, your altar, myself, your living sacrifice.

It's beautiful, isn't it? Something actually beautiful about that. This bed, your altar, myself, your living sacrifice. What else? Keep busy doing the things you find your hands fine to do.

I think of the Lord Jesus in Nazareth up to the age of 30, working at a carpenter's bench. So clearly is the will of God. What do you do in the meantime? Kill yourself with work, then pray yourself alive again.

That's the kind of people that God comes to and reveals his will. And when you do that, you'll find that the gears will mesh. Life will sparkle with the supernatural.

You will be radioactive with the Holy Spirit of God, and when you touch other lives, something will happen for God. Don't you want that? Do you want that kind of a life that when you touch other lives, something will happen for God, and you will see things happening in your life that would never happen according to the laws of chance or probability. You'll know that this is interesting.

You'll know that God is working in you and through you, and yet you'll know it in a way that doesn't produce pride. I think that's wonderful. And you will have occasional mountain peak experiences, but most of life will be the usual daily routine.

In describing the coronation of the Queen in Westminster Abbey, John Stott said that one of the most moving events was just before the coronation, just before the crown was placed upon her head. The Archbishop of Canterbury called four times toward the four points of the compass in the abbey, north, south, east, west. Sirs, I present unto you the undoubted Queen of this realm.

Are you willing to do her homage? And not until a great affirmative shout went up in that abbey was the crown placed upon her head. Ladies and gentlemen, I present unto you the Lord Jesus Christ as your undoubted Lord. Are you willing to do him homage? Are you willing to turn your life over to him in sacrificial service? This is a question that everyone who professes to be a believer must answer.

Are you willing to pray tonight, Lord Jesus, I've already turned my life over to you for salvation. Tonight I want to turn it over to you for whatever you want me to do. I give up my small ambitions tonight, and I choose your will, whatever it may be.

This means anywhere, anytime, anything you want me to do. You have bled and died for me. Henceforth, I will live for you.

Were the whole realm of nature by net were an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, shall have my soul, my life, my all. I love the poem by Theodore Monod because it so clearly describes the experience of many of us, and I hope to the end.

He said, Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow that a time could ever be when I let the Savior's pity plead in vain and proudly answered all of self and none of thee. Yet he found me. I beheld him bleeding on the accursed tree, heard him pray, forgive them, Father.

And my wistful heart said faintly, some of self and some of thee. Day by day, his tender mercy, healing, helping, full and free, sweet and strong and so patient brought me lower while I whispered less of self and more of thee. Higher than the highest heavens, deeper than the deepest sea, Lord, thy love at last has conquered.

Grant me now my supplication, none of self and all of thee. At a conference in Ben Lippin some years ago, a young woman was giving testimony as to her call to service, and in the course of her message, she held up a blank sheet of paper. She said, This contains God's will for my life.

And she signed her name at the bottom and left God to fill in the details. Different. That's commitment to Christ.

The blank piece of paper with her name signed at the bottom, allowing to God to fill in the details. Lord Jesus wants to meet the people here tonight. Would it be wonderful, it would be wonderful really if some of you would take that blank piece of paper and just sign your name to the bottom.

And life will never be the same again. There's a sense in which this call of Christ comes to every man and woman, every young man, and every young woman. If we refuse to follow him, for any reason, he'll get others to do it.

But we will never get a better Christ to follow. While our heads are bowed, I wonder if you would just search your own heart tonight. You know where you are.

And you know whether the Lord has been speaking to you. I wonder if there are some here saved by the grace of God and sure of heaven through the merits of Christ. And yet you have never turned your life over to the Savior to do with it.

Whatever you want to do. Some of you are saying, well, I'm too old for that. Dear friends, you're never too old to be obedient.

Never too old to be obedient. I wonder if in your mind tonight you'll see that blank sheet of paper. Just sign your name in your mind.

Just sign your name to the bottom. Say, Lord, your love at last has conquered none of self but all of thee. I wonder if you'll say, nay, but I yield, I yield.

I can hold out no more. I sink by dying love compelled and own thee conqueror. Remember, if you don't answer, he'll get others to answer.

But you'll never get a better Christ to follow. Shall we pray? Father, I do believe you're speaking to some in our meeting tonight. Nothing more wonderful could happen as a result of this conference than that many would have this crisis experience with you when in a new and vivid way they would turn over their lives, take their hands off the controls, give up their small ambitions, and just let you fill in the details of their lives.

We ask it for your glory and for their eternal blessing. In the Savior's name, amen.

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