

The experience of a personal relationship with Christ. (i) Quality: Average

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[0 : 0 0] Lord help I shall speak from word defined in the second chapter in the epistle to the Galatians second chapter in the epistle of Paul to the Galatians reading verse 20 I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me scattered through the epistle which Paul wrote there are verses like this verses which speak with a most precious and most remarkable assurance the apostle Paul was a man who having been blessed by God taught by God strengthened by God and confirmed by God was unashamed to say what he felt and what he believed he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ he was not ashamed of the Savior who had saved him he was not ashamed of the cross which he preached and he was not ashamed of what the Holy Spirit had done for him

I believe that so often in the lives of God's people he was not ashamed of the Lord he was not ashamed of the Lord by insinuating that there is something wrong in speaking clearly decisively and confidently about the truth and about the way in which God has taught them the truth certainly there are so many aspects of our lives that we are ashamed of so many failures that we grieve over so many sins that we have to confess and indeed so many besetting sins that we have to confess over and over again sometimes it does seem that sin and fear have shut our mouths yes that is true that is one side of the true believer's experience he is deeply conscious of his own personal sin and his own personal failures and that will often make him blush and it will close his mouth and then again there is also a very deep sense of our lack of knowledge how superficial how little our knowledge of the gospel really is then again there is a deep consciousness of the poverty of our Christianity the poverty of our testimony to the things of God there is a deep sense of how lacking we are in regard to the question of holy living all these things too seem to crowd in upon our minds and the devil will point his finger constantly at this aspect, this dark, sad aspect in our lives and we know that we are not what we want to be and he knows that too but it is very sad if all these things should so affect us that they stir up in us that completely wrong sense of reticence so that we are silent completely silent about the things which

God has taught us about the blessings that God has showered upon us and about that great and precious work that God has accomplished in us I believe that one of the very real dangers is that we should discredit and do despite the spirit of grace by remaining silent when we should speak I suppose for years an emphasis has been laid in the preaching and teaching that we are accustomed to of the danger of presumption the danger of false assurance the danger of religious talk and all that is a very right and proper emphasis for these things are great evils and great dangers but friends there are only one side of the matter there is another side the other side is the bold and confident declaration of what the Lord has done now of course if the Lord has never done anything for you at all it would be folly to pretend that he had if you don't really believe this afternoon that God has done anything for your soul at all well then there are other questions for you to be concerned about not the ones I'm speaking of now but I'm speaking now to people whom God has blessed people who have known the power and blessing and teaching of the Holy Spirit of God your danger is a very real one that you should dishonor the blessed spirit of the living God by a sinful silence in regard to the things that God has done for you listen to the way in which

Paul himself speaks of these things he says you have heard of my conversation in times past in the Jews religion he very well knew what sort of reputation he had and particularly the reputation that he had amongst the churches he knew what a violent and wicked opposition he had pursued against the people of God against these Christian believers he says you have heard of my life and the way I live you have heard that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it and profited in the Jews religion of those many my equals in mine own nation being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my father but what at all for deeply bemoan the sinfulness of his path he deeply bemoans the bigoted hatred that was in his heart against Christ and against the gospel but he said there was something else when it pleased

God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me that's what God had done for him and he knew God had done this for him and he knew he would have been a liar if he had pretended that he hadn't had this accomplished in him and he honours the sovereign grace of God by simply and humbly telling out what God has done for him he says it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me he sees the absolute sovereignty of God in every aspect of his life the circumstances in which he was born the way in which he was brought safely into this world separated from his mother's womb and then he says he called me by his grace then has

[9 : 15] God called you by his grace if he has called you by his grace then you've heard his voice you have known the power of the voice of the Son of God if you have been called by grace something has been accomplished in your life that no power on earth ever could accomplish there has been such a radical change in your life that no man however able however knowledgeable however skillful in spiritual things that no man ever could have done for you God has called you with that divine effectual calling he has called you graciously have you ever known the gracious attraction of God's power and God's voice have you ever known the gracious influence of his gospel the word of his love and mercy he called me by his grace well let me go a step further back how did

