

Faithfulness of God

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness to God and the need to prioritize His way over human approval, highlighting the Christian life as a non-stop performance of deity in action.

Duration: 1:03:24

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Exodus 3:2, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 3:8, Galatians 3:13

Topics: "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his own experience of burning out and being left as a heap of ashes. He then discusses the story of Moses and the burning bush as a lesson in understanding God's presence and power. The speaker emphasizes that it is not the size of the bush that matters, but rather whether God is in it. He also highlights the importance of waiting on God's timing and having audacious expectations. The sermon concludes with a reminder of Moses' discovery and the desire to be like a burning bush that continues to burn for God.

Transcript

Without faith, it's impossible to please Him, because God so engineered man that the presence of the Creator within the creature is indispensable to his humanity. But God has built into you and to me a moral option that makes us morally satisfied. And it's only in the exercise of that option, which is called faith, that lets God do it, that God in faithfulness responds and does it.

That's why the Bible says, many are called and few are chosen. Because faithful is he that calleth he who will also do it. And of the many who are called, so few will let him do it.

And that's why, as Sonny indicated, all that he looks for in you and in me is our availability to his divine ends. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking for the man whose heart is perfect toward him. That he, God, may show himself as God, strong on that man's behalf.

He's on tiptoe, just to demonstrate his deity. All he needs is an outlet. Any boy, any girl, any man, any woman, anywhere, out of any nation, kindred, tribe, or tongue, or race, or creed, or color, of whatever age, who's prepared to let God be God, can live that miraculous life that has no possible explanation, but Christ in the Christian putting God back into the man.

And no matter where you turn in the Bible, it'll underline those simple, basic, first principles, the oracles of God. And that's why God has been pleased to record for us the stories of so many in whose lives the principle was demonstrated. And one of those men was Moses.

In the seventh chapter of the book of Acts, Acts chapter 7, and the 22nd verse, Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds, with all the kudos of being reared as a member of the royal family, with all the education that money could buy, having been endowed by God with a gigantic mental capacity and a very delightful disposition. You might imagine that at the age of 40, he got it made, the world at his feet, but he flunked it. After studying throughout all those years, at the age of 40, he flunked out and didn't graduate until he was 80.

You see, it wasn't that he wasn't smart, he was just looking in the wrong direction, hadn't got his priorities right. And there came a moment of crisis in the life of Moses that had profound consequences for the rest of his life. So I thought just for a few moments we might look at that moment of crisis.

And as you've probably guessed, you'll turn back to the book of Exodus, and in the second chapter, and the 11th verse. It came to pass in those days when Moses was grown that he went out unto his brethren, and he looked on their burdens. And he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

And he was moved with compassion. There was no insincerity in what he embarked upon as he went to rescue, to support that individual. It was out of the genuine desire in his own heart to bring some relief to those of his own kith and kin who were suffering at that time so severely.

But he looked this way and that way. The one way he didn't look was God's way. God saw him, but he didn't see God.

He was looking in the wrong direction. He got his priorities wrong. He wasn't preoccupied at that moment with what God might think.

He was primarily preoccupied with what man might think of approval or disapproval. He looked this way, and he looked that way. And when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hit him in the sand.

And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together, and he said to them that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And the one said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou kill'st the Egyptian? Are you going to murder me too? And Moses feared and said, Surely this thing is known. And he fled for his life. And for forty years, as well you know, he was useless to God or man in the backside of the desert.

That was the moment of crisis. That was to have a profound impact and consequence upon his life for the rest of his days. He flunked it.

And you know, often there comes such a crisis in the life of a genuine Christian who's nobly motivated, not insincere, with a genuine desire to serve God and with a deep compassion for the lost, for their friends, for their family. But they flunk it. But it can be a most significant moment in time, calculated completely to revolutionize your life when it's brought to its ultimate end in a new revelation of God himself.

Peter flunked it. You couldn't say that Peter wasn't sincere. He had a genuine love and affection for the Lord Jesus.

He had left his fisherman trade, left his nets, left his boats and hit the trail and identified himself with the Lord Jesus and his party. He was filled with a considerable amount of verve and enthusiasm. He wanted above everything else to see the movement off the ground.

And he wasn't insincere when the Lord Jesus, having warned his disciples that when the shepherd was smitten, smitten, bit of German, sort of poked in between. When the shepherd was smitten, they like frightened sheep would scatter. He wasn't insincere when he said, well, maybe there might be one or two faint hearts amongst us, but I think you misjudge most of us.

