

# Salvation by Christ's Life

by Major Ian Thomas

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*The sermon emphasizes that the Lord Jesus' life is the basis of our salvation, and that our relationship to him is to be identical with his relationship to the Father.*

**Duration:** 38:22

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 13:3, John 14:10, Romans 12:1, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 10:5

**Topics:** "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the nature of Jesus' victory and how it relates to Christian believers. He emphasizes that Jesus' victory was not based on simply avoiding sin, but rather on his complete submission to the purpose for which he was born. Jesus presented himself to the Father through the eternal Spirit, and every action he took was an expression of the Father in him. Through his death on the cross, Jesus became the author of eternal salvation for those who obey him. The speaker also mentions his gratitude for the arrangements made for his visit and expresses his willingness to meet with parents and friends of students at the college.

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## Transcript

I'm certainly very grateful to Dr. Rothschild and to the Spiritual Life Committee for the great privilege of joining with you for this special week of meetings. It's a privilege that I have looked forward to for several years, and I'm sure that as we meet together day by day, conscious of the presence of our Risen Lord, dependent upon His Spirit as our Teacher to lead us through the Word into all truth, He will enrich our hearts in such a way that it will enrich His joy. We claim our inheritance in Him, but our supreme purpose should be that He has His inheritance in us.

And it is to that end that we shall meet day by day, that the Lord Jesus, in the fullest possible sense, will see of the travail of His soul in us and be satisfied. I'm certainly very grateful for the very gracious arrangements that have been made for my entertainment this week and for the opportunities that this will present for many personal contacts. I might add that in various places in this country, and in Canada and Japan, possibly Formosa, elsewhere, I have met parents and friends of students here at the college.

It'll be difficult for me to find you, but it shouldn't be too difficult for you to find me. So I'd be happy to visit with you, if maybe from different places you've come to know that I've come to know. Both that you've come to know, by the accident of birth or any other incident.

I'd like our time together this morning to be, in a sense, a time of introduction. May I just pause at this moment? Is there a bell that rings or is there a clock? Unfortunately, the spring of my watch is broken. And so we close before lunchtime.

Thank you very much. It'll help me to keep within the prescribed limits. We'll turn to the Gospel of John, the 13th chapter.

John's Gospel and the 13th chapter, and the third verse. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

The Lord Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, that's the first thing, that all the illimitable resources of deity had been vested in his person as man. For although he was God, and is eternally God, was in the beginning with God, and was God, and although by him all things were made, and without him was not anything made that was made, in other words, he is the creative deity, when he was on earth, he humbled himself, took upon himself the form and fashion of man and servant, and played the role of man as God intended man to be. So although he was God, in a very real sense he became man, and walked in this world day by day in that relationship which God designed should exist between man and God.

We shall enlarge upon that as we proceed throughout the week, but I mention that in particular now that we may recognize this fact, and that in all his activities, in all his reactions, in every step he took and every word he said and every decision he made, he did so as man, even though he was God. And he knew that as man, in his perfection as man, the Father had vested in him all that God intended to vest in man as man was intended by God to be, all things. In other words, man in his perfection has an unlimited call upon the inexhaustible supplies of deity.

To put it another way, all the inexhaustible supplies of God are available to the man who is available to all the inexhaustible supplies of God. And Jesus Christ was that man. He was man in perfection, totally, unrelentingly, unquestioningly available.

And that is why there was available to him all that to which he was available, all things. Now that's a principle that we shall need to return to on many occasions. The second thing is this.

He knew that he was come from God, that is to say his divine origin. And he knew that he went to God, that is to say his divine destination. He came from God and he was going to God.

This is reiterated in the same Gospel in the 16th chapter and the 27th verse. The Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father and am coming to the world.

Again I leave the world and I go to the Father. From the Father to the Father. And in the interim period in the world.

So there's a bracket as it were. Eternity on one side and eternity on the other side. And a short limited time space, 33 years on earth.

Of the Father and to the Father. And in between 33 years in the world. He was in the beginning with God of the Father.

He will be eternally with God to the Father. But in the meantime he's man for 33 years. So he knew that the Father had given all things into his hands.

That he had come from God and was going to God. And one might imagine that at this stage we're poised upon the threshold of some sensational event or some sensational utterance. But instead it comes almost as an anticlimax to read that he rises from supper, laid aside his garments, took a towel, girded himself, poured water into a basin and washed his disciples' feet.

