

Death to Self

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's presence in our lives, highlighting the need for spiritual union with Christ and true repentance.

Duration: 1:25:55

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:7-11, Joshua 1:2-3, Isaiah 60:1, Philipians 2:9-11

Topics: "Self-Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of remembering and reminding ourselves of the truth that sets us free. He encourages everyone to take copies of the sermon transcript and the annual general report to constantly remind themselves. The speaker also highlights the significance of God's covenant and glory displayed through the rainbow, symbolizing that all God needs is a few raindrops to showcase His splendor. He further emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit within believers, who will flow like rivers of living water from their innermost being. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God cares for His people and that they can experience divine consistency and productivity every moment of every day.

Transcript

The pulpit, they bring the pulpit to the preacher. I certainly would like to take this opportunity of saying how deeply I've appreciated, too, the renewed opportunity of being with you here at Thanksgiving, and I speak, I know, for my wife. Also, we always enjoy this visit each year.

Wish it could be more often. I haven't had the opportunity of introducing you to my latest mule. Just two or three weeks ago, we were in a church in which the pastor was a mule of mine 20 years ago.

A mule, as you know, is a cross between a donkey and a horse. Most of them as stupid as a god for the mules that he's given me all down the year. They kick every now and again.

They've got rather long ears, but that's why I carry a stick. So, you'll have bumped some of you already into Joel Vermillion, who came last night. He went home to be with his mother and his older brother for Thanksgiving, and so Joel is back on the job, between the shafts, with a bit in his mouth.

Sometimes it's a big bit, but I don't know where he is right now. He's probably hiding somewhere. Are you here, Joel? All right, stand up.

Have a look at him. I wanted you to look at him because he's smarter than he looks. I always introduce the mules in the same way.

I tell the folks I met them in a home for the and he's not deaf. Draw your own conclusion. I want to thank Charlie McCall, director, and others on staff, Tim and Doug Lanier, and those who labor so faithfully in the office and produce much of the paperwork and do much of the the cooks, who have fed us so magnificently, and lots of others.

Maintenance. I can't name them all because I shall certainly forget some, but these are the folks who, behind the scene, keep the wheels turning. And it isn't the place, it's the one who lives here, within the humanity of those who've made themselves available to him.

Not least, are we always thankful to Johnny Merchant, who had the vision of purchasing this property, and who, from her incorporation, have made this property available to ours, so that over these many, many years, we have been part of her vision, bringing young folks here so that they might be introduced to the living, risen, and indwelling Savior. So thank you, Johnny, too. And we trust that it'll be a source of great joy in your heart to see young folks blessed in this way.

I thought it'd be useful, maybe, just to enumerate again, spell it out loud and clear. What is the main thrust of Torchberry? Truth is as timeless as God himself. It never changes.

It may be forgotten, neglected, perverted, opposed, rejected, counterfeited, or displaced, but it never changes. It is not an emphasis, a concept, a party line, nor merely an option. It is an imperative.

God created man in such a way, the presence of God as creator within a man as creature is imperative to his humanity. Man in normality is to be distinguished from the animal kingdom by a quality of life and behavior that can have no possible explanation apart from God himself in the man. This fact is truth.

It is not subject to debate nor dialogue. It is not an option to be offered. It is a fact to be proclaimed.

Truth does not evolve over the years any more than God evolves or Christ evolved. In assuming our humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ as creator chose to play the role of creature. As the God who made man, he chose to be the kind of man that he as God had made.

In declaring that he as man without the Father could do nothing, Christ demonstrated the truth that has always been true, that we as men can do nothing without him, that the Father as God then was as indispensable to Christ as man as Christ as God now is indispensable to us as men. To recognize this and to practice the principle is the nature of true repentance, and without true repentance there can be no true faith, for true repentance compels us to be totally dependent upon Christ as he was totally dependent upon the Father. Christ then can do the work in us as the Father then did the work in him, and we let all God loose in the world.

Not then just the sky, but God himself is the limit. This gives an entirely new dimension to our understanding of the gospel and the remedial measures it proclaims, not just that in the redemptive act Christ died for us, but that in the regenerative purpose of God Christ rose again from the dead to live his life in us. Thus by apostolic proclamation, if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, your faith is also vain yet in your sins.

The resurrection is at the very heart of the gospel through which we are born again. Any departure from this truth is a corruption of the mind and has its origin in the subtlety of Satan. It is a departure from the simplicity which is in Christ and constitutes neo-evangelical humanism.

We are the time to come when by mutual consent the members of the fellowship were to depart from this which is the true substance of our faith, then God would have written over the Torchbearer Fellowship as over so much else of what purports to be Christendom the word Ishabod. The glory has departed. New birth is a divine conception.

A man takes a woman to wife so that his life imparted to her may be reproduced in and through her. We too have been espoused to one husband, Christ, married to another, even to him who is risen from the dead, so that his life imparted to us by the Holy Spirit at new birth may be reproduced in and through us to raise up the foundations of many generations, abiding fruit to his eternal praise and not only to abide but to reproduce. The Lord Jesus Christ established the fact that our spiritual union with him as he was in spiritual union with the Father is the true and ultimate basis of all evangelism, missions, and church planting.

The world will know and the world will believe, said the Lord Jesus, that the Father has sent me when they are in us as I am in thee, Father, and I am in them as thou art in me. That is the truth that sets men free. That's the main thrust.

And I asked the office to make copies enough for everybody, and in particular, all students will take a copy and remind themselves of it constantly, because we need to be reminded about 30 seconds, every 30 seconds, because we're prone to forget to remember. So these will be on the piano too, and there are still a few copies of the annual general report which covers the world operation of torch bearing on the five continents of the earth and for which we cannot but be thankful to God. But as I have sought to remind those who will become recipients of this, it'll come to some of you maybe afresh through the mail, if you're on our mailing list.