And so far as I'm concerned, if needs be, I'll die for you rather than forsake you. That wasn't just arrogance. He wasn't putting on a sort of mock heroic exhibition.

He really meant what he said. But he flunked it. That's why the Lord Jesus wasn't all that impressed.

Because the Lord Jesus knew then about Peter what he knows about some of you right now. You haven't come to grips with the nature of your problem. You don't know really yet where it is at.

And that's why some of you are flunking it and will. But don't be unduly alarmed because to flunk it by and large for most of us is the only way we can enter into that rich experience of Christ that is calculated completely to revolutionize our life. Said the Lord Jesus before the cock is crowned, you'll have denied me three times and Peter was most indignant.

He was being completely underestimated in the mind of Jesus Christ for his worth. And he protested even the more vehemently that under no circumstance would he forsake the Lord Jesus. He said if there's one person you can count on, Peter is the name.

P-E-T-E-R. Underline it in red. Stick it in your diary.

Here's the telephone number. When you really need me, give me a call. I will be there.

And a slip of a girl came in and said you're one of them. And though within touching distance of the Lord Jesus said he I'm nothing to do with. Three times it happened and then to add color to his betrayal, he added the curses and the oaths that were customary to him as a Galilean fisherman as once he had been.

And the cock crew. And the Lord Jesus turned and looked at him. Never said a word.

Didn't shock him. Precisely what he anticipated. The most wonderful thing that you and I can discover is that you have never ever been a bigger failure than Christ expected you to be.

That's a comfort. A source of immense relief. You see we're always coming to God and apologizing for our stupidity.

As if we weren't stupid. We come to God and say fancy me saying that and God says fancy you saying anything else. You only adopt that attitude because you've never really repented.

You've never come face to face with the reality of your own bankruptcy. And until you've graduated out of despair, the bitterness of self-discovery, you'll never begin to register. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

And that for Peter was the beginning of the beginning. He was beginning at last to recognize the nature of his case. A man who till then neither wanted the cross nor believed in the resurrection.

He flunked it. Seven years ago a pastor of a Southern Baptist church flunked it. It wasn't that he was insincere.

He really loved Jesus Christ. He had an earnest desire to win souls for him and minister to his congregation and lead them on in the Christian life. It was to that end as a young man he completed his formal training, was ordained into the ministry and assumed the pulpit.

It wasn't that he didn't work at it. He did. And with an immense amount of sincerity and hard work.

But he flunked it. That's why seven years ago he quit. And for five years never went to church.

It just wasn't worth the effort. He'd already mustered all his resources and to the best of his ability he'd thrown himself into the task and failed miserably. And out of sheer despair quit.

He flunked it. Fled for his life as Moses did in the backside of the desert. He called me three weeks ago tomorrow when I was in Louisiana.

You see two years ago in Sarasota, Florida. Getting out of his car I supposed to go to some business house or shop. He noticed a small notice sort of stuck on the wall and my face, which in itself was somewhat of a shock, and my name.

Announcing that I was going to have a week of meetings there in an Episcopal church. I was in that Episcopal church three weeks later simply because about two years before that when he quit, one or two folks in that church who were totally unknown to me got hold of some tapes and began to listen to them. And just two, three, four or five of them really got excited.

They were discovering a new dimension in the Christian life. That the Lord Jesus not only died for us, shed his precious blood to reconcile us to a holy God, but that he actually rose again, not just to go to heaven, but in the person of the Holy Spirit to invade the humanity of forgiven sinners and credit them with his resurrection life and provide by his divine indwelling all the divine dynamic that makes the Christian life alone a working proposition. They got excited and they invited a lot of other people from the church to listen to those tapes and none of them were.

For a solid year they just weren't interested. But suddenly something happened. And after their first year of struggling, one after another of that Episcopal church began to listen to the tapes and a whole bunch of them got excited.

And so finally they went to the past of the church. Father somebody or other. Can't remember his name now.

They called him father, so I didn't often hear his name. He wasn't my father. He would have been a very old man.

But he came over with a delegation to St. Petersburg, to south, southern Kesey, and arranged me to go there for three weeks. And I had a whale of a time in that Episcopal church. It was heaps of fun, sort of walking in procession with a big cross all down the front, people bobbing up and down the whole time.

We had a whale of a time. Really great. I love going to places like that.

You've got lots of hungry hearts. Well, he saw this notice. And amazingly, just as he spotted the notice and recognized the name, because when he was still in the ministry, he'd read one of my books.

