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As A Tree Planted

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Sermons of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - MLJ Trust

Psalms 1:3-4 — In light of the emptiness of the ungodly life, how can one become godly, blessed, and happy? How can one truly live the “more abundant life” that Christ came to give? In this sermon on Psalm 1:3-4 titled “As a Tree Planted,” many think they are Christians, but in this inspiring discourse, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones distinguishes the person who is unquestionably “in Christ” from those who merely deceive themselves. No one is born a Christian or can make themselves a Christian. A Christian is the work of God through the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction, revelation, repentance, and conversion. It’s God’s doing and one can only experience the new birth into a new life as the result of the operation of the Spirit. Only then will one experience the happiness God intended for people to know in Him. The true Christian has no need to fear whatever comes in life. The true Christian is like a tree. God is the “Planter” of the tree. He selects the location of the tree so that the tree will bear good fruit, in its season, and without withering.

Transcript

The words to which I should like to call your attention this evening are to be found in the first sum, and reading again verses three and four. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveeth away.

Let me remind you hurriedly again. Of the first two verses, blessed is the men that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law that he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveeth away. Now, we are looking at this psalm for the third time, and I would say again that we are doing so in order that we might consider this great question which the psalm puts before us, and it

is the whole question of happiness. How to be blessed, how to be happy in a world like this.

That's always been the great problem confronting the human race. There's nothing new about that. Man ever since the fall has been trying to get back to paradise.

He has a feeling that he was meant to be happy, that he was not meant to be living in a world such as this is, and having the experiences that he has. He feels he was meant for something better, something different, and he's always looking for it, always hoping that he may find it. That's the very subject with which this first psalm deals.

It is indeed the theme of all the psalms. It's the theme of the whole Bible. That's the great message of the Bible, is to tell us the one and only way whereby we can become blessed, happy in a true and in a real sense.

Now, the teaching here is, as I've been showing, that happiness, and this is what makes the biblical teachings, so unique. Happiness depends, not upon circumstances, not upon what happens to us. That is the fatal philosophy of the world.

It believes that our happiness is entirely dependent upon our circumstances, surroundings, environment, and the things that happen to us. The Bible says, "No, if that is so, you'll never have true happiness." It has a happiness to give us, which is independent of circumstances, independent of what happens to us, as I hope to show you in particular this evening. It says that our happiness and our blessedness, "tends entirely and solely upon our relationship to God," and what we become when that relationship is right, and when it is the true.

Now, we've been working this out in previous two Sundays. And I think we've come and have seen this, that man by nature falls into two initial errors with regard to this old question. The first is, he's wrong about himself.

He's wrong about his own nature. He's wrong about his whole circumstance. Man thinks that he knows himself, a great claim made by psychologists and others.

That means his initial trouble is that he doesn't know himself. Some of the greater Greek philosophers knew that, and they said, "No, thyself," that that is the first principle in life, "No, thyself." It's very difficult for us to know ourselves. The Bible says that that's the first trouble that we're ignorant of ourselves and the truth about ourselves.

And secondly, it tells us that people are not Christian because they're also ignorant of the true nature of the Christian life, ignorant of the true nature of the Christian man. You see, there are two initial errors or mistakes which man makes. He thinks he knows the truth about himself, he thinks he knows the truth about Christianity, and he thinks that he rejects Christianity because of what he thinks it is.

There's this double error. Now these are the two errors with which this man deals here in this first song. And I was trying to show last Sunday night that he puts it all before us by giving us these pictures.

The Bible meets us where we are. It stoops to our weakness always. And it doesn't content itself with direct, explicit, didactic teaching.

It gives us pictures. It gives us analogies, expressions, because these things do help us. And so this man is chosen that form.

He says, "Now I want to bring you to the knowledge of this truth which I learned leads to blessedness." He says, "And I'm going to do it in this way. I'm going to give you a picture of the blessed man. I'm going to give you a picture of the man who is not blessed." So he does it quite explicitly in the first two verses and we've seen that.

But then in these third and fourth verses, he puts it to us in the form of this picture. This extraordinary picture which he has here with its striking contrast. The difference he says between a godly man and the ungodly is the difference between a tree and a heap of chaff.

That's his picture, a tree and a heap of chaff. Now last Sunday night we only had time to look at this contrast in the picture in general. But we saw some very striking things.

We saw that it's a very profound contrast. The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is not a superficial one. It is about as profound as anything can be.

It's the difference between a tree and a heap of chaff. There's nothing in common. So a Christian is not merely slightly different from the non-Christian.

