

# The Full Meaning of Life - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

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*The sermon explores the profound meaning of life through a genuine belief and commitment to Jesus Christ as the source of true fulfillment.*

**Duration:** 53:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:3, John 3:16, John 14:6, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8

**Topics:** "Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the message of John 3:16, which states that God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, Jesus, so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. The preacher uses a story to illustrate the cost of believing in Jesus. The story follows a man named John Freeman who leaves his home, wife, and child to follow the Duke, symbolizing the commitment and sacrifice required to believe in Jesus. The preacher also shares a personal experience of being visited by his son and having a conversation about faith. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus and the eternal life that comes with it.

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## Transcript

Let's go to John 3.6, shall we? We're going to give the verse as we did last Sunday. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted, but should begin to live now in the full meaning of life and go on living that way forever. Let's have a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for this season in which our minds look through that little keyhole of truth, revelation of thy word, through 2,000 years of bleak, black history, and see there a star that shined over a stable, and the roof of that stable divided time from before and after the event that took place there. We can't escape from him who was born there every time we sign a contract or a check. We acknowledge that the one who was born there of Abe, in a stable and lay in a manger, has had a profound impact upon our lives.

And today, our Father, we have before thee this explanation as to why that you loved the world and gave your only begotten Son, that if we should believe on him, we would not be wasted, but could experience the meaning of life and the purpose of life now in time, and go on in the ever-expanding fulfillment of that life forever. You planted eternity into our hearts. Now it's built it into our brains, given us so much more capacity that a few brief years of time will permit us to develop.

Put within us, Father, the reach that goes out to thyself and made us so that we can't be complete and fulfilled without thee. Thou hast so made us that we can't rest until we rest in thee. And so we ask thee that as we think today, that that star that shined then will have its light beam into our hearts.

And where there's darkness, there's an ability to understand and comprehend. In the name of him we love, whom thou didst give, the Lord Jesus, dispel that darkness and let the light of thy truth shine into our hearts and minds. We ask thee to bless each person here, each home represented has in it a need, a heartache, a burden, or a tragedy so enormous that only the one whom thou didst give, the Lord Jesus, of whom it was said, Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And in some one of these names is found the answer to that need, to that heartache, that burden, that tragedy. Might it be that we see him and the provisions of thy grace and love in him for these needs that are upon our hearts today.

Each of us have aspirations and hopes and longings that can only be fulfilled in him. So show us again thy son and lead us to him, we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

That whosoever believeth in him, this is a very strange word, believeth. All the words we have in scripture have to be understood, most of them through the passage of time have been robbed of their meaning, they've been weaseled, and I refer in that term weaseling to an experience that I had as a ride on the farm, visiting my uncle's farm near Champlin, Minnesota, and a lady sent me out to gather the eggs for her. And I came rushing in because I picked up an egg in one of the nests, and instead of it having the weight that was associated with an egg, my hand leaped.

And I looked at it and wondered why it was so light and found that there was a hole in the end. So I rushed to that lady and said, what is it? Oh, she said, that weasel's been there again. And then she told me how that this little rodent-like creature would get into the henhouse and would take an egg between its front paws and use its sharp front teeth and loosen up a hole in that egg and then suck the meat out without breaking the egg, and then put the egg back in the nest in hopes it wouldn't be discovered, you see.

And I learned at that time that eggs can be weaseled, and subsequently I learned that words can be weaseled. The passage of time can suck the meaning out of words in such a way that though we use them and we're familiar with them, they've acquired an entirely different meaning than they were intended to convey when they were used, as in this case, the word believe was used of the Lord Jesus. Actually, it has two, and you can't apply this generally, but it does seem to have some contribution here.

It's made up of two parts. First is be, which is to live or exist or have being. And the second is an ancient Anglo-Saxon root, liphon, which is not in general use today.

We don't use liphon that way. It survives in this form here. Believe from be, be liphon.

Liphon actually conveyed the idea of together, with. So this would literally mean to live or exist or have your being together with Jesus Christ. And it's a good word.

We'll see next week, as we look at the full part of the verse, that the word liphon occurs in another word in this verse. But here we see it as to live, to exist, or to have your being together with, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, to believe in him. Now, let's illustrate how it would have, the weight it would have had to the

King James translator.

