

# Collegiate Conference 1983-02 Life Changing Truths

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of commitment to God and the benefits of surrendering one's life to Him, highlighting the need to overcome obstacles such as fear and incomplete consecration.*

**Duration:** 52:24

**Scripture:** Psalm 1:2, Psalm 84:10, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 19:16-22, Acts 5:1-11, Romans 12:1-2

**Topics:** "Conference"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of turning our lives over to God and committing ourselves to Jesus Christ. He uses the example of the coronation of the Queen of England to illustrate the significance of total commitment. The speaker highlights that committing our lives to Jesus does not mean we won't face problems, but rather that we will have the guidance and support of God in navigating through them. The sermon concludes with the invitation for everyone to answer the question of whether they are willing to do homage to Jesus and commit their lives to Him.

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## Transcript

Okay, let's have a word of prayer before we look at God's Word. Father, we thank you for these hours that we've spent together at Koinonia, this conference, and we just come now as we reach the close and pray that you will command a double portion of your blessings upon this time and upon the ministry of your Word. We can echo the sentiments of the psalm, We pray a day and night course is better than a thousand.

I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of forgiveness. Father, we just thank you for these sanctified holy moments in the little empty room of heaven. We pray that the fragrance of the time might go with us and that our lives will be changed, each one of us.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. First of all, let's review what we went over last time.

The first, last night when we were here, we talked about some great life-changing truths, and this afternoon we spoke about three ways in which we can respond to those truths. First of all, we can do our own thing, plan our own life, live selfishly, live for money, live for material things, make a business or a profession a central thing in our life, go in for fame and honor, join the cult of the body beautiful, live for

pleasure, travel, entertainment, live for marriage and family. And secondly, we also said that we could go with the flow, that we could just drift aimlessly through life, take whatever comes, but be more like a jellyfish on a sea of time.

Tonight, we want to take up the third option, and that is a life of total, and our golden text is Romans, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable of God. The only thing that really makes sense in life is giving your life to the Lord Jesus so that he can do whatever he wants with it. It means choosing his will instead of our own.

Pardon me. Choosing his will instead of our own. It means losing your life for his sake and the gospel.

It's interesting to me that there's such an emphasis in the evangelical world today on self-esteem, self-image, loving yourself. Do you know that Jesus taught the very opposite? He didn't teach to hug your life. He taught to lose your life for his sake, and to find it as a life eternal.

We get things all the time. The poet said, swing your soul and body down for God to plow them under. Commitment means giving Christ the devotion of your heart, and the love.

And I know it's one thing to stand here tonight and talk about it. It's quite another thing to do it. And I know something of that conflict that goes on in the human soul when we face this tremendous issue.

There are some lovely examples of commitment in the Old Testament. I think of David's men when they came to him and they said, Thine we are, O David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse. Thine we are, O David, and on thy side, O son of Jesse.

We're taking our stand with you. We belong to you. You do with us what you think of.

I'll tell you, David had some devotion. And then I think of the book of Ruth. How Naomi suggested to Ruth, Don't you come back with me to Bethlehem.

You're a molded cat. You stay here with your own people. And do you remember what Ruth said? One of the most noble statements of commitment in all the Old Testament Scriptures.

She said, It's free me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. For where thou goest, I will go. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more often with us, that death part me and thee, and that praises be to thee.

That's what I would like the attitude of my soul to the Lord Jesus Christ to be. It's free me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. Where thou goest, I'll go.

Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, I will die.

That's what we say in believer's baptism, isn't it? Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more often with us, that death part me and thee. Have you and I ever really been holding on to our lives? Are we still hugging our lives? I thought I'd look at the dear apostle Paul in

Philippians chapter 3, verses 7 through 9. Sorry if there's ever a man sold out to the Lord Jesus.

It was Paul, wasn't it? Philippians chapter 3, verse 7. But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ. He had just listed all the things that a man could glory in according to the flesh, and he just wrote a few things for us. He said, What things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ.

Yea, dealt with, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuge. That I may be in Christ.

Great profit and loss statement, I think. All the things that he could glory in, I say, as a man in the flesh, and he just text them all out. He said, Christ to me and I count these things but refuge.