He's not only just a little bit better, a little bit nicer and so on. He doesn't do a little bit more good. No, no, there's no point of comparison.

Tree chaff, a profound difference. And then we worked out in general the contrast between the two. And we concentrated particularly last Sunday night upon the ungodly, the chaff.

And we indicated that its characteristics of these, that it's a sort of relic, refuge, something left over. That it has no form about it, no beauty, just a heap of refuse. We indicated that it has no roots, no beliefs, nothing to hold on to.

We show that it has no life and therefore no possibility of growth. And we showed finally that it never produces anything. A heap of chaff is always a heap of chaff.

It can't add to itself, it can't multiply, it doesn't bear any fruit, it's useless, it's finally of no value at all. Well, that's the men's picture. But now tonight let's turn to the other side.

Let's look at the positive side. The Christian says this man is altogether different from death. And I want to show some further respects in which he is different.

I was showing them incidentally last Sunday night in talking about the form of the tree, in talking about its roots, in talking about its scumbliness, in talking about the fact that it's got life, so that it can grow and develop. And in reminding you of the fact that he can bear fruit. But I want to go beyond that this evening and to work out what this man says in detail here.

The man he says who's got thee, the man who's in the right relationship to God, the man who's a Christian, the man who's truly blessed, is a man who is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. What a contrast. Well, very well, the question that comes to us must be this.

How can a man become like this tree? How can a man become godly? How can a man become a Christian? I see the point of the comparison, so someone I can see the point that you're establishing. That there really is nothing common between these two, but that it is altogether different to be a Christian. Well, now then I want to know how can one become a Christian? I see the uselessness of the other life.

I see its emptiness. I see its vanity. I see that it's of no value, finally, to the man himself, nor to anybody else.

Now then I'd like to know how does one become like this tree? Now remember, it's only a picture, it's only an illustration, but it's a very vivid one, and it does lead us to some of the most important answers to that very question. Therefore, let us look at them together. Here is the answer as it seems to me to be displayed here, that one becomes a Christian.

One becomes a godly person as the result of something that is done to us. It is the result of something that happens to us. Where do you find that, says someone, well I find it here.

He shall be like a tree planted. The tree is planted by the rivers of water. It's put there, and it's put there by somebody.

It isn't a natural growth. He says it's planted by the rivers of water. So it's not a natural growth appearing at that given place and at that given time.

I think you'll agree that that's implicit in this word planted. Somebody has come along and has planted it there. May the place for it put it in planted.

It's the term is to, and of course he uses it because the whole of the Bible uses it. This is of the very essence of the biblical message. This is how one does become a Christian and a godly person in other words.

No one is a Christian by nature. No one is born a Christian into this world. Doesn't matter where you're born.

I trust that nobody still believes the nonsense about Christian countries and that we are Christians because we are born in a particular country or that we are born into a particular family that happens to be Christian. There's no such thing. No one is a Christian by nature.

We are all according to the Bible, the children of wrath by nature, every one of us. None righteous, no not one. We are all born in sin, shaped in iniquity.

So it isn't something natural. Or you may like to consider that in this way. This tree does not just grow up there and in exactly the same way not to keep you at this point, no one grows up gradually to be a Christian.

That is impossible. Doesn't matter what the circumstances, doesn't matter what the surroundings. No one just grows up to be a Christian.

It doesn't just happen. It happened in the case of Topsy. Just grow up.

No, that's never true of any Christian at all. Neither is a man a Christian as the result of anything that he does himself. To himself or for himself, a tree can't plant itself.

It has to be planted by somebody else. That's the very essence of this picture. This is the picture that he's still in.

Somebody comes and he puts the tree there. That's precisely what happens to everybody who is a Christian. Everybody who becomes a godly person.

Now do let me make this plain and clear. There is such confusion at this point. There are so many who think that some of us are born Christians.

Always have been a Christian. Always taking the Sunday school or chapel or church. Always did believe in God.

Always said, "My prayers." They have always been a Christian. There's no such thing, my friend. It's impossible.

That doesn't mean to say that you may not have become a Christian at a very early age and that you may not be able to put your finger on the particular point when you became a Christian. All I'm saying is this, that nobody is born as a Christian. Nobody is a Christian by nature.

Nobody just grows up as a Christian. It's impossible. And nothing that any one of us does ever makes us a Christian.

It doesn't matter how good a life you live or is this plain. We are still at the beginning of 1963 and I'm preaching out to this first some at the beginning of this new year in order that we may be certain at end of it of our foundations. Is there anyone here who still thinks that you make yourself a Christian by doing anything at all? I don't care what it is.

