

Righteousness

by Major Ian Thomas

The Christian life is a life of rest, not a life of effort, where we quit and let God take over, recognizing our limitations and dependence on Him.

Duration: 41:36

Scripture: Isaiah 32:17, Ezekiel 44:18, Matthew 11:28, John 15:5, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:6, Philippians 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:4

Topics: "Righteousness", "Surrender to Christ"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the transformative power of righteousness in the Christian life, explaining that true righteousness is God's work within us, characterized by peace, quietness, and assurance. He illustrates that when we allow Christ to work through us, our actions are not marked by stress or panic, but by a restful confidence in His competence. Thomas encourages believers to vacate their own efforts and let Christ occupy their lives, leading to a life of divine action rather than human sweat. He draws parallels between the roles of the sun and moon, highlighting that Christians reflect Christ's light in the world when they are fully surrendered to Him. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a complete abandonment of self-reliance in favor of a life lived in intimate relationship with Jesus.

Transcript

A verse here in the 32nd chapter of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 32 and verse 17. Hope it's a verse that you've got underlined in your Bible. And the work of righteousness, that is to say righteousness at work, the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever.

That's a marvelous verse, the work of righteousness when righteousness is really at work. And of course righteousness is God at work, because God is righteousness. And all the work of God is God at work, and if it isn't God at work, it isn't the work of God.

God at work, righteousness at work, and it's always, always characterized by peace. And the effect of it is always quietness, a poise, an attitude which is utterly relaxed, and assurance, unshatterable confidence, unshatterable assurance forever. Now that's the characteristic of the genuine Christian life.

When you and I become wholly available to the Lord Jesus so that He as the God of righteousness can get into action. It's characterized by no panic, no fuss, very little noise, and seldom any dust. But there's always something which is valid, valid forever.

This I think was the gist of what Brian Turnbull had to say. I was interested in his word of testimony. I don't mean inaction, that's obvious.

It isn't inactivity, but it's simply Christ activity. It's got inaction. It'll keep you busy day and night, you'll be physically tired, you may have to travel thousands of miles, all kinds of things in terms of action, but always characterized by peace, poise, assurance.

You may have to knock on doors, you may have to try to climb through windows, or smash down doors. He didn't tell me this. But it's all part of the package, you see.

But at the same time you stand back and it's almost as though you're witnessing an event in which somebody else is taking part rather than yourself. This is the characteristic of being intimately, indivisibly identified with the Lord Jesus. Quietness, peace, assurance, rest.

That's the Christian life. In the midst of all that God commissions us to do. You know, that's why in the prophecy of Ezekiel, you'll find another very fascinating verse.

Ezekiel 44. I wonder if you've got this underlined in your Bible. Instructions for priests.

And remember, every true believer, and you understand what I mean by that, every boy, girl, man or woman who's been genuinely converted, redeemed in the blood of Christ, has been born of the Holy Spirit. In other words, their humanity, their flesh and blood, on earth with their two feet on the ground, has become the temple of the living God. His workshop.

The humanity with which He's going to clothe His divine action. That's the royal priesthood to which every believer now belongs. And these are instructions.

And they're as valid today for you and for me as they were then. Verse 18. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and they shall have linen breeches upon their loins.

Now, don't be worried about that. I don't expect you to wear little linen bonnets. It's the significance of what is involved that matters.

They shall not gird themselves, listen to this very carefully, they shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat. Isn't that marvellous? God says if there's one thing I abhor more than another in my priest is that they sweat. He says I can't stand sweating priests.

I can't stand ministers, preachers, evangelists, Sunday school teachers, pastors, deacons, chairman of committees. He says God says I can't tolerate them when they come sweating in, you know, carrying the burden. I just can't stand it.

You mustn't sweat, He says. You just mustn't sweat. What do you mean? What He says, you see, the effect of righteousness is peace, quietness, assurance.

When God is in action, nobody sweats because God doesn't. You see, He never gets in a panic, and that's why you and I never have to get into a panic. I find all kinds of Christians fighting all kinds of battles, and it must be very bewildering to God because all His battles are fought and already won.