The wind ripped the notice off the wall and plunked it at his feet. Well, that was a little startling too. So he picked it up.

And out of interest, he just stuck it in the car and then forgot all about it until three weeks later on the Sunday morning, he was packing his golf clubs into the car to go off to the golf course, which he always did on a Sunday. And as he was packing the golf clubs in the car, he saw that notice. And it reminded him that that was the first Sunday I was going to be in that church.

So instead of going to play golf, he came to church. He was there every morning throughout the week and every evening throughout the week. And God did a remarkable thing in his heart.

You see, through flunking it, out of sheer utter despair, in disgust at himself, and point of fact, disgust, in disgust at the Christian life, he was introduced to an entirely new dimension of Christian living because, you see, though he had become a pastor completing all his formal training, he had failed to discover the one thing that makes the Christian life a practical proposition, the fact that Jesus Christ is the only person capable of living the Christian life. That's why he called me three weeks ago to meet tomorrow. And he called from Abbeville in Louisiana, 100 miles from Sulphur, where we were with good friends of yours.

A whole bunch of them have been here through earlier visits to that church. He said, I'm coming tonight to the service with 15 men. He said, you may not remember me, but I met you in Sarasota two years ago.

I'm now pastor of this church in Abbeville. And so he arrived that evening, drove 100 miles, 15 men, all as excited about the Christian life as he was. He was back again the next night with another bunch, and he was back again the next night with another bunch.

He commuted 600 miles that week to come to those three services because he had made a fantastic discovery, the discovery that Moses made. As a result of flunking it at the age of 40, he graduated at the age of 80. You know what happened.

Chased into oblivion, he made the great discovery in that fantastic way, that unique way, and the Holy Spirit loves to reveal truth in his own unique way to capture our attention. And I don't need to major upon the event because you know it well. It's recorded in the third chapter of the Gospel.

He traveled a handful of sheep around the backside of the desert for 40 years, employed by his father-in-law, just his wife's husband, a non-person. The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, it says, verse 2 of chapter 3, out of the midst of a bush. And he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Well, you know the story. And if you've read The Saving Life of Christ, you've seen the spiritual application of it, and probably heard it from other people a thousand times too. Here was a bush that burned, and burned, and burned, and burned, and couldn't help but capture Moses' imagination.

How can that thing go on burning, and burning, and burning, and burning, and burning? He went and gathered up a few sheep that had gone astray, came back, and the thing was still burning. He sat in a cactus bush, and ate his packed lunch, and the thing was still burning. And he said, I wish I could be a bush like that, that burned, and burned, and burned.

Forty years ago, I burned myself out within 24 hours, and I've been a heap of ashes ever since. And then it was, you see, that God spoke to him. And he said, you're not in the presence of a remarkable bush, you're simply in the presence of a mighty God.

And as well you know, the principle that God enunciated there to Moses was very simple. It's not how big the bush is, but whether God is in the thought you were some bush. But you burned yourself out, because you tried to do forty years too soon yourself, what only I could do through you forty years later.

And that was the discovery that he made. Of course, it's spelled out in the New Testament loud and clear. Christ, himself, living in your heart, is your only hope of being restored to that relationship to God that allows him to reveal his character, his plan, his purpose, incarnate, fleshed out in your humanity.

The glory of God, the likeness of God. And remember, the likeness of God isn't a study in still life. It's a movie in sound and color.

It's non-stop performance. When the Lord Jesus was here on earth and provided a complete image of the Father God in heaven, when he said, he that has seen me has seen the Father, he didn't have to have office hours. You didn't have to make an appointment.

He didn't say, do you come round at quarter to three tomorrow afternoon, I'll be in position. You see, the image that the Lord Jesus gave of the Father God on earth was deity in action. God, clothed with his humanity, the Father, in business.

So no matter whether you looked at the Lord Jesus from the right or the left, from above, from beneath, the front or the back, by day or by night, at all times and in any circumstance, no matter where, you only saw a total, complete and absolute expression of deity in terms of his humanity. And of course, that's the Christian life. The Lord Jesus said, as the Father sent me, I'm going to send you.

Just as my flesh and blood being presented by the Father with a humanity just like yours and mine, which I, as the creator God, together with my Father and the Holy Spirit engineered. And I, in this humanity, reveal what my Father is like by everything I do and say and am. So I'm going to send you.

