

Saved But Perishing

By Paris Reidhead*

Now if you will turn to John, Chapter 3. We are talking about perishing, and I didn't quite have the nerve to say that the subject was, Saved But Still Perishing, because I thought it would be misunderstood. But now you are here, and they have got guards at the door so that you cannot leave until I explain what I mean. So we are going to read this. We are going to read just a few verses and we are going to remember who it was to whom our Lord spoke and then we are going to try to find out from the Word of God what the meaning of this word perishing is, and how it could possibly affect us, those of us who are Christians, and how it would undoubtedly affect those who are not Christians.

I think I'll begin reading with the very first verse. This will give us the setting:

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, 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; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And 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 eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God" (Joh. 3:1-18).

Nicodemus had a great deal more than most church members and many preachers and religious leaders. He as a Pharisee, and the Pharisees were fundamental in their theology, and they were evangelistic in their zeal, and they were missionary in their fervor, and they were premillennial in their hope, and they were devout in their practice; in addition to being whited sepulchers, they were this. They had all of this: theology that was fundamental, zeal that was evangelistic, fervor that was missionary centered, hope that was fixed in the coming of Messiah, and devotion of life that they fasted, two days a week, they tithed all they possessed, they prayed at least three times a day, and the shortest of their prayers would have occupied at least ten minutes unless it was rushed through. And this was the part and parcel of the life of the Pharisees. And he was a master, a teacher. He was a ruler of the Jews, one that had great responsibility. And our Lord says, You are perishing.

Now we understand why. He made it perfectly clear that Nicodemus had not been born again, and thus because he had not been born again, because he possessed only the life which was of this world, he was obviously perishing in every sense. He was perishing at the time. His future was one on earth that was marked by perishing, and certainly when he died, if he were to die in this state, his end would be to perish.

But you will notice that our Lord Jesus indicated that there was a kingdom. You have heard it. It's axiomatic, but none the less illustrative. There are five kingdoms with which we customarily deal. We deal with the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, the human kingdom, and the kingdom of God. Nothing gets from the lower kingdom into the higher kingdom except by the power of the life of the higher kingdom. For instance, if I could give personality to a little globule of chemical sitting in the ground, it would become restless with its state and say, It is good to be chemical, but oh look at that nice weed there, with its roots down around me, and I would like to be grass. I am just tired of being nothing but a little piece

of chemical here. This is no way for me to be, mineral; this isn't what I should be. I have hopes and aspirations. So it gets a short course in how to change chemicals into vegetables and tries by pulling on its shoelaces to get up, but it does not.

It remains what it has been, just a little globule of chemical. But you see, finally, one of the little almost filament like capillaries of this weed, this piece of grass puts itself around the chemicals, and there is a process that goes on, a process of absorption. And the first thing you know, the chemical has now become vegetable, not because of effort of its own, but because life reached down and surrounded it, and involved it and drew it up. But the little blade of grass has its frustrations, and it peeking up above the soil said, Here I have been all my life and no prospect of moving. My, how marvelous it would be if I could crawl, if nothing more than this little ant or like that worm over there. But oh how marvelous it would be to be a cow. Look at that cow. It can walk where it will. But one day the cow comes, and in its hunger wraps its rough tongue around the little blade of grass, and the first thing you know the grass has entered into a new kingdom. And so the cow after a while says, it's all right to be here inside a fence, but there is the fellow that made the fence. It would be much better to be him. Try as it will, it endeavors by some short course of self-discipline to become a man but it does not. But one day the hungry man just makes arrangements with the cow, and the first thing you know the cow has been transmuted into man life. And so the man sees another kingdom, the kingdom of God, with all the beauties and the wonders that it possesses, and his heart is stirred, and he said, Oh to enter into that kingdom, oh to share in that life, to enter into that which I see and am so weak in reaching. And so try as he will he fails. One does it by concentration, one does it by positive thinking, and another does it by self-abnegation. One puts himself on the ground, measuring the continent of India, hoping that as he does somehow this degree of penance and pain will succeed in changing him, bring him into that state of Nirvana, that state of rest and peace, and realization. But all the efforts are in vain until a gracious God with nail pierced hands reaches down and surrounds the sinful man, and by His grace effects in the man a change so that this one is born from above. He partakes of life that is imported. He responds to instruments of love that are given, and he is the object of grace, rather than the originator of it. It is from God to him, rather than from him to God. Loved by God, sought by God, provision made by God to meet his need. And this is what our Lord Jesus told this poor bewildered Pharisee, that thought that by all of his penances, by all of his ceremonies, his ritual, all of his sacrifice and service, somehow he could fit himself for that kingdom which is above, but he couldn't. And our Lord Jesus met him head on without any discussion or argument, saying, "Except a man be born again he cannot see or in any wise participate in the kingdom of God." This whole real, this whole world that God has and is, and is willing to share, is kept from him because he is of the wrong nature. He has to be born again.