Only in that way can we measure whether or not it means that to us today. Back at the time of King James and earlier, there was a feudal system in England. Most people were of the serf class.

There were a few who, for some reason, had acquired that state of being free man. And whenever you meet someone whose name is Freeman, it probably has a root back in England, when for some service or work or paying a price, the person was able to purchase his freedom from serfdom and become a free man. But most of the people were serfs.

Now, to illustrate how believe would have been used, can you imagine a man who, in battle as a serf under the banner of his liege lord, his duke, would have saved the duke's life? And as a result of this, he would have been given manumission papers, he would have been declared free, and he would have been given a piece of ground and perhaps a horse and a cow and some chickens and some geese and an axe to go and clear the woods and plant his farm and build his house. He was a free man. But he still would live under the protection of his liege lord.

Now, in this particular situation, he has his farm, little farmstead. He's built a house out of stone and timber, thatched roof, a thatched roof barn. He has a few animals, a few acres that he's cleared in his killing, and he's a free man.

And life is becoming sweet to him now because he has his wife and his little child, his first child. But one morning, as he is on his way to his chores, a horseman rides into his yard and says, Are you John Freeman? Aye, I'm John Freeman. Do you, have you given your allegiance to the duke of so-and-so? Aye, and I have.

Do you believe on him? I do. And with that, he then says, John Freeman, I want you to be there on the first day of the week at six o'clock when sun up. Aye.

So the morning comes, when he gets up, he has to walk two or four hours, so taking a torch, perhaps his dog, his club of staff, and a little food, he starts off. He comes to the castle, and there are others, also free, that have come in. And they wait beside the fires that have been built to take the morning chill off until the door is opened and one of the attendants of the duke comes out.

John Freeman. And he comes in, walks, and there he sees the man whose life he saved, his benefactor, the duke. And the duke greets him and thanks him again and says, Do you believe on me, John? Aye, sir, I do.

John, will you fight my sovereign? Aye, sir. And so his name is given, the clerk comes, writes his name, makes his X, and give him a gold sovereign, a little gold coin. And John puts it between his front teeth and bites it until there's an unmistakable, discernible mark made by his teeth in the gold.

And it's put into a little bag, and his name is put on it, and he gives his mark against his name, declaring that it's his. That's all, John. Sire, why have you called us? Well, there's a threat against our lands, and I may need you.

Will you fight for me? Aye, sir, I bid you so. You have my promise. I believe on you.

And so he goes back to his home, back to his farm, back to his work. But he's now a committed man. A few months later, in the middle of the night, his horsemen clatter right into his yard and call John Freeman.

And he comes up, and there again with thoughts, he steps out. And the duke, you there, have you believed on the duke? I have. Have you been disobedient? I have.

Be there tomorrow morning at sunup. Now, John goes back into his little house. His wife and he have been anticipating this time.

They know all what it means. They know all what it costs. He's going out, leave his home, leave his little farm, leave his wife and small baby, because he has believed on the duke.

He is living together with, he has committed himself to the duke. And so in a short time, he has taken such garments as he can wrap into a little roll of a blanket. And he has taken a little food that's been prepared against this day.

His staff, his torch. With his wife, he goes and stands and looks into the crib of his sleeping son. They walk out to the barn and see the quiet animal.

Stand at the edge of the field and listen to the rustling corn or grain. And then back to the house, one last embrace. And she says, John, you must go or you'll be late for the duke.

And she gently pushes him to the door, holding back the tears and probs that are there. And he can hear as the bar drops across the door, as he steps out into the night with the flickering shadows cast by his torch. Now what, why? Why is he doing this? You mean to say he doesn't love his wife and child? Oh, no.

He doesn't love that little piece of ground that's his future? No. He loves both of them. He loves his wife, his child.

He's deeply committed to this little homestead that he has. But he also realizes that that carries with it a price. And he's made a commitment.