So that having reconciled you through my atoning death upon the cross and established peace again between you, the guilty party, and God, the innocent party, I may come in the person of my Holy Spirit and inhabit your humanity as my Father inhabits now mine. So that others will see me in you as they now see my Father in me. I mean, that's the whole Christian life.

That's the very heart and substance of the good news of the gospel. And that's exciting. And this is, in this beautiful Old Testament picture, what Moses discovered.

And it had profound consequences for him for the rest of his days. Turn to the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, verse 24. By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, I like that expression, when he was grown up, when he was mature, when at last he was adult.

That doesn't mean simply age-wise. Your spirituality in mind, your adulthood, your maturity in mind spiritually has nothing, nothing whatever to do with how old we are age-wise. It simply derives from our personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

You may have a kid of 15, 16, or 17, and I've met them who are infinitely more adult than a man bearing office in a local church at the age of 60. Because that kid has already discovered the secret of the Christian life, what it is that makes a genuine Christian tick. And the other man may simply be playing church.

But you see, Moses, we're told here, had come to years. He had come to years and had become spiritually adult through the bitterness of that discovery he made in the day he flunked it. That a man, apart from God, is nothing, has nothing, and can do nothing, no matter how sincere he may be, and no matter what advantages, humanly speaking, he may have.

Behind him, when he had come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That was the evidence of his spiritual maturity. Because, you see, having come to years, he now had discovered a new authority.

Not that authority that had been his as Pharaoh's son, Pharaoh's daughter's son. You see, as a kid at school, everybody nudged when he came by and said, Pharaoh's daughter's son. When he went to the gas station, you know, fill up the chariot.

Everybody made way, and they said, Pharaoh's daughter's son. You see, he could throw his weight around. He was exercising a borrowed authority that derived simply from his human connotation.

The son of Pharaoh's daughter. But now he had embraced an entirely new relationship to God that he had learned at the burning bush. That it's not your human connotation, it's not how much money you've got in the bank, it's not your family pedigree, it's not whether your face is white, it's not how many degrees you've accumulated at the university.

The only thing that matters is whether you've come to know God for yourself. Whether you've learned that the dynamic of the Christian life is Christ himself indwelling the redeemed sinner in the person of the Holy Spirit in such a way that at last we've recognized his absolute right to be king in his kingdom. He now refuses to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

He's recognized himself, you see, to be the seed of Abraham, a child of promise, an heir of the covenant. And that was a million times more important than being the son of Pharaoh's daughter. You know what it involved? Being a child of the covenant, an heir with Abraham.

Spelled out loud and clear in Galatians in chapter three, and of course it relates to the burning bush. In the Galatian epistle in the third chapter, in the thirteenth verse, and this comprehends that gospel which God preached before unto Abraham, tells you that in the eighth verse. The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before gospel unto Abraham, saying to thee shall all in thee shall all nations be blessed.

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. And this is the gospel, this is the good news that was preached to Abraham. The gospel that we proclaim today is precisely that gospel that was preached to Abraham.

And being preached to Abraham, it was simply a confirmation of that covenant that God first made. When recorded for us in the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of the book of Genesis, God rebukes Satan side by side with the fall of man into sin, when he said I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed, it, the seed of that woman, Jesus, born of Mary, will bruise your head. In

the process you'll bruise his heel, but he through death will destroy you who have the power of death.

Through death he'll kill, death, death. What did God have in mind when he then rebuked Satan and foreshadowed the birth of the seed of the woman, Jesus, to be born of Mary? What did God have in mind when he confirmed that covenant in Abraham? Christ, verse 13, Galatians 3, hath redeemed us from the curse of the Lord, being made a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

To this end, not that you and I might get off the hook, escape hell and go to heaven, just avoid the punitive consequence of our guilt. Just recognize that Jesus did his thing two thousand years ago so that we might be forgiven, and then live it up on earth, keeping God off our back until we get to heaven. That isn't the gospel.

That's the cheap and nasty gospel that by and large today is being promulgated throughout evangelical Christendom in this 20th century, in this poverty-stricken decade, in days of deep spiritual decline. But that isn't the gospel. Jesus Christ doesn't deserve that kind of an insult.

The reason why the Lord Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Lord, being made a curse for us, was, verse 14, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, that as forgiven sinners, cleansed in his blood, accepted in the beloved, accounted, acquitted, we might become the recipients in the person of the Holy Spirit of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ, so that as God was in the bush, Christ might now be in us, lest we burn ourselves out in the futility of self-effort and find ourselves with Moses a heap of ashes for wasted years. That's the content of the gospel. This was the covenant in Abraham, that forgiven sinners should have restored to them that life for which man was created and which was forfeited in Adam, because it's only the life of God in the soul of man that can ever restore the likeness of God in the character of man.