God deal with solar tasks God dealt with him powerfully sovereignly very graciously but God convinced of the sinfulness of his unbelief has ever God done that for you has he convinced you of the awful sinfulness of your unbelief in the face of the person and gospel of Jesus Christ I believe that this is one of the principal ways in which the Holy Spirit works by way of conviction he shall reprove the world of sin why of sin because they believe not on me and that was exactly what happened in the case of Saul of Tarsus I am Jesus whom thou persecute it is hard for thee to kick against the fruit sin ah well people are quick to say yes but that was Saul of

Tarsus and his conversion was really very remarkable so far as the circumstances of it are concerned it was remarkable but friends there is a pattern in Paul's conversion which you will see in the conversion of every sinner Paul was brought to repent of his sinful disbelief and his active opposition to the person and gospel of Jesus Christ Paul was brought to a broken hearted submission before the Saviour he was so determined to go about what he thought was right he thought he did God's service that man was brought to say and very early to say what wilt thou have me to do he was a man whose whole attitude spirit and will was changed well then the circumstances may be different the consequence will be the same

Saul of Tarsus was a sinner saved by grace grace I know he was a bigoted parisaical sinner saved by grace and other people like the woman at the well of Samaria might be dissolute and immoral sinners saved by grace but they're all sinners and they're all saved by grace my friends are you a sinner saved by grace if you're not then there's something terribly solemn about your position today make no mistake of it if you die as a sinner then you'll be punished as a sinner if you die as a sinner saved by grace you'll go to heaven there's some very simple truths in the gospel which we need to be reminded of

Saul of Tarsus was a sinner saved by grace he was called by God it pleased God to call me by his grace now that that is a characteristic mark of all these sins saved by God's grace they are all called they know God's power they know the power of the word of the living God they know the power of the word of Jesus Christ maybe different parts of the gospel which the Lord uses particularly in different people's experience of these things that's true but Jesus said and he cannot be contradicted my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me now friend if you're called by grace you're made into a follower of Jesus

[15 : 07] Christ well Paul goes on to say it pleased God to reveal his son in me oh well again I can almost hear people saying he was an apostle he had to be specially blessed because he had such a remarkable work to do he had to go and preach to the Gentiles he had to carry the gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ far and wide he needed this remarkable experience of having the son of God revealed in him friend if no one ever hears about you and you live the most ordinary and the most obscure life that it's possible to imagine I tell you there is one thing you will need and that's the very thing that Paul has you will need his son to be revealed in you and I believe in that expression we come very close to the principle thought in the verse that

I've read as a text we come to the experience of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ a union a spiritual union with the son of God and friends that is an experience of something which was in the heart and purpose of God from before the foundation of the world but it's a vital real personal experience it's something we must all know if ever we are to be found in the blessedness of heaven at the end this is something we must know please God to reveal his son in me and let me go a little further and explain what this is not it is not necessarily the same thing as happened to Paul on the

Damascus road it is not necessarily seeing a blinding light from heaven so that we lose our literal eyes it is not necessarily hearing a real voice speaking from heaven evidently that was what Paul did experience I believe that that was part of this revelation but it was really a preliminary to this revelation that was really a revelation of Jesus Christ to Saul of Tarsus now he says there is something more he revealed his son in me there were many to whom Jesus was revealed in a literal sense when he was here on earth who never had Jesus Christ revealed in them

Judas had Jesus Christ revealed to him there was a person Judas knew there was a person whose works Judas saw whose ministry Judas heard a man who was in some ways impressed by the man and by his ministry and by his works he never had Jesus Christ revealed in him now friends this really is the vital point in all real spiritual religion real religion can be summed up in this it pleased God to reveal his son in me what is this revealing of his son in me how can

I describe that to you well let me put it very simply perhaps for some long time you have heard the gospel preached you have heard men talking about Jesus Christ you have heard men explaining that there is a great need of salvation that sinners in their sin are in a desperate plight you have had the elements of the gospel presented before you in a very simple way that Jesus Christ is the only saviour of sinners there is no other way in which a sinner can be saved but by this mighty work of Jesus Christ and you have had many other things explained to you about the gospel you have gone on completely indifferent you have gone on as though that were just an interesting story or you may have gone on as though that was something out of history which people some people think a lot about but which was really quite irrelevant to you and then there has come a time in your life when the whole situation has altered has that ever happened has the whole attitude of your heart and mind toward the gospel and toward