This was difficult for the Pharisee to comprehend. He was bringing to bear upon it his experience, he was not willing at this time at least to learn that there is a whole new dimension of reality that exceeds the definitions and the experiences that he has had, and so he was in ignorance. But our Lord left for anyone who will the simple fact that we have man life, we have human life, and that that which prevails in the kingdom of God is god's life. And thus he concludes this statement and testimony to Nicodemus this wise man, and ruler and teacher by saying that, "Whosoever believeth in Him," that is the One who was pictured by the serpent in the wilderness, lifted up on the crossed sticks by Moses, and He is referring to that which is going to happen to Him, of course, when He, the Son of Man, is lifted up upon a cross to die for Nicodemus, and for you, and for me; then He states, "Whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have eternal life." And later in the 16th verse He says "everlasting life."

Notice now that He has presented us with the fact that to be born again requires belief. This word belief is to be the key to escape from perishing. And in just a moment we are going to deal with the extensions and the implications of this word perishing, but right now consider for a moment what it means to believe. There is through the years of time a process that I call, for want of a more - a better term, weaseling of words. This refers to the chicken coop process when the little weasel squeaks in somehow, takes his teeth, bites a hole out of the egg, holds it in its four paws and draws the meat out of it, leaving the shell there in the nest, almost whole except for the little break, and yet emptied of its meat. And so I think that this process goes on. Sometimes it is done deliberately, but more frequently it is just the erosion of time-when you read the Word, you apply to it your present-day definition and miss its meaning.

For instance, when Paul wrote to the church at Rome, he said, "I would have come to you many times, but I have been let hitherto." And one reading this would say, Well if he was let why didn't he go. Until he begins to realize that the Anglo-Saxon

word *let* meant prevented. And we use it in tennis when the ball hits the net. Some people think that they are saying net ball, but if they are speaking correct tennis parlance from the old Anglo Saxon word *began*, they would say, It is a *let* ball, that is a prevented ball, a hindered ball. And so through the years there's been this process of changing the meaning of words. And the word here that is the key to every aspect of the Christian life is word *believe*. And unfortunately this process has been of weaseling, or changing the meaning of words, has nowhere been as devastating and as tragic as it is in respect to the word *believe*, because the common use of the word today is to agree with, to hold to be so, or to intellectually assent to. And the word in the Anglo Saxon use, as it was employed by the translators, was a far stronger word. *Lief* comes from the same root as love, or *lufu*, and it has its idea of wanting to go along with. The idea of the word love is to desire to accompany. The Anglo Saxon used L-U-F as *Luf*, and it meant to be in agreement with, in accordance with, or in this sense, if you love somebody you wanted to walk with them. You desired to share with them. And so the word *lufu* has another form, *lief*, and this means in accordance with. The little first part of this word, *be*, is simply as we would commonly use it, *be* – to exist, or to have being, and thus to *be-lufu* or to *be-lief* would be to be in accordance with or to go along with.

