

# The Day Jesus Came

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of self-examination and sacrificial living in the context of discipleship within an affluent society.*

**Duration:** 32:09

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 22:39, Matthew 23:11-12, Luke 14:33, Revelation 1:9-10, Revelation 1:12

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience where he was confronted by the Lord about his happiness and the material possessions in his life. The speaker realizes that material things do not bring true satisfaction and that his life lacks power. The Lord challenges him to give away his possessions rather than having them taken away. The speaker reflects on missed opportunities and the need to prioritize serving others and sharing the gospel over worldly pursuits.

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## Transcript

I turn tonight for our reading to Revelation chapter 1, the first chapter of the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 1, beginning with verse 9. I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.

Verse 12, and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks wand light unto the Son of Man, flowed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the path with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many.

Verse 17, and when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. Chapter 3, please, beginning with verse 14. Chapter 3, verse 14, and unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write these things, saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou art cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, I am rich and increased with goods, and of need of nothing.

Knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor, and blind and naked? I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesars, that thou mayest see as many as I love. I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore, and repent.

I'd like to talk to you tonight on the subject, Discipleship in an Affluent Society. This is a subject that is exercising the hearts of many of God's people today, and causing considerable turmoil of soul. And I'd like to introduce it to you by telling you a simple little anecdote.

Some time ago, a young disciple whom I've known for some years, a young fellow, who's really dedicated, devoted to the Lord, every fiber of his being, sold out to Jesus Christ. He called me up on the phone, he said, when are we going to get together? And I said, well, I don't know, I've been wondering how long you'd be. Well, it'll be interesting to stay in the apartment of the man who wrote True Discipleship.

And I felt as if I had been engulfed in the bath of... I immediately began to think of my apartment and what he would see there, and whether it would be to the glory of God and to the blessing of souls at home and in foreign lands. It was a most searching experience. Then as I was trudging up the stairs with him, I thought, well, what are you worrying about this disturber of the peace? The Lord Jesus sees your apartment all the time.

What does he see when he goes into it? And that didn't make me any more comfortable. In fact, it made me all the less comfortable. And I couldn't help thinking then of a statement that F.W. Grant made one time, and I hope I'll never forget it.

He said, there is no other test for anything but how it looks in his presence. There is no other test for anything but how it looks in his presence. So then I began to imagine the Lord Jesus Christ in my home.

And what did he see? And how did it affect him? That's why I read that passage from Revelation chapter 1. There you see the Lord Jesus as the scrutinizer. There you see the Lord Jesus as the judge. In chapters 1 through 3, and in chapters 4 through 19.

But that day he was my scrutinizer. I came before the Lord Jesus, and I began to see things as I had never seen them before. And so I'd like to take a trip with you through the apartment, and you'll understand that some of these things I've transferred to Apollos and myself for your sake.

I think you'll understand as we go on. And I hope that each one of us will be able to make the applications. We go into the apartment, and the desk is the first thing I see, and stupidly enough, before I left, I had forgotten to put away the bank books, and the stocks and bonds, and the insurance policies.

And they were all lying up there in the desk. I had taken them out of the safe, you see. I mean, I like to go over them once in a while, because they do give me a certain measure of security to know that they're there.

And there they were sitting out in the desk, and the Lord Jesus was standing there. There was something else on the desk too. And then there was my choice gleaning calendar.

It was there too. And strangely enough, that day on the choice gleaning calendar, the scripture, the first scripture, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. And it went on to say, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And I somehow felt very shriveled up by the whole procedure. And so I gathered the things up, and put my heart back in the safe. And when I came back to the desk, the Lord Jesus was standing there, and he was looking down at the globe of the world, looking over the countries of the world.

And in that moment, I couldn't help thinking of what those securities of mine could be doing for the worldwide outreach of the gospel. Because I was sure, as he was looking at the globe, he wasn't just looking at countries. He was looking at the souls of men for whom he had died on Calvary's cross.

And then he said to me, Bill, are you living by faith? I always thought I had been. I've been commended to the work of the Lord. I thought I had been living by faith.