Dear friend, there's no great sacrifice. Commitment. I could take you and give you some illustrations of commitment that come close to the home.

Not too many years ago, well, quite a few now, there was a student at Moody Bible Institute. Her name was Betty Scott. God was having healing in her soul.

But you know, when God is grappling with your soul about the subject we're facing tonight, you really know it. I call it the barbecue process. I know when God is barbecuing me.

Don't run from it. And Betty Scott was grappling with this whole thing up in her dormitory room, and finally she sat down and she wrote in a flyleaf from her Bible, Lord, I give up my own purposes and plans, all my own desires, hopes, and ambitions, and accept thine. I give myself, my life, my all, humbly to thee, to be thine forever.

God bless you, goodness. It was Betty. I hand over to thy keeping all of my friendships, my love.

All the people whom I love are to take second place in my heart. Fill me and fill me with thy Holy Spirit. Work out thy whole will in my life at any time, now and forever.

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is Jesus. Betty Scott later married a young Christian brother named John Sam, and they went out to China, they had one child, and they sealed their testimony for their blood. They died as martyrs in China.

If you read the story, the story is a book called The Triumph of John and Betty Sam, and this verse recurs over and over again in her life. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is Jesus. I want to tell you something.

If you could talk to Betty Scott Sam in heaven today and say, what do you think about it now, Betty? Would you go back over that commitment you wrote in your Bible? No reserve, no retreat, no regret. I think of William Borden. Borden belonged to the famous Borden Dairy Company.

He went to Yale years ago to leave an office in the Bible at Yale, and this great battle went on in his life, too. You know, the heir of a great fortune I guess God comes in and takes hold of his life there at Yale University, and he wrote in his Bible, Lord Jesus, I take my hands off as far as my life is concerned. I put thee on the throne.

Change, cleanse, use me as thou shalt choose. I take the full power of thy Holy Spirit. I thank thee.

Amen. And Borden at Yale, I don't know if any of you have read the book, there's a book called Borden at Yale, written by Mrs. Howard Taylor, and more people have gone to the mission field as a result of that book than have been there. There's a great pain in a Christian's life when neither she can write bad enough in the findings of the Bible.

One of the great Christians, Spurgeon, I don't know many men that have had the impact upon the church of Jesus Christ, but Charles Haddon Spurgeon, what was the secret of it? I was thinking of that when I attended the workshop here this afternoon. He said, In that day, when I surrendered myself to my Savior, I gave him my body, my soul, my spirit, I gave him all. All I have and all I shall have for time and for eternity.

I gave him all my talents, my powers, my faculty, my eyes, my ears, my limbs, my emotions, my judgment, my whole manhood, and all that could come of it. Years later, A.T. Pearson wrote of him, all the mind he had, and all the chance God gave him, he made the most. Maybe that accounts for the fact that some of us just make no ripples in the sea of life.

And why a man like Spurgeon has such an impact. Now, I think there's something intensely noble to see young men and young women with talent, with gifts. Men and women who could really go ahead in the world.

I think it's just wonderfully fitting to see them coming and laying it all down at the feet of the Lord. It's just so appropriate. Not to see people who have been failures in other walks of life, and then think they'll thrive at the service of the Lord.

They haven't made it otherwise, and so now they're going to serve the Lord. It's nice to see people with the best in life coming, saying, all that I have for it. Somebody said, you know, there's a place for Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

So that type of scholarship. But the place is not over the head of Jesus, for they place that superscription on the cross. And it's really wonderful when we can take our prowess, our education, our degrees that we worked so hard for and just lay them at his feet.

Let him sanctify them and use them for his glory. Let me think with you tonight about why should I do this? Why should I commit my life to the Lord? Number one, if Jesus Christ died for me, the least I could do is this, at least. Isn't that what it says in Romans 12, 1 and 2? It speaks about our reasonable service.

Our reasonableness really is the most reasonable thing in the whole world. For me, to surrender my life to the Lord Jesus is the most sane, logical, rational, reasonable thing that I could possibly do. For me, to cling to my life and live it the way I wanted it is absolute form of his grace.

Secondly, as we said before, if he is Lord, then he has a right to all, and we decide that he is Lord. R. A. Laidlaw said something that really struck me. He said, it's interesting that we can come to Christ and we can trust the eternal salvation of our souls to him.