And we had the sense of meaning, and I have used this before, but it brings it to point. Here in ancient England would be a free man, living on his little plot of ground and trying to make his living, but without possession of arms, or horses, or soldiers, dependent upon the feudal lord for protection. So the time would come when some kind of international or national disturbance would threaten the peace of this free man, and he would have to decide what was for his best interest. And so the call would go out that the Earl of such-and such was taking volunteers, and deciding that it would be to his advantage to throw his weight in with the Earl or Duke whoever it might be, he would go to his Estate, make his way to him, and he would take the coin of this nobleman, he would take the gold sovereign, if you please, and he would by this means identify himself with the one whom now he pledged to serve. And he would then return home and tell his wife that evening in front of the fire that he had believed on the Earl of such-and-such. This meant that he had put himself in accordance with, and he wanted to walk along side of the Earl, or the Duke as the case might be. And he would by so doing have said that he would pledge himself to obey, he was ready to leave his home and family when he was called, he was willing to accept all the duties of a soldier and all the consequences of war. He had pledged himself. He had believed. And this was what was in the mind of the translator when they used this Anglo Saxon word to translate the Greek word for faith, *pisteuo*(*pistis*), which means to commit yourself to. And you can see the reason why the word had significance. It meant a committal of one's life, and property, and person, his past and his future, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus when our Lord is said by the translation to have given these word of instruction to Nicodemus, that whosoever is willing to commit himself to the Son of man, and go along side of Him, and walk in accordance with Him, well you see you have not got a word that had considerable strength, and significance, and meaning. And it has gone far past than to intellectually agreeing with something that is said. It is now included in a moral act, an act of abandonment an act of submission, an act of surrender, an act of commitment.

And so it is that the only one who can escape perishing is the one who sees Jesus Christ to be exactly as the Word describes Him, God come in the flesh, very God of very God, as well as perfect man, that He died and was buried, and was raised from the dead, and that He invites us to walk alongside with Him, or to commit ourselves to Him, or surrender to Him, and obey Him. All of this I say is implicit in the word *believe*.

Well let's leave this point and proceed to the next, should not perish. Here is the man that has station; he is a ruler of the Jews. He has ministry. He is a master, or teacher of Israel. He has religious system that would bolster and secure him, give him confidence for the unknown future, and he is accepted by his group. In fact in most ways, you would say, Here is a well-adjusted, successful man who has everything. And yet our Lord say, by the inference I draw, Nicodemus is perishing. Now, is perishing means that it is going on at the moment. So frequently we use this word *perish* only in its future tense, only in its ultimate destination. And we recognize that unless Nicodemus is born again, unless his past sins are forgiven, unless he passes from death to life, unless he is born from above, unless he believes on Christ, he shall continue and finally perish. No question about that. But the thing I want you to see is that at this time he is perishing. Not that he is going to, but right then he is perishing. And this is the aspect that we seldom understand.

We look outside of our own company of believers, and we see people in the world. Oh, they are seeming to have a good time. They are jolly, jovial, happy people, apparently. Of course, if they have to depend upon narcotics of one sought or another in

continual submission to them in order to maintain this happiness would prove that it is somewhat artificial. But nevertheless, they seem to be happy, and many times Christian people, living within some framework of their own making, rather than His, would with rather longing eyes look out to the world and say, O my, it used to be fun, didn't it? It is amazing. You know there is an amazing quality here. Have you ever discovered it in yourself? You move from a place, you move from a situation, and no sooner do you get settled where you are going when you are talking about it to someone you tell how wonderful it was back there where you left. It is amazing you know. You can hardly wait to leave, but now that you have arrived at the new place there is a haloing affect around the past. And so it is when people come to Christ, many sometimes look with longing eyes back and around, and they see the worldling, and they say, Isn't he having fun, isn't this a happy life? And he is going through the slew of despond or some other hurdle in the Christian pilgrimage and it is rather difficult. But the fact of the matter is, this person is perishing now. Not that he is going to; he is in a state of continuous perishing, because you see the word perishing is a word that is in the continuous tense, not something out in the future. It is something that happens now. And I think we are beginning to arrive at the point where the definition of the word to perish will have meaning to you. And it is this, to perish is to fail of its intended use, to be lost, or to lose, or in some way to destroy the meaning of now as well as the meaning of the tomorrows, the meaning of yourself. And he is perishing who is living in less than that for which he was intended.

You see the children, when mother is down shopping, or has gone visiting, go into the house, and they want a tent in the back yard. They have found a greasy sawhorse, they have found somethings, and they need something big enough to cover it. And one of the little children with great inventiveness and clear and keen memory says, Oh, mother has a piece of canvas that we can use for a tent. It is in the drawer. And there in the bottom of the drawer is her starched linen table cloth, the one that she saves only for the finest of her friends. But to the little child it was course; it was stiff, it was canvas. So when she comes home she discovers that they have taken it out of the tissue paper in which it was nicely wrapped, they have carried it out into the backyard, they have slid it over the greasy sawhorse, they have covered it with mud, they have torn it on the slivers, and they have ripped it on the nails, and when mother looks at it she says, It is perished. Now it is all there. It is all there. And children come and say, Don't cry so hard. It is all here. I know it is tore, but you can put flowers over that greasy spot. But the mother knows better than that. It has perished. What do you mean, it's perished? It is simply no longer useful for that for which it was intended. And this is the meaning of the word perish, to fail of its intended use.