And I began to splutter some excuse. And he said to me, how is your life different from the lives of the bankers you left back at the First National Bank of Boston? Isn't that the way they do too? And I had to admit it was. I had to admit it was.

It was a searching thing for him to come there into the living room. And then above the desk, I saw my diplomas there. I'd always been quite proud of them until that moment.

And he said to me very softly, why did you go after these? I had never suspected before in my life that I had been seeking great things for myself. And as the words of Jeremiah came to me, seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them. And as he was standing there looking at them, I couldn't help remembering what Rudyard Kipling said one time.

He was speaking to the graduating class at McGill University. And he said to the young people, as you go into life, he said, don't seek for fame or for money. He said, because one day you'll meet a man who cares for none of these things.

And then you'll realize how poor you are. And somehow in that moment, I felt I had met that man. But I realized how very poor.

And we went along to the, down the corridor. And I, my eye just happened to go into the, the washroom there. And I saw all the bottles and jugs and jars and all the gadgets.

And I saw my electric toothbrush hanging on the wall. Electric toothbrush. It always seemed quite modern to me before.

But then I thought, for just a few strokes of a common, ordinary toothbrush, somebody could be, could be hearing the gospel in far off Malaysia today. I mean, I had never seen it before until the Lord Jesus came into the picture. And then I was, got my own unworthiness.

As John said, I fell at his feet. It was terrible. We went on to the dining room.

There was nothing in the dining room. There was no food on the table or anything else. And yet I couldn't help think of the times back there when at the holiday season, we'd sit at that table and gorge ourselves with food from that table.

And I thought of 7,000 people dying each day in the world without the necessities of life, dying daily from starvation. And it was as if I was in a sea of molten lava at that moment. And as the Lord Jesus stood there, I couldn't help remembering that there were verses in the Bible about fasting that I had always put off for the dispensational flavor some way or other.

And I just dismissed them from my thoughts. They made me altogether too uncomfortable. And we went to the bedroom and I had awkwardly left the closet door open.

And as I looked at my closet, I thought for sure I was at the Hills Clothing Center. In fact, I wished I were. I thought of all the clothes, clothes that I didn't really need, clothes that I expended the Lord's money on in a world of need.

And the Lord Jesus didn't say anything to me. He didn't have to. Just His presence there.

And then on top of the dresser, of course, all of the jewelry gadgets, all of the jewelry gadgets. And I wondered whose they would be if the Lord required my soul at night. I wondered who would get them.

And I thought, well, I could use them for the Lord now. I remembered one day at a mass that I got an envelope in the mail. And it was kind of a thick envelope.

It was thicker than most of the envelopes that come. It had some larger objects in it. And I opened it and it was from one of our former students.

And as I wrote to me here, Mr. McDonald, she said, she said, I don't have anything to give him but this diamond ring. And she said, and all of these thoughts went through my mind. And then I looked up to the text on the wall, the text that I had earned in Sunday school for memorizing scripture.

And it said, thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. All the clothing, all the jewelry, thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. And then we went into the family room and my golf equipment was over there in the corner.

And the Lord said to me, you enjoy golf? And I was kind of surprised at myself how, how fluently I could speak about golf. I was really quite surprised at the enthusiasm that I was able to generate about that game. I couldn't help thinking at the same time how hard it was for me to speak to people about their souls.

But anyway, I went on at great length and told him until, until he looked at me and I began to wonder, is it right to be that enthusiastic about golf when there are so many souls to be saved? It's such a wonderful savior. Then over on the table, there was a diary there. It was a diary of my trip to Athens.

I had gone to Athens in 1955. And I always thought I was good at scripture connections and all the rest, you know. I never thought anything about it.

I'd gone to see the Acropolis and Parthenon and Morris Hill. I remember when I came home, somebody said to me, did you have any fruit in Greece? And I began to think of the oranges and the grapefruit that we did have. But I guess that wasn't what they meant.

I guess they meant, did we have any souls? And you know, standing there in the presence of the Lord and looking at the diary of the trip to Athens, I realized I had gone as a sightseer and not as a soul winner. And I surely loathed myself. And then I remembered that Paul went to Athens and as he looked upon the people steeped in idolatry, his soul was burdened.

