

We're going to have a rather informal meeting tonight. I'm going to talk with you, and I'm going to ask you to talk back to me, if you will. This morning in the second service, second morning service, I said that tonight I would talk to you about the secret of the Christian life, the secret of the Christian's life.

By way of introduction, I'm going to tell you just a little bit about myself. Saved in Texas, a senior in college, shortly thereafter entered the ministry, instantly went to seminary at Southwestern, and became a pastor. After pastor, I became an evangelist. I saved the world by the time I was 29. It was all a blur from one end of America to the other. I was completely burned out in spirit and in soul, but I learned a little bit about myself, and what I had learned was that I was really more interested in being a Christian than I was in serving the Lord. I actually had to make a decision about which I was going to be, and it was not an easy decision. I laid down the ministry in its entirety and told the Lord I would never minister again until I ministered, or I just wouldn't, unless He ministered in me, through me, lots of things like that.

I went on an exploration to find out something about, may I use this term, deeper things of the Lord. Well, I was mercifully treated by the Lord, and I learned a great deal, and I have to say that was experientially, not knowledge. I think that I learned a great deal from some of the very best possible places. And I know you're curious as a cat as to what I'm talking about. About that time, I got sick, and that destroyed all possibilities of my taking anything that I may have thought I'd discovered and running out somewhere with it, which would be my natural inclination, being of an evangelistic heart. I was out of it for the next four years.

Then I have to tell you that I had two things on my heart. One of them was to know the Lord. I don't mean in salvation. I trust you understand what I'm saying. And I wanted to know His church, and when I say that, it's very difficult to explain what I mean, but I think you could come a lot closer to understanding than most folks, and for sure, you could come a lot closer to understanding than most Baptists because of the very unique assembly you have here. I think the Lord granted me both of those desires. In my heart, I discovered things of Him, in Him, through Him, by Him, and for him that I never knew existed, not in my wildest imagination. And I had the privilege of experiencing the body of Christ and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as very few people ever have, and one of the highest expressions of the church that I suppose anyone ever had the opportunity to.

Five years ago, my health broke again, and I have been confined to bed most of the last five years, and this is kind of my first time out, so you better kick your shoes off and lean back. I've got a lot to say, folks. I went through that stage at 30, and I have to hope and believe that I've gone to another one now in my 50s. Now, you've been wondering how old I am. I'm 16, going on 127.

I will share something with you tonight that you have never heard before, and if I am wrong, you come and correct me. Okay? Brother Peter, would you do that? If you say, Gene, this is old hat, I wish you would come and tell me. In fact, come and tell me of any book you have ever read that deals with this subject. Come and tell me of any minister anywhere that is

speaking today about what I will share with you tonight. I would like to know, and that's not a dare. That's a hope. A genuine hope.

Before I get there. I have something very personal I want to say, and I want you to listen to me. I want to say something that probably doesn't even need to be said, but I feel the need to say it. I've been very impressed with your church. In fact, I didn't know anything like this existed. I've only met 4,5, 10, or 15,000 Baptist preachers in my life. Among all the Christian workers that I know, very few are real leaders. Leadership is a rare commodity. If you have leadership that is innovative, you even have a rarer commodity. Innovative leadership is even more rare. Now then, if you want to get it over into the scale of the exotic, try to find a leader, a Christian leader, who is an innovator and a pioneer, and you're down to a handful. And you're lucky. Say amen. I'm glad you did that. Thank you. I'm encouraged by that.

I belong to a group of Christian people who had one of the greatest expressions of the church that's ever been, and when you get in it, you get used to it. But every person who's ever left that place has wandered from one end of this country to another, thinking there was another one somewhere, and they're still looking, and they just never have found it. And you can get in here and begin taking the church for granted, don't do that. It's very unique. Be grateful. Now, mind me. Be grateful. And follow Peter, and don't give him a hard time, just do what he tells you to, and don't think about it.

Okay, before I begin telling you the secret of the Christian's life, you're going to tell me, rather than expose any of our ignorance here tonight, we'll play superior. Okay? We'll all play superior. What do other people say is the secret to the Christian life? And let's... Okay? Alright, you got it, good. We'll start with the simplest things and then work our way to the deepest, most profound things we've ever heard. Now, I want you to talk to me, and I want you to say it really loud and clear because I really would like to know what you do know and what you've been exposed to. What's the secret to the victorious Christian life? What is the secret of the Christian life? What are the secrets of the Christian life? What are the things that make us victorious? Or whatever.

Alright. Start. Now talk to me. Prayer.

Alright, we have prayer. Obedience. Faith. Death to self. Serving others. Fellowship with other believers. Teachable. Having a teachable spirit. Okay, I got seven. We're going on. Christ in me, the hope of glory. That isn't bad. The Word of God. Alright, you're referring to the Scripture. Okay. Alright. The worship of God. And what was another one? Believing in God. Thanksgiving. Hearing God. Boy, I tell you, Peter, this is great. Your folks are doing real fine. All right, go ahead. Speaking to God. Hey, aren't you going to throw in tongues? Come on, Baptists. Don't be so sectarian. Throw in speaking in tongues. Somebody do it. Amen. Speaking in tongues. Alright. Helping one another. Getting the truth in the inward parts. An abundance of the Father's life. Being filled with the Spirit.

