

# Revelation in the Christian Life

by Paris Reidhead

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*The Christian life begins with personal revelation of Jesus Christ, and this revelation is necessary for assurance of salvation.*

**Duration:** 36:57

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 13:32, Luke 24:19, Luke 24:27, John 14:26, Acts 17:11, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that simply hearing and memorizing scripture is not enough. He compares it to a funnel that only allows the gas to pass through but does not possess it. The preacher highlights the importance of experiencing the reality of God's Spirit and redemption in one's life. He encourages the listeners to remember their past encounters with God and to insist on seeking Him with their whole hearts. The sermon concludes with an invitation to partake in the communion table, where the preacher emphasizes the potential for a personal revelation of Christ.

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## Transcript

Luke, chapter 13, this past week, last Lord's Day, first instance, yesterday, the second, individuals have come to me, either directly or through someone, saying, I saw, I see, I know. For the first time, I know what you mean, what you're talking about. I've heard, but now I see.

Having come this way twice during the week has impressed upon my heart the appropriateness of the message the Lord has laid there. And I believe no place in the scripture more relevant to this particular theme, revelation in the Christian life, than the text that I've chosen. When I use the word revelation, as you understand, I'm not speaking of something in addition to the scripture.

We have here a full, final, complete, unamendable, unchangeable testimony of God's will and purpose for us. No question in your mind, I'm sure, as to what I mean in that. This is his word, and we so receive it, we so accept it.

But when we use the word revelation as referring to the Christian life, have reference to this. A truth is not mine or yours because we have heard it, because we have described it, because we can define it or prove it. Now, hearing, remembering, defining, proving are all essential steps in Christian growth and experience.

But there is this further matter set forth here, seldom understood by us, I'm sure, but that is the key to growth, maturity, and development in the things of the Lord. Let's go back to the text and see why I have prefaced the message with these words. Behold, two of them that same day went to a village called Emmaus, and they talked together.

We'll go down now to the 19th verse, and he said unto them, what things? And they said unto him concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was the prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And then we'll go over to verse 22. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre.

And when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre and found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not. Notice the testimony that they have received.

They have heard the word from the women. They have heard the word from the apostles which visited the tomb. But all of this is neutralized in their minds as far as being significant and meaningful is concerned, because it says, but him they saw not.

And I have wondered through the years of my own experience, why thinking back over past teaching, good teaching, teaching which was orthodox, sound, practical, in every way addressed to my need. Why it was that teaching that I received at one time was not made mine for 10, 15, sometimes even 20 years, and probably in tomorrow there will be truths which were learned with the intellect back years ago that have burst into life, for it's a continuing process. Why is this? If you'll excuse, and you have to because I'm here and you're there, personal testimony, I'd like to relate something that happened and so as to give a background, because this is testimony of these men, and I'll join mine to it.

As a lad, came to know the Lord Jesus Christ at a conference, a camp meeting, in South St. Paul, Minnesota. And the next day, after a night of joy and delight in the realization that I'd been born of God, I went to see the young people's worker, Miss Julia Hibbert, dear, gracious, coddly woman, who'd been such a blessing, such a help. But as I saw her on the grounds that morning and ran up to her and said, Oh, Miss Hibbert, last night I was born of God, I was saved.

She smiled, put her hand on my shoulder, said, Oh, I'm so glad to hear that. But she said, You know, what you need is to be sanctified. And this was true, because this was our conference testimony.

And so she began to talk to me. We sat down on a bench, and she explained it to me. And of course, I was eager for everything the Lord had, everything that he gave and wanted to give.

And so she said, Do you understand, Sonny? I said, Yes, I do. I think I do. She said, All right, let's go into the altar.

The Lord met you there last night. Let's go there. So we went back to the same altar where I'd been just a few hours previously.

She had explained to me, she asked me if there were any questions, if I had any problem. And as far as I could understand, I thought I knew what she was talking about. And so she said, Well, all right, let's pray.

And then she prayed a simple prayer, and then she told me somewhat how to pray, asking the Lord to cleanse my heart and fill me with himself to sanctify me wholly. And I prayed. And so we got up and she

said, Well, I said, I don't feel any different.

She said, That's all right. We're just trusting the Lord, taking this by faith. We walked out and we met the evangelist that had been speaking the night before, who was on his way into the morning ministry, for in the old time camp meetings you spoke at night and then the next morning, and then not till the following afternoon.

And so she said, Oh, doctor, he has, and she gave him my name. She said, He has a test, something he wants to tell you. And so I said, Well, last night at the meeting, I was born of God.

