

Yosemite Bible Conference 1996-03 More Like Christ

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the transformative power of Christ and the importance of embodying His character in the Christian life.

Duration: 46:38

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:20-24, Luke 9:51, John 4:34, Acts 20:35

Topics: "Christ Likeness"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the importance of living a life that reflects the character of Jesus Christ. The speaker emphasizes the need to be more like Jesus in both our actions and words, so that others may be drawn to Him. The sermon also highlights the significance of giving and serving others, as Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The speaker encourages believers to live with integrity and to prioritize kindness and courtesy, even if it means sacrificing personal gain or a good story.

Transcript

Your sins and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ by a definite act of faith. But it's possible there could be some people here today, and they've been listening to the high standards of the Christian life, and they've been thinking, I know I should be a Christian, I know I should trust Christ, but I could never live up to those standards that he's been talking about. Let me assure you that that is true.

Of course you couldn't live up to those standards in your own strength. In fact, believers can't live up to those standards in their own strength. It takes divine life to live the Christian life, and what you must remember is that when a person is born again, he receives the indwelling Holy Spirit, and he, the Holy Spirit, gives him the power to live the Christian life.

There are people here at the conference who have been on drugs, they've been addicted to drugs. There are people here who have been addicted to alcohol. There are people here who have been sexual slaves, and of course they couldn't live the Christian life until they were saved and received freedom from those addictions by the power of God.

I say that in case you're holding back from making a decision for the Lord Jesus. Just believe me, when you trust Christ, when you're genuinely born again, you become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Before

you're saved, you're not comfortable talking about God.

After you're saved, it's the thing you want to talk about, the Lord and all of the things that pertain to him. So, I hope you don't hold back. I hope you make your decision for Christ, and let him produce the change in your life, and it's very, very real.

I've often told the story of a friend of mine out in Honolulu during the war, not the Civil War, World War II. He was a very consistent Christian, and the fellows used to go out and play basketball after they got off duty. And Bert Graves, he always played according to the rules, never lost his temper, exhibited Christ in all his ways.

And there was an unsaved fellow used to play up there. His name was Dick Kegler, and he watched Bert Graves. He noticed there was something different.

Bert never used foul language, just a consistent life through it all. And one night after the game was over, Dick Kegler came to Bert, and he said, Bert, you're different. I don't know what you have, but I want it.

And that night, it was an easy thing for Bert to lead him to the Lord Jesus Christ. You're different. I don't know what it is you have.

Whatever it is, I want it. He got it, and Dick Kegler is still back there in Pennsylvania living a Christian life himself. Really wonderful.

That's what we're talking about this week, how the life of Christ can be reproduced in the life of a believer so that others want to come to the Savior. Years ago, I wrote in the front of my Bible this little ditty. It says, if of Jesus Christ their only view may be what they see of him in you, what would they see? That has been kind of a beacon to me down through the years.

If of Jesus Christ their only view may be what they see of him in you, McDonald, what do they see? It really brings you up short. You know, the Thessalonians first saw Jesus in the life of the Apostle Paul. They liked what they saw, and he preached the word as they came to him.

Now, today I'd like to take up where we left off yesterday in the subject of forgiveness. Perhaps we could turn to Matthew chapter 18. Matthew chapter 18, verse 23.

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he had begun to settle accounts, one who was brought to him will owe him ten thousand talents. As he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold with his wife and children, and all that he had, and that payment be made.

The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all. The master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what you owe.

So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay you all. He would not, but went through him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

Then his master, after he had called them, said to him, You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? His master was angry, delivered him to the torturers, till he should pay all that was due to him. So my heavenly Father also will do to you, if each of you from his heart does not forgive his brother his trespasses." God loves his people to have a forgiving spirit.

We talked yesterday about a woman in Angola named Mandy Turner, who came to the place in her life where she forgave the guilty murderer of her husband, who had in the meantime been converted to God. I can't help thinking of Hari Tenbum in that regard. You know how she suffered so intensely in a concentration camp during World War II, how her father died in the camp, and her sister Betsy died in the camp.

Hari was survived through those war years. One night she was speaking in the basement of a church building, and she looked out into the audience, and she saw one of the guards who had been with her in the concentration camp. A man who had been cruel, and you can imagine how the whole scene passed before her as she was talking that night in the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the guard walked up to her. He said, God has forgiven me. He said, I have been saved by the grace of God.

Can you forgive me? She said her hand was in her overcoat at the time, and she started to struggle to pull the hand out of the overcoat. Finally, God gave her the power to do it. She reached out her hand to him, and she said, I forgive you with all my heart.