May we quit? Alright. I'm on overload. I'm on overload. Okay, now then, without shocking you, I'm sure you're ready to hear me say this. None of those. None of those, and that's true.

We have to start somewhere else entirely. With the exception of one or two in there, and I have to say one or two of them are really, really great, but I'm going to hit them, just for the...there are a couple in there we could take, but I'm going to put them all down for the sake of clarity here. We have to start somewhere else.

As a young Christian, I can remember when I opened a book, and it said to me, Now you are a new Christian, and you're supposed to do such and such, and I can remember the verse references. There's Galatians, Romans, and Philippians, and as a new Christian, I started my mind looking at things required of me in Galatians...Philippians. These were the Christian life for me. Now that, without my realizing it, put something really deep inside of me, that there were verses that told me what I should do or be, and most of them in the epistles.

Alright, I want to start by saying this to all of you, and I hope you don't throw something at me. For you and for me, there is no secret to the Christian life. There never has been a formula, and there never will be a formula. What helps you fails me. What helps me fails you. Now, will you allow me to please be radical for a few minutes and say some really outlandish things? Most of it, I don't even believe myself, but in order to shake your tree, to shake your thinking.

If we say prayer, you're talking to the wrong person. I find prayer to be about the most boring thing in the world. Prayer only leads one place for me, and that's sleep. Now don't look so shocked. If you say witnessing to me, and I am a former evangelist, I can only think of one thing. Holy terror. Say amen. So now I've got sleep and terror. The Bible? Brothers and sisters, don't throw me out of here, but it will not hold up. It will not hold up to historical fact.

I'm headed for high ground here. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not going to stand up here and defend my belief in the Word of God. Just let me rattle your cage a minute, would you? Please? The Bible began to be printed plentifully around 1720. That leaves us from the year 30 AD to 1720, when Scripture was almost unattainable for most people. In the first century, if you wanted a copy of the Old Testament, you probably couldn't get a whole copy anywhere, anywhere on earth, maybe one or two or three in Jerusalem. Most of the synagogues had at most five or six books of the Old Testament during the first century.

If you and I believed everything we heard about being obedient to the Bible in the first century, we would have the distinct impression that everybody in the first century had a large wheelbarrow full of scrolls going around everywhere they were being obedient to the New Testament and reading it prolifically. It won't hold up to historical facts. It takes years to hand duplicate Scripture. That's about all anybody would be doing, would be copying passages of Scripture or whole books of Scripture. The way they were built, any one of them, any one book of the Old Testament would have been a very heavy thing, an arduous thing to carry around with you very much. Well, you say, well, yeah, but they did exist. Sure, they existed in the synagogue, but the synagogues weren't going to open their doors to Christians to come read, and that was the only place they were available.

Now, I don't mean to shake the tree, but this is a historical fact. What was the first piece of Christian literature ever penned? Will you tell me? Talk to me. Do you have any idea what it was? The very first piece of Christian literature ever penned. Probably. You can't be more than one or two, three different books. New Testament. First Thessalonians. Okay, we have First Thessalonians down here. Mark, I doubt that. Okay, it's either James, First Thessalonians, or Galatians. That's it. I think it's Galatians. The book of Galatians was written to a group of churches in an area where illiteracy ran somewhere between 97 and 98 percent. The Christians in Galatia were mostly Phrygian slaves who were totally illiterate. Illiteracy was running 100% among the Phrygians.

Now listen, that may devastate your belief, but it is glorious to me. Paul and Barnabas were dealing with a situation in which they had to give those people something that, because they could not read, they had to be given something. Do you know what they were given? They were given something glorious. They were given an indwelling Lord. And they were shown how to relate to Him.

I wonder if you're still out there, and I would just go on to say that dispositionally, many Christians love Scripture. But you have to know that dispositionally, some people don't like the Scripture. We cannot say to a Christian world that reaches around the earth, the only way you can be a victorious Christian is to be literate. We cannot make that demand. Three-fifths of the world cannot read or write. We cannot say to someone, You have to have the Bible in order to be victorious. Therefore, literacy becomes a foundational part of the Christian faith. We have left out three-fifths of the world's population.

Alright, Gene, that's just terrible. I never heard anything like this in my life. Okay, do you want to argue with me? I'll give you the chance. Does that shake your cage too much? Do you want to say something? This was the situation in the first century. Illiteracy was running well over 90% throughout the entire Roman Empire. Hey, isn't it wonderful that an illiterate, some snaggletooth, blood-drinking pagan in Iconium or Lystra or Derbe could get saved? And not know anything about anything and have the Lord come live in him. We look back on him, and we're jealous, because he was a first-century New Testament believer. He had something going for him, and it was internal. Praise the Lord.