Nothing is of any ultimate validity unless it becomes demonstrably obvious that God did it. That is why the Lord Jesus, in assuming our humanity, although himself the Creator, constantly affirmed throughout his life on earth, without my Father, I can do nothing. How foolish then on our part to consider ourselves so smart that we can do so much without Christ our Creator.

And it is my sincere concern therefore in presenting this annual report for 1993 that God may have preserved us throughout the past 12 months from so great a folly. For of him, through him, and to him are all things to whom alone be glory. Please pick up the annual report if you haven't already done so and please pick up the main thrust and keep in orbit.

Keep on target. Have you found the rainbow? The rainbow? That which displayed God's glory and God's covenant, his sign to a lost world, that all he needs is a few raindrops to take like God himself, the purest of all things, and display his splendor. Just a few raindrops.

Have you found the rainbow? Where God made a pledge that though man had earned nothing but God's just judgment, there was mercy that shone through judgment, grace, reflected in the clouds. The law came by Moses. That condemns us.

Grace and truth, liberating truth, emancipating truth came by Jesus Christ. When God said the biggest thing he ever had to say in the word, who was with God, was God, and by whom all things were made, was born at Bethlehem a little baby boy. All the God's people had been waiting for all down the centuries.

The great Messiah was going to come to create a God incarnate. And when he arrived, there was no Cadillac, there was no Hyacinth, there wasn't even room. So he ended up in a stable and a little baby in a manger.

And you might have said then, is that the best that God can do? Well, that was God's divine economy. But it was a little baby boy, conceded the Holy Ghost, who was prepared to give God the Father in him as man a place for his feet. And God says, I'll make the place of my feet glorious.

And John could not but acclaim, we beheld his glory. Paul the apostle could not but acclaim, I saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And the Father God in heaven could say, at last, I've got a real man again.

A man who at last is prepared to let God once more be God in the man. That was the covenant. I'll put enmity, said God, to the devil between you and a woman, between her seed and your seed.

That seed of that woman, a little baby to be born in Bethlehem will bruise your head. He'll destroy you. In the process, you'll bruise his heel.

He will be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Whereby, I will highly exalt him and give him a name which is above every name, that one day at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, without exception, and confess that Jesus Christ, the man, is Lord. Found the rainbow? Got the message? Are you perpetuating in your humanity the main thrust? Well, I indicated last evening that we'd turn back to that verse in the 60th chapter of Isaiah.

We won't turn to the passage itself, but seek from God's word to discover what it means to give God in your heart a place for his feet. So, turn to Deuteronomy in chapter 11. And I'm not going to do all the preaching this morning, because I've brought a few friends with me.

I'm just going to give the introduction, and then I'll let them pick up the message. Deuteronomy in chapter 11, verse 10, The land, said Moses, preaching in the wilderness, the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence you came out where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot as a garden of herbs. But the land whither you go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God careth for.

The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. And here, Moses is contrasting that from which they've come with that for which they were destined to go. Egypt, sold into slavery, as you and I are born, dead, sold under sin, dominated by that satanic origin, called the flesh, that can only abuse, prostitute our humanity, and make us the nasty caricatures that we are of what God intended when he made us in his own image, in his own perfect likeness, to advertise deity.

He said the land you're going to isn't like the land from which you've come. He said there, in that colorless, waterless, lifeless waste, the desert, where you were slaves, the only thing colorful was what you pumped up with your own foot by the sweat of your own brow, God said you would, when Adam fell. Thou waterest it with thy foot as a garden of herbs.

Luther translates that as a cabbage patch. He said you've been brought out of a cabbage patch, but the only thing colorful was what you pumped up with your own sweat. Well, what were they doing in the wilderness? Pumping it up, for what little water there was.

They were doing no more in the wilderness than had been done in Egypt. But all that period of time, 40 miserable years in the wilderness, for a journey that should have taken them, Deuteronomy chapter 1, verse 2, 11 days. All during that period of time, 40 years, Moses was preaching about Canaan, which as you know, never, ever, ever, ever, ever in the Bible speaks of heaven.

Only, always, and exclusively of that quality of life that derives only from the presence of the creator within the creature. Normality. Normality.

Hebrews in chapter 3 tells us that they grieved God for 40 years in the wilderness. Is that normality? If Canaan is heaven, and you don't enjoy it until you get there, it means you have permission to grieve God for all the days you're here on earth, because you haven't got there yet. That was never God's intention.

He said to Moses, bring them out and take them in. An assignment that he failed to complete, because he only did half a job. It isn't that he didn't know it all in his head.

See how he describes that for which they'd been redeemed. That quality of life that should have derived from their redemption when God brought them through the Red Sea. That rock that was smitten.

Jesus and him crucified. The land whither you go to possess it, said he, is a land of hills and valleys. Infinite variety.

Not the colorless waste of a desert, where you look in every single direction or all directions, and you see nothing but a vast expanse of desert. He said the land you're going to is quite different from that. It's a land of hills and valleys.

Every new bend in the road will introduce you to some new and glorious vista. Life will be filled with the excitement of infinite variety. Not only that, it's a land that drinks water of the rain of heaven.

It's a land where you no longer pump it up with the sweat of your brow. God sends it down. So, there's a restful productivity.

It isn't that nothing will grow. Things will grow because God gives it what it takes to grow. It comes from above and you don't pump it up from beneath.

In other words, it will no longer be carnal sweat where you do your best for Jesus. It'll be divine unction, where at last you make yourself available for God to do his best in and through you. Not only that, by virtue of the fact that that land is full of infinite variety, restful productivity, it's characterized by a heavenly consistency.

It doesn't fluctuate. It's a river that goes flowing. It doesn't flow when you push it.