You don't make yourself a Christian even by praying. You don't make yourself a Christian by reading the Bible. You don't make yourself a Christian by doing good.

You don't make a Christian by giving all your goods to feed the poor. Well, there it is. It's all in 1 Corinthians 13.

Do what you like. Do everything. And you are still not a Christian.

Not the labours of my hands. Unfulfilled thy laws be men. Could my zeal no respite no? Could my tears forever flow? All force in could not return.

No, no. The tree is planted. And my friends, this is the message.

It is planted by another. Planted by another, not by itself. Which leads me, of course, to the very heart of the gospel.

What makes anybody a Christian is what God does do. In and through, He has only begotten beloved son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And by the application of all that, by the Holy Spirit to individual person.

Planted. Now, let me get this clear. It's another's action.

It is now our action. It's something that's done to us. It's something that happens to us.

Because this is the gospel. God so loved the world that He gave, sent His only begotten son. That who so ever believe within Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

There it is. That who so ever believe within Him should not remain as chaff. But might become a tree planted by the rivers of water.

It's just another way of saying that. But you notice the action is God. The Bible is a book which records the activity of God, not man.

This is not a record of man seeking and searching after God and striving to find Him. It's the exact opposite. It's man going astray.

God coming after Him. As He came down into the garden of Eden at the very beginning, when man had sinned. So He has been coming down ever since.

And He came down supremely in the person of His only begotten son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This planting you see just means this. It's what God was doing when He produced the incarnation.

When He sent His son from the everlasting and eternal glory and caused him to be born out of the virgin's womb, that's it. That's what makes him an Christian. It's not good monolithic teaching which we strive after.

My dear friend, what makes him an Christian is this, that God sent His son into this world. God have visited and redeemed His people. It's the incarnation and all that followed it.

What makes him an Christian is not only the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. It is holy, perfect life, rendering perfect obedience to the law of God. It is His sacrificial attorney, death upon the cross on Calvary's Hill.

This is the planting. This is God's action. This is what makes men Christian.

That's why He came. He would never have come. He would never have died on the cross if men could be made a Christian or a godly person in any other way or manner.

No, no, this is the part of God's action, this planting. God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

God laid our sins on His Son and smelt Him and struck Him. It involves all this, this tremendous activity on the part of this great planter, the planst the tree. It's His action, His activity.

And then as the result of smiting Him with the sword of His wrath on Calvary's Hill, the son died. His body was taken down and buried in a grave. And then by the mighty power of God, He was raised again from the dead.

Death and hell were conquered. He burst us under the bends of death. He was raised even to the heavens itself.

And there He is seated at the right hand of God. And being seated there, He sent down the blessed Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to produce the results of all this activity in men and women as they believe in Him. So you see Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost.

People began to cry out saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And the answer is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Repent every one of you and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's it.

And then He says, "You shall receive this gift of the Spirit." Well now the point I'm establishing so far is just this. That it is God and God alone who makes anybody a Christian. The tree has to be planted.

And the one who plants is God. You become a Christian not as the result of anything you

do, but as the result of something that God does to you. It's what God does to you that makes you a Christian.

Tree planted. Have we got hold of this? Or are we still imagining that Christianity is something that we can produce? I could keep you almost endlessly in quoting text to show you that you're wrong. We are His workmanship as the Apostle Paul created in Christ Jesus and to good works.

I am strangely enough preaching on this same theme this morning. One can never preach only too often. And to as many as received Him gave the power to become the children of God, even to as many as believe in His name who are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of men but of God.

That's it. And that's it everywhere. So that the Christian is a man who must sing with the Apostle Paul, "I am what I am by the grace of God." No man has anything to boast about because he's done nothing.

It has been done to him. It is God and God alone who makes us Christians. Very well.

There's our first point. A man becomes a Christian as the result of something that is done to him. Something that happens to him.

This operation of the Almighty God upon him and his soul. Very well that brings me to my second principle is which is this. What then is it that does happen to him? What do you mean by this planting sizamah? This man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

What's it mean? It is only a picture. What's the spiritual content, the spiritual truth? Well, you see what it means is this. Somebody's got to create this tree.

And the thing created it, he has to take it and to put it into this position by the rivers of water. Now let me re-unfold this wonderful picture to you. Let me put it to you in more direct New Testament terms.

What is it you say that happens to a man in order that he may become a Christian? Well, this is the operation of the Holy Spirit. Before any man can become a Christian, obviously from this definition, he needs new life. He needs a new nature.

