

His Life or Ours?

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the radical transformation and new identity believers receive in Christ, urging them to live out this new life through the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 26:57

Scripture: John 15:4, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Exchanged Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of vital truths in Christianity. He explains that vital truths are like vital organs, essential for the Christian faith. The preacher discusses the various factors that influence human behavior, such as genetics, surroundings, and peer pressure. He then highlights the shocking reality that even with intelligence and religion, people failed to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. The sermon concludes with a plea for believers to abide in Jesus and allow Him to live through them, giving all glory to Him.

Transcript

Talk about vital truth? How vital is this? Every Sunday, I get up here like a guy who's always trying to improve on his last introduction, but this is maybe the bottom of all the truths of what Christianity is. Remember, the goal here is not to go through books of the Bible and that expository style, but to talk about the 20, 30, 40, 50. In other words, if you had X number of times to stand in front of people who were Christians, what do they need to know? Absolutely vital, like the heart and the brain and the lungs are.

Nah, a finger you could lose and still live, but you can't live without vital organs. These are vital truths. That's what I've been trying to do and it's been good for me.

It's made me look at preaching in a different way. I've been sharing that with other pastors. How could a sermon be about anything but vital truth come to think of it? So there's been studies forever.

Men have tried to figure out why do people behave the way they do? What's the source of why people act the way they act? There's many different approaches to it. Let's just look at three. One is genetics, that a person is the product of the genes that they inherited through the DNA of their parents.

And thus, just like you get maybe the color of your eyes or if twins are in your family and you get married and now you could have twins, it was genetic. It was in the family. That certainly seems to also go through

possibly into behavior patterns.

Some people believe, no, that's, you know, it's passed down from one generation to another. Other people have put their confidence in psychology, that through the traumas and experiences that we've had, there's an effect on our minds, our psyche, so that we're wounded, we're twisted, we're bent. We have a predisposition towards certain things as defense mechanisms, so on and so forth.

Complexes form and now we become captive or the product of psychological factors that have to be ironed out through therapy. But then again, the therapists, you know, show 95% failure. After you pay a lot of money and sit and talk with people, the statistics are not very encouraging.

Then other people look at it from a sociological point of view. The reason you act the way we act and that we do the things we do is because of the surroundings that we've experienced growing up, so that, and peer pressure, and school, and so on and so forth, so that we have a herd instinct and we wanna fit in with people, so we act in a way that we know will be acceptable to the people around us because we're all looking for affirmation. And then, of course, all the combination of those three, and I am not an expert in any of those three.

But then there's the Christian teaching, which is absolutely, when you get to the bottom of it, rather shocking because we learn things like this. John chapter one, look. He was in the world, Jesus was, and though the world was made through him, Jesus, the logos, the word, the world, this earth, and its people did not recognize him.

Imagine, everybody with their intelligence, everyone with their religion, everybody with their IQs, they didn't even know the Son of God was standing in front of them. That's noteworthy. He came to that which was his own, his own people, the Jews, or his own humanity, but his own did not receive him.

Yet to all who did receive him, what does receive him mean? To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of a natural descent nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. So the Bible tells us that when a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, turns away, repents of their old self-centered ways, confesses their sin, which is defined in the Bible, and turns from that and puts their faith in Jesus, God's answer, God's Messiah, God's Savior, they just don't become religious, they don't just join a church, they just don't try to live a better life, they just don't have a new goal, read the Word and live a good life. No, no, no, no, no, that's not what God intended.

Those things have value. No, it's much more radical than that. God offers them salvation, which includes birth, supernatural birth, into a new family, with a new father.

That's why Jesus said to Nicodemus, you must be born again or, in the margin, born from above. You must be born totally again, your natural birth, and what it produced is totally, absolutely insufficient as God's blessing for you. You will be born again and now have a new father and a new identity.

Your father will give you identity, provision, oh, taste and see that the Lord is good, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. You will have a new family, a new father, a new life, a new being. Obviously, Jim Cymbala is the product of a Polish mother and a Ukrainian father and was raised and inherited genes, has psychological factors.

I'm the son of an alcoholic who, for 22, 23 years, devastated himself and the family and my mother and me, never made it to my wedding, so now I have all of that psychological stuff, but now God says, no, I'm taking you out of that family. You're still in that family, but I'm putting you in a new family. You have a new life, a new identity, and a new family.

You're not to identify with Jim Cymbala, the son of Estelle and Nick Cymbala. You're not to identify with them, primarily. You have a new identity now.