Nor can it ever remain the same shape because you can't push a river and you can't keep a river the same shape without freezing it. But if you want to keep the river the same shape and freeze it, you haven't got a river. It doesn't move.

It's a block of ice. And you can't change its direction without digging a new channel and that isn't what God does. That's man-made.

That's a canal that Jesus said out from within your innermost being will flow rivers that you can't push, nor channelize, nor retain in its same shape. Out from within your innermost being will flow rivers of living water. And this he spake of God the Holy Spirit, who each who believe on him and obey the gospel receive, that he might in them become the one who motivates what you do and say in awe, with infinite variety, restful productivity, and divine consistency.

Well, that sounded enticing. A land which the Lord thy God, verse 12, careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year, twelve months in the year.

You don't have to long, you know, for the next Thanksgiving conference. You don't have to, you know, wait with bated breath for the new exciting experience that you're going to get every moment of every day in divine consistency. God cares for it.

No matter what the human circumstance may be, that has become now totally irrelevant. The land whither you go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys, drinketh water, the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God cares for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it always from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

Therefore, says Moses, and he constantly exhorts them to keep this in mind, verse 18, therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul. Teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest down in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, when thou lies down, when thou risest up. Write them upon the doorposts of thine house and upon thy gates.

Let everybody know you know the truth. Verse 21, that your days may be multiplied. And not only you, the days of your children.

In the land which the Lord swear unto your fathers, as we have reminded already this morning, the land which the Lord swear unto your fathers to give. It's not a land that you can earn, it's certainly not a land that you can deserve, it's not a land into which you can be educated, it's a land that God gives you. And you can only get it from him by taking and saying, thank you.

And says Moses, I'll tell you what it'll be like. End of verse 21, as the days of heaven upon the earth. That quality of life for which you've been destined as a redeemed people is like heaven on the way to heaven.

And that, of course, is where Canaan is to be enjoyed. Look at the next chapter, chapter 12 and verse 1. These are the statutes and judgments which you shall observe to do in the land. It's something that you do in the land.

You just don't lie on your back with glazed eyes looking into space. It's something you're going to do, but it's going to have its origin in a divine activity. These are the statutes and judgments which you shall observe to do in the land which the Lord God of your fathers gives you to possess it all the days that you live upon the earth.

That's where you're going to enjoy this land. All the days that you're on earth, it's going to be heaven on the way to heaven, and that quality of life that you've learned to enjoy on earth will continue to be the

quality of life that you'll enjoy forever in heaven. And that's why I reminded you the other day that when you get there, you won't even know you've arrived.

Once you've discovered the rainbow and you've entered into the covenant of a little baby boy to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, born at Bethlehem to live a sinless life to his father's total satisfaction, accomplish the redemptive transaction, rise again from the dead and come re-inhabit your humanity, re-invade your soul. Then you'll be a Christian. Say, could you fault Moses and all that he had to say about the land? He preached this year after year, year in, year out, year in, year out for 40 miserable years in the wilderness.

Anything wrong with what he had to say? Uh-uh. But having proclaimed the truth, he told them what God had in prospect for them by that divine intervention on the threshold of the Red Sea where God opened the waters and brought them through miraculously. Where did Moses, the preacher, spend the rest of his life? Where did he spend the rest of his life? In the wilderness.

So he had the truth in his head. What was wrong? He hadn't given a place in his heart for God's feet. It's tragic when you've got the truth in your head, but God has no place for his feet in your heart.

Where did Moses die? In the wilderness. Why? Die of old age? Cancer? Arthritis? Heart attack? Uh-uh. God buried him where he chose to live.

Isn't that sad? He preached the truth for 40 years and God finally buried him in the place where he and they chose to live. Because as Charlie, Charles Price, has been reminding you, truth doesn't make you spiritual any more than experience makes you spiritual. Only a person, given the place he deserves, with the right to place his feet in your heart and reach the throne.

Behold, remember Ezekiel 43, the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, but I can't get to the throne until I've got a place for my feet. What was the problem? Well, Moses even explains that. Look at it still in the 12th chapter of the book of Deuteronomy.

In that land that God gives you, for which you were destined when you were redeemed and brought out of slavery, verse 7, there said he, you will eat before the Lord your God. You will rejoice in all that you put your hand unto, not only you but your household, your kids, your family will be as excited as you are, your staff will be as excited as you are. There you will eat before the Lord your God to the full.

You shall rejoice in all that you put your hand unto and your households wherein the Lord thy God has blessed. You'll know that God did it. Your kids as excited as you are, your mums and dads about the Lord Jesus.

Is it demonstrably obvious when they look at you and the circumstance in which you've rid them that God did it? Verse 8, you shall not do after all the things that we do here this day and which Moses kept on doing until God buried him. Every man whatsoever is right. That's what we're doing here.

Every man is doing what is right. What's wrong with doing what's right? Who's doing it? Every man what is right in his own eyes. In other words, you're looking in the wrong direction.

And if the mirror that can only reflect the image of the object which must in itself be as the object, the origin of the image, if you're looking the wrong direction, the mirror will reflect nothing of what God is doing. Now, years ago Moses learned that because he looked this way, that way when he thought he could bring his

people 40 years too soon out of Egypt, which God intended through him to do 40 years later. But he forgot to remember.

He said everybody here is doing what's right in their own eyes. In other words, there was one person whom they didn't consult because they didn't think it was necessary. They got what it took.

They got it all wrapped up, organized, analyzed, doing what's right in your own eyes. Do you know what will happen if you're a redeemed sinner who's got out of Egypt, you're on the way to Canaan, to that quality of life that derives from the presence of a risen Savior dwelling within your heart, destined for heaven, and you do what's right in your own eyes? God will bury you where you chose to live. You'll get to heaven, but you'll never visit Canaan on the way to heaven.