Oh, she said, Tell him about what we've just done. Oh, yes. I said, And this morning we've gone in and we prayed, and I've been sanctified.

Now, the point I want you to see is this, that there was revelation in the first. This has been God's dealing for weeks, stripping, breaking, crushing, dividing between soul and spirit, exposing, bringing me to the place of bankruptcy, waking me in the nighttime, proving to me I was lost, bringing to bear every kind of pressure, every kind of force, until the night before he had, in this glorious, supernatural way, unveiled the fact that Jesus Christ died for me, and that I knew I'd been born again. To me this was wonderful.

I could have gone on for weeks in the delight of it, the joy of it, the exhilaration of it, the thrill of it. Now, I believe in sanctification. I believe that it's necessary for one that's after regeneration to come to a crisis of death to self, a presentation of their body, and experience consciously and inwardly, in a very real way, the fullness of the Spirit of God.

I believe that with all my heart. But the point I'm trying to make out is this. She was so anxious for me to grow and to go on and to develop and to become all that she knew I ought to be, that she just couldn't wait for the Lord to do for me, in respect to this, what he had done in respect to forgiveness and to regeneration.

So years later, after having gone to Bible school and into the pastorate and then to the mission field, I came home from the mission field, utterly at the end, and went, as is related to some of you, to seminary, didn't attend, but stayed for a month or more in the dormitory, having a time of spiritual inventory. And this is what happened. After a month of searching through the past, for reality, I discovered that from 1949, right back through the years of the mission field, and back through Bible school, and back through beginning pastoral experience, right down across the years, I had made the mistake of thinking that because I could diagram out this doctrine, and I could define the doctrine, and could explain the doctrine, and preach the doctrine, and believe the doctrine, that I automatically could assume I'd experienced it.

And so I went back from 49, right on down, until I came to 1932. And I assure you, dear friends, that if there had not been, under all of this reality, right then I was prepared to go out into agnosticism, because I had come to the end, utter end, of myself. If there had not been something real, something that could stand the test, this is what would have happened.

But when I got back to that night in the straw, there at that altar, when in brokenness, in contrition, and in faith, I had opened my heart to Jesus Christ, and had passed from death to life, I could no more deny that than to deny my own existence as a person. And so I had to stop right there. What? After all of these years, 17 years, I found that I had to begin where she met me that morning.

For she had taken me out of the realm of experiential reality, into the realm of evangelical presumption. Do you see? And you can't build a life on evangelical presumption. Won't hold.

Won't stand the test. Won't stand the pressure. Won't stand the force.

These men had heard that Christ had been risen from the dead. They heard that the women had seen an angel. They heard the testimony of Peter and John.

But you see, they had been living in the realm of reality, and had they moved on in the basis of presumption, they would have been exposed to every kind of onslaught. And so rather than simply take as being credited as true the testimony that had been given, they didn't deny it. They simply said, but we, him, they saw not.

They saw the grave clothes lying as though a body were in them, empty. They saw the stone rolled away. They saw the women that had seen the angel.

They saw Peter and John. But him they saw not. And they were not prepared to base their future upon this.

As good as it was, they weren't just saying it wasn't so. They're simply saying that when he was alive, we saw him. We walked with him.

We heard him. If he's alive, we'll see him. We'll hear him.

We'll walk with him. And they were not prepared to begin this phase of their ministry on anything less than an inward, personal, experiential reality. And so they were on their way to Emmaus.

Apparently they were simply going home. Someone, as I've heard messages preached here on doubting. I don't know that it was doubting.

I'm not saying it was doubting. I'm simply saying that it was the recognition of honest men, that if the things said were true, that there would be adequate proof. And they would not have to base their future on an assumption.

There would be reality. And our Lord recognized this. And our Lord honored this.

Do you see? He honored it. And he honors, he honors, may I be perfectly frank and say, he honors honest doubting. He honored Thomas.

Thomas wasn't satisfied. He said, oh no, don't involve me in this until I can put my finger into his hand and my hand into his side. Here was a man that said, my soul demands proof.

I want reality. I'm not going to be content with what I've heard. It's good.

I have no question. But if this is so, then, then. And with that, we find that the Lord honored Thomas.

You say he did? Oh yes. You say, should everyone doubt? Oh no. But you see, the fact was that Thomas was honest in this.

Honest at the place where he said, if then, and I believe that in every human heart there is certainly, sometimes, someplace, someday, an if, then. And I can think of nothing more disastrous for your Christian

character and development in ministry than if you have an honest if accompanied by a then, you just ignore it. Because you're going to live all your life in the crippling effect of not having had your if satisfied, so that your then could be strong.