And that commitment means that he is available to the duke, who has committed himself to the preservation and the protection of John and all of those with him. He believes on it. And so, with his heart back there, he walks out through the night until he can see the torches from the castle door, and comes in and joins this other company of men to take the uniform, to take the halberd and the spears or the war club or whatever it is, the bow, the arrow, the crossbow, whatever it is that he will be using for in his obedience to and his support of the duke.

Now, friends, that's what you have when you have the word believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. No right little tipping of the hat. Oh, yes, I believe.

No intellectual agreement as the substance of it. No acceptance of a few logical deductions. No embrace of a system of doctrine.

No memorization of a few scripture verses as the sum of these. Not saying aha to a few questions at the right place. It's far more than that.

To believe in the New Testament means that one brings their entire being, body, soul and spirit, all they are and all they have, into a lifelong commitment to the person of Jesus Christ. That separates the men

from the boys. That separates those who have just a superficial response to the scripture, and those that have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, it's so important for us to understand this, because we live in a day when everything is cheapened and everything is shoddy, and when the cheaper you can make it and the shoddier you can make it, apparently at times at least, it seems the more successful you are. And we've lived in it through in the last 37 years with my ministry, I have had to see the, what I would call the weaseling of the gospel to the point where it's reduced down to a mere decision, just a few words, instead of what the scripture indicates, a commitment to the person of the Son of God. And the consequence, well, there are different kinds of faith.

Paul writing to the church in Rome says, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. I've found several different kinds of belief or faith. I've found a head faith that I've referred to, an intellectual assent to what's written.

I've found a dead faith, an appropriation of doctrines of rituals and taboos. I've found a devil's faith, an emotional response to the horrors of hell and to the wonders of heaven. And then I have found heart faith.

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. And in the scripture, heart stands for the seat of the entire personality, the total focus of the being, with the intellect and the emotions and the will, we're all converged on a commitment to the person of Jesus Christ, to himself. Let me illustrate the consequence of it.

I perhaps have done this sometimes past if some of you were here, but we're talking about the most important part of John 16. When I was a pastor in New York City, one Sunday evening, I was setting forth the claims of Christ and gave an opportunity for those who wanted to respond to do so by walking not to the front, but to the back and going into a room that we had to the side. I was rather surprised to see my 12-year-old son, 13-year-old son, who would get up from his seat and walk out and go into that room along with others.

I was obligated to talk to some after the service. There were friends that went in with the ones that had come, and then as soon as I could, I went in. And my associate had talked with my son and said, Jim, perhaps you'd like to tell your father what you've done.

And Jim said, Dad, I've taken Jesus Christ to be my Savior. I've accepted him. I said, Jim, I'm so glad.

I didn't say much more. I had others that were there, and I was very pleased, of course. But within a couple of weeks, Lozai and my wife sensed that there was something a little niche in Jim.

He was trying hard, but there didn't seem to be a great deal of dynamics, so we just continued to pray with him. It's very difficult to be a pastor at home, you know, where religion is a family business. You've got to have some degree of such sensitivity, lest you should make your children the product of your professional activity instead of the overflow of your love.

So you always have to be a little bit sensitive. We tried today, and things went on, and I didn't say much. We moved then up into the country and went to school.

Jim was helpful. I had been speaking several years at Harvey Cedar's Bible Conference the last week before Labor Day, and this year, Jim, between his junior and his senior year in high school, discerned to go with me for the week. So he was down, enjoyed the sea, went fishing in the ocean.

Then we took Labor Day afternoon and the following day just to see some of the early American pre-Revolution sites in southern New Jersey and had a pleasant day together. We were driving to our home up in Greene County, New York. We turned off the thruway at Catskill and gone up through Wyndham and coming to the point where we turned off to go up to our home on Huddersfield Mountain.

And just from the time we left Wyndham, Jim hadn't said much. He'd been quiet. We'd been talking back and forth all day.

And I thought perhaps he was tired, and when I turned, I had to almost come to a stop and then go up the hill. As I was just making that turn, Jim said, Dad, would you stop when you get to the top of the hill? There's a kind of a brow on it. So I said, sure.

He pulled over and sighed and I just waited, left the lights on and the dash light was on. I could see he was thinking. He said, Dad, do you remember back when I went forward, I went to the room, the prayer room that night at the Yeah.