You don't become a Christian by deciding to imitate Christ or to follow him or try to put the sermon on the mount into practice. You try that and you'll find you can't do it. That's the experience of the greatest saints the world has ever known.

Now it's not a matter of addition to what we are. It's not a matter of improving what we have. Isn't that at all? What makes us Christians is that God creates us anew.

He puts new life into us. He puts a new principle into us. We become new creations.

We become new men. Oh my dear friend that you realize that. The Christian you see is as I showed last Sunday night absolutely and essentially different.

This heap of refuse, this chaff, this gathering, this lump of chaff. It's gotten a life in it. But the Christian's like a tree and somebody's put life into the tree.

The creator has put it and he does the same thing to everybody who becomes a Christian. He must be born against his or her Lord, Ennekadimas. You need to have life put into you.

You need to be regenerated. That's great new testament doctrine, which is the essence of Christian doctrine. My dear friend you must have new life given to you before you can ever become a Christian.

How does it happen? Well this planting, oh this is the most fascinating and wonderful thing. It's God dealing with us and ourselves by the Holy Spirit. You see he has prepared the life in his son.

Humanity was so rotten that it couldn't be improved. You've got a new start. There in the Old Testament you are told, oh God gave his law to the people.

He said if you can keep this it will save you but they couldn't. Nobody kept it. Everybody failed.

God said there's only one way to save and that is I must start a new humanity. The first Adam fell and his progenies fallen after him. I must send a second Adam.

I must send a now or now. It's no use creating another man. He would fall as the first men fell.

The first men was perfect. So if you create another perfect man he again would fall and succumb to the attacks and the onslaught of the devil. So God says I'm going to make a new type of humanity.

I will send my own son and he will take human nature unto himself. Here is a new head of a new humanity, the son of God. He's got life in him for men.

He is truly men so I can receive life from him. That's it. But how does that come to me? Now you see the meaning of the incarnation and his perfect spotless life of obedience and his death upon the cross, his burial and his resurrection and ascension.

There it is. There is salvation in him. But the question is how can I get that life? That's what I need.

Now then the answer is oh there is a power that can take you and plant you into him. Put you into him. Like a tree planted by the rivers of waters.

How does it happen? Well I'll tell you something about this process. Have you ever tried to plant a tree? Well you see what you've got to do is this, there is the earth. Now you've got to dig it.

You need a spade and perhaps a fork and you've got to loosen it. You've got to do all that before you put your tree in. Then you put the earth back and you stamp it down and press it down.

The tree is all right. But it's quite a process there, isn't it? It's quite hard work sometimes. And it's not an easy process that we go through to become Christians.

What does the Holy Spirit do to us as he plants us in Christ Jesus? Well here are some of them. Do you know anything about that work of conviction? Do you know anything about this process of getting that earth broken up? Dog. Spade put in, press down with the foot, likewise the fork and lift it up and broken.

Do you know anything about it? You can't be a Christian without conviction of sin. You see this process involves a good deal of disturbance. We may have gone on living for years persuading ourselves that everything was all right and refusing to think.

And toward the events and circumstances would take place. We would never allow them to have their full weight of benefit and upon us and so on. But suddenly we are disturbed.

We are taken hold of and something makes us think. We say something makes us think. It's the Holy Spirit that makes us think.

This process of breaking up the ground can happen in a service like this. You know, thank God it has happened here many times. It is still happening.

I believe it's happening at this moment. You've suddenly become aware of the fact that God is dealing with you. You're no longer a spectator.

You're no longer just a listener. You're no longer just a critic sitting there, notebook in hand, making notes about things you don't like and don't agree with all that stops. And you're aware that something's being done to you.

You're being broken up. You no longer are detached from this but you're involved in it and you're aware that God is dealing with you, disturbing you, rousing you, convicting you, making your face questions, making you feel uncomfortable and unhappy. You want to defend yourself.

I know but it's because of what's happening to you. This is conviction of sin. Do you know anything about it, my friend? And then of course it goes on to a realization of the truth.

And what is that? Well, that we are what we are because God hasn't been in our lives

and we don't know him. We haven't lived to his glory and to his praise. We haven't spent our time delighting in his law and meditating in a day and night.

We've dismissed the Bible, played out. We believe in modern philosophy and modern science and this has meant nothing to us and God has meant nothing at all. And now you come to the realization that that's why you are what you are.

That's why you fail in life. That's why you're unhappy. That's why you have to spend so much time and money in trying to find happiness and you never succeed.