With all the illimitable resources of deity, of divine origin and divine destination, he washed his disciples' feet. Something which was too lowly even for his own disciples who felt themselves above such condescension. Did it take all the illimitable resources of deity to wash his disciples' feet? God on his knees.

Well you see the Lord Jesus again was demonstrating a principle that it is not the nature of what you are doing that determines its spirituality but the origin of that activity. Not its nature, but its origin. There was never a moment in the life of the Lord Jesus that was without divine significance.

Because there was never anything he did, there was never anything he said, never any step he took which did not spring from a divine origin, that was not the activity of the Father in and through the Son. Thirty-three years of availability to the Father, that the Father in and through him might implement that program that had been established and agreed as between the Father and the Son before every world was. Why did the Father give all things into his hands? Because he was completely manifold.

He was completely available. Because for the first time since Adam fell into sin there was on earth a man. As God intended man to be.

I want you to turn with me to two passages in the epistles of the Hebrews which at first sight appear a little bit strange. Hebrews chapter 2 verse 9 and 10. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him. It's a quaint Old English expression, you understand what is involved. It became him.

It beheld him. It was incumbent upon. It was necessary for him.

For whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons into glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. It was necessary for God the Father to make him, God the Son, perfect through sufferings. Bearing that in mind, turn now to the fifth chapter of the same epistle, the eighth and the ninth verses.

And here it says, though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. In the second chapter it says that it was necessary for the Father to make him perfect. In the fifth chapter it says that being made perfect, he became.

In other words, his becoming the author of our eternal salvation appears to have been dependent upon the successful conclusion of a process whereby by the Father he was made perfect. He was made in order to become. Doesn't that strike you as being a little bit strange? Was the Lord Jesus not perfect, but he needed to be made perfect? Was there after all in the Lord Jesus some blemish that needed to be rectified? Some imperfection that had to be remedied, that he might become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him? Here's another principle involved.

The Bible leaves us in absolutely no doubt about the absolute perfection of the Lord Jesus in his person. We're told that God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin. That he might be made the righteousness of God, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

We're told that when the Father looked down from heaven before the beginning of his public ministry, in reviewing, as it were, the whole thirty years of the then life of Jesus Christ as man on earth, as a little child, as a son, as an apprentice, as a craftsman, as a neighbor, as a citizen, the Father said, this is my beloved son. In him, in all these areas of human relationship, I am well pleased. Perfect.

Perfect in his person. But although he was perfect in his person, he had to be made perfect in his vocation, by the process of obedience through time. Because, you see, he was man.

And man, perfect in his person, can only be perfect in his vocation. The purpose for which he was created, in the fulfillment of the ends to which he is, can only thus be perfect by an attitude of total dependence, which involves spiritual obedience. So being perfect in his person, he was made perfect in his vocation.

Was he perfect in vocation? Was he perfect, in other words, in the purpose for which he was incarnate, and came into this world as a little baby at Bethlehem? Had he then been able to speak as a baby, could he have said, it is finished? As a boy of twelve, when his mother found him in the temple, and he said to her, whist ye not that I must be about my father's business? Was he perfect in vocation? When he preached the Sermon on the Mount, or when he raised Lazarus from the dead, or even when he washed his disciples' feet, was he perfect in vocation? When he was in the garden, the Gethsemane, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood, was he perfect in vocation? When he stood before Pontius Pilate, and as no idol boasts, said at one word from me, my father would send ten legions of angels, had he spoken that word, and the father had sent ten legions of angels, and he had bypassed the cross, would he have been perfect in the vocation for which he was incarnate? No, you and I would today be of all men most miserable. For there would never have been established any grounds of redemption that would have satisfied the eternal, unrelenting, absolute demands of God's holiness. But we are told that he set his face like a flint.

He turned neither to the right hand nor to the left. But he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He was completely submissive to that purpose for which he had been born.

Completely submissive to that purpose to which the father was committed in him. And as the heavens were darkened for the space of three hours, and as just before he tasted physical death, as he had already now tasted spiritual death for all men, he was able to cry legitimately and know that it was true, with a voice that reverberated across the city of Jerusalem, It is finished! And bow his head and die. And in that moment of time, he was made perfect in his vocation, as he had already always been perfect in his person, and he became the author of eternal salvation to them that obeyed.