And the tragedy of the evangelical church today is that countless are on the way to heaven but will never taste Canaan on the way. God will bury them where they chose to live, in the wilderness. But everything that Moses said was true.

Everything that Moses said was right. Verse 24 of the 11th chapter. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours.

He said if you're ever to enter into the good of this, you've got to put your feet where you say your faith is. But until then, it'll be a beautiful doctrine, a hypothetical proposition, grounded in scripture, totally evangelically conservative. But you'll never taste a grape, nor drink of the milk and honey with which the land will flow, nor the old corn of the land.

And you'll die where you chose to live. This is the enthusiastic, dedicated, committed Christian who's biblical to the fingertips, who's got the truth in the head but never gave Christ a place in their hearts for his feet. Where they're still busy, busy, busy, and committed, doing what's right in their own eyes.

Without recognizing the simplicity of God's plan in creating a man who could only be functional by virtue of the presence of the creator within the creature, who was never to echo like a parrot what God said, nor mimic like an ape what God did. But by virtue of that mutual inter-availability, a relationship from within between the creature and the creator, lets God be God in action, which is righteousness. So as you've already been reminded this morning, God reassigned the assignment.

Let's turn to that first chapter of the book of Joshua. We're not going to stay there long because we've already visited that. You see, Charles and I are two members of the same body, we're subject to the same head, and he's got two mouths with which here, this week, to say the same thing.

So inevitably we keep crisscrossing, except that his mouth's bigger than mine. Or he might say, my mouth's bigger than his. And neither of us could care less, so long clumsy as we may be in what we have to say, we give him the right to be the one who speaks.

After the death of Moses, two of the saddest verses in the whole Bible, recognizing what a giant of a man Moses really was, whom God honored far beyond he'll ever honor you or me. And yet he failed because he forgot to remember the main thrust. After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, and servant indeed he was, incredible for his integrity in shoveling that bunch of human beings through the wilderness, but never got them to their destination.

God knows how much he tried, even though he failed. But he failed in the final analysis because he forgot to remember. After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses, my servant is dead.

I buried him. Because he was the last hindrance between my people and that place for which they were redeemed. Look at the last verse of the preceding book, Deuteronomy chapter 34 and verse 7. Moses was 120 years old when he died.

In what condition did he die? His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. In other words, he was in the best of health. But God buried him.

Because, he says, you've failed to honor me. You've smitten the rock twice that should only and could ever be smitten only once. Look that up for yourself in Numbers chapter 20.

And for this reason, because you believe me not, you're going to die as an unbeliever, a believing unbeliever, who had enough faith to get out but didn't have enough faith to get in. I'm going to bury you. Numbers chapter 20.

Don't turn to it. It's homework. Keep you out of mischief when you get back home.

He's dead. I buried him. Now, verse 2 of Joshua chapter 1. Therefore, go.

As you've been told a million times, when you see in the Bible wherefore, say wherefore the wherefore. What's the wherefore therefore? And what's the therefore wherefore? And get yourself thoroughly confused. When you see therefore, say wherefore the therefore.

What's the therefore therefore? Moses, my servant, is dead. Therefore. That's why.

I've removed the last hindrance between my people and that land for which they have been redeemed. Because all he could do was tell them the truth, but never gave me the right to get them where he said they were due to go. Therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel, and every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that I have given you.

So what does it mean for a person to have their foot in a certain place, occupied territory, entering into their inheritance, receiving what has been given and they deserve on the basis of grace, but no other basis. Occupied territory, entering into their possessions. What did it mean for the Lord Jesus to have in your heart that place for his feet that gives him his inheritance? Occupied territory.

Where you say, Lord Jesus I'm prepared to give you my mind to think with, my emotions to react with, my will to decide with, as you for 33 years as man made yourself mutually available to your father as he was mutually available to you in the fullness of God the Holy Ghost. I'm prepared now to be as available to you to occupy that territory which is yours as you were prepared at all times to allow the father to occupy that territory in you as perfect man which was rightfully his. Occupied territory.

You occupied territory. There's a very simple acid test as to whether or not you're occupied territory. Because when you embark upon this glorious adventure of letting God be God, there are certain things you still have to learn as Joshua did.

Because there was a hangover, you see, from the wilderness. Look at chapter 4 and the 22nd verse. He reminds these people whom he has now led out of the wilderness into that land for which they were redeemed, the assignment that Moses failed to accomplish.

He said to them in verse 22 of the fourth chapter, you shall let your children know saying Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. But please don't let them get the idea that I did it any more than when they got out of Egypt through the Red Sea. God, Moses did it.

Moses did it then only at God's command, but God did it. I led you out over Jordan, but God did it. Now, it was the Lord your God, verse 23, that dried up the waters of Jordan from before you until you were passed over as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea.

It was God that dried up the Red Sea. It was God that dried up Jordan, which he, God, dried up from before us until we were gone over. That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty.

Not Moses was mighty, not Joshua was mighty, God mighty. God did it. That you might fear the Lord, your God, forever.

Now, Joshua might have added, it's perfectly true that when Moses preached again and again, I listened. And I have to confess much of what he said went way over my head. I hadn't a clue what he was talking about.

But I had a deep conviction that was rooted in my heart that the God who brought us out is the same mighty God who could take us in. I let him do it. That's all I had to learn.

Whatever I did or didn't understand about what Moses was blathering about in the wilderness, he never translated into action, but somehow deep in my heart, I knew the God who brought us out was the God who could get us in. All I had to do was let him. And he did it.

It's the only reason why you're here right now. Simple, isn't it? You don't have to know too much. It may well be that during the course of this week, you're saying a whole bunch of what that man said went over my head.