You know, some are holding the Communists back, another holding the Catholic Church, and others sort of trying to balance with the ecumenical movement, just about to crush them any moment. And God says

please don't sweat. I'm not sweating.

I want you to know that God's in good form. He's marvelously healthy, and He's very much in business, and He's got everything, everything gloriously in hand. And He says if only you'll be caught up in intimate identity with my timeless and eternal purposes, you'll be as poised and balanced, as relaxed as I am.

Please, says God, don't sweat. And verse 23, they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. He says, my priests, once they've learned not to sweat themselves, will discern the difference between what is holy and unholy, what is profane and what is clean.

In other words, what derives from carnal sweat, and what is in the inevitable, triumphant consequence of divine action. It's the energy of the flesh and the flow of the spirit. That's the difference.

That's why the Do you remember, in Matthew's gospel, and chapter 11, he says, 28, Come unto me all ye that sweat. Now it doesn't actually say that, that's in my revised version, but that's exactly what he meant. He said, verse 28 of Matthew 11, Come unto me all ye that are laboring and are heavy laden.

All of you who are sweating it out, bowed under the burden, your muscles aching, and your back bent, he says, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. And he said, I'll give you a rest. I'll give you a rest.

Anybody sweating tonight? Did you just make this meeting by the skin of your teeth? You really didn't think you had time, but you just made it? Well, you better get out your linen bonnet. Don't sweat. I remember as a young man, I went to a voice trainer in London, once, only once.

She made it painfully clear to me that it really wouldn't serve much useful purpose, my going again. Mind you, we didn't get on with each other, not from the start. She was one of these buxom women, you know, all muscle and chin.

And, you know, I'd hardly crossed the threshold into her room before she barked at me. She literally barked. She didn't talk.

I don't think she knew how to talk. She just barked. She said, expire.

Well, I mean, what would you say? I said, I'm too young. And she didn't think that was funny. I thought it was a scream.

But, obviously, diplomatic relations were severed from that very moment. So I did my best. I expired.

She said, that isn't the way to expire. This is the way to expire. You know.

And she was this buxom size. You know, by the time she'd expire, she was about half the size. So I expired again.

And I trust I made a better job of it. And then she said, inspire. And so I inspired.

And she said, that's not the way to inspire. And so, first of all, she expired again. And then she inspired.

And it was terrific. She almost cut the pictures off the wall. You know, I hardly expected the piano to come across the room.

And then she said this. She said, you will never know how to inspire until you've learned to expire. And she was right.

And it was the best sermon I ever heard. It's exactly what the Bible is trying to teach us from cover to cover. Until you and I are prepared to expire, we'll never inspire.

We'll just perspire. But this is exactly what Paul said. Galatians 2.20. I am crucified with Christ.

I expire. To all my fancy feelings about myself, to all, you know, my inflated self-esteem, all that I ever imagined that I could do because of who I was, I am crucified with Christ. Expire.

Nevertheless, I lived it. Not I. Don't get me wrong. Anything that you could admire, anything that you could cherish in what you now know me to be as Paul the Apostle, please don't credit to me.

Having expired, crucified with Christ, I learned to inspire. I've breathed in, and my lungs spiritually are filled with Christ. And so not I. Christ liveth in me.

And the life that I now live, I live through faith. That restful attitude of utter dependence that is unshatterably confident in Christ's competence. That's it.

That's rest. After all, if you're unshatterably confident in somebody's competence, you don't worry about the situation so long as it's in their hands. But it depends, of course, whether you put it in their hands.

That's why the Lord Jesus said, come unto me, all you that are laboring and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Put it in my hands. Supposing you were digging a hole, you know, sweating away, back aching, muscles fit to burst, perspiration flowing off your brow, and I came along and said, let me give you a rest.