It's all because of this wrong relationship to God. The truth comes home. The spirit brings it home.

It says, "There you are. There's God and you haven't lived under God and for God, but you've sinned against Him." And you realize it now and you stop defending yourself. And you begin to feel hopeless and you say, "What can I do?" The devil suggests you start living a new life, start reading your Bible and start going to church, start doing good.

And you perhaps foolishly listen to Him and you go on doing that as Martin Luther did it before his conversion. But the more you do this, of course the more you find about the holiness of God and the darkness of your own soul. And it feels absolutely hopeless and you feel helpless.

And then the spirit reveals to you this wonderful message of salvation that is here in the Bible. All the preparation for it in the old, then the coming of the Son of God, all that I reminded you of just now, "Sudden you see it all and it's relevance and it's relevance to you." And the boy says, "You believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and there shall be saved." Accept that truth. Believe it's true for you.

Believe that the Son of God came from Him in order to make you a new man to give you a new life. He's taken your sins. Upon Himself you can be forgiven and He'll give you a new life.

You suddenly begin to get a glimmer of insight into it and then you're led on to repentance to an acknowledgement that you don't deserve this. That God would be fully justified if He punished you eternally. You're sorry for your sin.

You want to leave your sin. You tell God so. You cast yourself upon His mercy.

And you tell Him, "Oh, I don't understand it, but I believe this message. Repentance, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the Spirit that makes you do all that.

That's all a part of the preparation of this ground. The digging and the breaking up and the shifting and the preparation of the bed this it were. All this is essential.

Then comes and he takes hold of this new life and he puts it into you. This is the rebur.

This is the life put in and the tree put into its position of the ground, put back and leveled and all that I've been describing.

Now that is the thing that is emphasized in particular here by this man. You see the picture is a very wonderful one. It's like a tree.

He says, "Plant him." Yes, but he doesn't stop at that. It's not just a planted tree. It all depends where you plant your tree.

The secret of this man he says is this, that he's like a tree planted by the rivers of water, not planted in a wilderness, not planted on top of a mountain, planted by a great majestic river flowing through a beautiful valley with a rich loam, with wonderful lands surrounding it everywhere. That's where it's planted. And this of course is about as perfect a picture of what happens when a man is born again and regenerated that you could possibly find anywhere.

The location is the thing that matters. Where is the tree planted by the rivers of water? Where is the Christian planted into Christ Jesus? And you realize this? What makes a man a Christian is not that he's a better man than he was and is trying to be better still and that he's trying to follow Christ? No, no. What makes a man a Christian is this, that he is taken and is grafted into Christ, that he begins to receive of the life of Christ.

The New Testament is full of a term like this, in Christ. It tells us that we were all born in Adam and it is because we're all born in Adam. We end as chaff.

Now this says the New Testament what you need is to be in Christ in this new humanity. You need this new life that is in him. He said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." So what makes a man a Christian is that he is planted into Christ.

Oh, I mustn't keep you, but here you see the illustration works itself out, doesn't it? The characteristic of the soil by the side of a great river is always that there's depth there. It isn't just a light, loose soil. It isn't a rocky soil with just a little surface layer of earth.

No, no. Always by the side of a river. There's always this depth, this mud, this nutriment, this solidity.

Oh, it's a wonderful life. That's why the man plants it there. He wants this to become a majestic tree.

So he puts it by the side of the river in that rich loam, that wonderful soil. How inadequate is the best illustration? Do you know what it is that makes a man a Christian? Well, it is this that the life of God comes into his soul. Nothing less.

Here's the soil. Plant it into Christ, the Son of God. We become partakers of the divine

nature.

And you can't estimate the depth. It is the riches of the Godhead himself. The Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians that he was praying for them, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God.

You're put into such a soil, into the very being of God himself as it were. In Christ, God and men, and we receive of this new humanity, this perfect humanity that's in him. That's what makes a man a Christian.

It's an entirely new stuff. It's like being born again. It's like a new life altogether.

There is a new principle put into us, a new disposition, something that wasn't there before. But notice also the rivers of water. Because the point about this tree is this, that it's not only in very good soil, but it's branches go down and they spread and the tendrils break out and some of them actually get into the bed of the river.

And there it draws its moisture. And it's rivers of water so that the roots of the tree are in this river bed with all its glorious moisture. It's just a picture which tells us this.

That the Christian is a man who draws the hall of his life and nutriment and sustenance and everything from the Lord Jesus Christ himself. My dear friends, let him say it for himself so that you don't imagine the time inventing these things that I'm putting before you. Listen to him.