Well, it doesn't matter. Maybe I'll bump back sometime and hit the target. But it doesn't really matter so long as you are fully persuaded that the Christ who redeemed you is the one who, having reconciled you to a holy God, is the one who rose again from the dead to come by his indwelling Holy Spirit, reinstate your humanity and do what you never ever could have done or ever will.

A clever theologian who at the age of 19 became the director of a theological college, invited by Martin Luther to be his foremost advisor, in whom he placed total confidence. He was given every kind of promotion within the ecclesiastical hierarchy of his day at the time of the Reformation. Dr. Johannes Bugenhagen.

Sounds impressive. But he didn't try to be impressive. Smart as he was, and smart he was, the way he put it was this.

Wenn du Jesus wirklich kennst, if you really know Jesus himself, what you don't know, it doesn't matter. Then he went on to say, wenn du nicht Jesus wirklich kennst, if you don't really know Jesus personally for

yourself, alles was du weißt, everything you know, ist nichts, nothing. Very smart.

That's why he was so smart. If you really know Christ personally, somebody, whatever you don't know, it doesn't matter. But if you don't know the Lord Jesus personally, for who he is, what you do know is worth nothing.

Well, Joshua found that out. Much of what Moses has said may have gone over my head, but I grasped the main thrust. Something penetrated.

Something filtered out of what he was saying. God has given us the land, and if God has given us the land, all I've got to do is take it. That's my theology.

And then all I have to do is say, thank you. But on his terms, a place in my heart for his feet so that he can reach the throne. Well, that's what he had to continue to learn and be reminded of all the time in which he was used by God to bless God's people.

And in which course of time, as you have been reminded, the end of the book of Joshua, all recognized, God did it, God did it, God did it, God did it. He communicated the main thrust. Look at the next chapter, 5. It came to pass, verse 13, having led them through Jordan, when Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword in his hand.

For this was going to be the main obstacle in their onward march to enter into the good of what God had given. Occupied territory. There was a stumbling block.

There was a problem in the way. And so Joshua, still having to learn the principle, God alone can do it. On his terms, a place for his feet in a man's heart that gives him access to the throne.

He went to make an evaluation of the situation. He wondered how he could marshal his forces, mobilize what means he had got to overcome the problem. He saw a man with a sword in his hand.

And Joshua went to him and said, art thou for us, or for our adversaries? Whose side do you want? Whose side do you want? And said, the man with the sword in his hand, I'm neither on your side, nor am I on their side. I didn't come to take sides. I came to take over.

Nay, said he, verse 14, as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come? And Joshua, recognizing in whose presence he was, fell on his face to the earth and did worship him. What saith my Lord to his servant? I want you to know there's a place in my heart for your feet so that you can reach the throne. And Joshua discovered that it was the God who got them in was the same God who got them out.

That must be the God who at all times must have the final right to exercise his total jurisdiction. That for him now, in this new quality of living, there were no issues to face, no decisions to make, only instructions to obey. Occupied territory.

And no matter what you have heard, maybe this week or at any other time, if that that you've heard hasn't brought you to that place where you're prepared to say to him, what saith my Lord unto his servant? Then he missed it. The captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. In other words, you're in the presence of God.

And I'm not asking you to shoulder the responsibility except to do as you're told. I'll take care of the rest. And Joshua found the rainbow, and the sun shone through the clouds, and he realized all he needed to be

was a raindrop through whom God could display his glory and his splendor.

Well, that's what it means for the Lord Jesus to have a place for his feet in your heart. When you're prepared simply to be the raindrop in which will be displayed the splendor of the God who is light, so that all cannot but confess, God did it. And there's nobody to be congratulated but God himself.

That's the main thrust. But remember, there's no sunrise to shine through the clouds without sunset. When a man gets down on his face, worships him and says, I can't, you never said I could, but you can, and always said you would.

Well, that's where I'm going to quit preaching and let my friends do the rest. In the time that we have available. Here are my friends.

It's much cheaper to bring them this way. Saves the fare. I'm going to read you a few letters.

Something I've learned to do because I find that these folks who speak from that new experience of rediscovering Jesus, finding the rainbow, they put it more eloquently than ever I could. Some of these letters I've read before because they're as valid today as they were then. But this primarily concerns the staff.

Most of you haven't been here. This is a letter I got in March 1991. Dear Major Thomas, nine years ago I attended Bodenseehof Winter Bible School.

That's one of our two centers in Germany in Friedrichshafen, south of the Black Forest on Lake Constance with Switzerland the other side. Gerald and I will be there in two or three weeks. That year more than any other year changed my life.

When I arrived at Bodenseehof, I was tired of Christianity. When I arrived, I knew that Christianity was true, and I knew that I needed to be a follower of Jesus Christ. But I'd been trying my hardest to live the Christian life for four years and was getting nowhere.

Needless to say, I was surprised to hear that instead of me trying to do something, only one man in history has ever done, Jesus, I needed to allow that same man to live his life through me. My first reaction was surprise. How come? No one told me that before.

How come? No one told me that before. Well, how come? Isn't it in the Bible? Doesn't this ring true from the moment God created man, not to be an ape nor a parrot, but to be the human vehicle of a divine activity? How come? What's gone wrong? Afterwards, I realized many others also did not know, and then a desire to learn more about it and tell others. Some of you know him.

He wrote this before you got to know him. His name is Dan Runcke. That's why I suggested he came here on staff this past summer and suggested it to Charlie or asked him to get in touch with Charlie McCaw.

I'm happy to tell you now he's on staff and I'll see him on Monday in Sweden. Do you know what he's doing there? Telling others. Because he doesn't want the students there in Sweden, years to come, after struggling and failing, to say, how come? Nobody ever told me.