And I would hope that most of us in the room have done that. We come to Christ, and we believe that he died for us in the cross of Calvary, we receive him as our Lord and Savior, and we trust him to save us for all eternity, right? Why can't we trust him to manage our lives? There seems to be a lack of sincerity in my life. When I come to him and receive the gift of eternal life from him, and I don't dare to let him control my life.

One of the reasons I don't dare let him control my life is because I don't trust him. But, notice what it says in Romans 12, that he may prove what is that good and acceptable end. And you know, I'd just like to stand here tonight before you, dear young people.

I want to testify to the fact that the man who turns over his life to Christ makes no mistake. God wants only the very best for you. You might think you know something better.

Years ago there was a titled lady in Ireland, in the south of Ireland, a lady of power, she was a woman of God. And she said that it seems an insult to that love which gave all for us to say that we love, and yet hold back part of our lives. It seems an insult.

Let me read it exactly the way she said it. It seems an insult to that love which gave all for us to say we love, and yet stop to calculate about giving all to him, when our all is but too mighty. His all was heaven, earth, eternity, himself.

She said, better not to love at all. Better to be cold. And you know, there's a lot of truths to that.

We just think of the enormity of the passion of Christ and his work for us on the cross at Calvary, that you can't love him with a hissing hot love. Better to be cold than to be lukewarm. Why should I commit my life to the Lord? Well, it's the only wise choice when we realize that he knows options that we don't know anything about.

Why, you might think that the most wonderful thing for your life would be to be the vice-president in charge of paperclips at the Amalgamated Futility Company. And you know, all the time you think that, and you're gunning for a dead hole. Above you burns the vision of the Christ upon the cross, you know.

And he has something glorious in mind for you. Some of you don't even know about this. He won't tell you.

So you kind of make that commitment to him. And even then, he won't tell you. It's kind of a mix.

Why should I commit my life to save my life from being wrecked and wasted? In the late 1970s, the United States Navy developed an automated system for landing hyperplanes on aircraft carriers by the use of computers. And this is the way it worked. The pilot, they line up the planes with the aircraft carriers, and the pilot had to take his hands off the controls and just sit there as his plane nose towards the aircraft carrier, lurching and shuddering as the computer adjusts for the movement of the aircraft carrier.

You know, the aircraft carrier might be going this way, it might be going this way, and the computer is adjusting so that the plane is in sync. S-Y-N-C. In sync with the movement of the carrier.

You know, the crucial point of that story is, the pilot could ask, Do you want your life to land safely? Take your hands off the controls. Let the Lord Jesus bring your life in. A wise commitment we had last night, the love of Christ constrains us.

Because God made us judgements. If one dies for all, then will he die for all the things which live for him. But not for himself.

But then, who dies for them and grows again. Unfortunately, our commitment to the Lord Jesus is oftentimes inconclusive. Unfortunately, we're like Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of Acts, you know.

They sold a piece of property and pretended to give it all to the Lord. And we do that. We sing all to Jesus if I surrender all.

We're touching arms. It's a good thing God doesn't strike every Christian dead and make the incomplete consecration anew. Every once in a while, God seeks out in the history of mankind to show his extreme displeasure with certain things.

He doesn't do it every time. And he did it then in the Book of Acts, with power in the church. And God showed what he thought about incomplete consecration.

About pretending to give a part, to give all and hold back a part. Peter expressed it. Remember when Peter said, not so, Lord.

That's a contradiction. Cross out the no or cross out the Lord. Not me, Lord.

Not now, Lord. The Lord Jesus told about that young man who was filled with enthusiasm. He wanted to be a disciple of Christ.

And he said, Suffer me first to go. The key words there are me first. That's what hinders our surrender to the Lord Jesus.

Suffer me first to go. My interest comes first than yours. Jesus said, let the dead bury the dead, but go down and preach to demons' eyes.

In other words, there are things that unsaved people can do just as well as saved people. Don't spend your life doing what an unsaved person could have done just as well. Be indispensable.

It's a game of life. Another one said, let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home, which are at my house. And there you have it again.

Let me first go bid them farewell. The ego trick. Makes me think of what a person said this person once.