Likeness by every act and word and deed in the totality of your being, 24 hours a day. And you see, now Abraham doesn't need to call himself the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He's entered now, at last, into that spiritual birthright.

He's the seed of Abraham. He's a child of promise. He's an heir of the covenant, and he can exercise now a completely different authority.

This is the authority that you and I alone have the right to exercise, that authority that derives from our submission to Christ's authority, recognizing who he is, God, and where he lives. The moment we claim redemption through the blood of Christ, that he indwells our humanity to be to us now precisely what the Lord Jesus, in the sinlessness of his humanity, was prepared to allow the Father to be to him. You see, human authority normally is exercised only on the base of what a man knows and who he is.

That's why when you're a stranger, folks always in their casual conversation want to find out who you are, or who you think you are, and how much you know, or how much you think you know. Because on the basis of who you are and what you know, they would then evaluate the worth of anything you might say, and how much notice they're going to take of it. If ever there was a man who walked this earth, who had the right to exercise authority on the base of who he was, that man was Jesus Christ.

He just happened to be God who created the universes and threw them into space. He was the one who threw the stars into the far corners of the night. He's the one who at this very moment, while I'm talking to you, upholds all things by the word of his power.

One little tiny flick of his finger and this earth could go up in flames, in a chain reaction of nuclear blasts. He could turn it into the sun and consume it in fire. He's the one you say is your savior.

He's the one you say you're answerable to as a child of God, redeemed in his blood and indwelt by his spirit. That God! And if ever a man walked this earth, who had the right to exercise authority on the base of who he was, it's that God who can throw the planets of this particular group of stars and planets and suns and earths. So that one of our own tiny little satellites can send us pictures back a billion miles.

And he thought it all up and stuck them where they are. And there are billions more of them. And yet when he came into this world as man, the Lord Jesus never ever once exercised that authority, ever.

If ever a man walked this earth, who would have the right to exercise authority on the base of what he knew? That man was Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. Nothing that man has ever discovered. The Lord Jesus did not first think up, but he never exercised that authority.

The Lord Jesus said, the only authority that I exercise is that in my humanity, which derives from my complete submission to the authority of my Father, indwelling that humanity. For without my Father, I can do nothing. And the Father who lives in me, he does the work.

If I do not the works of my Father, said the Lord Jesus, John 10, 37, believe me not, you don't have the right to credit me with anything that I say, except insofar as it is demonstrably obvious that I'm told by my Father what to do, and I am doing consistently what I'm told. That's the only authority you can exercise. It's the only authority that anybody standing here on this platform and expounding the Word of God has the right to exercise in Bible school, not by virtue of the fact they're teachers at his hill.

That doesn't give them authority. Their authority will derive exclusively from their own personal relationship to Jesus Christ, the measure in which they've come to be of years, grown up, spiritually adult. The only authority that a mum or dad can exercise spiritually in the home, that is of any validity, is that which derives from their relationship to Jesus Christ, so that to their children it becomes demonstrably obvious that their mum and dad are being told by him what to do, and are gladly, joyfully, and obediently doing as they're told.

Don't expect to exercise any true lasting spiritual influence on your children if that isn't the case, because you don't exercise any authority. There is no authority that you and I can exercise apart from our submission to Christ's authority, and this is what Moses found out. You needn't turn back to it, but it's interesting to know that when he fled into the backside of the desert, and you will remember, met the daughters of his father-in-law Jethro, a Midianite, and he helped them water their beasts.

When they came to roil their father, he said, How is it that you have come so soon today? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand to the shepherds. An Egyptian? Moses wasn't an Egyptian, but he was dressed like an Egyptian. The only authority then exercised derived from his royal bearing, the fact that he had taken on the color and identity of that people who kept his own people in slavery.

That was the only authority exercised, but now he refuses to be called the son of Herod's daughter. He throws away his Egyptian garb and takes his place with his own people, exercising now an authority that derives only by virtue of the fact that he is the seed of Abraham. See, the moment in true repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus, you and I are truly converted.

We step out of Adam into Christ. But in that moment of time, Christ steps out of heaven into you, and then you become the true spiritual Israel of God, a child by faith of Abraham, and can exercise that authority that derives now from a new restored relationship to your creator. He had a new authority that now no longer depended upon his pedigree, upbringing, background, family status.