I tell you, friends, that's Christianity, isn't it? I forgive you with all my heart. You know, I think we're nearing the end of the dispensation. The coming of the Lord is near.

I think it's a tremendous time for sense-mending, don't you? For getting all of these things straightened up. I know there are certain wrongs against us that really should be repented of before they are forgiven. But I think it's a great thing if we can spend the rest of our time just to mending fences.

Life is too short to be small, and we want to go to be with the Lord with all these accounts settled. Somebody said, forgiveness is the perfume that the trampled flower cast back on the foot that crushed it. Worth living a lifetime to say something like that, isn't it? Perfume, forgiveness is the perfume that the trampled flower cast back on the foot that crushed it.

Forgiveness. Forgive them, O forgive, he cried, then bowed his sacred head. O Lamb of God, my sacrifice for thee, thy blood was shed.

Praise. I think it's very interesting that the Lord Jesus was never hesitant to praise people, and we shouldn't be either. This is another way in which we can manifest his character before the world.

When it was needed, he was there to praise people. To the mother of a demon-possessed daughter, he said, O woman, great is your faith. That's wonderful to have those words spoken to you by the Son of God, isn't it? O woman, great is your faith.

Concerning a woman who had anointed him with a very costly fragrant oil, he said, she has done a good work on me. While the disciples were quibbling about it, how the money could have been better spent, he said, leave her alone, she has done a good work on me. And to a centurion in Capernaum, he said, I

haven't found such faith in all of Israel.

That's marvelous. His own people were rejecting him, and yet Gentiles were springing up here and there with faith in the Lord Jesus. Concerning Nathanael, he said, behold an Israelite in whom is no guile.

I think that's beautiful. You see something in a person that's commendatory, don't hold back. There's a difference between praise and flattery.

Flattery is saying something you don't really believe, but you're saying it to ingratiate yourself to the people. Praise is genuine. Look for things to praise in one another.

It really helps to oil the wheels. Thankfulness. The Lord Jesus was thankful.

Many speaks to my heart. Sometimes when the unbelief around him was towering, he expressed thanks to God. Matthew chapter 11.

You might like to look at that. It's been a tremendous lesson to me. Matthew chapter 11.

I'm going to read beginning in verse 20 to show you the context. Then he began to upbraid the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyrant Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyrant Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would remain until this day.

But I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you." Well, it's not particularly a scene in which you'd think anybody would be thankful, but read the next verse. At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babe. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight.

In the towering unbelief of these three cities of Israel, he could find reason to be thankful to God. We have so much to be thankful for. Christians have more to be thankful for than anybody else in the world.

We take so much for granted. Do you ever thank God for eyesight? You just take it for granted. Do you ever thank the Lord for hearing, for help, for memory? You ever thank the Lord for the mattress you sleep on? Jesus never slept on one.

You ever thank the Lord for hot and cold running water? Jesus never had that when he was on earth. We're really spoiled, aren't we? So many things that we just take for granted. Fanny Crosby lost her sight at the age of three through the malpractice of a physician.

What did she do? Go through life sulking and pouting? No, she didn't. Listen to what she said. She said, although it may have been a blunder on the physician's part, it was no mistake on God's part.

I verily believe it was his intention that I should live my days in physical darkness so as to be better prepared to sing his praises and incite others to do so. I could not have written those thousands of hymns if I had my sight. That's wonderful, isn't it? To be able to thank the Lord for his providence in our lives, for

the way he has ordered our lives.

Thankfulness. Righteousness. The Lord Jesus was absolutely righteous in all his ways.

He was scrupulously just and upright. He never would stoop to anything that was dishonest, or shady, or even questionable. His decisions were always righteous, and so were his actions.

Isaiah says he magnified the law and made it glorious, and he did, and he fulfilled the law in his death on the cross. If I'm going to be like the Lord Jesus, I have to be as straight as an arrow. But I want to tell you today, we live in a world where every week we're tempted to compromise, to do something that is not quite right.

We're constantly faced with ethical problems. For instance, doctors are under pressure oftentimes to sign their name to false insurance claims. Their patients want them to sign their name to these claims.

Lawyers oftentimes resort to legal tricks at the expense of justice. Used car salesmen. I used to ask the question, is it possible to be a Christian and a used car salesman? But I don't say that anymore.

There are quite a few here from the San Ramon Valley Bible Church, and there's a brother there, I think he's only been saved a year ago last November, and he's a used car salesman. Ron Cooper. It's like my car from him.

Used car. After I bought my car from him, I took my friend Jim McCarthy out to get a Toyota, and I introduced him to Ron, and we talked about it, and Ron said, frankly, he said, I don't have anything on the lot today I'd like to sell you. That's wonderful.