He said, I have to live, don't I? The person said, I don't grant that. We have to obey God. Our responsibility is to obey God and let him take care of the life.

And that's what we say. We say, Lord, anywhere, don't send me to the dishes yet. We say, Lord, I want to do anything you want me to do.

You start putting those butts in, and you might as well forget about it. Is that real? That's real. I've got to get married.

I tell you, I really think we're, I think it's God's will for most people to be married. You can only leave it with the Lord. When you start bargaining with God like that, really, I mean, you know, I really mean it.

Not speaking just marriage. I come from a long line of married people. Lord, I want to commit my life to you, any time.

But her left me financially independent, and give the Lord the tag end of a wasted... He doesn't want it. He wants it. How would you like it? I'm going to give the best years of my life to the corporation, and I'll give you what's left of it.

Lord, in the fullness of my might, I would for thee be strong, while runneth o'er each dear delight to thee. On the martyrs of Ecuador. Why do we make this incomplete consecration? Well, one of the reasons is the fear of the unknown.

You don't have to empathize with people. I oftentimes have the fear of, you just kind of see ahead, and it's hard to put down your steps. Fear of the loss of security.

That's very wrong. And very deceptive, too, because people think today that if they just have bank accounts and stocks and bonds, that they have security. And we're brainwashed.

We talk about real estate as if it were real. We talk about security as if they were secure. God.

The only security we have in life is God. I chuckle. I chuckle at, in recent years, you know, when we were going through that terrible inflation, and all of a sudden, all the analysts were saying, gold was the same.

Buy gold. Buy gold. And what happened? They said, silver is the way to go.

Everybody buys gold. Diamonds. Diamonds for investment.

Not diamonds. They're wearing a hat. Diamonds for investment.

You know, it's wonderful to have the Lord. To be able to say, my God, it's according to his riches. Incomplete commitment.

Incomplete, because we put conditions for it. I'll never forget one time at a Native Bible school when I was there, George Verwell was visiting us, and he was living up in the dormitory, and one time he was going down the hallway in the dormitory, and there were two fellas in a room, and the door was ajar, and these two fellas were underneath praying. And while everyone was agonizing before the Lord, I can picture him saying, Lord, I can't do it.

You know I can't do it. He was really... George was just walking by the door. When I talk to the Lord like that, when I hold myself back from the Lord, I'm holding myself back from him best.

So, let's come tonight to where the rubber hits the road. What are we going to do? The crisis of commitment. The crisis of commitment.

And I want to make this very, very practical tonight. There has to be an initializing. There has to be a first time in your life when you get down before, when I do.

Before I do that, however, I think I should learn to say, can you honestly say before the Lord, and I... Jeremiah said that. I like it. He said, Oh Lord, I know that the way of... It is not in man that walketh to direct.

It is not in man... Man just doesn't have the... Then, we take this initial act, and we get down on our knees and say, Lord, you've brought me to this place. Anything. The story is told years ago of a meeting in Africa.

And those dear African people, they didn't have money to give to the Lord, and so the time had come for them to give their offspring to the Lord. And one, and the next one would go up in the field. They gave what they had.

Somebody said, Give him all there is. No half measures. No broken pieces.

No reservations. No keeping back part of the gift. And no pretending that part is the whole.

There's an impressive unity and simplicity about the life that undistractedly loves and serves God. But, you know, even that initial act, you can crawl on the table today, and you can put yourself in that captive, dead to the world. And so, in addition to the initial act, there has to be a continual process.

And that means that every day in my life, I rededicate myself to you again today. I turn my life over to you for this next day. You never get away.

Renew the surrender day by day. A poet has put it very nicely. I think you'll like this.

I want my part so clear to self that my dear Lord may come and set up His own furniture. And since I know what this requires, each morning, while it's still, I slip into that secret room and leave with Him. He always takes it graciously, presenting me with His.

I'm ready then to meet the day in any task there is. And this is how my Lord controls my interest, my ills. Because we meet at the break of day, we meet every morning, and we turn our will over to the Lord.

In one of Harold Wildridge's books, he wrote something. I hope I can explain it to you. The gist of it is this, that we come to the Lord in the morning, and we rededicate ourselves to Him for that next day.