What would you expect me to do? Recite a little ditty about digging? Would you expect me to read some rules and regulations? Or would you expect me to give you a demonstration of a new, marvellous new technique so that you could throw it over your left shoulder without getting it in your right eye? Would that give you a rest? Well, of course not. That wouldn't give you a rest. The only way, the only possible way I could give you a rest would be for you to get out and let me get in.

For you to drop the spade and let me pick it up. For you to vacate and let me occupy. Then I could give you a rest.

You've got to quit. Now, this is what the Bible's trying to tell us, that you just don't have what it takes. But he does.

He does. Brian Turnbull mentions Stuart Briscoe, my assistant general director, and he first came to Capon Ray when he was a rascally young teenager. He knew all the answers.

He was soundly converted and he was saturated with Bible. He was brought up in the brethren. It oozed out of his ears.

And I mean genuinely, he knew his stuff. But he was hopeless. Absolutely hopeless.

He didn't come really because he wanted to do business with God. He was soundly converted. He knew that his sins were forgiven, but he simply had, he came to have a whale of a time with another gang of youngsters just about as rascal as he was.

And I don't blame them. And we made sure they had a whale of a time. But, you know, he told some of our young folk just recently, he said, I couldn't get over why they kept talking about the resurrection.

They kept saying that Jesus was alive. He said, well, I knew Jesus. I could prove it chapter and verse.

I've been able to prove it chapter and verse since I was about six. Why get excited about the resurrection? Then he said, one day at dawn, not only is Jesus Christ risen from the dead, not only is Jesus Christ alive, not only is he in heaven, he's in me. In me.

Then he said, the penny dropped. Suddenly it made sense. He went on to say this, when I first became a Christian, genuinely, I thought it was easy.

And I discovered I was wrong. It wasn't easy. And I thought it was hard.

And for years, I thought it was hard. All those teenager years, I thought it was hard. But I discovered it, I was wrong again.

It wasn't hard. It was neither easy nor hard. It was impossible.

And it wasn't until I discovered the Christian life was a sheer impossibility that I saw the significance of the resurrection. That I needed not only what he did when he died because of what I'd done, I need what he is, living, risen from the dead, in me to take the place of what I am. The only person who could do what to me otherwise would be a sheer impossibility.

That's it. That's exactly what the Lord Jesus meant. Come unto me all you that are laboring and heavy laden, I'll give you rest.

You quit, I'll take over. You drop the spade, I'll pick it up. There'll still be action, but it'll be my action simply clothed with your humanity.

You'll remain at the receiving end of my instructions. I'll tell you what to do. You'll do it, but I'll call the shot.

And I'll assume complete responsibility. You vacate, I'll occupy. Now that's marvelous.

And that's righteousness at work. It isn't you rushing around raising the dust and everybody marveling at your enthusiasm or dedication. That's nauseating so far as God is concerned.

That's nothing but pure sway. Plenty of action, marvelous action, divine action, miraculous action, but always originating in Christ himself. This is what's called walking in the Spirit.

Taking every step in the attitude of humble, childlike faith that says, Lord Jesus, for this situation I don't have what it takes. You've told me again and again, but you do. And that's all I need to know, thanks.

You're in business. Marvelous. So you take a step into this situation, you bow yourself out, you bow him in, and you say, thanks, Lord Jesus, for your strength, your victory, your wisdom, your purity, your everything, your authority, thanks.

And he marvelously vindicates his deity. And then you take another step into a new situation and say, as you bow yourself out, bow him in again, thanks, Lord Jesus, for you are in me for this situation. And he vindicates his deity again, always.

Marvelous. And of course every new occasion upon which you allow him to vindicate his deity makes it easier to trust him in the next situation. Of course your attitude of dependence in this situation will never, never be adequate for the next.

There's no sort of special blessing that you can have that will relieve you of the moral obligation of exercising an option every new situation in which every new step takes you, of depending on him or upon yourself. But once you've learned the secret of rest in every new situation in which every new step takes you, you vacate and he occupies, you vacate and he occupies, you vacate and he occupies. So the Christian life you see is one vacation after another until finally you're always on vacation.