These are his words in the sixth chapter of the gospel according to Saint John. He says, "I am that bread of life. You are Father's did eat men are in the wilderness and are dead.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat rather than not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.

And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except he eat the flesh of the Son of men and drink his blood. You have no life in him. O so ye teth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath he turned a life, and I will raise him up at the last day, for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me even he shall live by me." That's it. The life, the trust and the moisture, everything comes out of this blessed river of life which is none other than the Son of God himself who became incarnate and died and rose again in order that we might have it.

He is the head cesspool in writing to the Ephesians, part of which all comes, the head of the body, Christ, and he controls the entire body of which we are but parts. And you notice this man's emphasis upon the rivers of waters. There is an endless supply.

It's as endless as God himself. We receive of the very life of God. We are partakers of the divine nature.

There is no end be filled with all the fullness of God. That's Christianity. Never think again of Christianity in terms of being just nice and good and moral and decent and better than somebody else.

That's Harry Sayism out upon the suggestion. I don't stand here to tell you to be a good man. I say, "You're so bad you must be made and you men.

You must be born again." I say, "You can have life from God and this is what makes a man a Christian. Nothing less planted by the rivers of waters. Drawing the life of Christ himself.

He's planted into him. He's put into him. He's engrafted into him.

These are all the New Testament terms suggested by this man in his wonderful illustration here back in the first song. That's what happens to you when you become a Christian. You see the logic? The man becomes a Christian as the result of what happens to him, not as the result of what he does.

Secondly, that is what does happen to him. That is what is involved in this planting. I ask you in the name of God before I go any further.

Have you been planted in Christ? Have you been through this process in some shape or form? Have you been aware of the digging and the breaking up and the preparation? And have you known the blessed hench taking all of you and putting you in Christ so that you know that you're a new man and a new woman? Or has your idea been that you're making yourself a Christian? Well, that you've always been one, that you were brought up to be one. Which is it? My friend, you can't be a Christian without knowing that he, the Spirit of God, has taken you and has put you, has planted you, has engrafted you into Christ himself. And you say, Christ is my life.

I am what I am by the grace of God. I live yet not I. But Christ liveth in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Can you say that? If you can't say it, I doubt, I take leave to doubt whether you're a Christian. Unless you feel that you are what you are, solely as the result of what God has done to you through the Spirit, you're not a Christian, my friend. You may be very good, you may be religious, you may be highly moral, but you can't be a Christian.

It's God alone who makes Christians. And that's how he makes them. Well, that brings me to the third and the last point which will perhaps help us to answer the Christian I've just been putting.

What is the result of this thing which happens to the Christian? What is the result to which this operation of the early Spirit upon him? What is the result to which it leads? It's all here. Thank God for it. We saw something of it last Sunday night.

We'll see more of it now. I'm only going to give you my headings. I'm almost ashamed that I said that.

That was to be an intimation that I wasn't going to keep you. I was almost apologizing for keeping you, shame on me. May God forgive me.

Do you feel you're being kept? Do you feel that this is too long? Do you want to go home? If you do, you know nothing about Christianity. What is there in life but this? We are in a dying world, my friends. Great men have to die like everybody else.

You may have to die at any moment. Don't you boast too much about your scientific advances and developments? You can't always deal with a virus infection, can you? Very well. I'm talking to you about eternal life which God alone can give.

Very well then I make no apology for going on. I'm telling you my headings about the results to which this wonderful action of God upon the soul leads to. It's the ideal of course.

It shows us the blessed, glorious possibility. Here's the first thing. Here's like the tree planted by the rivers of water.

Here's the first result he bringeth forth his fruit in his season. What's this mean? Well, you see the first thing it means this, that men when he becomes a Christian, rarely begins to function in the way that he was meant to do. What's the function of a tree? Well, it's to bring forth fruit.

That's what it's for. And this tree bringeth forth its fruit. I showed you last Sunday night that the trouble with that chaff is, men's never meant to be that.

It's no good, it's profitless. It's a relic, a remnant, the germ is gone. But here now men is restored.

He's meant, he's doing no and is what he's meant to be. In other words, when a man becomes a Christian, do you know what happens to him? Well, that image of God that was defatched and more or less destroyed when Adam Phil is restored to the men. Listen to the apostle Paul putting this.

He tells it again to the Ephesians in chapter 4. He says, "But he have not so learned

Christ, if so be that he have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus." That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. That being interpreted means less.