Okay, if you believe I can do this with the Bible and prayer and witnessing, believe you me, I can devastate all the others that you just brought up, and if you will, let me just run away from them. I'm going to tell you I cheated this morning. No, I'm not going to tell you that yet. When I told you I was going to speak on the secret to the Christian's life, and I said to you a minute ago, "There is no one secret for all of us," I'd like to talk to you for just a moment from a life of experience, and I hope you'll listen.

I have been dealing with things of the Spirit for years now. My ministry is on things internal: an indwelling Lord. That's my ministry. That's my call. That's half of my call. The other half is the church, but I'm going to tell you something. That's not enough, because I am not a totally spirit being. One third of me is spirit. Spirit. So, no matter how much I minister on this subject, it takes care of one-third of me. Another one-third of me is my soul. Now, what

you're about to hear come from my lips is unprecedented. Sometime in the next year, there will hopefully be born a fellowship of believers in New England, and we're making a lot of preparation for that right now. And at this moment, we have one brother, a unique, Christ-centered brother, who is a counselor of the soul.

By this time next year, and we're not even started yet, by this time next year, we will have four people with master's degrees in counseling, and I'm hopeful that we will have one Christian counselor for every 50 people in the fellowship, and they will be the busiest four men in America handling 50 needy souls.

I believe in balance. I'm not up here peddling to you a cure-all. There is no cure-all. Never listen to the merchant who has a panacea. He has a panacea for himself; he has a cure-all for himself. The body of Christ is too diverse to be cured by any one thing. Then, Gene, why did you say what you said this morning, that you were going to tell us the secret to the Christian's life?

Okay, let's talk for a minute. Let's go back to the first century. Do you consider Paul an outstanding Christian? You do. Okay. Well, previous to Paul, there were Peter and John. You consider them outstanding Christians. And something motivated them, didn't it? We'd like to sit down for an hour or two and talk with them.

Okay, let's go back. Who's the first Christian? Who was the very first Christian? I'm sorry? Jesus Christ. Alright, now here's where I cheated. I'm sorry. This morning, I said I would tell you the secret of the Christian's life. I'm going to repeat that sentence, and I want you to listen to it very carefully. I am going to tell you the secret of *the* Christian's life. Did you understand? I'm going to talk to you about *the* Christian and how He lived the Christian life. Gene, I just got cheated. No, you didn't. We will never understand who and what and where and when and how about us until we understand the who, what, when, and how about Him. You do not start in Galatians, Philippians, or Ephesians. You start at the headwaters of your faith. You start with Jesus.

Now then, I ask this question: how did Jesus Christ live the Christian life? Well, Gene, He was good to people. That didn't make him a Christian. He prayed a lot. That was not his secret. He...oh, I don't know, you could go on and on, and we get the impression we're supposed to imitate his life and do what he did, and that is disastrous. Don't ever fall for that, brother. Don't ever fall for that, sister. That'll lead you up a blind alley.

How did Jesus Christ live the Christian life? Okay, you tell me. By the Spirit. By obedience to the Father. Oneness with the Father. One with the Father, okay? Alright, fine. This is good. You people are two or three notches above. Those are good answers. I'll accept all of that. If he did that, how did he do that? Huh? He was God. That certainly helped, didn't it? I feel a little cheated because he was God, and he lived the Christian life, and I am not God, and I didn't get to live the Christian life that way. He's demanding an awful lot of me to ask me to live the way he lived. I don't particularly feel like that's fair. Do you? That doesn't sound fair. Was someone else saying something over here? Humility. The great Catholic teaching,

“humilium”, held sway for a thousand years, asserting that humility was the key to the Christian life. No. No. No, no, no.

I don't know how to go from here. For one thing, we have made a disastrous decision, and we have come up with the wrong conclusion. We have all of our thinking concentrated right now on the earth, and we have it on performance, and brother and sister, if you start there, if you even have a little bit of that there, it's going to drive you crazy.

Listen, I don't care how hard we try to remember that it is the Lord, and not ourselves, who lives the Christian life; we are going to get involved. Is that not true? We're going to be filled with the Spirit by grunt, by gum, and by golly. Uh... We're going to be humble if it kills us. There is the human grunt element in the Christian experience. Now, I'm coming up to sacred territory, and I really don't know how to impress you with this, but boy, I want you to know something. I'm going to make an effort at this, and in order to do so, I am going to tell you something right now.

You see, I'm still an evangelist, and I still like to do things. I like to feel that I've accomplished something. I don't like to preach sermons; I like to make sure that something is done, so I've asked your pastor for permission to do this. And that is, I've asked two things, and one of them is if I could get his permission to get you out of bed early two mornings this week to pray. And the second thing I've asked is that would he let me plan next Sunday night's meeting? Peter, being the gracious adventurer that he is, has trepidatiously, I'm sure, allowed this perfect stranger into this place to do that very thing.

So... I'm going to tell you before I go any further. I don't want you to come back next Sunday night unless you have gotten up a couple of mornings to pray. Now then, I'm going to give you something I want you to do tonight, but I want to meet you again at 6:15 on Tuesday morning. Think about it. Now I'm getting serious. I'm getting really serious. I'm going to talk to you tonight about getting up with someone tomorrow morning and praying, and then on Tuesday I'm going to meet with you, and I'm going to ask you to get up with someone on Thursday and Sunday morning early to pray. Only it won't exactly be prayer. Alright, have I pricked your curiosity? Just say amen. Make me feel good. Okay.