And that's rest, isn't it? Don't you expect to go and have a rest when you go on vacation? Now that's the secret of the Christian life. It isn't lethargy or passivity or uninterestedness, of course not. It's simply an unshatterable confidence that there's only one person who's really competent for the job, Jesus Christ.

And so you let him get into action. And that's the one thing that he's waiting for. So you see the Christian life is essentially a life.

It isn't the consequence of your inherent gift, skill, ability, enthusiasm, dedication, none of that. God will use any and all of it if he wants to. He may or he may not.

But essentially the Christian life derives from the person of the Lord Jesus and his ability to reproduce himself in you in action in the measure of your availability to him. That's why we're told to present our bodies. Not our activity, but our bodies.

He'll take care of the activity. You present him your body and allow the Holy Spirit to spark the activity. Then it'll be divinely sparked.

It'll be divinely breathed. And it'll always be on target. Present your body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Don't be conformed to this world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, by adopting an entirely new attitude, the attitude that was in Christ, the mind which was in Lord Jesus, that allowed the Father in him always to be in action. We are now to allow him in us always to be in action.

And then said the Lord Jesus, you'll prove daily, experientially, what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. A derived life that has its origin in Christ himself. You know, the Bible gives us some very marvellous pictures of a derived image.

And image, as I've explained to some folk earlier this week, image in relationship to man's office in declaring God's glory isn't a study in still life. It isn't a religious posture. It isn't a pose you put on.

It isn't a religious look. It isn't even in a normal religious context. The image is 24 hours a day.

It's God's character in action, fleshed out in your humanity. Any moment, any time, this was the image that the Lord Jesus produced. Look at him from the left, the right, from above, from beneath, from the front, from the back, by day or by night, no matter what he was doing at any time, you would always see the perfect expression of the Father who indwelt his humanity with his consent and was given total expression in all that he did and said was.

That's image. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And it's a derived image.

One of the marvellous pictures that's given to us in the Bible is such a derived image, and we only have a very, very few moments to consider it, but I can give you some sort of seed thoughts. It's found in the very first chapter of the Bible, chapter 1 of Genesis, and God said, verse 17, Genesis 1, 14, God said, And verse 16, Now that's a marvellous picture of a derived image. God made two lights, and the office of the two lights was to divide day from night.

The greater light was to rule the day and the lesser light was to rule the night. Now in the Bible, the greater light, the sun, always speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. Last book in the Old Testament, the son of righteousness, not S-O-N, S-U-N, the son of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings.

The Lord Jesus, the greater light, he is not visible now because the day hasn't dawned. It's still night. It's still this world's darkness.

The son of righteousness has not yet risen. That is, of course, his second coming, the return of the Lord Jesus, for which we wait with tremendous excitement, because it's imminent. We're almost living on borrowed time.

The psalmist constantly mentions this. He says, I will awake in his likeness, when? In the morning. In the morning.

You read the Psalms and discover how many times the psalmist talks about in the morning. In the morning. It would be a marvellous way, you know, for Christians to say goodbye to each other.

See you in the morning. See you in the morning. I may not see you for ten years on earth, but I'll see you in the morning, because we shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, in the morning, if we are alive and remain to his coming.

If the greater light is the Lord Jesus, and we may joyfully anticipate his coming. Look at the first epistle to the Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians and chapter 4. I would not, verse 13, have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them which are asleep.

That is, believers, redeemed sinners, who have died physically, absent from the body, but are now present with the Lord. He says, I don't want you to be ignorant about them, that you sorrow not even as others which have no hope. Those who have no hope, the unregenerate, the unconverted, the lost, who don't know the sweetness of sins forgiven, and who know, have no idea where their loved ones are except possibly in hell, for all that they know of hell.

They've got every reason to be miserable when somebody dies. They've got every reason to be downpressed and depressed, but not a believer, not a Christian. He says, you can't sorrow.