That was the nature of his victory. This is the nature of all Christian victory. The Lord Jesus did not live a victorious Christian life because he did not commit sin, in the negative sense, that he didn't tell lies, or he wasn't dishonest, or he never committed adultery, was never envious.

That isn't the nature of his victory. If this had been the nature of the victory of the Lord Jesus, if this simply had been the criterion of his righteousness, he could have stayed in heaven. The nature of his victory was that as man, he positively implemented that purpose for which he was incarnate.

That apart from not doing the things that were wrong, he positively accomplished all that was right. That his absolute availability to the Father for every moment of 33 years enabled the Father in deity to do him, through him in his humanity, all that had been agreed between Father and Son before ever the world was. So that he could say, it is literally finished.

He was from the Father, he went to the Father. And his perfect manhood in the meantime made him absolutely available for the Father. So that between his coming from God and his going to God, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives, it was possible for the Father in him and through him to implement utterly the redemptive purpose.

I want you to notice how he made himself available to the Father. And if you'll turn in the same epistle to the 10th chapter and the 5th verse, Hebrews 10 and verse 5, reading from the Amplified New Testament, to which I shall depart if I depart from the King James Version, Hebrews 10, 5, Hence when he, Christ, entered into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but instead you have made ready a body for me to offer. In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no delight.

Then I said, Lo, here I am. Come to do your will, O God, to fulfill what is written of me in the volume of the book. Even as the whole redemptive purpose had been foreshadowed by the prophets to the fathers and recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the volume of the book, the Old Testament Scriptures, so now the Lord Jesus, as the living word, says to the Father, the body that you have prepared for me, I now present to you that all that has been written in the volume of the book now finds its complete consummation in my person.

Chapter 9 and verse 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot, faultlessly to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself faultlessly to God.

How did he present this, his body, to the Father in these thirty-three years that the Father in and through him might implement all that had been written in the volume of the book through the eternal Spirit. So the Father, God, gave himself to the Son, Man, through the eternal Spirit. And through the eternal Spirit he walked, he moved, and had his being.

Every step he took, every word he spoke, everything he did, all that he was, was an expression of the Father God in the Son as Man through the eternal Spirit. The Lord Jesus summarizes this in the 14th chapter of John and the 10th verse. And then we get the complete picture.

John 14 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. For I have presented my body to the Father for my Father who dwells in me to do in my body his works. And he my Father who dwells in me he does his works through his Spirit through whom I have offered myself without spot

thoughtlessly to my Father.

So we understand that the whole activity of the Lord Jesus on earth as Man was the Father's activity through the eternal Spirit through whom his body was presented to the Father. Of the Father, through the Father, to the Father. That was the life of Jesus Christ on earth.

From Bethlehem to the Mount of Olives as Man, through the Father who dwells in me and does the works. My office, says the Lord Jesus, as Man is to be my Father's office in me as God is to do. I am, he does.

Of him, through him, to him. Now what does the Bible say regarding your relationship to the Lord Jesus? The Bible tells us and it comes from the lips again and again of the Lord Jesus that your relationship to him is to be identical with his relationship to the Father. That as the Father sent him so he sends you.

Or John 6, 57 which we should explore probably fuller later As I lived by the living Father so he that eateth me shall live by me. So if we discover this to be the basis of the life of Christ in his relationship to the Father inevitably we shall discover that this will be the basis of your life of mine in relationship to him. That shouldn't surprise us.

Indeed if it isn't so it should shock us. Turn with me to the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Romans and the last verse. Romans 11 and verse 36.

For of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen. Of him through him to him.

But that is precisely the relationship that existed between the Son as man and the Father as God. Of him through him. I say do you have eternal life? Will you say yes? Thank God I do.

That's why I'm here at Westmont. What is eternal life? Did you ever give yourself a satisfactory answer to that question? What is eternal life? Is it a place that you're going to when you're dead? Is it a peculiar feeling inside? You'd be amazed. You might think this is rather elementary but you'd be amazed at the strange answers that you get if you ask a normal congregation or any sort of Bible class or Sunday school in an evangelical church as to what eternal life is.

You'd be amazed. Staggered. What is eternal life? Or tell me this, when does it begin? I noticed just the other day, I forget where it was or it was in a in a hospital chapel where I was speaking there was a tablet on the wall in commemoration of one of the previous chaplains and giving the date of his death it says he entered into eternal life.