Alright, now let me come back. We have made a tremendous blunder. Jesus Christ was not the first Christian, nor was the Christian faith born at Pentecost. Nor was the Christian faith born in the waters of the Jordan when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. Nor did the Christian faith have its origins and beginnings in Bethlehem. The origins of the Christian faith, the origins of the Christian experience, are older than antiquity. They have only recently invaded time and space.

No, Jesus Christ, God incarnated on this earth, was not the first Christian. Nor did the Christian life have its origins on this planet. Nor did the Christian life have its origins inside the confines of time or space. Nor did the Christian life have its origins within creation. The Christian life was here previous to creation. And I'm going to tell you something else that's really breathtaking. Church life did not begin on this earth at Pentecost. And church life did

not begin in Galilee with the Lord fellowshiping with twelve men. Church life also began before time and before space. Its origins are in antiquity, nay, before antiquity.

Give it a little thought for a moment, would you? I want you to listen to this; every Christian needs to hear this. Einstein stepped off a train, and a bunch of reporters came around him. He'd come into a city to speak about this new thing called relativity and  $E = mc^2$ . They asked him, "Now we know we can't understand it, and everybody's told us it's too deep for us, but would you please explain  $E = mc^2$ , this relativity business, in some way we can put in the newspaper?"

Boy, his answer was unreal. He said, "I think we all have the idea that if you were to remove all matter from creation, there would be a gigantic empty place. He said that is not true. Matter, time, and space are one, and if you remove all the atoms and molecules, and if they cease to exist, 'nothing' even ceases to exist." Did you hear that? There's not even a big hole. There's not even a big abyss, an empty abyss. The empty abyss goes with the matter. Do you know what that means? That means the great, big, massive thing called space began with creation. Creation was physical matter, atoms dropping out of the hand of God, and with that came the big hole, the big empty space, and until then, there was nothing. I mean, no, no, no, that's not right. Not even nothing. There was not even nothing.

Well, what was there? Do you know what was there? There was one thing, and there was nothing else on the edges of that one thing. *There was God.* He was All. And you know something else? He was a Christian.

I'd like you, for one moment, please, to drop all your concepts of what the Christian life is and what a Christian is, and let us free ourselves, for a moment, in our imaginations of time and of space, and let us, as best we can, see before creation: God. Only my arms aren't big enough. And He is the All. And He is living the Christian life. And you better believe this: He's the only one who ever has or ever will. He's got...He has staked out a franchise on the Christian life. It belongs to Him and nobody else.

Now, for those of you who are doers, that may come as a tremendous disappointment. Those of you who love to play golf, I understand golf is the game of a man who is determined he's going to do it. Against all odds. Well, trying to live the Christian life is very much like trying to get a pig to learn manners at the dinner table. You have the wrong species. The Christian life is confined to God. Now, hold steady. Don't throw anything yet. Wait just a moment.

Who was the first Christian? Now you tell me, who was the first Christian? Okay. We have somebody holding out for the Trinity here, real strong. May I put it this way? The first Christian was the Father. The first Christian was the Father. Now, who was the second Christian? I don't know if it was the Holy Spirit of the Eternal Son. I really don't know. But I'm fascinated with something that, in all of the references, there is so little definition of the Holy Spirit's part in this. Don't strain the scripture to try to find it, because it's simply not there. I understand someone recently wrote a book entitled 'The Shy Member of the Trinity'.

I love that title. He is there to glorify the Father and the Son, and he is very shy toward any glorification. He is there to glorify, not to be glorified. He is there to work the works of the Father and the Son.

But I want to come back to the Christian life and say to you that within this eternal God was the fellowship of the Godhead. There was the fellowship of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and for just a moment, long before you and I came along, I would like for us to take a moment and look at the Christian life as it was first lived.

Have you ever heard of the term epistemology? Do you know that word? Could you define it right now? Is there anybody in here smart enough to define that word? Not anybody, huh? The study of truth. Alright? How we know what we know. That's pretty good. Epistemology is the study of the origin and meaning of truth. Okay. Here is true epistemology. Here is a look at the beginning of the Christian experience. And brothers and sisters, it makes everything we've ever heard pale. And if you will begin here and work forward, the Christian life will become such a glorious and a beautiful thing for you to see.

Will you start at the headwaters? Will you start at the fountainhead? Will you start at the source? Will you begin at the wellspring, look there, and look nowhere else for a moment, and let what was in the Godhead before creation pour forth? Let us look. How is the eternal Son living the Christian life in eternity past, in fellowship with the Father? Can you see? Now here is the Christian life.

Boy, if it were the way we have been taught, you know what we would see? We would see the Son sitting in a chair, reading His Bible, praying, and speaking in tongues, and we would say that is the Christian life and the secret to the Christian life. Now, that's true. If we press this point too far, that's where we end up. There was no Bible there, and you know, there wasn't even any prayer there. And excuse me, Pentecostals, forgive me. Please forgive me. I doubt that the Eternal Son was speaking in tongues. There was no soul-winning. What was going on?