And therefore when a person lives in whatever degree of prosperity they may live, in whatever degree of honor they may live, in whatever degree of apparent satisfaction they may live, if they are living in less than what they were intended to life, they are perishing as far as that moment is concerned.

So here are people living in great wealth, in great luxury, in great ease, in great comfort, and looking at them we would say, My, my, what a lovely life theirs must be. But the fact is they are perishing, because they are having to substitute that which has no meaning in lieu of the fact they have lost that which has all meaning. If man was made simply for clothes, then the possession of clothes will fulfill him, and if he does not have clothes he is perishing, and if does he isn't. If man is made just for food, then the fact that he has food will mean that he is not perishing, he is being fulfilled, but if he doesn't have food then he is perishing. But you see, if man was made for something beside clothes and food, and house, and possessions, and he doesn't have that which is beside this, other than the necessities, physical necessities of life, and then he is perishing, regardless of how much wealth he may have.

In our family is a man, the only one in all the connection who is very wealthy. His grandfather was a lumberman. You know, back in the days when they would take a section of land, a mile from the road, and they would cut a road into it a half a mile wide on each side and cut all the timber off. It was a very convenient way to take the timber without paying the state for the taxes and so on. And so by this means some of the money came to this relative of mine. And he lived there in great affluence and display, and he would have to at times in years gone by — I remember learning of it as a little child through some accident — that he would go into his bedroom and take a bottle of whiskey and sit there and drink until he was quite intoxicated and then just would roll over into his bed. Now he never embarrassed. He didn't certainly get drunk on the street. But you see he had discovered that all of his wealth, and all of his position, and all of his numerous possessions did not satisfy his heart, and he felt he was perishing. And somehow to obscure the deep longing that he had of insatiable discontent he took this means of narcotizing his brain so that he could get a little rest, a little sleep. He had everything but that which made him a fulfilled

human being. Later on, I talked with him and found that he had come to see the Lord Jesus Christ and opened his heart to Him in some measure. But the fact is that in those years at least, he demonstrated in these early formative years of my life that things and position, and place could not complete a man, could not make a person happy. It would require some kind of a narcotic, some kind of an escape, and this to my mind is why I would contribute to my definition of the word perish that Nicodemus wasn't only going to perish at some future time; he was living in a state of failing to fulfill his purpose. Even at the time that he thought he was happy, there was discontent. Even at the time that he thought he was living a satisfied life, there was a deep inner dissatisfaction. And so when you are seeing the unsaved, you have this to know: that if they are not in a right relationship with God they are basically unhappy people even though they may not admit they are unhappy, even though they may not agree with you. They may look at you in your threadbare cuffs and your rundown clothes and say to you, if this happens to be your case, Look, what do you have to make happy? Well you have someone to make you happy. Your happiness does not depend upon the clothes, and it does not depend upon the possessions. And it does not depend upon things, because a complete person is a person that is in right relationship to God, a happy person is a person that is a fulfilled person. And he is only fulfilled that is in right relationship with God.

Augustine knew it and said it eloquently. "Lord, Thou hast so made us we cannot rest until we rest in Thee." And it is a right relationship with God that gives meaning and significance to life. And anyone that is not in a right relationship with God is at that moment perishing. And if they continue in that state, then they will be finally perished. This we understand. You must be born again, you must have life imparted, you must come into a beginning relationship with God that will transform you out of the kingdom of men into the kingdom of God, allowing you thus to partake of His life in the miracle of the new birth.

And we are agreed on that. And if I speak to any here tonight that do not know that you have been born again, and then I say it in truth, you are not only going to perish. You are perishing. That is, you are not understanding or realizing what you as a human being were intended to be. For we weren't intended just to have food to satisfy our need for nourishment, and clothes to protect us from the elements, and a house to secure some privacy and pleasure. No, no. We were made for more than that. We were made for God, and to live with all these things without God is to be deprived indeed, and to be wasting these precious days and hours of your life.