Is that accurate? If he was a Christian? What is implied in such a tablet on the wall? That eternal life begins when a man is physically dead. Is that true? No. This is the record, 1 John 5 this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son.

That eternal life and Jesus Christ the Son are synonymous terms and he that hath the Son hath life. This quality of life, eternal life. And he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

This quality of life, eternal life. So eternal life is none other than Jesus Christ of whom it is written in the first chapter of John's gospel in him was life and this life was the light of man. If you have eternal life it simply means that you have the Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus said I am the way I am the truth I am the life. Eternal life is not a peculiar feeling inside it is not the ultimate destination to which you will go when you are dead. Eternal life is the quality of life that you possess right now at this moment in your own physical body with your own two feet on the ground in the world now.

And where does this life come from? Of him. When was your Bethlehem? In the day that Jesus Christ was formed in you by God's Spirit. In the day that Jesus Christ came to take up residence and inhabit your redeemed humanity for God by his gracious presence through the eternal Spirit.

So that your body became the temple of the living God and you were added to that body corporate called the church which Paul to the Ephesians describes as a habitation of God through the Spirit. Through the Spirit of God's dear Son. For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ in him he is none of his.

So if you have eternal life it means that you have some body Jesus Christ and the life that you possess is of him. Where is that life going to? If you were to die physically what would happen? The Bible says you would be absent from this body this earthen vessel and you would be present with the Lord. That the life that is his imparted to you now by his indwelling Holy Spirit would return to the origin the source of that life Jesus Christ.

And if the Lord Jesus were to come again today as well he may we are told that we shall not precede them who sleep in Jesus but we shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. And the life which is his life that he has imparted to us through his eternal Spirit will return to the one who is the author of that life in us of him and to him. What is the in-between? Your Bethlehem and your Mount of Olives.

33 years? Could be. Or 3 years. Or 50 years.

Or 6 weeks. Whatever period of time you remain physically alive on earth indwelt by Jesus Christ through his eternal Spirit. In other words your vocation that purpose for which as man you exist on earth not just to have your inheritance in Christ heaven one day but that Christ might have his inheritance in you now on earth on the way to heaven.

Your humanity as unreservedly available to him as his humanity was once unreservedly available to the Father. The verse 1 of chapter 12 draws the logical conclusion of the last verse of chapter 11. I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye also present your bodies also a living sacrifice just as he did to the Father you do now to the Son.

Holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Don't be conformed to this world don't ape its methods its techniques or its ways or its spirit but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good acceptable and perfect will of God that as the good acceptable and perfect will of God was implemented by the Father through the Spirit in the Son so the good acceptable and perfect will of God in the Son may be implemented through you by him through his Spirit as you present your body to him as he once presented his body to the Father for as the Father sent him he now the Son sends you. And how are you to implement this divine vocation to which you have been redeemed as his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that you should walk in them how are you to implement this program only by virtue of what he is in you through his eternal Spirit only in the energy and power of the one who indwells you now by his Spirit as he walked once only in the energy and the power of the Father who indwelt him through the Spirit for the Lord Jesus said I can do nothing apart from my Father but he says of you and of me in the fifteenth chapter of John without

me you can do nothing how much can you do without him? nothing so what is everything you do without him? nothing it's amazing how busy you can be doing nothing did you ever find that out? for the flesh everything that you do apart from him profit it? nothing and the awful possibility if you don't discover this principle is that you would be trained here at Westmont to spend a lifetime in the service of Jesus Christ doing nothing and you wouldn't be the first and you won't be the last and that's above everything else we seek this week to avoid so you discover that the life that you possess as a born again Christian is of him and it is to him and every moment that you are here on earth it must be through him of him through him to him all things I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies in this way to him if it's of him and through him and to him all things where do you come in? you don't that's just where you go out and that's what Paul meant when he said to me to live is Christ is Christ and the only person whom God credits says Paul in me to be alive is Jesus Christ so I reckon myself to be dead to all that I am apart from what he is and I reckon myself now to be alive unto God only by virtue of what he is to me to live is Christ of him through him to him all things and my holy ambition is to be to him that he might do as he was to the father that the father might when the world looked at Jesus Christ they saw God they heard him speak they saw him act when you walk in this relationship to him when the world looks at you they see Jesus Christ they hear him speak they watch him act this is the purpose of your redemption and nothing less will do let's pray

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