You can't sorrow as those that have no hope. The amazing thing is this. We're always talking about the glory of getting to heaven, how marvelous it will be to see Jesus face to face, and just so soon as some believing friend or relative of ours goes to be with Christ, we're miserable.

Isn't that extraordinary? We don't really believe what we're saying. Mind you, there is a sorrow imparting, I'm sorry to say goodbye to my wife, when I know I won't see her again for four or five months or longer. Of course there is that legitimate sorrow, but we shouldn't be miserable like the unregenerate.

To think that my child, who's a redeemed sinner, is now present with his marvelous Lord, protected from all the sin and slime and muck and filth and danger of this world. Nothing could be more marvelous, nothing could be more wonderful, if that's his pleasure, absent from the body, present with the Lord. Says Paul, I'm in a straight betwixt two, to depart and be with Christ, which is far, far better, or to remain in the body, if I can be of some help to you.

And he says, so long as God has got some intelligent purpose to accomplish in terms of my humanity on earth, I'm happy to hang around. But he says, as soon as the job's over, bye-bye, I'm off. That's what he's saying, because it's far better.

Of course it is, marvelous. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, verse 14, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain under the coming of the Lord shall not precede, is the exact translation, not prevent, shall not precede them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, the dawning of the day, the sun rising, visibly, so that every eye will see him. The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.

Comfort one another with these words, the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of the times, seasons, brethren, verse 1 of chapter 5, you have no need that I write unto you. Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

And you know how a thief comes, he sends a postcard on the preceding Wednesday and informs you that he's going to climb through the bathroom window at half past three in the morning on the following Thursday. Please leave your cash and your jewelry on the kitchen table. Is that how a thief comes? Well, you say, don't be so stupid.

Of course he doesn't. He comes when you just do not expect him. And that's exactly when the Lord Jesus is going to come.

So far as the exact time and hour and day, we're never to know that. But of course, the Lord Jesus says, don't be taken unawares, because you should be able to read the signs of the times. Having foreshadowed the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70, you can read it for yourself in Luke 21.

To save time, I don't ask you to turn to it. And he says, then the Jewish people will be scattered into all the countries of the world. And there, he says, they will remain buried.

And the city of Jerusalem will be trodden underfoot of the Gentiles. Luke 21, verse 24, Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And of course, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled when the day dawns, when the sun rises, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back again, and said, the Lord Jesus, the city of Jerusalem is going to be in the hands of non-Jews until then.

Well, in whose hands is the city of Jerusalem today? The Jews. Not in the hands of non-Jews. It took place two and a half years ago.

Six days war. We're living in exciting times. I wouldn't live in any other generation.

I wouldn't live in any other decade. It's marvelous. Frightening for the unbeliever.

Exciting for the Christian. We're living on borrowed time. Really, borrowed time.

The Jews are already in the city of Jerusalem. And not only that, next verse, just think of this. Said the Lord Jesus, just as the Jews are marching into the city of Jerusalem and wrenching it out of the hands of non-Jews, he says, next verse, look at your television.

Keep your radio on all day. There shall be signs in the sun and the moon and the stars and upon the earth, a distressing nation. Men are going to walk on the moon.

We're going to get signals back from Mars. They're planning in the next half decade to land men on Mars. Most up-to-date newspaper in the world.

Of course it is. We can expect the day to dawn any moment. You brethren, 1 Thessalonians 5.4, you brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Why not? Well, because you are the children of the light. You're the children of the day. We're not of the night, nor of darkness.

Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. They that sleep, sleep in the night. They that be drunken, the alcoholics, they're alcoholics in the night.

The drug addicts, they're drug addicts in the night. Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, for in whom is the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, that present tense, listen to this, verse 9, verse 10, who died for us.

There's redemption, who died for us, shedding his precious blood that we might be reconciled to a holy God, who died for us. Listen to this, that whether we wake, that is, still alive in the body, two feet on the ground, whether we wake or sleep, absent from the body, present with the Lord, doesn't make the slightest difference whether we're here on earth or with him in heaven, whether we wake or sleep, we could live together with him. That's what it means to be a Christian, whether you wake on earth or whether you're absent from the body, present with the Lord, you live together with him.