Inevitably, God has set forth here that he will not play with the superficial. We see this in the case of the Pharisees. They said, if you be the Christ, there is no time for them.

Because they knew. They had not accepted that which in, and playing. God is not going to have anyone play games with.

Clearly, the Lord Jesus had nothing. But with these that had walked in light, and walked in truth, and met his terms, he honored the honesty of their heart. He recognized it.

He accepted it. And he met them on that level. Now, too frequently, we find that there's a compromise here.

People are saying, if there is a revelation, then I will do what I know I ought to do. And there'll never be any revelation, then. There'll never be anything from the Lord.

As when a person is walking in the light of all that he knows, and doing what is right, simply and only because it is right, he can expect the Lord to meet him in the terms of the particular problem that arise out of this. But you can't, one can't otherwise. I believe that it's absolutely necessary for a person to repent, even if there's no heaven.

We dwelt all last Lord's Day morning on this. If there weren't any heaven, if there weren't any escape from hell, I believe that morally awakened men ought to repent of their sin because of the high treasonous nature of sin, the high crime of sin, turning from rightful government to anarchy. But, be that as it may, we do know that with repentance is unto life.

And we recognize, therefore, that we can't separate the two and say to the sinner, repent so that it be just because Jesus Christ is able. But we also know that we can frankly say to him, don't just repent so that you'll escape hell, because there's no answer there. Jesus Christ must be seen, he must be met, and repentance must be based on this, that since he is God come in the flesh, lived and died and conquered death and rising from the dead, he is worthy to be obeyed, he's worthy to be served, worthy to be loved and worshiped and adored, and so I gladly give a quick-claimed deed to all the rights I have claimed are mine, and I am going to render to Jesus Christ the obedience, the service, the worship, the adoration that he deserves, just because he deserves it.

Now, on the level of this, this commitment to the sovereignty of Christ, this commitment to the lordship of Christ because of the truth, then I know full well that when this is genuine, when this is real, there will be a revelation. There will be a revelation of Jesus Christ to the heart. The Christian life begins with personal revelation.

John Wesley, and I've repeated this so many times, I'm sure many of you are weary of it, John Wesley added to the testimony of the Reformers, the other collateral truth that you cannot presume you're justified because you believe in the doctrine. For when you have savingly repented and received Christ, you have the witness of the Spirit. You know because of an inward, personal revelation that God gives to your heart.

And this is how anyone finds out they're saved, and if anyone has found out on any other basis than the fact that he has the witness of the Spirit, saved he may be, but the grounds of this assurance are utterly fallacious. There's no other real ground for knowing that one is born of God than the fact that he knows by that inward revelation that the Spirit of God gives called the witness of the Spirit, that he is a child of God. Now there will be collateral proof, there will be evidences, but we can't begin the Christian life on the level of presumption because God said this, and I've done this, and this, and this, therefore I presume I am saved.

It's far too great a weight that you're suspending on far too slender a thread to swing your soul out over the abyss of hell, to land on the shore of eternity on the level of an assumption that because I've done this, and this, and this, therefore I must be. I submit to you it's far, far too great a weight to swing from such a slender thread. Jesus Christ is alive, he is the Son of God, he has conquered death, and he does meet the repentant believing heart, and he does witness, and you can know.

This is a testimony, you can know, and the Christian life has to begin there because if it doesn't begin there, there's no place for reality thereafter, and there's no possibility of reality thereafter, and the Christian life must begin on the level of a personal revelation. Salvation is revelation that not only that Jesus Christ is not only the revelation given in the Word, but the revelation confirmed in the heart. Surely it's true in the Word, but how are you going to know that what you believe to be true in the Word of God is now personally, inwardly, true in your own experience unless God confirms it to you? And so the beginning of the Christian life is on the basis of a revelation that God has said to your heart, just as someone witnessed to you about Christ, and you believe that witness, now the Spirit of God witnesses to you that what you believed and done is right and genuine, and you inwardly know that you've been born of God.

And it's this, dear heart, it's this lack of inward reality that drives so many people out into agnosticism. So many young people that have grown up in our Sunday schools, in our youth meetings, and in our church, get out to college, get out on their own, and they're no longer interested. This is the cry of pastors of churches across the nation.

Why? And the answer is that they've gone through a formula, they've gone through a ritual, they've gone proceeded through a plan that's been laid before them, and when they've gotten out where the abrasive power of life has come to bear upon them, they've discovered they haven't any reality. And so they just drift away. This is the cry of parents, this is the cry of everyone that is thinking about our day and our responsibility.

