

Christ's Revolutionary View of Life

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the revolutionary nature of Christianity, urging believers to prioritize Christ and serve others over material pursuits.

Duration: 33:10

Scripture: Luke 14:12

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a revolutionary mindset in the Christian faith. He criticizes the focus on worldly pleasures such as entertainment, beauty culture, and materialism, and calls for a pursuit of true reality in life. The preacher believes that the teachings of Jesus are the most revolutionary in the world, surpassing even the ideology of communism. He highlights the importance of living according to God's standards and seeking His kingdom above all else, as taught by Jesus in the Gospels and the Epistles.

Transcript

Tonight, first of all, I thought I'd like to talk about the foundation that these people operated on. And I'd like to remind our hearts tonight that there's other sides to the subject that our brother Walden was speaking on. Rebellion, the sin of witchcraft, and yet, we as Christians, in a sense, should be rebels.

Not rebels against God, but rebels against many of the things that bind us now. So, I'd like to remind our hearts tonight that Christianity is really a revolutionary movement, in a good sense. And the Lord Jesus Christ, and I say this reverently, was the greatest revolutionary of them all.

And when the disciples, when the apostles went forth, and the early Christians, they were really disturbers of the peace. They were really fanatics for Jesus. And it got to the point that their enemies had to cry with tears of rage in their eyes, these men have turned the world upside down.

Are we turning the world upside down tonight? Hardly. Why not? Well, I believe that we've lost the impact of New Testament Christianity. We've nullified ourselves into thinking that we're really following the pattern.

And if so, it's certainly a pattern without power, isn't it? I long to know more of the power of God by the Spirit of God poured out in our midst. I don't think God's looking for revolutionaries today. I don't want to use the word rebel, because Mr. Walden has used it in the bad sense, correctly.

And I certainly agree with what he said. I just wish he had added one name to the name of Dr. Stock. That's the name of John Dewey and his undermining philosophy that he taught at Columbia University.

I thought there was kind of an even-handed justice recently in the rebellion that took place at Columbia. It looked to me as if some chickens were coming home to roost, and God was having the last word. It's absolutely true.

The permissive spirit that's been taught has been one of the greatest causes of the difficulties that we're having in the United States today. And yet, we want to be rebels too. And I believe God's raising up a generation of rebels among us today.

Young people and people who want to rebel against living self-centered lives. That's an awful bondage, do you know? And praise God, as I read the Book of Acts, I find the people who were not self-centered, they were Christ-centered. And, you know, you don't read about all the nervous and emotional trouble in the Book of Acts.

They just didn't seem to have them. You ever think about that? Why? When they were so engrossed in Christ, and in the service of Christ, they didn't have time to be introspective. I really believe that.

They were weary of living self-centered lives, and they wanted to be Christ all the way from now on. I think we want to see a generation arising who realize that we're here for bigger business than to make money. That's one of the worst bondages that is holding us down today.

And it's reflected all through our lives, in the way we talk, in our conversation, in the ideals we hold out for our young people, and in the way we measure their success. How much money they're making is a test. But I say again, God has put us down here for bigger business than to make money.

We're stooping too low, if that's the end of our existence. And I think God wants some revolutionaries in the day in which we live to rebel against the terrible snare of materialism, against the terrible delusion that happiness is the possession of things. What a lie.

Now, there was a more affluent society than the one we're living in tonight. And there was never one more torn apart by frustration and unhappiness than all the rest. Over and over again, in these days, the words of Hudson Taylor danced in my mind.

He said that he enjoyed the luxury of having few things to care for. And the many is a luxury. A woman said to me recently, I spent the first 25 years of my married life accumulating things and spending the second 25 getting rid of them.

And she was much happier. Materialism is a snare. Materialism is a bondage.

And God's looking for men and women and young men and women who will see through it, rebel against it, and set out for him. God's looking for people tonight who will look in the book of Acts, the gospels in the book of Acts, and see that there's a great gulf between that kind of Christianity and the kind of Christianity we see about us in the world today. He wants people who will turn away from the tyranny of the fashion parade.

Pretty kind of empty, isn't it, when you stop to think. Imagine, engrossed in the things of fashion, people who turn away from the amusement parade, turn away from the parade of beauty culture, if you will, and

even from the food parade. I believe God's looking tonight for revolutionaries who are determined to find reality in life.