He said, Dad, nothing happened. Nothing happened at all. Just a few days after that, I knew that nothing had happened.

And he said, Dad, I've been listening to you for a week down at Harvey Cedars. He said, I just got to be honest with you. I got a level with you.

He said, I don't know if there's a God. I don't know if there's ever been a Jesus. I don't know if the Bible's true.

I don't know anything. And I just can't fool you anymore. I can't pretend something that isn't so.

I got to be honest. And I said, Jim, do you, do you know the plan of salvation? Oh, sure. He said, I've heard that all my life.

Sure. I know the plan of salvation. I said, do you know the one key in it that Jesus Christ saves lost people? He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Yeah, I know that. Well, he said, I said, Jim, sometime you're going to find out how lost you are and when you do the most important thing in the world to you is going to be the plan of salvation until such a time it doesn't amount to that. I said, Jim, knowing the plan of salvation before you know you're lost is like knowing about a doctor that's good in curing, helping people get over cancer when you don't have cancer.

But as soon as the doctors tell you you've got it, boy, then you say, what's the name of that one I heard about? And I said, that's the way it is with the plan of salvation, Jim. It doesn't mean much till you need it. Sometimes, son, you're going to realize how lost you are and how desperately you need Jesus Christ.

Now, I said, when you do, if you know the plan of salvation, then what's been just words and doesn't have any meaning to you up till now is going to become the most important thing in the world. And Jim, I learned it from, I'm going to make a promise to you and I want you to make a promise to me, okay? I'm never going to bring this subject up again of my own. Never.

If you want to talk to me about it every morning and noon and night, that's up to you. But I will never initiate this subject again. It's up to you.

Because I can't save you, Jim. I can do the same thing that somebody did there that time, but that's not enough. You've got to meet Christ.

And I'm just not going to bring it up again. Now, I'll be glad to talk to you about it, Jim. But you've got to bring it up.

I can't. And your mother won't either. I'll talk to her.

Now, I said, I want you to go on being cooperative and helpful and go to church with us and do everything you've been doing as long as you're at home. But after you're finished, then you're going to go to college and you'll be on your own soon enough. So as long as you're home, I want complete cooperation, but we're not going to bug you.

Now, that's my promise. Now, your promise, Jim, is this. That when you do find out how lost you are and you do find Jesus Christ and he does save you and you know that you've believed on him from the heart, I don't know where you'll be or when you'll be, but if I'm alive, I want you to start from wherever you are as soon as you know that you have met Jesus Christ in a real way.

And I want you to come to me and personally tell me. We're sitting here personally now, talking. I'll never bring it up again.

Maybe the next time a subject is raised, Jim, is when you tell me that you've received Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior. Will you promise me that? He said, I will, Dad. And he put his hand out and he gripped it.

Well, I didn't pray. I didn't give him the plan of salvation. Didn't do anything.

I just started the car. We went home and we talked the way we'd talked before. Best we could.

Not much, but some. And the next morning, we just went on as though we had before. And I told my wife that night, and she agreed with me, this is what we should do.

He went through that year as a senior. Then went the next summer, worked, and went on to Cornell where he was in YAG school. And after about a month, his older brother, who was a senior, called and said, Mom, I don't know what, but Jimmy, Jimmy's, uh, geez, Jimmy's surprising me.

He's real wild. He's doing, he's doing things I never thought that Jim would do. What should I do? Should I talk to him? And Marjorie said in no uncertain terms, you leave him alone.

Don't you say one word to him. If you want to talk to anybody, you talk to the Lord about yourself and about him. But don't you talk to Jim.

When you have him, we'll talk to my, your dad and I'll talk to you about it. But you just leave him alone. Because we knew that he had to find out how lost he was before he'd ever need a savior.

Because you see, Christ only saves lost people. He didn't come to seek and to save the righteous, but the lost. And that's why more people are finding him.

They've never discovered how lost they were. You got to get people to realize that before they, before he has any meaning to them. Well, November, I was responsible to go down to Louisiana and Florida and did

and came back on Thursday, got in about eight o'clock.

I was beat. It had been a rough, hard, difficult trip. Long hours.