I wish you could just camp right here. I wish we could throw a tent and just camp right here and forget ourselves utterly; to lose the "I" syndrome. I'm a Christian, what do I do? I am a Christian. What is the Christian supposed to do? To totally lose the "I" syndrome and come into the Godhead and look around and see what's going on. You will be surprised how much the Lord Jesus, while he was on this earth, let leak out what was going on in eternity past. If you don't believe me, try John 6, John 7, John 14, John 15. Try them and look for what was going on in eternity past.

I'll go a little further. What was going on was even previous to eternity, because eternity implies that there was something there besides God. If you look in the book of Titus, you will find in the margins of the New American Standard one of the most incredible passages. It says, *Before times eternal*. Listen to that again. *Before times eternal*. Oh, brothers and sisters, come with me to the Godhead, and let us see the Christian, and here is simplicity in

its essence. You may add to this if you will search it out, no guessing. I will tell you what I am certain of that was going on at that time. Of this I am certain. Of this I can prove.

Listen to it. Listen to it. I want you to remember how long ago it was, because this is important. The Father is the Christian, and the Son, the eternal Son, not yet incarnated, the eternal Son is there with Him. Somewhere in all of this is the Holy Spirit. But the Lord Jesus, in the times He leaked out this, He didn't give us any clues to the Holy Spirit's place in this. None at all.

What is going on? This one...the Son, is beholding the face of the Father. The Son is beholding the face of the Father. Praise the Lord. Say praise the Lord. Isn't that simple? The Son is beholding the face of the Father. The Son is loving the Father, but that's not exactly correct. The Father is loving the Son, and the Son is taking the Father's love, the Father's love, and loving the Father back with the Father's love. Say something. Don't just sit there. Amen. Glory.

The Son is listening to the Father. He is listening to His voice. Now, He is not answering; He is listening, and He is responding. There's a difference between answering and responding. He is responding to the Father's voice. He is beholding the Father. The Father is loving Him, and He is loving the Father back with the love the Father has given Him. He is listening to the Father's voice, and He is responding.

Now, one more. He is obeying the Father, but He is obeying the Father by means of the Father's life...by means of the Father's life. His obedience is born of the life of God the Father. He is not obeying Him by the strength of the Son. The Son can do nothing. I would put it another way. The Son is living by the life of the Father, and in that living, by that life, He is able to obey His Father's voice, and all that is demanded of him by means of the Father's life.

Now, dear Christian, I want you to know that Jesus Christ, yes, but Jesus Christ not yet incarnated, Jesus Christ out there, the eternal Son, cannot live the Christian life by his own means, and he made that really clear on earth when he came later. *I cannot live the Christian life. I lived that life by the means of the life of the Father.* Brothers and sisters, there's the only Christian there is, and there is only one way the Christian life is lived, and that's by the means of the life of the Father. Any human effort to live the Christian life fails outside the life of God the Father. If the eternal Son could not live the Christian life, it's for sure I can't. And you can't either.

There was only one other thing going on, and it is the totality of all that I've said. All that I've said is wrapped up in one word. All of that was simply this. Within the Godhead was an eternal fellowship between the Father and the Son. The Son beholding, the Father loving, the Son loving, the Son listening, the Son responding, the Father speaking, the obedience by means of the Father's life. All of that was fellowship, and they simply fellowshiped, and that fellowship began by the eternal Son beholding the face of the eternal God. Are you with me so far? Now, I just would remind you, if you have that book, bring it to me. This is where

we must begin as Christians. Aha. Now, how long did that go on? How long did that go on? Give me an idea. How long did that go on? Long time. Eternity plus. Long time.

Well, let me ask you something. Do you think that if that went on for a long, long, long, long time, that it could get to be a habit? Yes or no? Amen. That would be a habit, would it not? I'd say it is a very ingrained habit. We have just looked at the Christian life, and we have seen its engine. We've seen the way it's done and how it's lived, and it is simplicity itself.

Then one day, the Son, and I'm imagining this, don't hold me theologically to this, the Son bids the Father adieu, and the Son is placed into the womb of a woman. He goes through the door between two realms, two universes, and he enters this world. And he grows up with that eternal Father within Him.

As He grows in His soul, He grows in His Spirit, and He grows in the understanding of humanity; He grows in the understanding of His divinity. And as He grows in the understanding of his mind, He grows in the understanding of His Father within Him. And as He grows in the knowledge of human things around Him, He grows in the understanding of a Father who reaches from eternity to eternity. And now the eternal Son, who has lived the Christian life in the bosom of the Father for all eternity, has come to this earth, and he begins to live the Christian life by speaking in tongues, praying, and reading his Bible.

Yeah? No. Say no. Protest that. You've got a habit here ingrained for eternity. Boy, listen, I don't know why you're sitting there. You ought to be up, standing on the pew, shouting. This is liberation. Say something. Say a little bitty amen then. Can you muster that? He didn't change. He didn't change one bit. He didn't change a bit. He's standing in that carpenter shop, and He is beholding the face of His Father, and the Father is loving him, and he is pouring back his love upon the Father. And He is listening to the Father; the Father is speaking, and He is responding. He is obeying and living by a Life not human. He is living, what he's doing, by means of a Life in another realm, a Life not his own: the Life of His Father. And they are fellowshiping together.