He took his bachelor's degree in St. Paul, a Christian college in Minneapolis, and then he took his master's degree. Before he went, I talked to him on the phone. He said, the one thing I learned in those four years earning my master's degree was that that isn't the way to know God.

There's only one thing that qualifies him, not that he's got a bachelor of arts or a master's degree in theology. The only one thing that qualifies him to be in Sweden right now at my invitation is that he found the rainbow. That's all.

The covenant. That a little baby would be born, not just at Bethlehem, but in his heart, by divine conception of the Holy Ghost, whereby that Lord Jesus, the man, might clothe himself with those who are individual members of that new body God gave that man on earth, the church. Pretty eloquent.

Said it much quicker than I could say it, to your relief. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Most of all, thank you to our Lord Jesus Christ, for how he has used you and other members of the Torchbearer family to correct my Christian walk, my walk with our Lord.

In fact, since God showed me the reality of my Lord Jesus Christ living in me, I really became a new creation. I gave my life to Christ 14 years ago. Four years ago, I started walking with our Lord.

In other words, there were 10 years of latency, latency, redeemed jest. If you'd said, are you saved? He'd say, of course I am. But that was all.

He'd mean by that, I'm going to heaven. I'm not going to hell. Jesus died in my place.

I gave my life to Christ 14 years ago. Four years ago, I started walking with our Lord, but only a little more than a year ago. This I received in 1990.

Three years ago. So, a little more than four years ago from today. Only a little more than a year ago, I can say with Paul, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has gone and the new has come. This verse has become wonderfully true in my life. Remember you told me the story about the car which someone filled with petrol, gas, and after he had done this, he stepped outside the car and started to push it himself, pushing a car with a full tank.

This story applied exactly to my life. 14 years ago, when I was born again, I got a brand new car, but I was more or less content just sitting in this car for about 10 years, enjoying the comfort of a nice brand new car. You're still sitting in the car? Four years ago, I realized it needed gas, but after I'd filled the tank, I started pushing it myself, pushing a car with a full tank.

Spent his time going to seminars and special meetings to learn how to push. That's what the vast majority of Christians do today. They read this book, listen to that preacher, go to this seminar, attend that in, come to Bible school, torch bearer Bible school, learn how to push a car with a full tank.

Only over a year ago, I found out that I need only to step in, turn the key, and enjoy the ride. After I talked with you at Townhof one and a half years ago, I knew there is something missing in my Christian life, but I had no idea what it is or how I could change it. But I found the answer in 1 Thessalonians 5, 16 to 18.

I learned to say, thank you in all circumstances. 1 Corinthians 5, rejoice in the Lord, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks. In everything, in everything give thanks.

This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. It isn't a suggestion. It isn't an option.

This is the will of God in Christ Jesus. Quench not the spirit, because the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, has come to indwell your human spirit, so that you may be credited by his presence with the life of your

risen Lord, as by the same Holy Spirit Christ as man was credited with the life of his Father. So in everything give thanks, because somebody lives within you who, no matter what the circumstance, can never ever be less than big enough.

So you have only one possible intelligent alternative. Bow yourself out, bow him in and say, thanks, I can't, you never said I could, you can, always said you would, that's all I need to know, and you're in business. I learned to pray always, to chat with our Lord and learn to be joyful.

Since I know exactly that I myself would never be able to do even one of these things mentioned above, I know now that my Lord Jesus Christ is alive in me. I cannot express in words of how thankful I am to God and to you as his mediator, that he showed through you this truth to a wretch like me. I'll never be able to understand why God chose me to tell this truth to my brothers and sisters now in the ministry at Townhove.

I will never understand it. I can only say thank you and let him do what he wants to do with my life. After skiing, rock climbing, cave exploring, he's a professional, had his own business for nine years taking folks up the mountains that he knew like the back of his hand, God now gives me a challenge which is far more exciting than any of this, to preach Christ.

This is my new joy and my challenge. Hans Peter Royer, God was preparing him from the day that he got into the car at the age of 14, led to Christ by Gernot Kunstlmann, who later was killed in a paragliding accident, and now Peter Royer is the director at Townhove, and he couldn't be in better hands. Do you know why? After pushing the car with a full tank, even when he realized it needed gas, he found the rainbow, entered into the good of the covenant.

The little baby boy had been born in him to be clothed with his manhood. When I met you this past July, I was a miserable young man, frustrated, desperate. In fact, I can remember the first day I left your room at Northwestern College, you said as I left, keep rejoicing.

Of course, we're to rejoice always. Rejoice? I had absolutely nothing to rejoice about. I walked out the door, outwardly composed, inwardly crushed.

Can't seem telling somebody that miserable to rejoice. Second day we were together, when I took you out to my parents' place to have dinner, things were no different. I can remember you explaining the main thrust message that you gave at the director's conference last June.

This was 1986, because nothing's changed, because he doesn't change. Explaining the main thrust message that you gave at the director's conference last June, well, that just added to my frustration, along with other parts of our conversation, in which you spoke of Christ's indwelling life. It frustrated me greatly, because I could have said the same thing.

I felt like I could have written you a book. I'd studied those truths. I could recite those truths.

I'd preached those truths. In other words, I'd learned to be a parrot, and everything I echoed was right. I had become so consumed with and proud of the truths of Christ's saving life, that I was a living denial of the truth of Christ's saving life.

What a pathetic condition it is to know the truth of Christ's life expositionally, and at the same time to deny the truth of Christ's life experientially. As you may or may not remember, I exposed my frustration to you

as I left you at Northwestern. I was embarrassed, in one sense, to expose my barrenness to you, and what was really the first time I'd spent any significant amount of time with you, and yet I had to be honest with you.

I felt like a hypocrite. We prayed together, and I left. Major, for the first time in a long time, I started to act on what I had studied and discovered, in theory, even years earlier.