I mean, that's record-breaking. You know, the marvelous thing is that that dear brother, and he really is a dear brother, he walks off with the prize for the most sales almost every month. Almost every month.

You don't have to dicker with him. Just go in. He'll do the dickering with the manager.

He'll come and tell you the price. That's it. I tell you, what a testimony for the Lord Jesus.

He's loved by everybody except the other salesmen. You know, things would go a lot faster for contractors and missionaries if they would resort to bribes. Contractors in connection with the local laws.

Missionaries in connection with customs agents. So, you land in India, and your things are in customs. You want to get it out of customs.

That is, I'm out of customs. You have to grease somebody's hand with silver before you can get it out. And the weeks go by, and you still don't have your apparatus.

You still don't have the things you need. You still don't have your books. But they're adamant.

Oh, they don't say it in so many words, but that's all they want is a little of your money. There's always a temptation to fudge when making out income tax returns. You feel that? You know, diminish the income and increase the expenses.

And, you know, evangelists too, and preachers, they can fudge when they report the numbers that were converted, or even those in attendance. God wants us to have a conscience live and clean in an age of corruption. One contractor had the reputation of building his Christianity into his houses.

I like that. He built his Christianity into his houses. One man, a businessman, said of a Christian competitor, you don't need a contract from him.

His word is enough. A soccer referee said, when I'm refereeing a game in which Tommy Walker is playing, I know I have only 21 players to watch, not 22, because Tommy would never do a dirty thing. In other words, Tommy brought his Christianity into the soccer game.

We had a fellow come to the intern program years ago. He transferred with GM from Detroit to Fremont. If he had stayed with GM for, I think, 36 months, he wouldn't have had to mention the expense of moving all his household equipment, plus two cars.

He wouldn't have had to mention that, but he didn't stay. He didn't stay 36 months. He left and came to the intern program at Fairhaven, and it came time for him to go and fill out his income tax.

He went to one of the big companies, and he told them about this, and they said, forget it. The government has no way of knowing. He said, I can't forget it.

I'm a Christian. They said, look, be reasonable. The government would never know about this money, what it costs you to move down it.

He said, I'm sorry, I can't forget it. He said, I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a very hard decision to make, because that year at the intern program, he didn't have any income, and yet he was responsible for a very hefty income tax.

But, you know, God honors those who honor him. God provided for him, and he and his family are serving the Lord down in Mexico today. His name is Tom Peasland.

These are examples of practical righteousness. Compare them with this professing Christian, who, when challenged by another Christian concerning his ethical practices, said, look, you're talking about Sunday. This is Wednesday.

In other words, his Christianity was confined to one day of the week, Sunday, but he could do anything he wanted on the other days of the week. Look, you're talking about Sunday. This is Wednesday.

Selflessness, another attribute of the Lord Jesus, another excellency of the Lord Jesus that we are to imitate. He lived for others. That's what Philippians 2 is really all about.

Others is the key word in that chapter. If you put that key in the door, the whole chapter opens up. He puts the interests of others above his own.

He let other people trample him, and God highly exalts him. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Selfishness was absolutely foreign to his nature.

Isn't that wonderful? I think it's great. Selfish. Here's a man, and there's not a selfish thing in his whole life.

He loved his neighbors more than he loved himself, and I tell you, it's beautiful to find this feature in his people. My experience in going through life and observing people is that the happiest Christians are the Christians who are always thinking of others. Those are the Christians that really don't have to be rushing off to the psychiatrist and the psychologist all the time.

Now, there are exceptions to anything I say like that, but I find that to be true. It was the spiritual prosperity of Philemon that filled Paul with joy. Epaphroditus was sick.

He was sad. He wasn't sad because he was sick. He was sad because the Christians had heard he was sick.

Most of us, if we were like, if we were Epaphroditus, would have given our friends a lengthy organ recital, but he wasn't about to do that. You know, I know a Christian lady in Colorado Springs. She was driving.

She was in the car going to the meeting on Sunday morning. Her son was driving, and a man came from a side street. He didn't stop, and he plowed into the side of the car, and she was rushed off to the hospital.

She was put under anesthetics, and she was operated on, and her first words when she came out of the anesthetics were, Who's taking care of the visitors today? I tell you, that makes me think of Jesus, doesn't it? That makes me think of Jesus. She was always the one to take the visitors home and show them hospitality on the Lord's day. That was the first thought that she had when she came out of the, when she regained consciousness.

She was always thinking of others, and still is. I remember when I was a boy, H. A. Ironside used to come and have gospel meetings. We'd have a pitch tent, and one of the songs in his hymn book that he used was, Live for others while on earth you live.