Intimately, indivisibly, inextricably identified with Jesus Christ. That's the Christian life, not just knowing that he's since been forgiven and waiting one day to climb into heaven, all covered with bruises and blisters and to be thumped on the back, well done my good and faithful servant, you sweated it out, you've got it, you've made it. Nothing like that, no, we are to live together with him every moment of every day.

Isn't that tremendous? Alright, well, where does the moon come in? That's the moon, the body of Christ on earth. That society of redeemed sinners, that society of forgiven sinners, cleansed in the blood of Christ, who by his indwelling Holy Spirit share his resurrection and who on earth still awake before ever departing from the body and proceeding to be with Christ, clothe his divine activity with their humanity. That's the moon.

It's the lesser light that is to rule the night, to exercise a borrowed authority. The whole Church of Jesus Christ worldwide, out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue, these faithful Chinese brethren that we've

heard about tonight, members of his body of which the Lord Jesus is the head in heaven, is the greater light and we are the members in particular on earth as the lesser light. And we're to rule the night, we're to exercise authority.

I say it, when the moon penetrates this world's gloom during the night, where does it get its light from? Has it got any light of its own? Well of course it hasn't. You ask the astronauts or let them take you with them next time and find out for yourself. They tell us that the moon is as black as black could ever be.

They said we've never known such blackness. Utterly without light, utterly without light. That's the moon.

It's just one vast, pitted desert of craters and endless waste. Has nothing, absolutely nothing to offer. Precisely, that's you and me without Christ.

That's our noblest and our best, all our inherent gifts and skills, all the things about which we fancy ourselves. We're nothing but a lifeless, lifeless moon. Well then how ever, how ever can a moon in that condition rule the night and penetrate the gloom and banish its night and darkness? Well only by virtue of its heavenly position.

By virtue of its heavenly position and by virtue of its relationship to the greater light in that heavenly position. Listen to this. Paul in the second chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians speaks of those of us who have in claim redemption through the blood of Christ have been quickened from the dead, raised from the dead, regenerate.

Even when we were dead in sin of the night, of the darkness, he has quickened us together with Christ by grace you're saved and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That's, that's the legitimate position of every forgiven sinner raised with Christ by the coming of his Holy Spirit to credit that forgiven sinner with the resurrection life of Jesus Christ and to be set with him in a heavenly position. That's the only reason that the moon can discharge its office to rule the night in a heavenly place rightly related to the sun.

I say, do you know what happened in Mexico just a few days ago? The moon got between the sun and the world. The moon that should bear witness to the world of the sun got between the sun and the world. What happened? Total eclips.

Total eclips. And that's exactly what happens when you as a Christian, you as a redeemed sinner, converted, soundly evangelical, conservative to the fingertips with fundamental oozing out, you know, both ears. That's exactly what happens when you, you get between Christ and the world to which he has called you to witness.

When you imagine you've got what it's, what it takes to do something for Jesus. And of course it's exactly the same when you've got a few individuals like that clubbing together and forming a denomination or a missionary society or an evangelistic crusade and they have their committees and they think we are the people who are going to keep Jesus Christ in business. And so with their back to Christ and with no little sincerity, no little enthusiasm and no little business acumen and promotional skill, they begin with their backs to Christ, the greater light to witness to the world about Jesus.

And what do they do? Advertise their own bankruptcy. Whenever the moon gets between the sun and the world, it advertises its own bankruptcy. It tells everybody I don't have what it takes.

That's exactly what happens when any individual Christian or corporate body of Christians begin to sweat for Jesus. They advertise to everybody their own bankruptcy. Get the idea? I say what happens when the world gets between the moon and the sun? Of which the moon should be bearing witness to the world.

What happens when the world gets in between the moon and the sun? It just shares its night and adds its own shadow. That's all. That's happened perhaps in your life.