Someone to live for, and if necessary, someone to die for, too. Now, the Lord Jesus laid the foundation, doctrinally, for what we find in the book of Acts. And I really believe with all my heart that his teaching is the most revolutionary teaching in the world.

I really believe that the teaching of the Lord Jesus, for instance, makes the revolutionary teaching of communism look sick. But the heartache today is that oftentimes you find more reality in the average communist than you do in the average Christian. That's the heartache.

Well, now, the Lord Jesus laid the platform by the teachings he gave his disciples. And I'd like to go over with you tonight, just very quietly and briefly, some of his teachings. And all I would ask is that we try to capture the fact tonight that there's enough dynamite in any one of these teachings to blow the church out of its complacency, to reach out with the gospel that hasn't gone out for centuries.

First of all, I'd like to suggest to you that the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary standard of living. A revolutionary standard of living. He taught it in the Gospels, and we're going to be seeing that as we go along.

But he also teaches it in the Epistles to the Apostle Paul. And I'd like you to turn with me to a verse in 1 Timothy, chapter 6, verses 6, 7, and 8. 1 Timothy, chapter 6, verses 6, 7, and 8. It says, But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

And having food and raiment, let us be there with content. Now, that's the last verse I have particularly in mind. Having food and raiment, let us be there with content.

Now, I'd like to tell you, that's really different, isn't it? Have you heard any messages on that verse lately? Have you heard any all your life on it? How many Christians do you know who believe it? There's having food and raiment to be content. And incidentally, that word raiment, the word literally translated means covering. And it's the same word that would be used to describe the roof over your head or the clothes that you wear.

Interesting, isn't it? The Lord Jesus says, look, you came into the world empty-handed. You're going out empty-handed. Be content with food and clothing and the roof over your head.

Now, I think as we go to the book of Acts, we're going to see a people who didn't bother to think up 60 theological explanations why these verses don't mean what they say. They just were naive enough to believe that the Lord and the Holy Spirit knew what they were talking about. And they thought, well, this must be it.

And so they went for it. And they lived on that basis. Of course, the idea is that everything above that went into the work of the Lord.

And that's the way they lived. Well, it's very uncomfortable, isn't it? And immediately when we read a verse like that, the word prudent comes to our mind. And we say, well, that isn't prudent.

Isn't that right? You have to think of your future. You have to live, don't you? Well, all I'm trying to say to you tonight is that the Lord really was a revolutionist. And he was a disturber of the peace.

And I believe the Holy Spirit still is a disturber of the peace. And he wants to disturb my peace. And he wants to disturb yours as well.

A revolutionary standard of living. Well, then the Lord Jesus also taught a revolutionary social life. Luke chapter 14, verses 12 and 13.

Luke chapter 14, verses 12 and 13. Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, Call not thy friends nor thy brethren, Neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors, Lest they also bid thee again, And a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, Call the poor, the lame, the blind, That thou shalt be blessed, For they cannot recompense thee, For thou shalt be recompensed At the resurrection of the just.

Now, it's wonderful, you know, how these verses can be in our Bibles, and we can put the Bible on the table beside our bed and sleep comfortably beside it. But really, really, if you read those verses, think of what they say, and realize this is what the Lord is calling us to. It's really upsetting, isn't it? What it really means is that going back from the conference, we would break up these little social cliques that we have even in the local assembly, and instead of inviting those people who have sweet dispositions like ourselves and are generally in the same intellectual and social level and good conversationalists and all the rest, we'd make a determined effort to go out and reach people who have no way of repaying us and seek to witness to them for the Lord Jesus.

Can you picture the average Christian home next Thanksgiving or Christmas if we actually took the Lord Jesus at his word? It would really involve going down to perhaps the skid row, bringing out some folks with just the single purpose of telling them about the Lord Jesus. Maybe going and getting some foreign students, maybe some students from the Muslim world, and bringing them into the homes that they might know, just what a Christian home is like. Giving thanks for the food and reading the word of God after the meal.

That's what Jesus said. Don't call those who can repay you. That's a revolutionary home.

Call them the social outcast. That's what he said. I heard a touching story about Jack Wirtson.

I've always admired Jack Wirtson's Word of Life Hour. I've always loved him more since I heard this story. He has this Word of Life camp up in Scrooge Lake, New York.

The folks were there, and they told me that there was a dear brother there, a dear brother in Christ, and he was very horribly deformed. And oftentimes he was going to the dining room, and it was not unusual for him to be the only person sitting at his table. Because, I mean, everybody had their own friends and their own social circle and all the rest.