When I drove into the yard, there was a strange Volkswagen. I didn't know who it belonged to. Went in and it was Gene Chase, whom I'd met and, and, and Jim.

And I didn't know why they were home, but I was delighted to see them. I visited for a while and then I began to, my eyes began to flip shut as I watched the fire. And so I said, well, you'll have to excuse me.

I just got to get some rest. I'll see you in the morning, Jim. He said, no, dad.

Well, I said, I'm glad to see you. And I walked out and then I heard him say, dad, can I talk to you for a minute? We were in the dining room and I said, sure. He said, let's sit down.

So he looked at me, he said, dad, you remember a little over a year and three months ago when we stopped down here by the side of the road? Yeah, Jim, I remember. It hasn't been a day since. I haven't remembered.

He said, I know that. I said, but why? Well, he said, uh, you told me sometime I'd find out how lost I was. He said, I have.

I didn't know how long it'd take. I guess God's been working a little bit too, but he said, I began to get a frighten of what I was and what I could be and what I could do. He said, a week ago last Wednesday, Gene called me just out of the blue.

He'd been praying for me. And he said, and he invited me to go to prayer meeting of all places, the Alliance church. The one place I didn't want to go was there.

So I went over to prayer meeting and he said, you mentioned me going to prayer meeting, dad. I said, you went? Yeah. He said, then we talked and Gene saw 12 o'clock.

And I got into my room and said, oh, I'm glad that's over. I'll never do that again. He conned me once, but that's it.

Uh, next Wednesday night he called me and said, Jim, I'm going to prayer meeting. I'll pick you up. And he said, dad, I said, okay.

And so he said, we went to prayer meeting and we talked till about 1230 in his car. And I went up and I, I tried to go to sleep, but I didn't sleep. By one 30, I got up and I sat at the edge of my bed and I thought this thing through.

And he said, dad, somewhere between two 30 and three 30 or four, Jesus Christ came into my heart. I believed on him the way you've been talking about. I've committed my life to it.

He said, you remember, you made me promise that I'd come. Well, he said, that was Wednesday night, Thursday night. I had tests all day.

I got a test at eight 30 in the morning, but I had to keep that promise. He said, we're getting up at four 30 and driving back. No, that's what I'm talking about.

That whosoever believe it on him. See the first time he'd been confronted with a plan and script reverses and system. And it was all true.

And he agreed with it, but the difference was he assumed because he intellectually concurred. That it was true in him because his definition of belief was to agree with what is taught. That's not what the word says.

It's not to agree with what is taught that's implicit in it. Of course, John Freeman had to believe that the Duke was an honorable man and a man who would keep his word and was concerned about the people living in the area for which he was the administrative leader, governor. He believed in the person, but that wasn't what the word belief meant.

Intellectually convinced of the integrity and the truth was far more than that. Was to live, to act, to have one's being in accordance with the control and the direction of God upon whom you believe. And that's what he did.

He believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, who is that to whom do I refer? I'm speaking of my son. Yes, but I'm also speaking of Saul of Tarsus, who was convinced that Jesus Christ was an imposter.

That he was the worst thing that ever hit Israel. That he'd do more to destroy the possibility of Israel ever regaining its freedom from Rome because of the fact that he would fragment the loyalties of the people and he would destroy the capacity of the Pharisees to provide that continuity of leadership that was necessary if Israel was to ever become a significant nation again. And so he thought the greatest service that he could render to Israel was to eradicate the memory of this imposter that had appeared for a brief time and created such havoc among his countrymen.

So he dedicated himself to destroying this incipient movement around the memory of a dead Jew. Then he had something happen. Probably the first impact that really hit that granite facade enough to make a hairline crack was when he stood there that day consenting to an illegal act, holding the coats of those who were stoning Stephen.

And Stephen, bruised and broken and bleeding, who should have been cowering under this hail of death, barely shook off the stones and, ignoring the dangers that were represented, stood, or at least upon his knees stood, and looked up into heaven and said, I see Jesus standing on the right hand of the throne on high. Someone said, why was he standing? Well, he'd been seated there, yes, but this was the first time anyone had died for their faith in him. And you see, the word witness means martyr, and this was the first one who had witnessed for him by his life.