That when a man becomes a Christian, he's been born again, he's been created anew by God. In righteousness and true holiness, that's the thing he lost in the fall. As I showed you last Sunday, it's given back to him.

The image is restored and man is no longer that ruins with the notice saying, "God wants to bloke you." God's come back into residence. And the thorns and the briars have been removed and the ivy has been plucked off. And he sent his architect and his workmen and his back in residence, created in righteousness and true holiness.

The image of God is restored to him. And therefore he becomes a man whose conscious one's more of the dignity of manhood. He knows what it is truly to be a man and a man's not a mere creature that's in the well to eat and drink and indulge his passions and desires.

No, no, he's a friend of God. And he enjoys fellowship and communion with God and he knows he's meant to live to the glory of God. He is separated from the animals.

He realizes and knew that he's meant to be the Lord of creation and essentially different from the animal, was governed solely by lusts and bribes and passions and desires. The psychologist's view of man is nothing but the chaff. The biblical view of man is in the image of God, righteousness and holiness of the truth and back again into the likeness of God.

But secondly, he bears his fruits as this man in his season and I rather like this. That's the characteristic of the tree, isn't it, that you can more or less prophesy when the fruits are going to be there? There's a regularity about it. Why? Well, because it's obeying the law of its being.

The tree has been so made and constituted that it brings its fruit at a given point. You begin to see the buds and then the flowers and then the maturity and then the fruit begins to form and that grows and develop. And there you can go and pick your fruit.

I'm told by the experts you can almost do it to the day apart from some curious accident in weather. Here it is. And this man bears his fruit in its season.

And that means that he is not godly by fits and starts or when the spasm takes him or because it happens to be the beginning of a new year or because somebody dies in the family or because he's at an illness. Now, now, steadiness, reliability. Life governed by truth and life based upon principles.

It's not a rootless life. It is a life that is rooted in Christ and is drawing its regular supply there from that glorious river of water that's flowing by. And then the fruit itself, of course, bears its fruit in its season.

What is this fruit? Well, I read to you at the beginning. What the apostle tells us about the fruit of the spirit, the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith and temperance. That's the fruit of the spirit.

And these are the things that begin to appear in a man who becomes a Christian. Now, there are many people who say they're Christian, but I've been told often in my consultations there with people after services. I know so and so was always selfish and self-centered.

All right. She says she's a Christian. All right, she may say so.

But the fact that a man or a woman says that he or she is a Christian, as I've shown you, it doesn't prove that they are Christians produce fruit and they produce it in season. And the fruit of the spirit is that love, joy, peace, long suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, faith and temperance. It's of necessity, true.

You can't have the life of God in your soul and still produce those works of the flesh, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, licentiousness, jealousy and all those belong to the chaff. But the fruit of the spirit who have different, that's the fruit that these men bears. And then, of course, we've already come across a bit of it.

His delight is in the law of the Lord. A very good test, this, do you enjoy reading your Bible? Do you meditate in it day and night? Do you want to know more about it? These are some of the fruit. But listen, help to others.

Fruit, somebody comes along and his hungry takes the fruit and beats it. And the Christian is a man who can help others. You should be ready at all times as the Apostle Peter to give a reason for the hope that is in you.

Can you help people when they're in trouble? Can you tell somebody else how to become a Christian? Can you tell them what the Christian faith is? If you're a Christian, you can. If you can't tell them you're not a Christian, you can help others. And not only help them in that way, but help them in actual deeds of kindness and mercy and compassion, do you know it is a simple fact of history to say that the greatest pain effect is this world has ever known have been Christian people.

Where did your schools first come from? From the Christian church. Where did your hospitals come from? From the Christian church. The oldest hospital in London is St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

It was started by a monk called Ray here, over the 11th century's ago. Where did your

poor law come from? From the Christian church and Christian people. Where did the end of slavery come from? From William Wilberfoss converted Christian, a man who could tell you that he was once not a Christian and the thing he was planted in Christ.

Where did your factory acts come from Lord Shaftsbury? Again a converted Christian. All the best and the noblest institutions in this country have come originally from Christian people. Where did your trade union come from? There's a lot of talk about them today.

Do you know they came from Christian people? That even a man like Lachie is prepared to admit that it was those methodists converted to 100 years ago who first began to see themselves as men and not as pigs. Who began to demand their rights? All these things have come in the wake of Christianity. Yes this tree bears fruit always in its season and that is some of the fruit to which we can make reference utterly impressing tonight.

But let me say this other word. Not only shall he bear his fruit in his season. Thank God for this next thing.