Well, now we've got to move another stage down, and this whole thing is going to fall apart now. Now comes us. Us peasants. We were talking about the unfairness of this thing. Listen, he had...He wasn't fallen, and I'm fallen, and I don't like what's going on that I see here.

Okay, here we come. We're Peter, James, John, Didymus, and you know all those guys. Judas, not Iscariot, and what are some of the others? Matthew, the Levite, come on. Just the twelve. Bartholomew, Philip, and Andrew, is that enough? And Mary and Joanne and Margaret and Mary Magdalene. Okay. This little group and a few more. They're watching the Christian. First time the Christian has ever made an entrance into time and space. You can see him now, and they're watching Him.

You say, they're watching Him read the Bible. He didn't read the Bible; He wrote the Bible. He prayed a little bit, but He said once, "I'm only praying for your benefit; it's not necessary." His prayer was His fellowship with the Father. That was His prayer. That was almost all of His prayer. Take out Gethsemane and a few other crisis experiences in His life.

His prayer was His fellowship, and they're watching him. They're watching this Christian, and they're watching this Christian live the Christian life, and they are impressed. They are overwhelmed. And He says to them, I've got something you can't have. You're going to read your Bible, and you're going to pray, and you're going to speak in tongues, and that's how you're going to live the Christian life. Right?

Right? No. I'm going to say something that may not make a lot of sense to you, but hold it for a moment anyway. What the Father is to the Son, the Son is to you. You got that? What the Father is to the Son, the Son is to you. Praise the Lord. Who is living inside the Son? The Father. Who's living inside of you? Jesus. At least Jesus. Yeah. Oh, but Gene, come on. He didn't reestablish that same eternal relationship in me, too, did he? Amen, he did.

Listen, we're talking about an ancient habit here. We're talking about a habit of eternity, a habit he lived out for 30, 33, 33 1/2 years upon this earth. He did the same thing on earth that He did in eternity. Did He pass that on to those twelve illiterate disciples? Yes!

I'm going to stop this message right here, but I'm going to prove that point to you with a story, and I'm going to have you impressed, and I want you to know I have been faithful. I have shown you the secret of the Christian's life. This is how he did it, and you should pitch your tent here.

Did it really come on through the third stage? The Lord Jesus Christ dies. He rises from the grave. He blows into the disciples His very life and nature. They now have him dwelling in them. They've been watching him live by the Father for three and a half years. They watched how he did it. Now he says to them, He who dwells in Me dwells in you. And they're going out to tell us to pray and read our Bible and speak in tongues, to a world that also is illiterate.

Alright, here's my story. The death of the Lord has come. The resurrection has come. The Lord has ascended. 49 days have passed. Pentecost came. The church was born. And the disciples tell 3000 people: "You show up tomorrow morning, the day after Pentecost; you show up at Solomon's Porch. We want to talk to you."

Okay, join with me for a moment. It's about 4 a.m. The apostles...all of the apostles, get up. It's Monday morning, the day after Pentecost. They get up, and they go to Jerusalem to pray. And Peter says, Let's go up on the wall right over the porch, Solomon's porch, where everybody's going to gather, and let's pray. So, they get together, and they're scared. Twelve scared men. They've got to take care of 3000 people, and about 5 a.m., the sun starts to come up, and the people start trickling in, and in a few minutes, it's 1000, and then it's 2000, and it's 3000, and goodnight, it looks like about maybe 4000.

They all sit down kind of like this. Peter peeps over the wall again. James looks over the wall. Oh, oh, oh. John peeps over the wall. Oh, no. And then Peter says, "What are we going to tell them?" James says, "I'm not the leader. You tell me what we're going to tell them." Peter says, "Oh, what are we going to do?" And John looks up again. He says, "Peter, I've got an idea."

*That which we have seen and heard, let us declare unto them that they may have fellowship with us. For our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And those twelve men walked into Solomon's porch, and it wasn't the Bible, and it wasn't prayer, and it wasn't tongues, and it wasn't all of these other things. They declared to those people the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ with His Father while He was on this earth, as they beheld it, and as they now had that fellowship within the bowels of their own bosom.*

They declared to them the eternal fellowship of an eternal Father with an eternal Son, and then they declared that fellowship of an incarnated Son upon this earth in fellowship with the Father, and then they declared the beholding of that fellowship with the Father and the Son in Galilee as they beheld it. And then they declared unto them that they had joined in that fellowship and that they had entered into the fellowship of the eternal Father and the eternal Son, and they were there, beholding with them that fellowship. Eternal. Free of time and outside space. And it moved to its fourth stage: the people in Solomon's porch joined in that fellowship. Well, saints, it's time some of us became motion number five. Say amen.