And more often than not, he was sitting alone. And it often happened that Jack Wirtson would come into the dining room late, and whenever he came to the door, the folks there would see him coming, and they'd all wave to him to come over to their table and sit with them. And every time, Jack would go over and sit with that brother who was alone.

It's only the spirit of what the Lord was teaching here, wasn't it? And praise God for the experience I had in Turkey with those dear young people. Some of you know Steve Richards and Diane. Other young people there.

See them going out to the universities, out in the streets, and contracting young people, bringing them back to their apartment, sitting down with them, serving them a supper, and then speaking to them about the Lord Jesus. And I thought, well, here it is. It works.

A revolutionary social life set forth in the Word of God for the day in which we live. And then the Lord Jesus also taught a revolutionary view of earthly relationships in verses 25 and 26 of this same chapter, Luke chapter 14, verses 25 and 26. And I went to great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, in his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And that's revolutionary, isn't it? Really what it says is that Jesus Christ must be first. That peers, family relationships, nothing of the sort, must be allowed to come between Christ and the individual. Everything else must be subordinated to him.

And really this was the spirit of those early Christians as they went forth. Their attitude was, well, it isn't true, it doesn't matter. But it is true, nothing else matters.

And that's why they turned the world upside down. A revolutionary view of earthly relationships, and incidentally of one's relationship to himself, too. I often think of that at the end of the verse, yea, in his own life also.

And then, of course, the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary view concerning our occupation in life. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33, familiar verse, which we need to recall to our hearts over and over again, but speaking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. I have underlined two words in that verse, the word first and then the word God.

First, God. And once again here we're reminded that our vocation in life, the purpose of our being here, is to serve the interests of the Lord Christ. And that the job is not the important thing.

Job is secondary. The purpose of the job is simply to make expenses and have the wherewithal to help in the work of the Lord. And yet, no matter how much you say this, and no matter how much we might realize it intellectually, the fact remains today that secular occupation, for many of us, is the principal thing in life.

And the work of the Lord takes the fag end. Is that true? I'm afraid it's true. And business today is making increasing demands, increasing pressures.

Standards of living are rising. And it's so hard to miss the balance of the Lord Jesus taught. Isn't it amazing that he would come into the world and give this revolutionary view of occupation? Yet, if you really sit down and think it over, you have to realize it's true.

You think of the most glorious secular occupation that there might be in the world today, and then think of it a hundred years from today. The glory fades, doesn't it? The glory fades. What will count a hundred years from today? Only the life which lives for God.

That's all. My heart aches when I see our Christian young people being encouraged down the road to making a name for themselves in the world. When you see the sands of time running out, you think of their potential for God.

If they could only see the vision. And I think of the strong social pressures, the strong parental pressures that are on our young people today. And I long to see more Christian parents who will encourage their young people to give their best to the Lord, to be satisfied with a more modest standard of living in order that men and women might not perish for want of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then I think the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary view of security. Matthew 6, 25. Security.

That's a great word today. He says, Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? And all the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Perhaps you'll be walking around Yosemite here and see some wildflowers. Just remember as you look down on them, they're saying something to you. They're saying, Don't worry.

You don't have to worry about the future. But Christ first and foremost. He'll take care of the details.

That's where the life faith comes in. Wonderful to think of the flowers preaching a message to us day by day. Yet that's what the Lord said, Wherefore if God sow close the grass of the field which today is, tomorrow it'll cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? As I see it, the Lord Jesus knew that if I had to worry about my future, then I'd never have time to give to him.

That's true too. Because if I have to worry about the unknown future, I'll never know how much is enough. And so the Lord says, I want to make an agreement with you.

You seek first the kingdom of God in his righteousness and leave the future to me. And I'll take care of it. Remember the verse? All these things shall be added unto you.

Revolutionary view of security. My, how brainwashed we've become. It's in our vocabulary.

So clever. You've got a few stocks and bonds. They're known as securities.

Are they secure? I've seen an awful lot of Christians biting their fingernails lately. We talk about land and building. We call it real estate.

Isn't that clever? It's real. You can touch it. You can walk on it.

You can handle it. And therefore, it's secure. Do you really think it's secure? Dear friends, there's no security in this world apart from God.