You are a child of the living God. You are a son and a daughter of the living God. Come on, let's say amen to that.

That's Christianity. That's Christianity. 101.

Now, the Lord says that when we believe, we're receiving, so salvation and becoming a Christian is a matter of receiving, so I give her my Bible. She has to take it. I could offer it all day long.

She has to take it. She has to believe that that's a Bible. He wants me to have it.

She reaches out her hand. You just saw that, and she takes it, and that's how we enter into God's family. What's involved in that? So she has now forgiveness of her sins.

She has her name written in the Lamb's book of life. She has the promise of eternal life. When she dies, she ain't gonna die.

She's gonna live forever. Her soul is gonna be with Christ forever, amen? If this is that salvation. Ah, but the question now comes, what if you don't receive everything he offers? What if you receive just what you understand, 50%, 40%, 60%? So you say, yeah, I wanna go to heaven.

Vanessa wants to go to heaven. Vanessa knows she's conscious of her sin, and she wants mercy and pardon, so she receives that, but what if there's much more in it that Vanessa doesn't receive because she doesn't get it? She can't believe in it because she doesn't get it, and that's what the Bible is really about. As the epistles are written, Paul and others are trying to expand for us all that is involved when you become a Christian and a child of God.

You know, we throw that around. What do we call each other? You know, brother, sister, and all of that. Why do we say that? Because we have a common father.

God is our father. You're not my biological sister or brother. You're not in my biological family, but the family that God put us in has no end.

We're gonna be brothers and sisters for all eternity. We might not be with our biological siblings, but we're gonna be with us all together. How many are planning to spend eternity with your brothers and sisters, right? But that identity itself doesn't get into all Christians.

Many of them don't recognize and appreciate their brothers and sisters spiritually. They're more tied to their biological ones, even though they act contrary and are negative and pull themselves away from you and all of that, and we're supposed to obviously love our families and all of that, but you get what I'm saying. The love that the early church had was a manifestation of this thing of we're family now.

Why? Because we're the children of God, because we've been born again. But now the question comes, if I'm in a new family, who am I? I can't be Jim Cymbala alone because Jim Cymbala is part of that other family. So what is my source of life supposed to be? My old family or my new family? I got life, biological life from my parents, but through sin and the fall of mankind, we are all limited, cursed, if you wanna say, with a self-seeking Jim Cymbala nature, and we know from the Bible that God will not work with that nature.

God will not improve Jim Cymbala. Jim Cymbala is so depraved, so out of it, so twisted, so bent, so self-seeking, that God, when he saves us, does not say, now look, now that you're saved, I'm gonna work on you, like a psychiatrist would. I'm gonna work on you, I'm gonna get those wrinkles out and those dents out because obviously you're messed up, and now I gotta work on you.

No, God never says that. He will never work with Jim Cymbala. My flesh, who I am, essentially, who you are, he says, no, I bypass that.

I'm not working on you. You're no renovation project for me. No, I will give you, I'll change you, but by not working with you, I'll give you a new life.

I'll give you a new heart. Isn't that the promise of the new covenant? In that day, God says, I will put a new spirit within them and I'll give them a new heart. Why? Because Jim Cymbala cannot be changed.

He cannot be changed. He can make promises till the cows come home. He can try to reform himself.

You can work with him, counsel me, and all of that. All I can do is revert back to who I am, and it ain't nice. So now, we are staggered by the potential of this passage.

Look at it. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here.

You know the other translation of it. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation, or King James, a new creature. But creature has a bad connotation now.

As in Frankenstein and Dracula. So he's a new creation, that has come. The old, what old has gone? The new has come.

What new, what old? In God, Jim Cymbala is gone. The new has come. Don't live anymore out of Jim Cymbala, because I'm not working with him.

He can never be like Christ. He will never please me. He will never fulfill my will.

So I will put my own spirit, I will give you life. Isn't that Jesus Christ, who is our life? What does that mean? Jesus Christ, who is our life. So my sister can live out of herself, with all the dents that she has, and twisted strands of whatever.

Or she can bypass herself and say, Jesus, live through me. You are my true life. You are my life.

I will never be patient, but you are patient. I will never be pure, but you are pure. I will never control this temper.

So I'm not gonna work with my temper, because I've tried to cure my temper 30 times. I'll never, I'll always be selfish. I'll always think of myself.

So now, oh now I see. God not only promised forgiveness and pardon, he not only promised us help, he promised us the whole thing. He said, I will be your life.