It derived exclusively from a restored relationship to a mighty God, the God of the burning bush. And in the next verse there in Hebrews 11 and verse 25, because he's now enjoying that new authority that derives from that relationship to God, he chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He's making new friends.

Not only has he got a new authority, he now has a new identity. And you can always tell those who are growing up spiritually. It's one of the things that always fascinates me when I visit the different Bible schools.

You can always tell which kids are really growing spiritually and putting on muscle by the friends they choose. Everybody knows what you're like by the friends you choose, the kind of company you keep. You know that's true in every walk of life.

Your own kids may be in the high school or the junior high. You'll know exactly what their characters are by the kind of friends they choose. And it's absolutely uncanny how people sort themselves out and get themselves classified.

They don't have to wear a label. It becomes demonstrably obvious. At home at Cape and Ray we've had over 100,000 young folks, far more than 100,000 of our teenager house parties.

They'll classify themselves within 24 hours. All the unconverted will have found each other even though they live 500 miles from each other. Some across the Atlantic.

Some may be coming in from the Pacific. Never ever seen each other before. But they smell each other out.

And they form their little hostile clique. Needn't think they're going to get me converted. Or me, or me, or me.

It's really funny to watch. And then you have those who profess conversion, you know, but are rebels at heart, sitting tired, probably because they've come from some kind of legalistic home maybe. But these are the sort of carnal baby Christians who haven't begun to grow up spiritually, and they'll find each other.

You see, a carnal baby Christian who's still hostile in his heart and playing rebel, even though he may profess to be a Christian, isn't likely to seek the company of spiritual people, because that makes them feel uncomfortable. And that's just as true in Bible school here at His Hill, or Capernaum, or Australia, or Bodenseehof, or Sweden, of course. Those students who've only come to find a wife or a husband, plenty of them.

We call them tourists. Some come over to Europe, not because they're really interested in being, you know, spiritual giants, but because mum and dad, you know, persuaded them to go. In any case, they're prepared to swallow Bible school if they can see Europe on the cheap.

And you can pick them out a mile off. They soon find each other. It's the common level.

And then of course, thankfully, and in the majority, are those who have a real heart for God, have a genuine appetite to grow and really know the Word of God, and become healthy, living, vital, virile, full-blooded, adventuresome members of the body of Christ, in business for God. But it's uncanny how they classify themselves. I wouldn't have to be here more than a few days to discover what you're like.

Just by years of discernment, just watching. It's fun, of course. I do this every time I get into a pulpit and preach.

Did so last night in Charlotte, on Saturday night. You can pick out the kids that have absolutely no appetite, whatever the things of God. And the older folks, not just the kids.

Of course, some folks make it very demonstrably obvious. They just snooze in the corner of the pew. You don't even have to look.

You can hear them snoring. But you see, the moment, the moment Moses woke up, the moment Moses grew up, he found new companionship. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. He now had a new sense of values.

So he had not only a new authority, and from that new authority he sought a new identity. He wanted now to be numbered with those who were genuine. He didn't want to wear a mask, or put on a show, or make out, get by, just pious expressions at the right time just to impress somebody, and then slink away into the dark.

No, now he's choosing the right kind of friend. The people of God. No matter what it may involve for him.

But he's not only got this new authority and this new identity, now he's got a new equity. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Because he had a new perspective.

He had respect now unto the recompense of the reward. He knew where the end was going to be. If you're just a creature of time still, then your treasure will be on earth.

And where your treasure is there will your heart be also. You'll be looking around to see where you can best make yourself comfortable. Another second car, a nice little, you know, cottage by the lake.

Make quite sure your nest is well feathered. Make quite sure that you meet the right kind of people who can get you on and advance you in business. Mind you, I'll go to church and I'll do the right things that a Christian is supposed to do, but I know where my treasure is.

Now people, Christians who live like that, who've never invested everything they are in the service of the Lord Jesus, have never had a true perspective. They've never had any genuine, real concept of what eternity is going to be like. If we really believed in eternity, really believed in eternity, I mean forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever! Do you think we'd spend all our time accumulating things in the few tiny years of time? Just by that alone you can evaluate your concept of eternity.

If you're primarily preoccupied with accumulating things down here, it just means that it's only language. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also, said the Lord Jesus. Don't lay up treasure down here.

You're only going to be here a few years at most. And when you accumulate treasure down here, you're a gambler. You're gambling you're going to be alive tomorrow.