Okay, now, I'm through. What on earth are we going to do? We're going to pray and read our Bible. Let's begin talking. I tell you what, let's do something really simple. Let's fellowship with the Father and the Son, and let's stay out of it just as much as possible. Now, wouldn't that be neat? Now, wouldn't that be neat to get it away from you onto Him? Alright, I'm going to take this week to help you do that, and I'm going to help you by doing something else first. I'm going to do a little weeding; by Tuesday morning, there won't be as many of you here as there are tonight. Just a second. Peter, can I still do this? Yeah.

Okay. I'm going to change so radically. I know you're going to think that I'm not really going to do... I'm not going to keep my promise. I'll keep my promise. I will keep my promise if you'll work with me. First of all, how many of you would be willing to come on Tuesday morning at 6:15? And if we need to make it earlier than that, we will. How many of you would be willing to come, and how many of you would be willing to pair off with one other person and get up with that person alone, the two of you together, on Wednesday morning? Oh, let's make it Thursday morning and Sunday morning early. Alright? Are you willing to do that? Think about it. Give it some consideration, then I'd like for you to come back next Sunday night and share what happened.

Are you ready? This is nothing. Don't be frightened. This is nothing big, but it could be something very wonderful, very simple, just the simplest thing. So simple, you wonder how in the world we have been so stupid for the last 1800 years. Let me see your hands. You'll do that. Tuesday morning. Oh, get the bend out of the elbows so I can get a really good look at it. That's not bad. I'll tell you what, let me just see you stand up. Let's see how many people that is. Now, I know many of you are too old, too infirmed, and that's too early, and I know some of you have nighttime jobs, so I don't feel badly about this at all, but I'll tell you what I want you to do. Let's see if we can do this.

I want all the brothers to walk right down here and fill this aisle up right here, and this is just for a practical reason. Just for something very practical. Bring your Bible with you.

Would you come fill this end up over here? And would all the ladies, I call them sisters, and I mean that as a Christian sister, would you get over here and fill up this empty spot? But for all of you, we can all get together in this. Boy, are we moving fast. Oh, my land, this is wonderful. Brothers, my goodness. This many. This is wonderful.

I wish we had a week or two or a couple of months. Now look, all I can do is give you a little help. Hey, the rest of you don't feel out of it. I'm assuming that you work from midnight to 8 a.m. Everyone else, don't you dare sit there and feel guilty. Oh, bless your hearts. Have you got your Bible? Okay, now, this isn't going to make any sense. From here on, you're going to have to trust me. Just trust me. Do like Jimmy Carter said. Just trust me. Okay?

Sisters in the Lord, would you just trust me? I'm going to ask you in a moment, not now, to pick another woman here in this room to meet with you. First of all, you both be back here on Tuesday morning to meet with you tomorrow morning. You'll come back Tuesday morning, then Thursday morning, and then Sunday morning. That's four times this week.

I'm not going to tell you everything now. I'm going to tell you the rest on Tuesday morning. I'm going to give you something to begin with, and on Monday morning, you're going to practice it. It's not much, and it's not even really helpful, but you've got to do this first. Oh, yes, it is very helpful. Don't kid yourself. This is wonderful, but this is not Tuesday morning. This will be for Monday morning. Now, don't get too tired. I want to talk to you just a moment. I'm shifting a big gear. It's going to tax your mind to go with me.

Three hundred years ago in France, there lived a very, very godly woman whose book you may have read, titled "Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ." Her name was Jeanne Guyon. In the second chapter of her book, she resolved one of the most difficult problems of prayer. No, she resolved several. The name of that book originally was A Short and Simple Method of Prayer. Now, to say that was an insult to the Catholic religion because the Catholics did not believe that you could enter into a wonderful relationship with God in less than 20 years of hard work. Catholics, help me; you moved from meditation to contemplation. That took at least 20 hard years of work, and only a few could arrive at it. She said, No, here's a short and simple way to do that, and she overcame some of the most incredible difficulties of prayer. One of them is a wandering mind.

Your mind has never wandered when you prayed, has it? Pure, unadulterated boredom. This was overcome. But most of all, what in the world do you pray? You know, after God bless mother, God bless brother, God bless sister, God bless Aunt Nanny, there's nothing left. God bless all those people down there at the church. And there were soldiers who were fighting in Korea. Oh no, it was Vietnam. No, that's over too, and then you just don't know what to say. She gave us, by the most simple suggestion, a way to pray that was high and glorious, and the mind didn't wander, and you didn't run out of anything to say, and it had to be inspired because it was a matter of simply taking Scripture and turning it into prayer. And I understand you did this a few days ago. Is that correct? Nod your head yes. Is that true? Uh huh. You did? Brother Peter said you did. Is that correct? Nod your head. Tell me you know what I'm talking about. Okay.

Jeanne Guyon suggested Psalm 23. So, you and I are going to take Psalm 23. That's not what y'all have done. Did y'all take Psalm 23? You did not. Okay, good. I'm going to let you hear Psalm 23 turned to prayer, and tomorrow morning, I want you and your compatriot to get up in the morning before you go to work or whenever, you're going to decide tonight, and you're going to pray the way Guyon described. And then on Tuesday morning, I want you to come back here, and we'll do something different, but you've got to do this first, okay? Are you with me? Are you with me?