Truth in my head. But I'd never learned what it means to give Christ a place in my heart, His feet. I began to act.

How do you think I began to act? It's ridiculously simple. By thanking Him. That what was true positionally would be made true by Him experientially in me.

I walked out of your room that night just as emotionally drained and physically tired as before, but I started thanking Him. That what I knew in my head, He would now make real in my life. Very simply, I began receiving.

Not because of my feelings or a vision from heaven, but because He said it. In the coming days, I continued thanking Him for all that He is in me. The more I thanked, the more I received.

The more I received, the more I rejoiced. The more I rejoiced, the more I thanked. And I found Him to be hilariously true.

I wanted to call you at Hume Lake in August. A big Christian camp there in California that Charles is going to visit this coming summer, and I've been several times. I wanted to call you there and tell you about all that was happening, but I would have fused the wires.

And then I thought, all He'll say with a chuckle in His voice and a leap of joy in His heart is, of course, of course, He said it. Besides, He says, I'd be a fool to occupy my time recounting He's done, lest I should cease being occupied with who He is. Well, Peter was on staff for eight years at Baudin's Aho.

Now he's on staff at Caponry Harbor, Thetis Island. And God has given him, not only as before he left Germany, a ministry right across that country. Today, He's given him a ministry right across Canada.

Do you know why? The only qualification that makes him equal to the job in Thetis Island, He found the rainbow. He got back to the beginning. That's all.

First base, or rather home base. What God had in mind when He created man, that He sent His Son to restore a relationship. 1991, it's been approximately seven months since I heard you speak in Oklahoma City.

I've preached for 25 years, pastored for 10, but never knew the excitement I've known in the past seven months. Thank you for sharing the fact that Christ is alive. I knew that in my mind, but somehow had not appropriated in my life.

In other words, it was in my head, true. But I hadn't acted on the assumption that was true and given Him the right to place the soles of His feet in my heart, so that He, the only one who has the right to reign, could find the throne where He belongs. As you presented the gospel, it became so clear.

I'd never been able before to grasp the meaning and purpose of the Christian life. Can you imagine being a preacher for 25 years and a pastor for 10, and never before having grasped the meaning of the Christian life? He didn't learn new doctrine or methodology or technique. He simply rediscovered Jesus, who is the only person who gives meaning to the Christian life for the simple reason He is the Christian life.

Now I have peace. I don't have to worry about trying to serve Him, but rest. Allow Him to be in me the origin of His own image, in me the source of His own activity, in me the dynamic of His own demands, and at last, in me the cause of His own effect.

Thank you for your ministry. That's why just a few weeks ago, my wife and I were in Chandler, Oklahoma, where he's the associate pastor, and had a week of meetings, so that others might there discover the rainbow in the sky. Thank you for your most helpful letters.

I've used and reused your statement from your letter dated November 25, 1989. He quotes, the secret of appropriating Christ's life is to thank Him for who He is in us, in every situation, as once we learn to thank Him for what He did for us. In other words, he discovered what Joshua discovered, the God who gets us out is the God who gets us in.

He discovered what Paul means when he writes Colossians 2 verse 6, as you have received Christ, He is the Lord, so walk in Him. As you took and said thank you for every step you take, now recognize that what He did was to make it possible for Him in you to be in the eternal present tense of the verb to be, and say thank you. Is that how you're living a Christian life? You see, the Lord Jesus was a perpetual thanksgiving.

He didn't wait for a certain day of the week to be thankful. Five thousand to feed? Thank you, Father. A man four days dead and stinking? Thank you, Father.

On the threshold of the cross, breaking the bread, passing the cup? Thank you, Father. Every day in his life was thanksgiving, because he said without my Father I can do nothing. So I have only one logical thing to do.

Only one possibility. Expose every new situation as I walk, thy faith to the one who alone can, for without my Father I can do nothing. The Father who lives in me, He does the work.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, Father. Thank you, Father.

Thank you, Father. And stand back and see not what I'm doing for my Father, but what my Father is doing, God by me. So that now it may be on the grounds of redemption and that spiritual new birth as I'm born in you, it may be I by you.

And there'll be only one person to be congratulated. I've been a minister since 1964. 29 years.

Frankly, that statement has been the key to open a whole new way of approaching life and ministry. 29 years a minister before he discovered the rainbow. It's been there the whole time.

He was looking in the wrong direction. In the past I memorized passages like Galatians 2.20, I'm crucified with Christ. I read books like Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret.

I did want to realize the reality of Galatians 2.20. I agreed with what the books I read said, yet somehow I kept missing the practical application in every event I face in life. Thanking Him for who He is in me in every situation has opened a whole new way to live. Wonderful when a man stops existing and begins to

live.

Well, I'm nearly through. These folks speak more eloquently than ever I could. On September the 2nd of this year, I totally recommitted my life to Christ.

Prior to that date, I was hopelessly lost in a life of sin. I was brought up as a pastor's son in a wonderful Christian home. Both my mother and father truly loved God and exhibited Christ and His character in all I've ever seen them say or do.

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior at a very young age, was baptized at the age of 15. As a preacher's kid, I was very involved in the church right through my teenage years. This practice continued into my early 20s.

I was married at the age of 20 to a wonderful Christian woman who was also a preacher's kid. It was also at this time that I embarked on what developed into a very successful career in the automobile industry, primarily as a sales and management training consultant. As a Christian, I had never grasped the wonderful truth of allowing Christ to live in me, as opposed to trying in all my weakness to live for Him.

As it turns out, I found myself becoming a complete failure as a Christian in the world of business. This, of course, made me a completely vulnerable target for Satan and all of his incredible deceptions. I'll spare you the gruesome details for now, but believe me, it didn't take him long to take advantage of me in my defeated state.