Give for others what you have to give. Flowers do not hoard their sweet perfume, nor withhold the glory of their bloom. Live for others while here you dwell.

Live for others the good news tell. If your life is wasted, great will be your shame. Live for others in Jesus' name.

Others should really be one of the great mottos of our lives. Others, Lord, yes others. Let this my motto be, help me to live for others that I may live like thee.

Selflessness. Don't you love to see these virtues in the life of the Lord Jesus? That perfect life lived here below. Consistency.

The Lord Jesus was consistent. When I think of that, I think of the small flower of the grain offering in the Old Testament. Only of the Lord Jesus can it be said that his life perfectly matched his word.

We can't say that. The preacher can't say that. We have to say the message is greater than the messenger, and it always is.

With us there's a difference between our person and our personality. My person is what I am. My personality is what I want you to think I am.

With the Lord Jesus there was no such chasm. His person and his personality perfectly matched. When the Jews said to him, who are you anyway? He said, exactly what I've been saying to you from the beginning.

Absolutely consistent in all his ways. Sooner or later we have to confess that it is not so with us. It's good when it can be said of us, as was said of William Arnett.

His preaching was good. His writing was better. His life was best of all.

That's quite a tribute, isn't it? And John Nelson Darby said of Robert Chapman, he lives what I preach. He lives what I preach. Consistency, single-mindedness, single-mindedness.

The Savior was single-minded. He refused to be diverted from his primary mission. He set his face as a flint to go to Jerusalem.

Nothing would sway him from that pathway. Hear him as he said, my food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work. Another occasion he said, I must do the work of him that sent me while it is day.

The night comes when no man can work. And I often think of him on his way to Jerusalem, that final trip to Jerusalem, and he's way out ahead. The apostles, the disciples are following as if their feet were led.

The Lord Jesus is way out ahead of them, striding on that faithful faithful trip. He's leading the way while his disciples follow with reluctant feet. The apostle Paul was single-minded.

He said, this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Count Zinzendorf was single-minded. He said, I have one passion.

It is Christ and Christ alone. Watch out for single-minded people. They are the ones who make history for God.

They really are. What is the passion of your life? What is the single most driving influence in your life? Be careful. Class.

Class. This is a word that I don't think I've ever heard used of the Lord Jesus until recently. But I want to tell you, the Lord Jesus had class.

You say, what do you mean by class? Well, I mean culture. I mean charm. I mean polytess.

I mean style. He had style to him. He was a man of nobility and dignity.

John MacArthur said in a classic understatement, sometimes I think that Jesus had more class than some of his followers. What did he mean by that? Well, I'm afraid he was referring to how some of us can be insensitive to people, how we can be rude, how we can be crude, how we can say hurtful things. He said, sometimes I think that the Lord Jesus had more class than some of his followers.

Well, he could have said it again and it would still be true. President Reagan was a man who had class. He was asked to speak as a dedication of the Carter Presidential Library.

And Reagan thanked the former president, President Carter, for gracing the White House with his passion and intellect and commitment. That was nice, wasn't it? For gracing. They were different political parties, of course.

He thanked him for gracing the White House with his passion and intellect and commitment. And, you know, afterwards the reporters all rushed up to him and reminded him that that very morning President Carter had lambasted President Reagan for being so slow on arms control. They said to him, what do you think about that, President Reagan? He said, I wasn't watching TV this morning.

I'm telling you, friend, that's class. That's class. And later on, President Carter said that he understood more clearly than ever why Reagan won the election in 1980 and he lost.

And that's not to put down President Carter either because he himself was a man of grace, I think, and nobility. But he said, now I understand more clearly than ever why Mr. Reagan won the presidency in 1980 and I lost. On the 100th anniversary of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's birth, Reagan invited the Roosevelt family, those who were left of the White House, and they were very hesitant about coming because they were afraid that Reagan was trying to undo the New Deal that Franklin Roosevelt had inaugurated.

But, you know, such was Reagan's charm when the Roosevelt's were there at the White House that they flooded the press office for pictures of themselves with Reagan. The Lord Jesus had that kind of charm. He really did, and he wants us to have it too.

Contrast this with a foreign ruler who was at the White House when President Carter was there, and in the evening he asked this ruler if he would like to come up with him to little Amy's bedroom and say good night to her. And the foreign ruler said no. Not very much class there, was there? Not very much charm there.

Certain people have charm or presence. A man named Cornelius Plantinga Jr. said that it's not that they have been to charm school. They have probably not endured the courses on be likable and make friends.