You can look back to the day of your conversion. You know that your sins have been given, but quite frankly, love of money, promotion in business, the girl you want to marry who isn't really keen, perhaps not a Christian at all. Popularity, sporting headlines, just sheer creature comfort, just bone idleness because your body has got to be happy.

The world and the spirit of the world, gratification itself has come between you and Christ and you share its night and you add to it your own shadow. The lesser light is to rule the night by virtue of its heavenly position and its relationship within that heavenly position to the sun, the greater light. Sometimes you come out and there's a tiny little sliver of silver in the sky and you call the kids and say, look little baby new moon, look at this little baby new moon.

The little kids come out and say, oh what a sweet little baby new moon. Why is it only a sweet little baby new moon? Simply because the moon even in its heavenly position is only offering a fraction, just a fraction of its real self to the greater light. Are you a baby, baby new moon? Or you could have been converted 20 years ago and still be only a baby new moon because only just a fraction of your time, you've learned just how much and no more money to give to God.

Nicely tied, so now you're a respectable member in your constituency. You know exactly how much time, how much of your home so as not to interfere with your business prospects or your social engagements. Just a sliver of all that you are offered to the greater light, just a baby new moon.

But sometimes, sometimes you come out and at midnight it's as light as day and you call the family and they all get excited and they say, my, as they look at that great bowl of silver in the sky that hasn't got an ounce of life or light of its own. Full moon. Why? Why? Because in its bankruptcy, in its darkness, in its emptiness, in its lifelessness, it's offering all that it is to all that it can of the greater light.

That's full moon. And of course in the simplest possible language, that's what the Bible means by being full of the Holy Ghost. It isn't an exotic blessing.

You don't goggle your eyes or grow your hair long or thump chairs. To be filled with the Holy Spirit simply means that recognizing that you've been cleansed in the blood of Christ, you're his purchased possession, body, soul, spirit, mind, emotion, will. And so without reserve for 24 hours in every day, seven days a week, you offer all that you are to all that he is.

And then righteousness is at work. You have vacated and he has occupied. Peace, rest, quietness, assurance.

How's it with you? Full moon? Is that what you want? Let's bow our heads in prayer. Have you ever claimed redemption through the blood of Christ? Are you born again? Have you been lifted out of a state of darkness and death? Night? Translated into the kingdom of God's dear son? Are you born again? Have you been raised with Christ to a heavenly position? What's your relationship? Full of self? None of Christ? Total eclipse? Has the world come in and robbed you of the reflection? Baby new moon? Just a fraction?

Just enough given to Christ to get by and be respectable? Or is it hilarious, glorious, utter abandon? Totally sold out for God? Jesus Christ, your Lord of my life, I'm expendable. All that I am, available to all that you are.

God take the consequence, in life or death. Full moon. God, please, for Jesus sake, my saviour, my Lord, my Redeemer, full moon.

I've nothing to offer but what I receive and all that I receive. Dear Lord, you must give, thank you so much, for all the golden prospect of being rightly related to the greater light in a heavenly place. To chase the gloom, penetrate the darkness, and change night into day.

For your name's sake. Amen. 94 in your hymn book.

We're a minute or two behind time. I'm so glad that folk who had buses to catch were wise enough to slip out just a few moments ago. If you have to do so, don't be embarrassed as we sing this hymn, but it would be a pity not to sing it.

If you must go, that's perfectly understandable, you may have a bus to catch, you might have to wait another hour before the next. You may have somebody sitting on your baby and you've got to get back and relieve them. I mean babysitting.

So, feel very relaxed, but if you can stay, let's make this hymn the prayer of our heart tonight. Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow that a time could ever be, when I let the Saviour's pity plead in vain and proudly answered. Here's the unregenerate, the unconverted, the unsaved tonight, all of self, none of thee.

But here's full moon, listen, higher than the highest heavens, deeper than the deepest sea. Lord, thy love at last hath conquered, grant me now my soul's petition, none of self. I am crucified with Christ, all of thee, nevertheless I live, not I, Christ liveth in me, full moon.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32261.mp3>

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