His leave also shall not wither. The first Sunday night I said, don't think that your happiness is dependent upon circumstances and events because if it does you may soon lose it. Who knows what's going to happen in 1963? Are you afraid of it? Are you afraid of the future? Are you afraid of evil tidings? You said, don't tell me because you're afraid of it.

You know if you are my friend I doubt whether you're a godly person. Indeed I'm sure you're not a godly person because what I'm told about the godly person is this. It's in another sum.

Here it is in sum 112. Surely this godly men shall not be moved forever. The righteous shall be never lost in remembrance.

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established.

He shall not be afraid. Well now that's another way of saying that his leave shall not wither. And you know why? I can tell you.

A terrible drought may come. But the leaves of this tree shall not wither. Why? Well because it's planted near the rivers of water.

That river never dries up. And the roots and the tendrils of this tree are in that river bed and drawing out of this river. Never lacking in moisture.

Let there be a terrible drought. Still the moisture comes unseen. And his leave never withers.

This is one of the most glorious aspects of the Christian life. It prepares a man for

everything that can ever happen to him. It prepares us for middle age.

It prepares us for old day. It prepares us for the days when we are decrepit and in scarcely move and scarcely think. It prepares us for illness.

It prepares us for misfortune or loss. It prepares us for difficulties with other people. It prepares us for the death of loved ones.

It prepares us for our own death. There is nothing that can happen to us but that this prepares us for it. Plant it by the sight of the rivers of water which can never fail.

My life being in Christ, he will never leave me, no forsake me. Did you notice that statement in Psalm 92, "They shall still bear fruit in old age. They shall still be fat and flourishing even in old age." God has promised I will never leave the enough forsake thing.

So that the Christian is able to say, "The Lord is my helper and I shall not fear what men shall do unto me." Blessings as David in Psalm 37. "I have been young and I am old yet have I never seen the righteous but shaken." Yes is the apostle Paul. I have learned in whatsoever state I am therein to be content.

I know both how to be a best and hunt you a pound. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear and say if he is such confiding for nothing changes here, the storm may roar about me.

My heart may low be laid but God is wronged about me. And can I be dismayed? Of course I can't. It's impossible.

Let the storms come. Let the hurricane arise. Let the blizzard blow.

Let everything be let loose against me. It doesn't matter. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day.

Oh my life being rooted and grounded in Christ. I am able to say, "Plent his grace with thee as found grace to cover all my sin. Let the healing streams abound.

Make me keep me pure within thou of life the fountain art. Freely let me take of thee spring thou up within my heart rise to all eternity." Doesn't matter where you are. "Jesus lover of my soul.

Let me to thy bosom fly while the nearer waters roll while the tempest still is high. Hide me, oh my Savior, I till the storm of life is past. Safe into the haven guide, oh receive my soul at last." They're all saying it.

Whatever their theology. A Calvinist top lady adds to what I've just been quoting from

the Arminian Wesley. Rock of ages, clap for me.

Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy ribbonside which flowed be of sin the double cure cleanse me from its guilt and power. While I draw this fleeting breath while when my eyelids close in death, when I fall through tracks unknown, see the on thy judgment throne.

Rock of ages, clap for me. Let me hide myself in thee. His leaf also shall not wither.

Those who are planted in the house of our God shall flourish in the courts of our God. Oh my dear friend, have you got this life? It's the only thing that matters. Are you planted in Christ? Are you living on Him? Is He your bread, your water, your breath, your everything? Is He your all and in all? Are you ready for an unknown future? How are you standing up already to the trials of life? Is Christ's efficient foil? If he isn't, you don't know him.

If you're seeking any satisfaction apart from him, you don't really know him. Thou know Christ at all I want more than all in thee I find, says Charles Messley again. And he is because his is the life of God.

There's no end to it. He's the all-sufficient one. Oh, give yourself no rest nor peace until you really know him, until you know that you're in him, and until you can tell him, "Thou oh Christ, art, all I want." Make certain that you're planted in him, if you're doubtful, plead with God.

Tell him you want to be, and you know if you do even that much, it's a proof that he started dealing with you. You wouldn't say that much if he hadn't started. He's been digging, he's been preparing, asking to go on with the blessed work until you know that you're rooted and grounded in Christ.

He said, "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Are you enjoying that more abundant life? It's all there for you in him. Make certain that you are planted in him. Then you'll begin to bury your fruit in your season.

And most wonderful. Your leaf will never wither, whatever may happen to you. Amen.

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