What about the terrifying attrition? All right, the answer is this. The Spirit of God is real, and redemption is real. Not just a prism, it's real.

And when you're born of God, there's reality, and you know. Well, now it begins that way, but it continues that way. Here are people that had heard Jesus Christ's call, they had abandoned themselves to him, and now they are being told that he's alive from the dead, and they simply culminate their recital by saying, but him they saw not.

Now our Lord dealt with them on the basis of their need. Oh yes, he said, all fools and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken. And he has rebuked them undoubtedly, and there's no question about that.

And when I said that God deals with us on the level of our need, I meant that, but I also meant that there is, this is not the preferable way, of course. If we're going to be driven, well, he loves us enough to drive us, but there's a better way than that. But he did meet them there, rebuking them, yes.

But notice what he says, ought not Christ to have entered into his glory. They had failed to understand that the only way that the man Christ Jesus, God come in the flesh, could go back into glory and have all the attributes of the triune God in him, resident in him, manifest through him, was for him to go to the cross and into the tomb and vanquish death. Then by means of this, all of the attributes of the Trinity could be manifest in a man, and he could be glorified.

Christ, the anointed man, God-man, could now have exercised in him and through him all the attributes of deity. And there's a man in the glory and a glorified Christ, and he could only enter into his glory by way of the cross. He said, didn't you understand that this is the way it would be necessary for Christ to enter into his glory? So beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them the scriptures, the things himself.

And so we find that he gave them, in addition to recognizing the honesty of their own need, he gave them further teaching, further truth. He expounded to them. And so in this you will understand that when I speak of the necessity of revelation, in no wise am I reflecting on the necessity of teaching and contemplation and meditation.

In no wise, for I am certainly going to stand adamantly on this, that the ministry of God to the believer is essentially a teaching ministry, a preaching ministry, an exhorting ministry to the unsaved certainly. But even there, there has to be teaching. But to the church, to the believer, it's essentially an instructional ministry.

So he instructed them and noticed the teacher, none other than the Son of God, and noticed the teaching. Beginning with Moses and the prophets, he expounded unto them all the scriptures. Oh, what a testimony.

And of course, this was enough, wasn't it? Oh no, it wasn't. You see, it wasn't enough. It was necessary, but it wasn't enough.

And so if you have filled your notebooks with outlines and filled your minds with truth and memorized scripture, rejoice and be exceeding glad, it's glorious to have, but not necessarily enough. And if you could have no other teacher, no lesser teacher than the Son of God, it still wouldn't be enough. It's good.

It's indispensable. But just because you've heard, just because you can repeat, just because you can define and write and explain, does not authorize you or me to say, this is mine. Any more than the funnel should say the gas that pours through me is mine.

I am giving the gas. Oh no, something has to happen more than that to make it real. And so many a preacher has been a funnel from truth he takes out of his library and he filters through the spout of the funnel.

And many a Sunday school teacher has done the same. And many a Christian witness has done the same. They've just gathered and poured in and forced out.

There's more than that. They could have gone back and said, oh, do you not see what's in Moses? Do you not see what's taught in the prophets? They could have said, oh, this is marvelous, let's go. But you see,

they were honest of heart.

They said, all right, that's good, we understand that. And their hearts burned. But the burning of their heart and the illumination of their mind wasn't enough.

There still was another thumping. And so we find that as they come to the place where he's going away, he makes as if he would go on, because he's not forcing himself. They say, oh, stay with us.

It's evening, day is far spent. Stay, rest, abide. There's an inner hunger they can't verbalize.

There's an inner attraction, there's a sense of need, and now they must act obediently with this need. And so if you discover that in your heart teaching has done something and there's hunger, then cling to it. Cling to the source of hunger.

Cling to the source of teaching. Cling to that which has somehow caused your heart to burn. But don't mistake the burning for reality.

But cling, cling to the place cling to the thing, cling to the book, cling to the word, cling to the verse, cling. Don't let it go. Oh, how many times the Spirit of God has caused someone's heart to burn in the morning.

And then they go home and listen and talk and dissipate and fritter away. They don't cling. They don't possess.

And the Lord always is making as if he would go on. For he is only for thought of them who seek him with the whole heart. And you say, oh, you remember that morning back there six weeks ago when we were in the service? How God moved us.

But what happened? You didn't cling. You let it be dissipated. You let it be frittered away in idle conversation.

Perhaps even before you reached the street it had just, just evaporated. Some of you were to be wise when the Spirit of God causes your heart to burn. You'd sit there till the place was empty and then quietly go out.