And then he says in parenthesis, you can tell those people by their memorized phrases, sickly smiles, and instant chumminess. No, a genuinely charming person will have her own dignity and personal reserve, but the center of her interest is outside herself. That's worth thinking about.

A charming person, the center of her interest is outside herself. She has a highly developed awareness of you. Her attention stays fastened to what you say.

Her focus centers itself on what is worthy and interesting in you. She has the ability to make you feel special. I have a friend in Chicago in the printing business, and when you meet that dear brother, you get the distinct impression that that's the greatest thing that's happened to him all day, is meeting you.

That's charm. That's class. That's culture.

That's refinement. And courtesy is a half-cousin of charm. And the Lord Jesus was courteous.

He was never rude. He was never crude. There was no place where he was out of place.

He had a perfect sense of propriety, and no word or action of his ever caused him embarrassment. He was always the perfect gentleman. And this is a characteristic that we can emulate.

It's really hard for people to resist a courteous person. The gracious action, the appropriate word, wins fans for the one we represent. A speaker once was giving an illustration, and he looked down into his audience, and he saw a man there who would be hurt by this illustration.

And right in the middle of it, he stopped and never finished the illustration. Just left it hanging in the air. And somebody said to him after this, why did you do that? Why did you stop? You never finished.

We don't know what you were going to say. And he said, better to spoil a good story than hurt a good man. That's courtesy, isn't it? Better to spoil a good story than to hurt a good man.

Freedom from covetousness. Our Lord Jesus knew what that was. Freedom from covetousness.

He had no love. The Lord Jesus had no love for the things that men want most. You know what they are? Money, sexual conquest, and power.

He had no love for money. It's interesting to me that when the Spirit of God pens the life of the only perfect life ever lived here on earth, he pens the life of a person who's never recorded as having money on his person. Wow.

I don't think any man would have ever written a story that way, do you? Any mere man. And when the Lord Jesus needed a coin, he told Peter to go and fish a fish out of the Sea of Galilee, and there'd be a coin in its mouth. Of course, it's blasphemous even to suggest that he had any regard for spiritual conquest.

He had power, but not the power as the world thinks of it. He had the power not to retaliate when he was wronged. It was spiritual power.

It was moral power that could strike back, but that refused to strike back. No wonder the people couldn't understand Jesus, and they couldn't. His own brothers thought he was beside himself when they came once to take him away.

His life was so extraordinary, and you wonder what Mary ever thought raising a child like that. It must have been wonderful. Covetousness.

I don't like to use my example, but it's humorous. I went into Arby's one day, not so much for the sandwich, but for the Jamocha. And when I got, I paid the girl, and I was walking away, and she said, she said, oh sir, she said, I forgot to give you your sweet steak ticket.

And I looked back at her, I said, no thanks, I've got all the money I want. And she said, you do? I don't think she ever met anybody before that had all the money he wanted. So I got my Jamocha and left.

You know, even in Christian work, you can be covetous too. Even in Christian work. It's very easy.

I don't know, maybe there are some young fellows today that aspire to be in Christian work. Tell you what, I think Chuck Smith told a graduating class at Columbia Bible College years ago, or at the seminary, maybe. He said, don't touch the money.

Don't touch the women. Don't touch the glory. One of the best commencement addresses I ever heard of.

He said it all. Don't touch the money. Don't touch the women.

Don't touch the glory. It's terribly easy in the work of the Lord, to be a full-time worker in the work of the Lord, and just to want to be on the receiving end all the time. This has happened before.

Is it a bear? I was preaching here one year, and a bear with her cub. I was preaching away, and I was lost in my subject, but nobody was listening. And people's eyes were sparkling.

I could see their eyes sparkling as they looked up here. And then Fred Greenlaw said, Phil, that was an important point you were making, but would you please stop until the bear and her cub go up the path? And after that, I became famous as a man. Oh, the tapes went all over the world to the missionaries.

And they said, oh, I know you. You're the man. You were preaching when the bear and her cub.

No word about what I was saying. But I just want to say that in the work of the Lord, it's easy for people to develop the attitude to be on the receiving end, but Jesus said it's more blessed to give than to receive. And the Christian ministry is a ministry of giving.

Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. And I'm running over right now. So we're just going to close in prayer.

Father, once again, we just delight to think of the Lord Jesus and the marvelous things that characterize his life, thoughts of his sojourn. In this veil of tears, the tale of love unfolded in those years of sinless suffering and patient grace, we love again and yet again to trace. We give you thanks for him and pray with all of our hearts, Lord, make us more like the Lord Jesus.

Make us so much like him that people will want to come to him because of our lives, as well as because of what we say. We ask it in his worthy name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11879.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/yosemite-bible-conference-1996-03-more-like-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net