Now having said that, I hasten on; because I speak probably largely to people that have professed faith in Christ. Is it possible to be saved and yet to perish as far as today is concerned? Is it possible to have your ultimate destiny secured and your present time wasted? And the answer is an unqualified, Yes. It is absolutely possible for one to have their past pardoned, to be justified from all things that they have done, that if they were to die as they are in the present state they would go to heaven, and yet have tomorrow to be utterly wasted as far as real significance of life and being is concerned. For he that has pardon from past sins and certainty of heaven is far better off than the one who does not have this life from above and this forgiveness of sins, and this salvation from hell. But oh, why should one settle for crumbs when the whole loaf is theirs? Why should they settle for a portion? Why should they settle for less than all that God has intended?

God didn't only want to take you where He is. He wanted to come where you are. He wanted to live not only with you when you come to Him, but He wanted to live in you while you are here. And if you are living in any state other than Ephesian 3, then we are living in a state which means that tomorrow is to some degree at least, and probably almost entirely as far as eternal consequences are concerned, is going to be wasted. For the normal Christian life is expressed, Christ taking up His lasting dwelling place in our hearts through faith, that we might be filled unto all of the fullness of God.

God's destination of our Lord Jesus Christ when He left heaven was not just a stable in Bethlehem, nor a refugee's home in Egypt, nor a carpenter's home in Nazareth, nor a hillside or synagogue in Capernaum. It was not the Temple in Jerusalem, nor a Cross on a hill outside of Jerusalem, nor a borrowed tomb, not it even the right hand of the Throne of High, for He had been there from eternity past. When our Lord Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us, it was that He might do a new thing and establish a new covenant. His old covenant had been good but not good enough. The law was written on stone and kept in the Ark of the Covenant, and He dwelt between the wings of the cherubim with His Presence manifest by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. But He said, This covenant which you did not keep. And the reason they did not keep it was because it was too far away. God was too far away.

So He said, I am going to make a new covenant. I am going to write My law upon your hearts. Then He said, I am going to take away the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Then He said I am going to put My Spirit within you, and I am going to cause you to walk in My statutes. (See Jer. 31:31-33) Then He said again, "I will dwell in them that walk in them, and I will be a Father unto them" (II Cor. 6:16). And so the whole purpose of this new covenant, the New Testament if you please — it means New Covenant, was to teach us that the Lord Jesus' destination when He left heaven and was incarnate was your heart, not heaven, For you when you die, but for your heart, your life, your body while you are alive. Now if you are forgiven of the past, secured against hell in the future, and are walking in less than the fullness of God tonight, as far as tomorrow is concerned it is going to be relatively wasted. You are going to lose tomorrow. You are going to lose its joy, its possibilities of full fellowship with God. You are going to lose the prospect of God witnessing through you. You are going to lose the impact that you can make on the lives of those who greatly need it. You are going to lose the lessons that you need to be in a prepared state to receive. A tremendous loss is going to occur to you, even though you may if you die go to heaven. But if you live tomorrow in less than the fullness of Christ, then in one sense tomorrow is going to be wasted.

You say, Well I know, but if I've been born again, isn't the Spirit of God in me? Yes certainly He is, "for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). What do you mean then? It is one thing for Him to be in you, and another thing to fill you. You were born of the Spirit but you were not born full of the Spirit, for the Scripture says, "Be filled with the Spirit," and if you had been and were at your birth of being born again, then there would have been no commandment for you to be filled (Eph. 5:18). And this is a matter in which you must participate. This is a place where God demands your fellowship.

You see here is where we come to the implications of sharing. He has shared with you His Son. His Son has shared with you His life. He poured out His soul unto death. And He has died and been raised from the dead, but this is a matter of fellowship. As He shares with you His Son, His Son and the Father ask you to share with Him. First, they ask you *to share with Him the Cross*, for it was not only His going to the Cross for you, but you're going to the Cross with Him. And it is a matter of *sharing then His death*, that you are crucified with Christ. This deals with you. This deals with the ego. This gets the driver that has been using the vehicle of the body and personality as an instrument of selfishness out of the way and makes the body and personality and faculties available. And so you are to share with Him the Cross. He died for you, you died with Him, you are to realize that tomorrow lived in your energy and strength is wasted as far as eternity is concerned. Though certainly if you give your body to be burned in some one's place they will benefit. If you give goods to feed the poor, the poor will eat. If you have faith to move mountains it may improve someone's view. But the fact of the matter is this will not endure for the eternal glory of Christ, in spite of it. And in that sense, the day will be wasted.