Go find a quiet place to sit and cling to what's been stirred within you. So easy for us to dissipate and fritter. And when the Lord would make to go on, let him go on.

Instead of saying, oh, abide with us. Stay with us. We're beginning to touch reality.

So week after week the Lord comes and walks and the heart burns and then he goes on. Instead of clinging, holding. They came in, they had the meal and the Lord took the bread and he broke it and he blessed it.

And he said, take, eat. And this is what happened. He was revealed unto them in the breaking of the bread.

Where was it? It was at that point of worshiping faith. That place of a reminder of what he'd said to which they now joined themselves. As they remembered that he had said in the upper room, blessed as there was a moment of revelation.

But they cling, they clung to him. They stayed with him. They didn't let him go.

Oh yes, they'd heard the testimony of the women. They'd heard the testimony of the angel. They'd heard the testimony of Peter and John.

They'd heard the exposition of Christ. But still, there was something needed. There had to be a revelation.

Had to be a revelation. And if you're content with any of your contests with the testimony of the women, all right, you have what you're content with. You're content with the testimony of Peter and John, you have what you're content with.

You're content with the testimony of Andrew Murray and F.B. Meyer, you have what you're content with. You have testimony of Albert Benjamin Simpson, you have what you're content with. If you have the testimony of the word, you should study it.

You have what you're content with. But when you say, oh, I can't let him go unless he blesses me, then you'll find he'll stay. And he'll press you through and draw you through, but he'll bring a revelation of himself.

And it's always Christ who's revealed. Any revelation that doesn't focus on the Lord Jesus Christ is to be immediately ignored. Anything, any experience that doesn't exalt him and cause your heart to love him more and cling more closely to him and burden greater for others to know him, forget that.

For the revelation you seek is not an experience. It's the revelation, the unveiling of him, that the eyes of our understanding may be opened in the knowledge of him. It's a revelation of Christ.

And each step of your way is to be equally as real as the one you began. Now, I want to say this to you. As you began in the Christian life, so you've gone on.

If you began with presumption, you've gone on with presumption. If you began with meeting God, you may have been detoured into presumption, but somewhere back in your memory, you remember that you met God and you knew God. And it's to you I speak and cry out this morning saying, oh, remember better days.

Insist, for he'll meet your insistence. I cannot let thee go. I saw thee at Bethel, said Jacob.

I saw thy power, I saw thy glory, and now I cannot let thee go unless thou bless me. And he made as if he would go on and they prevailed upon him. When you find your heart burning and truth moving and you say, my soul demands reality, don't let go.

Clean, meditate, pray, wait, for God will be found of them who sought him, who seek him. We come to the table of the Lord. Here is the bread.

Will there be a revelation of Christ to your heart this morning? Here's the wine. There'll be a revelation of your heart. To some of you, it'll be just a little morsel on your tongue, moisture on your lips.

And to others, it'll be the unveiling of the body and blood of Christ and the wonder of his identification with you and yours with him. To some, it'll be a ceremony. To others, it'll be an experience.

Here is the table and there are you, and you come to the table as you are, and you receive what your soul demands and what you need. Are you coming? He's here. He's not the bread or the wine, but he's in the midst of his people to be met of you.

And he was revealed unto them in the breaking of the bread. Shall we bow our hearts together? Our heavenly father, eternity-bound men and women, walking in the Adam's race, so skeptical, will not believe what we say. They don't believe it, Lord.

We've told so many. They've heard and heard and heard again. They don't believe it.

They'll only believe what they see. Unless they see him, they won't believe us. But they can't see him in us unless there's been a revelation of him to us and in us.

And our hearts cry out to thee, dear Lord. There are twice as many people here this morning and more than there were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. And if in the breaking of the bread today there could be a revelation of Christ, oh, what glory thou couldst get to thyself.

But if it's the erudition of the speaker, the homiletical skill, the outline, tricky words and phrases, catchy amusement, oh God, words, words, words. Our soul can't be satisfied with words. Only with him who is the living word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant to thy people today a revelation of him, unveiling of him. If only one person could go saying, oh, I see him. I see him.

He's to be my life. I'm in him. He's in me.

I see him. Their life would be changed. Their witness would be changed.

Their home, their family would be changed just because they've had a revelation of thy son. So we pray that as we come to thy table, it may be a prepared people that are coming, broken, remembering all the truth they've heard, perfectly honest, transparently honest, and willing to say my soul demands reality. There must be a revelation of Christ.

I must see him. Meet us, Lord. We're so needy, so needy.

Meet us as we gather around the table of thy dear son, in his worthy name. Amen.

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