[20 : 55] Jesus Christ in the gospel been completely altered instead of indifferent and carelessness instead of unconcerned there has sprung up in your heart you cannot tell how but there has very really sprung up in your heart a completely different and new concern a different attitude you have begun to feel that these things that you have been hearing about for so long are deeply significant you begin to realise that sin is exceeding sinful that God is a mighty and holy and just and righteous God you begin to know personally that there is a God you deeply feel the reality of the being of God and you begin to feel a sense of awe and fear and deep concern because now you believe that you are living in the sight of this mighty and holy

God that you cannot and do not escape his holy eyesight and inwardly you become profoundly disturbed and deeply anxious and instead of being quite complacent and satisfied that somehow in the end everything will be alright you are deeply convinced that it will not be alright that there is something absolutely vital that you haven't got something absolutely vital that you deeply need to put it in simple language the matter of your soul's salvation is not being dealt with things are not right between you and this holy God how can they be you've been living your life in sin carelessness and unbelief and you can't be satisfied with any kind of parisaical traditionalism you can't come parading your upbringing and all your natural religiosity all that has been completely killed and if you've been living a thoroughly dissolute and wicked life well then the burden of that will be pressing increasingly upon your spirit like the

Lord said to that wicked Samaritan woman thou hast had five husbands and he whom thou now hast is not thine husband and that thou said truly that made a profound impression on that woman was the first stage it really in that woman's conviction the first stage in that deep spiritual work in that woman's heart she was awakened made to face her real situation friends is that what God has been making you do making you face the real situation so that you can't go on you just cannot go on in that careless indifference that has marked all the rest of your life then again in a way which you would be hard put to to explain you have begun to hear about the

Lord Jesus Christ about his word about his life and his suffering and his death and especially have you heard about his death on the cross and you've heard of it in a way that you never seem to have heard of it before there seems now to be such a deep significance in these things which you just were completely unaware of before you begin to see that here in the person and in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way in which the situation can be dealt with your situation situation of your soul as before God and then again in ways which God in his sovereign mercy alone knows ways which he knows there has been such a revelation of the

Lord Jesus Christ in regard to his glorious person his precious and holy life his true divinity and real humanity the wonder of his suffering death the awesomeness of his agony of soul as he is hanging upon the tree you see you see that here the person of the saviour is the only hope for your soul you see what the Lord so graciously led Nicodemus to see as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life and friends this goes a step further because it becomes an intensely personal matter it is your soul that needs saving it is your sins that need forgiving it is the burden of your heart that needs relieving it is your relationship with

[27:10] God that needs dealing with just as those dying Israelites in the wilderness had a case which was desperate so now there is a sense of urgency a desperation in the soul and you know friends that's why there is so much superficial and casual religion today because there is no desperate sense of need there is no sense of urgency sin the sinfulness of sin is not found the wonder of the suffering death of Jesus upon the cross is meaningless because there is no burden resting upon sinners soul dying Israelites cried out for Moses to speak with God on their behalf they were so ashamed of themselves for their murmuring and dissent they didn't speak for themselves they had to ask for Moses to be a kind of mediator on their behalf

God in his sovereign mercy tells Moses what to do to make a brazen serpent and to lift it up upon a pole that those who were stung to death might look upon him there freely and wonderfully was that serpent displayed amongst them those that look didly so there is a looking by faith upon the suffering dying Jesus as those dying Israelites looked upon the brazen serpent and there is a very real consciousness of the power that there is in the cross of Jesus Christ yes friends people talk about the cross of Jesus they talk about salvation through the saviour's word but there is this personal application as it were the flowing out of divine power from the Lord

Jesus Christ into the soul of the sinner it must be a personal thing you know the Israelites who were just about to expire would very well know that they were better they would very well know that they were healed when they looked upon the brazen serpent our friends there was in that act of faith a remarkable work of God and so there will be in the heart of the people I've been describing a remarkable work of God in the heart of these people so that there is now a real faith in their hearts in Jesus Christ whosoever believeth on him there is a believing on him there is such a looking to Jesus and to Jesus upon the cross such a believing in him there is gracious spiritual life flowing down into the soul from the