Huh. But he didn't take a gray line to her. No, he didn't.

He was after souls. And all of this came rushing in at me like a flood with the Lord Jesus standing there. Also, there was a grandfather's clock there in the family room and I had never noticed the tick of the clock so loudly before, somewhere or other.

I'd never been so conscious of the passing of time. And then I noticed the Lord Jesus walking over toward the television set. Once again, he didn't say anything, but I couldn't help thinking of the hours, the hours that had been wasted watching things of no lasting value.

I began to think of the opportunities that had been missed. It was a terrible experience. He didn't say it was wrong.

He didn't say it was a sin. He didn't say anything at all. As the grandfather's clock ticked, I thought too of some of the gatherings that had been in that family room, of the gossip and of the just idle chit-chat, the wasted evenings where we'd gather together and talk about nothing of eternal profit.

It was very, very solemn. And as we stood there in the Lord, the Lord was in my home. I began to look around and I saw things that I'd never seen before.

I thought of the trips that I had made to buy drapes that were just the right match for the furniture and the carpets and all the money I had had to spend on it. I thought of some of the hymns we used to sing about pilgrimage. I am a stranger here.

I do not crave a home on earth which gave thee but a grave. Thy cross has severed ties which bound us here thyself. I began to think of Abraham and his simple life.

It was really very terrible. Then I thought of the year of Jubilee in the Old Testament, how property reverted to its original owner in the year of Jubilee. And the closer that you came to the year of Jubilee, the less that property was worth on the market.

I mean, if it was going to revert to the original owner in two years, you wouldn't pay very much. I began to think of all my accumulation. I thought, the year of Jubilee really is coming, isn't it? And I could put it to work for Jesus now.

Then I thought of a funny story I had heard about a man in Canada, a very wealthy man dwelling in a magnificent mansion. The young people had gathered the home one night and they were having a sing. They asked if there were any requests, and this dear man gave out a request about some hymn and said, I am just a pilgrim here, dwelling in a tent.

And one irreverent young man at the back of the group said to the fellow next to him, and I applied it to myself, some tent. And right at that time my gawkward, Pomeranian beagle hound came bounding into the room, and I wish he hadn't come, because I was just so conscious of the bill I had just paid to the vet. It was as much as if it had been a human being.

I began to think of the ground beef too, the canned dog food and all the rest. The Lord didn't say anything, and I had never thought of it before, but the scrutinizer had come to my apartment. It was a terrible experience.

And then I looked over the corner of the room and I could see my stamp collection, stamps of Israel, all the stamps that Israel had ever issued except two. I guess I always thought it was pretty nice to have it. I

mean it had certain prophetic interest.

The nation of Israel had been formed and I could use this. I thought, and then I began to translate that stamp collection into soul, what it could do for the Lord. How it could be put to work in the vineyard of the Lord.

You know, at that moment I had loved it, and all of a sudden I hated it. I hated the wretched thing and wanted to get rid of it the earliest possible moment. But things began to come to me that I had never seen before.

I looked down and I saw a bill from a florist there on the lap table. One of the Christians had died and I had sent fifteen dollar spray to the funeral. The Lord didn't say anything.

He didn't even go over and look at it, but I couldn't help thinking of the scriptures that spoke about the flowers of the grass and how they spring up, born for one brief day and then they're gone. But the word of our God abided forever. I couldn't help thinking, my, if I had put it in the word of God, it could be an eternal memorial to that dear child of God who had gone into his presence and my heart was... Then as you might know, the Lord went over to look at the books in my library.

I have to confess to you, I didn't need all those books, but I thought they made a good display. There were a lot of them I never even looked at, to tell you the honest truth. But you'll have to admit that Darby's collected writings are imposing on the shelf.

Thirty-four volumes, matched binding. The Lord went over and just looked at the books. I couldn't help wondering whether some of those books I could possibly dispose of to help forward the work of the Lord.