I will live through you. Through the Holy Spirit living inside of you, who is the spirit of Christ. If you learn to, what does the Bible say? Walk by the spirit, and you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

The flesh will never change. I'm not working with it. But if you're controlled by the spirit, you'll be that new creation, living out that new creation that I plan for you to be.

And aren't most of us trying to hammer out and work on the old man? In 98% of Christianity, certainly when I grew up, everybody was working, trying to be better. Oh God, work this dent out. And then you'd meet someone.

No, I gotta go back. What happened to you when you were 11 years old? No, what happened when you were five years old? No, Vanessa, you had pain in your life. That guy hurt you, and all of that, and you're scarred.

But if you work with me for about six, nine months. But that's the old Vanessa. The new Vanessa is Christ.

Christ has no dents. Christ has no complexes. Is this the best Christianity has? You're a mess, and if I work with you for 20 years, I'll kind of get you in shape.

Is that what God promised us? Or did God promise something so radical that we're afraid to believe it? And we're afraid to live it out on a daily basis by saying no flesh, no Jim Cymbala, you are not in charge today. Christ is my life. He will live through me.

He will create desires. He will give me that patience. He'll stir me up to wanna read the word because in myself, I don't wanna read the word.

The natural man doesn't receive spiritual things. No, Spirit of God, live through me. Break every chain.

It's not gonna happen by someone laying their hand on your head. It's gonna be coming by Christ who lives in you, living out his life. So it's, listen, people will see us and say, yo, what is that? It is not me.

That's Christ. You say, no, that's too radical. Oh, is it that radical? Last verse, I have been crucified with Christ, and I, wait, wait, wait.

Did he die? Did his biological life die? Then how can he say, inspired by the Holy Spirit, I no longer live? I don't live anymore. The old Paul, the old Saul of Tarsus, who persecuted Christians, that old twisted guy, I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life that I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So brothers and sisters, as I close, isn't it true that a lot of us were just reaching out and probably receiving just a portion of what God planned for us? Because we've grown up with the understanding he forgave my sins, he lives inside of me, and now I'm gonna try my best to live a good life. I mean, isn't that Christianity? I'm gonna read the Word, and if I see those wrinkles, I can't get them out. You know those besetting sins? I just can't get them out.

So I'm gonna try harder. But the minute you promise, the minute you make a vow, you're doomed because now you're relying on who you used to be to try to change. Isn't there anybody here in the building who's like me? You've kind of given up on yourself because you realize the more you try, the worse it gets.

Is there anybody who found that out in their own life? Amen. And why would he promise us life if he didn't want us to rely on that life? Is life just live with him forever and ever, or is it right here and now? So what are you saying, pastor, as you close here? What am I saying is that I confess, and I wanna suggest to you, I confess personally, that God has much more for me and for you than we ever dreamed. Amen.

And we are probably approaching a lot of things with a skewed view of what Christianity is really about. It's not about what day you worship. It's not about how often you take communion.

It's about life. He that has the son has, and that to most of us just means, oh, one day in the by and by, I'm gonna live forever. Doesn't say that.

Says right now. How many believe as Christians right now Christ is living inside of you through the Holy Spirit? Lift your hand high, okay. Why would he be living there? Why would he be living there? I'm not talking malperfection.

I'm not talking about, oh, now as Christians, we'll never make mistakes. You see, I'm always naturally gonna revert to Jim Cymbala. That's the way it is with all of us.

How many have found that? Say amen. Amen. But God says, I wanna teach you that you stop living your life and you let me live through you.

Not by trying, but by trusting. Not by struggling, but by resting. And I wanna give you one sentence that I want you to say with me today.

When you find yourself in your Jim Cymbala mode, but put your name to it. And you know, no, this is not what God's intention was. I see myself here.

I'm struggling now with myself. Okay, Christ, you are my life. I want you to live through me.

Create desires, give me your thoughts. Of course God would do that. Whatever life you have inside of you controls you.

Whatever you yield to is gonna control you. It's either gonna be Christ or it's gonna be Jim Cymbala. I kind of have two people inside of me.

How many found you have two inside of you? Lift your hand if you know what I'm talking about. There's that one that aspires to be like Christ and love God, and there's that other ornery little critter. Am I correct or not? Here's a sentence you can say.

I've been saying it for the last few days. Say it out loud if you can, I'm gonna teach it to you. Jesus Christ, I belong to you.