Savior for a dying sinner lives consciously known the relief of heart there is such a thing as Paul describes joy and peace in believing conscious realisation of God's sovereign love and grace peace faith is like the arms that we have if you really love a person you reach out your arms toward that person you want that person to come and be embraced you want to be able to express your feelings for that person and you want that person to express their feelings toward you maybe a child who runs when it's in pain and distress to its mother it may be a wife who in her loneliness sees her husband coming home and runs toward him so many ways we could illustrate some of

Solomon very beautifully set before us in the relationship between the bridegroom and the bride my beloved is mine and I am his now friends this this is the personal realisation of a union between you and Jesus that's a vital thing in all real religions a living relationship between you and Jesus Christ between Jesus Christ and you friend it is this activity of God given faith that is the way in which we realise this inward spiritual union of our souls to Jesus I believe in him I believe on him

[32 : 42] I trust in him I lean on him you can't do that to someone who is only in the distance you can't do that to someone who is just a figure in history you can't do that to someone who is just a theological idea no friend it's a living person and it's a living personal relationship that we have with Jesus I visited an old lady of over 80 years of age this week a complete stranger to me and in course of conversation she just said in a very and she wasn't at all theological in her expression she was really very ignorant we would say theological but friend she had this vital relationship and she just put it like this well she said

I speak to him and he speaks with me yes as simple as that please God to reveal his son in me friend when you pray do you pray to Jesus as though he was infinitely far away from you well you say I pray to God who is infinitely holy yes friends that is true we pray to a God who is infinitely above us in his holiness and majesty and glory and power say again when you pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ you pray to a God who is still infinitely far distant from you or do you pray to a God who is with you there's a difference it please

God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the heavens my friends it is this personal sense of a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ the sense in our heart of his personal love it is this intensely personal aspect of real religion religion which I believe is so vital indeed I believe it is one of the things that has been stressed historically in our churches and I believe it's one of the things which so much needs to be stressed today I observe in what we might loosely call the evangelical world of today that there is a sad loss of this intensely personal aspect of real religion revival of interest in what we might generally call the doctrines of grace

I discern again the same danger a loss of this intensely personal sense of relationship with Jesus Christ and what is more sad and more personal I discern in my own life this constant danger that I should wander away from him Enoch walked with God and he was not forgotten it seems to me as though he was so near to heaven while he was on earth that it was but a step as it were to glory for Enoch he walked with God and it is our sin of shame it is our waywardness worldliness and unbelief that causes us to walk often so far away oh for a close walk with God we sing it but do we understand what we're saying oh for a closer walk with God well this is what

Paul endured this is how God began that war so far as Saul of Tarsus was concerned he revealed his son in and I believe that in that experience that followed God's revelation of Jesus to Saul of Tarsus under Damascus road there was a period of time in his life that he describes here in these chapters in which God very powerfully and deeply taught regarding this wonderful personal relationship between himself and his Saviour I went neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me but I went into Arabia and the Lord alone knows what went on between his soul and the Saviour in Arabia and you know that will be characteristic of your case that will be a part of your life which is so intensely personal between you and the Saviour and no one can ever intrude into that holy place there will be things which you cannot explain to others and it's best perhaps not even to trust but to thank

[38 : 47] God for what he has done in your heart and in your life and for your soul I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me there you have the same man saying the same things but saying them now more fully in more detail not only has God revealed his Son in me but I now see that I was crucified with Christ I know now that I am crucified with Christ I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me the kind of life

I am living now is not just an ordinary natural life in this world going about making ten it's another life it's a spiritual life a life of relationship with Jesus Christ a life of faith a life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself before that wasn't presumption friend if that's what God has done for you it's not presumption for you to say so I these words are left on record not just as an interesting fact in the history of old life they're left on record for our instruction and our encouragement they're left on record that we by faith might say the same I am crucified with Christ nevertheless

I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me gave himself for me God to good him he will he Thank you.