He's the only security we have. But I'm going to tell you, the more we try to find security in material things, the more worry, the more distresses, the more difficulties, the more problems we're going to get. In my

own life, I can see the Lord day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year, just trying to knock out the props.

Really. Trying to get me to get rid of the cushions and the crutches so I'll have nothing but himself who is deficient. A revolutionary view of security.

Just think of those early Christians. If their future was their concern, they never could have accomplished what they did. Never could have.

The Lord says, look, you can't, by thinking, add a cubit to your stature. I really don't know what that means. A cubit is supposed to be 18 inches.

And the word stature, there can also mean age. And so frankly, it leaves me with a problem. But take it either way.

You can't, by thinking, add an inch to your height or a day to your age. And then the Lord says, and I really think this is beautiful. He says, you can't do that with his least.

No, that's nothing at all. You can't do that with his least. How do you think you can control your future? And that's the truth.

The future belongs to the Lord, and he's promised to take care of it. And then the Lord taught a revolutionary attitude toward other people. Matthew chapter 19 and verse 19.

Just the latter part of the verse. Honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Now, I don't want to tell you, but I think that's one of the most revolutionary statements that was ever spoken.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Imagine. Just put yourself in your own neighborhood.

Think of all the quarrels and bickering and strife that there is in the average American neighborhood today. And think of the Lord planting a Christian family in that neighborhood who isn't going to react the way the rest of the people do. Who, when they're abused, shall claim this? And who will out for the souls of men and women and will do anything on your part to get them? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

And he that is chief as he that doth serve. For whither is greater he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth if not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth. Now that's revolutionary.

I think there's a trace of humor there in verse 25. He pictures the rulers of this world. Sometimes they're pretty tyrannical.

Sometimes they take advantage of the people. And in spite of all their imperfections, yet they're called benefactors. Now he says human ideas of greatness are fallacious.

In my kingdom it's not going to be so. I am among you as he that serveth. Let him that is greatest among you let him be as the younger and he that is chief as he that doth serve.

Marvelous, isn't it, to think of the Lord of life and glory coming down into this world and living it out before us, taking the apron of a slave and girding himself with it and getting down, washing the disciples' feet. It breaks my heart. That's what he did.

And he said, you live this life and you'll find a revolution in your home. You'll find a revolution in your local assembly. You'll find a revolution in your neighborhood as well.

And then finally I like to think that the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary view of social reform. You know, we live in a world that's sick. We live in a country that's plagued with problems and everybody has his own idea as to the solution of this problem.

But as far as I know, the Lord Jesus is the only one that has the right solution. We Christians today are being criticized that we have lost any sense of social consciousness. We should be activists.

We should be participating in all of the movements that are going on today. This is what we hear on every hand. Especially evangelical Christians are taking a terrible beating today in this connection.

Why aren't we out there in the vanguard fighting for social reform and all the rest, alleviating human needs and raising the level of the people? Well, the Lord Jesus really taught a most revolutionary view of social reform. And you get it, of course, in John chapter 3 where he said to Nicodemus in verse 3, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verse 5, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. My, oh, my, that I say unto thee, ye must be born again.

The Lord Jesus began with the individual. He struck at the very root of the problem, which is sin. And he is the only remedy for sin, cleansing through his own most precious blood.

Education is put forth as a problem today. It doesn't solve the problem. It hasn't solved the problem.

Politics. Politics is no better than the men who control it. Philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, varying forms of government and all the rest.

They all leave a man still in his sin and on the way to hell. The Lord Jesus has the only answer. The only answer for this old world at night is a revolutionary gospel of the grace of God that reaches down to where a man is.

In his sin, provides cleansing for those sins, gives him new life in Christ, starts him on the road to heaven, and teaches him these revolutionary principles of the Word of God. The difficulty is with us tonight, as I see it. I speak for myself today, which is bound by tradition.

And we look at Christians about us, and we say, I don't see them living that life. I don't see people around me tonight living that life. And as far as the totem pole is concerned, I seem to be higher than many of the others.

And so, in a very real sense, we succumb to the chill of our environment, and it's pretty chilly. And I believe what God wants us to do is go back to the Word and realize afresh that Christianity is really a world-shaking doctrine, a revolutionary movement. And he wants us to really think his thoughts after him, and just say, well now, this is what the Lord Jesus did, and what he taught, and whether people around me are doing it or not, by the grace of God, I want to do this.

By the grace of God, our family is going to start living this kind of a life.

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