And so it is imperative that you should recognize that that which He had, that He shared with you, demands reciprocal sharing. And He is insisting that you share with Him in the Cross, crucified with Him, dealing with yourself, with all that stands in the way of His full freedom in effecting His plan and purpose in your life. Secondly, He is demanding that you share with Him your body. He shared His body to the cross, you went with Him, not in body, but in Him, in your union with Him. Now His body is at the right hand of the Throne on high as the first fruit of the resurrection, and so He says, Share with Me your body. You used it, but you used it always in sin and failure. Now present it to me. Present your eyes, your ears, and your brain; give it to Me. Give Me your faculties. Give Me your body. The only thing you have that He asks for is your body. Did you know that? He says, "I beseech you brethren that you present your body a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1). This body that has been used as the instrument of your own vanity and the instrument of your own imagination, and sin. Tongue used to hurt, and hands and feet, and the whole body the instrument of ourselves... Now He says, Present it to Me. And then He says, I will fill you. I will dwell in you. I'll walk in you. You can know the fullness of the Holy Spirit. You can be filled with all of the fullness of God.

Now this is the normal life. This is not some victorious higher life. I am not talking about some extreme for a few religious fanatics. I am talking about what God intended for everyone born into His family. And I am saying that if you and I are prepared to go into tomorrow with less than this, and then we might just as well face it. Tomorrow's going to be wasted, as far as the eternal glory of Christ is concerned, as far as our joy is concerned.

The thing I seek to impress upon your mind tonight is that you have tremendous to gain and much to lose and it is a matter where we should do away with all contentedness that is willing to let us go on. You ought to put yourself in the way of saying, Lord, why should tomorrow perish? Why should these hours be wasted and squandered? Why should I just blunder through it? Why should I be content? Lord, put into my heart tonight, quicken tonight, release tonight such an insatiable desire for Yourself, that I am going to early, even tonight come to the place where Thou art satisfied, and I am satisfied. Perish? What does it mean? Fail of its intended use. What is your intended use? To be a vehicle for the revelation of the presence of Christ. You cannot, but He can. And this is what He is asking for.

Now if you go through tomorrow forgiven and pardoned, 24 hours are going to have been lived in the energy of your own strength, your own experience, your own wisdom, and you will have robbed the Lord Jesus of a vehicle of revealing Himself through you. This is too expensive. Whatever help you do will only be a fragment of what it could have been if He had lived in us the way He desires to live in us. So it is possible for us you see to be saved, and yet to waste tomorrow. And look at how little sand remains in the glass of our lives. See how few grains there are left. They go so swiftly. And one of these days, none of us know when, the last sands will sift through. Some of us think we have years. It is so easy for us to say, I am only 30. I have another 40 years, or 50 years. But it isn't quite that easy. You see from the outside of the glass we cannot tell how much sand there is in it. For God seems to paint all glasses the same. But the sand behind the paint is known only to Him. Think of it. Tomorrow may be the last day that any of us, you or I, may have. This may be the last week, this may be the last month, and this may be the last year. We've to live every day in the light of His coming or our going. Isn't it imperative that we should live there days as few or many as they may be in that normal and full relationship with Him lest they be wasted, and He be deprived, and He be robbed.

This is what I am seeking by the Spirit of God to impress upon your heart, that this is a sharing. You share with Him your body, your faculties, your personality, and He shares with you Himself by the Spirit, and He wants to do in you what you can't do. You see there is nothing wrong with the body, your eyes, your ears, and your brain. The trouble isn't there. The trouble is in you. So if you will share His cross with Him, then He will share His Spirit with you, and He will animate, and possess, and empower that which you cannot animate and properly possess and empower and use, and then we will be approaching what the apostle said, "I share His Cross with Him. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). I believe that this is what you couldn't see, you see, unless you had been born again. You cannot see the kingdom of God unless you have been born again. And I think that when you see that His kingdom is in you, and that you are His territorial rights, and He wants to live in you, and manifest Himself in you that which He has purchased, then you begin to realize how easy it could be for tomorrow to perish as far as eternal results for His glory is concerned.