You are my life. I feel myself getting rattled and angry. That's not Christ.

He doesn't get rattled and he doesn't get angry. Jesus Christ, you, I belong to you. You are my life.

But you gotta say it from your heart. This is not a thing you just say like a mantra that you just say and something magical happens. But if you wanna shift right now into the new man, the new one created in Christ Jesus, you can just stop.

If you have to say it 100 times a day, but from your heart. And of course, this is all strengthened by prayer and spending time in the word. Jesus Christ, I belong to you.

Say that. Jesus Christ, I belong to you. Say it from your heart and louder.

Jesus Christ, I belong to you. Jim Simbala belongs to you. I am not my own.

You purchased me. You paid with blood. So I belong to you.

Satan, flesh, world, let everybody know. I belong to Jesus Christ. Oh, Jim Simbala, get lost.

I belong to Jesus Christ. I don't belong to you anymore, no. I used to belong to you.

Now I belong to Christ. You are my life, Lord. You're my only hope.

You're the only one who can make me behave the right way. You are my life. I'm sick and tired of trying to improve who I am because it's a hopeless case.

Can a leopard change his spots? Say it again, repeat it after me. Jesus Christ, I belong to you. You are my life.

You are my life. If you're here today and you're just very tired of trying to change who you are, and now God has opened your eyes, the eyes of your heart, and you see that his plan for you is not a better you. His plan for you is Christ.

Christ's everything. Savior, Lord, life, hope. He's your peace.

He's your power. He's everything. God's final word to all of us on every question is Jesus, his son.

If you wanna just re-consecrate yourself and say, God, I just don't wanna receive partial salvation, forgiveness of sin, I know I've been born again, but I want everything you have for me. I want this new life, the Christ life flowing through me. There's a lot I have to learn about it, but I know you'll teach me.

But I just now submit to you because I'm tired. I'm tired of always feeling like I gotta try harder to be what he wants me to be. I'll never be what he wants me to be.

He will be what he wants me to be. Just stand wherever you're sitting. I would make an altar call, but we would all come.

We all need this word, do we not? Lord, we thank you for your word today and your promise. This salvation is way bigger than we thought. We thought it was forgiveness of sin, going to heaven one day, everything canceled up in heaven, justification by faith through God's grace.

Oh, it goes way deeper than that. You're our father now, God. We have your life in us through Jesus, through the spirit.

And you want Jesus to live through us so the world can see what he's like, not what I'm like, not fixed up Jim Cymbala, no, what, who Jesus is. Now, Lord, I've said in an outline form, but the intricacies of this, you have to teach us. How to yield day by day to Christ who lives in us.

No wonder Paul said, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Christ living through me makes me do all things. I can do everything God wants and asks of me, not through me, through Christ.

We say goodbye now to complexes and fears and prejudices and anger and resentment and scar tissue. That's all Jim Cymbala or whoever we are, but that's not the new person we are in Christ. No, no, no, in Jesus there's none of that, none of that.

We bypass it, we bypass all that. We go right to Christ. He is my peace, he is my love, he is my joy, he is my everything, I have nothing.

Lord, did you not say in your word without me you can do nothing? Maybe they didn't understand it, help us to understand it. Just abide in me as the vine branch abides in the vine. Just drink in my strength, my spirit, let it flow through you moment by moment and let it be me living through you.

So that I can get all the glory. No glory to Jim Cymbala, in a way he's never changed. He was hopeless, is hopeless, will always be hopeless.

Ah, but Jesus could live through him. And then the world might see how awesome you are. Help those of us who are struggling today with all kinds of stuff that we know is not of you.

Teach us how to walk so that if we sense these things coming up, rising up in us, we'll just stop and say, Lord Jesus, I belong to you. You are my life. I yield to you right now so that we can transfer from the flesh, Jim Cymbala, into Jesus.

Because Lord, we know it's worked out just that way on a daily, hourly basis. Everybody repeat after me. Lord Jesus, I belong to you.

You are my life. Lord Jesus, I belong to you. You are my life.

Even louder, Lord Jesus, I belong to you. You are my life. So from now in my life, flow through me.

It'll be my body, my voice, but let it be you. Guide me with your thoughts. Give me your desires.

For I belong to you and you are my life. Do the same for my brothers and sisters as we hug each other and love each other. Make us a blessing to someone through Christ.

And everybody said. Amen. You may now all stand.

Say hello to someone, greet someone, give someone a hug. Come on, everybody.

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