I will simply tell you that as a result of this, I deteriorated to the point of completely disbelieving in the very existence of God and with all certainty lived the kind of life to prove it. This, as you can well imagine, had devastating effects on my life. But praise God, in His infinite mercy, He opened my eyes, revealed Himself anew and has made and continues to make miraculous changes in my life, just as He promised.

A couple of days after my renewed commitment to Christ, my father gave me a copy of your book, *The Saving Life of Christ*. I honestly don't know how to describe the impact this book has had and continues to have on me as a baby in Christ, simply to discover that Christ not only gave Himself for us, rose again to give Himself to us. Just a couple of weeks ago, while reading some of your chapters again for the fifth or sixth time, I literally broke down and wept as I considered how different my life could have been had I known these truths 10 years ago.

How come nobody ever told me? Not even my dad, a preacher. 10 years I've broken their heart. Why didn't they tell me that there's only one person who can live a Christian life? Jesus.

Even now, as I prayerfully prepare this letter to you, my emotions are stirred. Say, how does it happen when people go to evangelical Bible-leaving colleges or even a torchbearer Bible school? How come? How come that I didn't discover there's only one person ever in all human history who lived the Christian life from the day that Adam fell? Jesus. And He's the one who's waiting to live that life right now in me.

How come? How come that you can come here as a student to His hill and go away as you came, as some of you will? Because some of you won't be prepared to receive what we're saying to you. You won't. I know it.

I'm no fool. I'm not a novice. Because you'll tuck a lot of these things away in your head, but there'll come no time in your life when you're prepared to give Jesus the place that He deserves, a place for His feet in

your heart.

Because it's going to spoil your agenda. You've already made up your mind who you're going to marry, what your vocation is going to be, you see, and that's your agenda. And it may be that the Lord Jesus, if He took a place in your heart for His feet to reach the throne, He might mess it all up.

So I'll have it in my head and I'll teach it, just as Moses did. But the bottom line will be when my days are done, God buried me where I chose to live, in the wilderness. I first became acquainted with your ministry in July 1975, 18 years ago, as I was visiting my brother in law and language school at the Rio Grande Bible Institute in Edinburg, Texas.

I was not ready to receive the truth of the imparted life of Jesus. I was not ready. Do you know why he wasn't ready? He didn't need it.

It was superfluous. Do you know why he didn't need it and it was superfluous? Just a mythological fantasy? Well, he said, I was on my way to the mission field of Brazil. And I had plenty of ideas and energy of my own, of how I would do mission work.

So why would I need all this stuff about Christ living in me, the only one who can do it? And he gives the final answer to that question, why he would still need Jesus. He said, I was 23. I mean, what other explanation do you need more than that? What doesn't a young man of 23 who's been to Bible college trained to be a missionary on his way to the field? What further explanation do you need in the fact he's 23? He's got it made.

My soul winning efforts during college were fairly successful. I figured to carry it through on the field with no bigger hindrance than just learning a new language. Apart from learning that new language, I was the finished article.

And God should have been profoundly thankful to have somebody like me on earth to keep him in business. I praise God that in his love and mercy, he saw the desire of my heart. He didn't trash me.

I desired my heart really to love him, but I had incomplete knowledge. I didn't realize at the age of 23, I was abysmally ignorant of the only thing that matters, that it takes God to be a man. That's why it takes Christ to be a missionary, because Christ in the man puts God back into the missionary.

I had incomplete knowledge. I was trained and left abysmally ignorant of what mattered. I was trained to go and burn out for God.

And that is just exactly what I did. Let me say we struggled through three terms. That normally is about four years a term, 12 years on the mission of him.

We struggled through three terms before God brought me to the point to realize that he wanted to be the fire in my life. In other words, he wasn't waiting for me to burn out, because any old bush will do when God's in the bush, and that fire never burns out. Until God brought me to the point to realize he wanted to be the fire in my life, so I yielded to his indwelling presence, and accepted finally, humiliated what I had despised so many years before.

As Israel in the wilderness despised the land, I allowed him to be God in my life, to minister to sinners and to saints. It was a slow, painful, agonizing death to self. But I rejoice in him today for the glorious freedom

of allowing Christ himself to be my substitute in all that I do and say.

Isn't it sad that a man trained for the mission field has to endure an agonizing death to self for 12 years on the mission field, before at last he finds the rainbow? What he should have been taught not even just in Bible school, but at his parents' feet as a little boy receiving Jesus. Not just to get him out of hell and into heaven, but to get God out of heaven into him. How is it with you? Do you think being at Bible school here, or even attending conference, is going to equip you for the Christian life? It won't.

There you've got a whole bunch of notes in a loaded notebook. There you've got your head packed with all the truth, as Moses had then. God has to wait till he's dead before he can get on with the job, buried where he chose to live.

Have you made your choice where you're going to live? Have you exercised your option? When you exercise the option, it's only the beginning of a new journey, but a new quality of life in which you will need to be reminded, as Joshua was every 30 seconds, of the principle of life. A man with a sword in his hand, who alone has the right to place his feet in your heart, reach the throne, so that for every step you take, you say, Lord, what do you want to say to yourself? No decision for me to make, no issue for me to face, no problem with which I have to wrestle, only instructions to obey, and let God be God in me. All that I am, Lord Jesus, available to all that you are, because all that you are is available to all that I am.

Can't have more. I see it now. I need never have less.

I've only got to humble myself and admit that I can't, you can, and take what I don't deserve and let you prove it, and you will. And every horizon now beckons me, heavy with blessing, golden with prospect, and every new day that dawns will be as big as God. All I've got to learn to do is what you did then.

In every new situation in which every new step takes me, look into your face as you looked into the face of the Father and say, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. Try it. You'll like it.

Now let's pray.

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