I began to realize what John was talking about in the first chapter of Revelation. He had come into the presence of the Lord, those all-seeing eyes, that heart that beats with compassion for lost souls of the world. And so I heard the voice of the Lord speaking to me, not to others.

That was the interesting thing about this experience. I wasn't looking at my neighbors anymore, I was looking at myself. And all of a sudden the letter to the church of the Laodiceans had applied to me, not to somebody else.

And I wish we didn't have to go out to the garage, but that was the way we had to go. And I don't think I have to tell you what happened there. Not only the car, but the speedboat, the water skis, very expensive equipment out there.

As we were going outside, the Lord said to me, you know, are you happy? And I said, no Lord, I'm not happy. For one thing, material things, they can never satisfy me. And I said, that isn't the only reason I'm not happy, my my life lacks power.

And I said to him, Lord, you can take anything away that you've seen tonight. He said, no, I don't take things away, you'd have to give them away. He said, could we sit down for just a minute? And so we did.

We went and sat down by the wall at the front. And he said to me very affectionately, so likewise, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. He said to me, lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures.

For where your treasures are, there will your heart be also. He said to me, Bill, why don't you start living sacrificially for the spread of the gospel? What you put in the collection, did it hurt? Remember what David said, I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing. He said, why don't you really start living by faith for a change? And all of a sudden my mind was filled with a thousand objections.

I never did get them out because he anticipated them. He said, Bill, all you have to do is be obedient to the word of God and leave the consequences with me. He said, I'll tell you if you'll do it.

He said, it'll develop your prayer life. He said, if you obey God in the realm of material things, he said, you'll have a new prayer life. It'll add fuel to the fire, because the best prayer comes from a strong inward necessity.

He said, one of the reasons your prayer life has been ineffective is you didn't need anything. You had everything that your heart could desire. Why do you pray? Why pray? He said, there's something else.

He said, he said, Bill McDonald, he said, you've been praying for things and you had it in your own power to answer that prayer and you didn't do it. He said, that's hypocrisy. He said, launch out in the deep.

Claim some of those wonderful, have you ever noticed those promises concerning prayer and the word of God? Ask anything in my name and it shall be given you, frankly confess. If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything, it shall be done. My father, which is in heaven, he said, you do this, he said, you can start laying hold of God and earth for the salvation of souls.

He said, this will involve your more and more inactive service. He said, things will hold less and less of an interest to your life and you'll begin to have a more aggressive personal witness day by day. He said, you'll have a burden to go out door to door with the gospel of redeeming grace.

You won't be ashamed to go in the street corner. You won't be ashamed to pass out tracts and tell men and women about the Savior and to start a home Bible class. Reach your neighbors right there with the gospel.

And then he said to me, there's something else I want to say, Bill. You've always been pushing for the top. I always wanted to be a supervisor, telling other people what to do.

Even in Christian work, he said, remember that wasn't exactly the pathway I took. I came down to be a servant of servants. He said, if you want to really be great, he said, be a servant.

He said, maintain yourself to me, yielded, yielded to me at all times. Just keep yourself in a state of perpetual yieldedness to me so that I can live my life out through you. And he said, there's just one final thing I want to say to you, Bill.

Remember when I talked to my disciples about the cross? What do you think about that? The cross. All through your life, you tried to cushion yourself from sacrifice and from suffering, trying to protect yourself, trying to save your life. He said, remember Bill, if any man come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

That's all he said. And then he left. And I felt in a sense, I was glad to be alone so that I could get down on my knees and pray.

Maybe some of us would like to do that tonight. Maybe God has spoken to some of our hearts tonight. And I think it'd be a nice thing if God's dealing with hearts here tonight.

Wouldn't it be nice if those whose hearts are really moved might just get together for a little time of prayer? I know we don't usually do this, but it might be a nice thing. If God is working not to let the voice of the Spirit of God be dissipated by the Russian crush afterwards. There's two doors.

One door here and one around the corner. This is a room right over here. If God has spoken to you and you'd like to talk to us, I'd like you to get down with us and pray.

Feel free to come in afterwards. We're meeting will be over.

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