And so all the Pharisees saw him. Ten days later on the road to Damascus, that south road, about 15 miles from Damascus, the testimonials that are great shined around about him, and he heard a voice, the others heard noise only. And how strange it is that to so many the word of God and the truth of God is just noise, whereas to a few it's the voice of heaven.

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Who art thou? said this good Pharisee who believed in angels and continued revelation. Who art thou, one to be worshipped, to be revered? I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. Now look, this is Jesus.

This is the Jesus whose memory he's been trying to eradicate from the minds of his countrymen. This is the Jesus who lived and walked and worked for three years, who was crucified, was buried, and was said to have been raised from the dead, and now is speaking to him. And he is aware of what is being said, and

he has to either deny his own sanity or he has to accept what is being said to him.

And so being convinced that Jesus Christ is alive, there's only one thing that you can do. There's only one thing you can do when God becomes man. You either have to commit yourself to him or have to kill him.

Well, they tried the second, and that wasn't successful. They only left with the first. And so he believed on the Lord Jesus.

He believed. Now, what did it mean? That meant that he was going to live, act, and exist in accordance with Jesus Christ. And what were his words? Lord, you are God, you are the one to be worshiped and to be obeyed.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Faith was expressed in a commitment to obey. That's what believe means. Not just to intellectually assent and agree with what's written, but it is a commitment to live, to exist, to have your being in obedience to the one in whom and upon whom you believe.

Believe on him. Whosoever believeth in him should not perish. This means, therefore, a total commitment of the entire being, every part of the being, to this person whom we now are, whom we now are convinced is worthy of our belief.

It's slowly given. It has to be given early on good evidence. John Freeman doesn't rightly bite a sovereign of anybody that passes by.

He doesn't commit himself in this fashion to be instantly and immediately and totally available to someone. That's not done rightly. He had to be convinced in the integrity and the honor.

If not, he might have had to have left, as how many did, and flee to another area because they didn't have that confidence in the character and the integrity of the one whom demanded this of them. But being convinced that Jesus Christ was God, that he could safely believe on him, then there was no hesitation. He bit the sovereign, if you please.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And from that time on, you find belief in action, the instant obedience to Christ, the total commitment to him. Now, in the life of Paul, you find three missionary journeys. And if you do as I did and go through everything in reference to the life of Paul, you find that those three missionary journeys comprise a period of about seventeen and a half to eighteen years.

The astounding thing is that they were over a period of thirty-five years. I'm not a fanatic. A period of thirty-five years, not just seventeen.

In other words, he was prepared not only to go, but he was prepared to stay. And someone has asked me, what did he do during those seventeen years? Well, there's one word that describes it. Everything we know about that extra seventeen years is comprised in the word abode.

And he abode a long while. We don't know what he was doing while he was aboding, but we do know that there's no other activity ascribed to him during that period. So to believe on Christ does not necessarily mean that one is involved with spectacular activities as he was in his missionary journey.

He was just as committed not to do something as he was to do something. So believing in Christ is not necessarily to be made synonymous with career or activity or involvement. Isn't it interesting that if the hundred and twenty people were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, we only find New Testament

reference to eleven? What about the other hundred and nine? Well, there's a collateral church history reference to one of them, a chap by the name of Thomas.

Yeah, he had trouble with believing, didn't he? Remember? The Lord came into the upper room and Thomas wasn't there. I was asked by somebody once, where was he? And I had to give an answer quick. I said, he'd gone down to the employment agency to register.

He figured he'd be ten up on the rest of that. Now, you can't say I was wrong. It's your burden.

Anyway, he wasn't there. And when he came back, they said, Thomas, the Lord was here. I'm not a fanatic, but I also like Luke.

And he said, the Lord is here. Boy, that's bad medicine. Because that meant he was somewhere else when he should have been there.

That meant that he didn't really believe Christ was raised from the dead. He didn't really believe he was God. And that, therefore, he had to do, commit the only sin that's in good standing.

In Hebrews chapter 12, in verse 1, you have an interesting verse. And that is, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. But really, the proper translation of that is, every weight and the sin which is in good standing.