Who says you're going to be alive tomorrow? Who says you're going to be alive the day after tomorrow? A thousand people are going to be dead this time next week who never anticipated they were going to be dead this time next week. They're going to be killed on the roads. In America alone, that's the price you pay for the convenience of an automobile.

You kill them a thousand a week. Well, why shouldn't you be one of them? Why shouldn't you? A person who's not saved, of course, is gambling. Gambling that he's going to be alive tomorrow.

If he thinks one day maybe I'll get saved, he's gambling that he's going to live long enough to get saved in time. You accumulate things down here without a thought to eternity. And those riches where neither moth nor rust corrupts your gambling.

Especially in 1980. Because God alone knows whether we're going to see 1981. And if we do, I'll tell you something, 1981 is going to be infinitely more dangerous than 1980.

And even if we somehow get by 1980, 1982, as things are going, is going to be a million times worse than 1981. If you think you can lay up for the next 40, 50, 60 years, forget it. We're not even going to see the turn of the century.

And anybody who can think straight and has enough intelligence to evaluate the things that are happening in the world couldn't help but come to that conclusion. There's not one single statesman in the whole wide world who holds out one vestige of hope for the world today. Not one.

So accumulate as you will down here. Won't be worth anything. Even if you survive another 10, 20, or 30, or 40 years.

Somebody asked of a wealthy man who died, how much did he leave? And somebody very wisely remarked, everything. That's how much you're going to leave. Everything.

But you see Moses now has made a new discovery. He knows where his treasure is. So he now esteems the reproach of Christ, a Messiah who had not yet come into the world, but of whom he was now well aware and acquainted because he was the seed of Abraham in whom the promise had been made that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Christ. Greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

He knew where it was all going to end. A lot of people are going to look awfully stupid in the day that the Lord Jesus comes. So he had a new authority, had a new identity, had a new equity because you see he had now a new reality.

By faith he forsook Egypt. Not fearing the wrath of the king. All his security in the past was in Egypt.

He'd been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Humanly speaking he'd got it made. Now he turned his back on the lot.

Why? Well because he now endured as seeing him who is invisible. He knew God for himself. He'd got the new look.

And at last God was a reality. He couldn't see him. But as a God he couldn't see.

He was a million times more real to him now than Egypt upon which now he turned his back. That's the measure in which you've grown up spiritually. By faith he forsook Egypt.

Not fearing the wrath of the king for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. And by faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood it says in verse 28, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. In this new encounter that revolutionized his relationship to God he was introduced to the new means of access that God planned to implement in the shed blood of his own dear son.

And he was commanded to take a lamb, firstborn, a male, a bone of whose body was not to be broken. Exodus 12 verse 46 and shed its blood and sprinkle it upon the doorpost and the lintel as that foreshadowed the coming of the lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. He discovered a new security for he recognized that God had planned in the eternal ages of the past that redemptive transaction by virtue of which no boy, no man or woman can otherwise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He kept the Passover. And you and I are only secure when we're on that solid rock, that foundation. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.

It's Jesus Christ the righteous who was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in him. That God imputing to him our guilt he God might now impute to us his righteousness. And the blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleansed us from all sin.

And with a new authority, a new identity, a new equity in heaven, a new reality and a God he couldn't see but who's now meaningful to him far more than ever. The Egypt upon which he has now turned his back with this new security in the shed blood of a lamb that foreshadowed the coming of Jesus Christ. He embarks upon his new responsibilities with a new audacity because now he has an expectation that's as big as God himself.

Back in the 14th chapter of the book of Exodus and the 10th verse when Pharaoh drew nigh the children of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold the Egyptians marched after them and they were sore afraid and the children of Israel cried out on the Lord and they said to Moses because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us forth out of Egypt is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt saying let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians if it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness and Moses said to the people fear you not stand still see the salvation of the Lord which he will show to you today for the Egyptians whom you have seen today you shall

see them again no more forever the Lord shall fight for you and he shall hold you shall hold your peace Moses verse 21 stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea dry land and the waters were divided and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left and Moses you see had begun to live the miraculous life that allows of no possible explanation but God's divine intervention instead of being a runaway escaping for his life landing in the funk hole there in Horeb with the Egyptian armies behind and nothing but certain death in front the Red Sea you see by virtue of his new relationship to God he can look God