"But he that believeth on Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Eternal life is a Person, Jesus Christ, and when He comes into you to bring life, then your destiny is secured. But when you give over to Him the whole house, all the rooms and allow Him to fill you with Himself, then whereas your destiny was assured by His coming in, the fulfillment of His purpose is assured by your giving to Him what He purchased.

Oh, what a pity it would be to have tomorrow wasted. It is a new day. We have never written on it. And if you live it in the energy of what you are, it will be; but if He can live it in what He is, great good will come to others and great glory will come to Him, and joy to you.

Let us bow in prayer. Think for just a moment. Press this truth home to your heart. Lay hold upon it. Ask the Spirit of God to ask you how much of your life has been wasted since you were forgiven and pardoned, and your destiny was secured. I personally have to look back onto 14 years after I was born again and pardoned that were nothing but ashes, because they were lived solely in the energy of my own personality; wasted, perished, as far as eternal consequences were concerned.

Do you know Him in His fullness? Are you walking in the fullness of the Spirit? You say, What'll I do? Well, we've told you what to do. You share the cross with Him. Lord, I know I can't. I am not adequate. I haven't the energy or the ability to live this life that Thou hast said is normal and so I am going to go where you told me and stay where you put me on the Cross crucified with you. But Lord, there is that body that I used as the instrument of my sin. Now I am turning it over to you, brain, eyes, hands,

feet, heart, and lip. Oh, Lord Jesus, fill me now. Fill me now. Come, O come, and fill me now. Fill me with Thy Holy Spirit. Come, oh come, and fill me now.

And you know when you see and understand that there is fellowship with Him in His Cross, and in your body, you go where He took you, and He comes where He sought to come, to live in you His life, then you realize that your life need no longer be wasted, time energy, strength. You become a vehicle for His working. Saved, but perishing, wasted. Oh, not as far as destiny is concerned, but as far as today and tomorrow are concerned.

Is there in your heart a desire to know Him? What are you going to do about it? I wonder tonight if I deal with some who with very hungry heart would say, Oh, I want so much to know the fullness of His Spirit. I feel that God has prepared me, and I would like to have counselling and help. I wonder if you would like to just stand where you are now, and say by your standing, My heart is so hungry. And then after a moment as others have stood with you, we will go into Wilson Chapel where we can talk and pray together, and join our hearts' longing and desire with you. The Word can be opened. Are you prepared to do that tonight? Are there those who with hungry heart would say, Yes, I don't want tomorrow to be wasted. I want Him to get out of my life all that He deserves. We are not going to press this invitation. We are simply going to allow you, encourage you, and urge you to stand now, and in just a moment others who will stand with you will go here to my right and your left into Wilson Chapel for a time of prayer together. Would you care to do that? We will wait just a moment for you. Are there others? Anyone else? All right. Will you that are standing please slip out the nearest way, and one or two of the deaconesses, will you go with them please, and we will join you so shortly. Anyone else that wishes may go as well. Just slip out now if you will please. Go into Wilson Chapel and the deaconesses will join you.

Let us stand together for prayer and benediction. You see, dear friends, because you did not respond does not mean that you are relieved of whatever impression, whatever teaching, whatever truth the Lord has given. You have to answer the question, Is He getting out of me what He desires? Is He satisfied with me? Am I walking in the fullness of God? Our Father, go Thou with us now as we part. How wonderful it is to realize that Thou has made every provision so that our lives can be fulfilled. They can be useful. They can be fruitful. Every day can be a delight, having it all that it was intended to be and all that it could be. Father, we want to live that kind of life. We don't want to wish our lives away. We don't want them to be drudgery, an unbearable burden. We believe that when we are in right relationship with Thee then life has meaning, it has significance, it has depth, and we become joyous people because our lives are as they ought to be, and we are knowing what Thou hast intended men and women to be. Now, Father, we pray that we may think, this truth may be pressed home upon our hearts, that as we go we may go with an awareness that Thou art speaking, and give to us insight, Lord, to our own hearts, and Thy purpose, and grant, Lord, lead all of us into the place where everything that the Lord Jesus died to purchase in us and for us is ours and His. May Thy grace and mercy and peace be and abide upon us. Bless the young people that will be assembling in the College and Career Group, and make their time sweet and precious. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, November 4, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.