And the only sin that's in good standing in most companies is unbelief. That you'll always find people to console you and agree with you and support you when you're unbelief. There's no question about that.

But what happened then is that he has this responsibility to vindicate being away. So it's a simple little thing. He says, alright, I just don't believe that he was here.

I think you fellows were under group hypnosis. I don't think he was here, and I won't believe he's alive from the dead until I can take my finger and put it right into the place where that nail went through his hand, and take my hand and put it into the place where the soldier's spear went to his side. Then I'll believe.

But not until. Well, the next time the Lord comes, he just waits until Thomas is back from wherever he's been. And as he's there in the midst of them, he says, Thomas, stretch forth thy finger and put it into my hand.

Stretch forth thy hand and put it into my side. Not only is he alive, not only does he have a nail wound in his hand, a spear wound in his side, but he knows everything Thomas has said, and he still loves him. That's the amazing thing about the Lord Jesus Christ.

He loved us when he knew the worst about us. But Thomas, who was so arrogant in how he was going to do it, walked right up and face-to-face put his finger in his hand, not now. I see him overwhelmed with the revelation that Jesus Christ is alive, and Jesus Christ is God.

And he falls on his hands and knees, and he crosses the floor crawling. And then he buries his face in wounds, all right, but the nail wounds in his feet, and washes those wounds with his tears. And from his broken heart he cries, My Lord, and my God, he believes.

The next we hear of Thomas. Oh, he's in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, but he's never mentioned in the New Testament again. We find him mentioned in the Patristic writings, this believer.

He's in the export-import business. He's gone out to India to bring back pepper and spices. You see, they didn't have refrigeration.

The only way they could preserve meat was through spices, and spices at one time were a pound of pepper for a pound of gold, because it was so useful. And so Thomas is there on the west coast. On the east coast, he had much greater success on the west coast.

On the east coast near Madras, he was successful. His first visit, his second visit, there was a church planted, a group of believers. On his third visit, the religious leaders met him, and when his little lighter put off the ship and landed, they came from ambush and started to hurl their spears at him, and Thomas started to run down the beach, and a spear was thrown and pierced him in the shoulders, and he fell to the ground, and they came upon him and cut him in pieces.

This was the man who knelt at the feet of the Lord Jesus. My Lord, my God. But I want to say this, that after nearly 200 years of modern missions in India, Thomas has more spiritual descendants than all the missionaries we've been able to send for that 200 years.

There are more Christians in India that are descendants, spiritual descendants, of the Church of Marcoma, of Saint Thomas, and from all the other activities he's had in these 150 to 200 years. Belief? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? It meant a total commitment to the Son of God. Even when he wasn't involved with the missionary journeys of Paul or the activities of Peter, he found his place as a businessman in export, import, trade, and as he was going, he preached the gospel because he believed.

So what does it mean, whosoever believeth in him? That's what it means to commit your life wholly, irrevocably, unreservedly to the Son of God. Call to the person of the Son of God. Come, follow me.

Lord, what will Paul have me to do? The evidence of your faith is not in how many verses of scripture you've memorized or how eloquently you can repeat the plan of salvation, but the proof that you've believed in the Lord Jesus Christ is your total and complete obedience to the Son of God. Whosoever believeth in him does not perish. Father, we thank you that you've made it so simple and so clear and so plain in this gift of your Son, so profound that the greatest philosophers can't comprehend it, and so simple that a little child can understand.

To believe, to utterly and totally commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, is the only one who's wise enough and big enough and good enough that we can do everything you will tell us and never be embarrassed, never be ashamed, never be disappointed in him. We're disappointed in ourselves and we're disappointed in our fellows, but never in him. And therefore, you didn't ask us to believe on the Church or believe on the preachers or believe on the evangelists or believe on the missionary draft.

You asked us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the one who's been more closely scrutinized than any other person in history, and no fault or flaw is found in him. And so, Father, today we're asking that we may come into a new understanding of this verse, that God loved the world and gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted, but should begin to live now and time in the full meaning of life, and then go on living that way forever.

Thank you, Father, for this time together. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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