And then we take whatever for instance, I'm driving along the freeway, and I have a flat tire, and I say, Oh! The other way of looking at it, Rob was still with me. And I said, Rob, I'm leaving. Within a minute, within a minute, yes sir, dear young black folks, they got into the car with Him for Him to take them off the freeway.

Laughter Laughter Laughter Laughter Laughter All it was was a point, no interruption, no accident, no tragedy. And you leave the whole burden of your life on the finished work of God. Give yourself up morning by morning to Him.

Cultivate the habit all through the day of joyfully depending on and obeying Him to guide, to use, and to do in and with you when He wills. Count upon His working as a fact. Altogether apart from sight or feeling, there it is again.

Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves. I like that. Cease from the burden.

Then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us. So there you are. First of all, the initial act of dedication, then the continual process day by day.

What else can you do? Have to keep busy for the Lord in your daily occupation. Have an effective prayer life and make the time. God doesn't reveal the blueprint all at once.

Just a step at a time. The psalmist says, I worry as a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my eyes. And that light, that flashlight just tells you where to know what the head but God shows His will.

I've often told the story of the building of the Brooklyn the architect was injured while the bridge was in process, and he spent a day to be dedicated and opened, and he had the blueprint. Dear friend, someday God is going to... Describing the coronation of the Queen of England, John Stock said that the most moving moment in the whole ceremony was when the Archbishop of Canterbury, a first citizen of the realm, he comes out into the abbey, and he stands at a prominent place of the abbey, and he calls out four

times to each of the parts of the compass in the abbey, Sir, I present unto you the undoubted Queen of this realm. Are you willing to do her homage? He said that four times.

Sir, I present unto you the undoubted Queen of this realm. Are you willing to do her homage? And not until a great affirmative roar comes back from the four corners of the crown place, the Holy Spirit is saying to us tonight, fellows and girls, I present unto you your undoubted Lord and King. Are you willing to do him homage? Are you willing to bring forth the royal diadem, Lord of all? This is a question that everyone has.

If you commit your life to the Lord Jesus, it doesn't mean that you won't have problems. But if you don't commit your life to the Lord, and I'd just like to say this in closing, it really doesn't matter. The Savior doesn't force himself on anyone.

He stands before you tonight and offers himself as your Lord and Savior. He offers to take over your life and make it. If you don't turn it over to him, he'll get plenty of others.

I really don't feel too happy about asking people to raise hands or come forward. I'm not going to do it. I have far more confidence in a decision that's made in the quietness of a person's home and the quietness of a person's bedroom.

But I would like to give you the invitation tonight, quietly and privately, while our heads are bound, that you would like to make that dedication of yourself to the Lord Jesus. It would be a great time to do it. And I'd like to extend this invitation to you when the meeting is over.

Many of us would be down here, especially those with red names, tags, ready to counsel, to talk with anybody who has problems, sayings, still have hang-ups in your life, hurdles, but easy to counsel. Feel free to stay behind. I mean, when anything as important as this, we're not tired.

If there's anyone here who's not saved, it would be a shame, really, to leave the conference when it should feel free to come forward. And as you go home, I really do pray that you'll all face this challenge. If you've never turned over your life to the Lord Jesus before, do it.

And then follow it up by a day-by-day dedication of yourself. And I'll tell you, if you do that, and the rest of your life, when we meet on the hillside of Emmanuel's land, you'll hug yourself. Blessed Lord Jesus, we think of the marvel of your humility, that you not only came to die for us, to save us from eternal hell, but you stand before us tonight, offering to run our lives for us, make them the very best that they could possibly be.

Forgive us, Lord, for any hesitation in our hearts, for daring to trust you for salvation and not trust you to run our lives. We pray that tonight there may be no holding back, but that many, all, will come to you. Say, Lord Jesus, I just want to turn over the control.

You run my life. I don't know what's best, but you do, and you know all the options. I ask you for your favor.

Pray that if any have problems, anything they'd like to discuss, that they'll have the grace to stay behind after the meeting. Pray that the others will leave quietly. Pray for safety, Lord, on the trip home.

We pray, Lord, that men and women from this meeting will go out to make history for you. We ask in Jesus' name.

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