straight in the face and say you put me here I'd like you to know that the certain death behind the Egyptians and the certain death in front the Red Sea but it's not my responsibility it isn't my problem it was my problem when I went out stupidly thinking that I was big enough for the job and murder an Egyptian because it was my problem I had to carry the load and I fled for my life and I was buried in the backside of the wilderness 40 years useless to God or man but now this isn't my problem because you sent me you put me here and God said thanks it is my problem but your problem and my feet always becomes my opportunity quick march all you got to do is put your foot in it and the moment he obeyed God God opened the waters and led them through on dry land and Moses made the great

discovery that the problem in front was designed in God's economy to swallow up the problem behind which the Egyptians are saying to do were drowned he began to live miraculously a quality of life that had no explanation but God no longer stemming from his breeding no longer stemming from his university training learned it and all the wisdom and of the Egyptians but now stemming from a relationship that was born of failure graduating out of despair that moment of crisis that was to have these lasting consequences upon his life a new authority identity equity reality security audacity and live miraculously that's the gospel summed up simply in the new testament in the person of Jesus Christ who gave himself for you only that he might give himself to you and any boy any girl any man or

woman who's prepared to recognize the reality of his redemptive transaction that was designed in reconciling us to God to precipitate that regenerative purpose that allows the Lord Jesus to come and clothe himself with our humanity will begin to live miraculously a quality of life for which there's no possible explanation it isn't a question of motivation it isn't somebody coming in stimulating them challenging them it's simply the spontaneous flow of the life of Christ it's an inevitability of blessing on the part of boy girl man or woman who by their own free choice have chosen to keep company with God and with his friends and are prepared to let all God lose I was in Tasmania Australia for the first time in my life last May and I was invited to speak on a Christian radio station and

when I got there the man who was the manager and founder of the Christian radio station said I wanted you to come because 10 years ago in so many words said he I flunked him I've been a Christian for many years but I was in total despair of my Christian life as I look back over the years in which I'd sought to serve Jesus Christ there was absolutely nothing to show for it plenty of dust plenty of noise attracted a great deal of attention to myself but nothing of any consequence survived and so there was only one thing to do and that was quit but then I picked up your book the saving life of Christ that simply introduced me to the fact that the only purpose which the Lord Jesus died for me was that risen again from the dead he might come and live within me and I'm so grateful that out of

sheer despair at last weaned of self-sufficiency no longer under any stretch of my imagination supposing that I could do it myself because I'd tried and failed I simply said thank you for his life in me as once I'd learned years before to thank him for his death for me that's why we have a Christian radio station in Tasmania and that's why I'm asking you to now to tell the folks what you told me in that book that Jesus is alive not just in heaven but in the redeemed humanity of every boy girl man or woman who's prepared to let him be God this to me is what makes the Christian life so exciting you don't even have to hang around I had no idea that 10 years before that man had read a book and come to to discover what his biblical historical Christianity but of course that's the object for

which the book was written not particularly smart as I've explained to some of you because I took 10 chapters to explain what God explains in one verse so it couldn't be very smart Romans 5 and 10 if when

we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son much more being reconciled will be saved by his life it's the life of Christ that saves you not his death his death reconciling you to God simply qualifies you to become the recipient of his saving life and the one thing that Jesus Christ is waiting for you to do is make yourself available so that he now can live that life in your body today that he lived once in his own body 2,000 years ago what's complicated about that and how could you possibly settle for anything less when he happens to be God and is waiting to live

his life as God in you and flesh his divine activity out in your redeemed humanity how could you settle for less than that what a miserable pauperish existence it must be to struggle pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps trying to do something down here for him up there when the Bible from beginning to end tells you he isn't up there he's down here in you why not settle for it and say Lord Jesus I make you no promises I don't trust my own heart you've made all the promises and I want you to know that my humanity body soul spirit mind emotion will cleanse in your blood which I never ever deserve reconciled to my maker now enjoying that peace that you purchased when you died upon the cross is available for you to clothe yourself with me and get into business thanks for what you're

going to be doing it's going to be exciting and it will be every moment of every day lots of problems but the bigger the problem at his feet the bigger the opportunity for him to be God so you ought to be just longing for big problems you ought to be just excited about tomorrow the things that are going to hit you right between the eyes so you can duck and let him take the bang because that's what he's waiting to do but it doesn't hurt him because you see he never worries about our problems because they're his opportunities and why should you and I have the right to worry about our problems that he doesn't worry about it just depends upon your disposition whether or not by faith you've rolled that burden upon his shoulder who said cast your cares upon me I care for you then you can say to

me to live is Christ that's what it means to be a Christian nothing less than that it's every word of prayer

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