Alright, here it is. Now, I'm going to ask you to be very patient with me, and I'm going to ask you to listen with reverence. This is not easy to do. Tomorrow morning, I want the oldest of you to take verse 1, and the younger of the two of you to take verse 2. If you're identical twins, still, the oldest takes verse 1; we'll do it that way.

Alright, this Psalm is so familiar to you, you should be able to use it quite easily. I'd like to ask you to get up in the morning. I'd like to ask you to do this. Don't rush. Get in a comfortable place together. Sit down. Open your Bible. Get it open, and take two minutes just to be quiet, but no longer than that. And the person who starts has got to not...don't you sit there for 10 or 15 minutes and drive the other person crazy. About two minutes. You understand? Right?

And for just a minute or two, make love to the Lord. Just make love to the Lord. Do you know how to do that? Do you know how to make love to the Lord?

Lord, Lord Jesus, my Lord, Lord, I love you. Lord, I adore you. My Lord and my God. Amen, Lord. Amen.

Now, I know some of you are hopped up on adrenals. (really fast) Good morning, Lord. I love you. I love you. I love you. Brother, steel your insides. Don't do that, would you? Sisters, don't do that. Alright, listen to the scripture. Turn to prayer.

Lord, you are my Shepherd; I will never want. Lord, I lay down in You. You are my rest. Lord Jesus, You are my water. I drink you as my water. Lord, you have restored my soul, and you are my righteousness, and I walk in you. You are my leadership, and you are my righteousness, and I am in you.

I do not fear death. I do not fear evil. For Lord, you are greater than death, and you're greater than evil, and you are beside me and in me. You comfort me with your chastisement. You comfort me with your staff. You hold me within the fellowship of your flock by all means that you have.

Lord, you are a table, a feast, a drink, a banquet that I partake of in the presence of my enemy and yours. Praise the Lord. Your head has been anointed with oil, and my head has been anointed with the oil from your head, and my spirit overflows in you. Throughout all the days of my life, goodness and lovingkindness will follow me, and Lord Jesus, I mean to dwell in you, and I mean to dwell in your habitation, forever and forever. Amen.

Now, Sisters, something wonderful will happen tomorrow morning. The older of you is going to pray, and you're just going to take this simple thing and pray it. But when you do, something in here may, may not, don't worry about it, this is no time to worry, may bubble up, and you may think of something else. Or maybe it's not a thought at all.

Now then, the sister who is sitting beside you has been listening and joining in with you, and she gets something out of what you said that's not in her verse. Okay, you're the other sister now. You take what you've got and turn it into prayer. Now, don't know that long prayer, just a short statement. Then take what you've got, your verse, your verse 2, and you offer that and turn it to prayer.

Now, the first sister listening to the second sister may get something out of the verse that really strikes something. Turn it into a prayer, and then take verse 3 and turn it into a prayer. Then the other of you may get something from you and the verse, take that, turn it into prayer, and take the verse and turn it into prayer. Are you following? Brothers, are you following me? Did you get that? And when you have finished, in the spirit of something so much higher than most of our prayers are, just, if there's any crumbs left over, just express them. Just express them. Let the Scripture, God breathed, breathe on your spirit, which is God breathed, and let the fellowship between you also spark that which the Lord may order, and turn it all into prayer, and when you have finished, if there are some crumbs left over, turn them into prayer.

That's tomorrow morning. Tomorrow morning. Now then, with your permission... We will get together on Tuesday morning for something. We're going to press this so much further than that. We're going to press. We're going to press. And on Tuesday morning, I'm going to talk to you about how to meet on Sunday night. Okay? And then you're going to come back. You can all come back and watch if you want to on Sunday night, but you can't participate. You can only watch. Okay? You hear? Okay. Alright, don't feel second-class, just feel left out.

Now, wasn't that simple? This can revolutionize your prayer life if we never get any further than that. Okay. Yes, sir. Okay. I'll tell you what...Oh, boy. Oh, boy. How many of you cannot stay until seven? How many of you cannot stay till seven? Alright, we're going to make it at 6 a.m., and I'll try to get you out of here by then. I'm going to make this really simple. I need 4 people with large living rooms. All of you bring a notebook with you, and we'll get into this really fast and get you out of there. Okay, 6 a.m., where are we going to meet? We're going to meet. Where do you want to meet? Right here at 6 a.m. Don't be late. And bring a notebook. And I want four people with big living rooms. How many of you have big living rooms, and your house is fairly easy to find? I got one. I'm not going to use your living room, preacher, pastor. Alright, you, one living room. You, another one. And you, another one. And I see some hands back there so eager. Both of you ladies, bring your living room. Okay.

Okay. Good enough. Is it a big living room? Yes, I pointed at you. I pointed at some brother back here. Okay, I want you to do this. I want you all to write down your address and phone number on 50 sheets, each of you, mimeograph it off or something. Alright, we're halfway home. Now, hasn't this been an unusual meeting? Yes, brother. How will this affect

Thursday's retreat? Thursday's retreat. Your staff retreat. Oh, don't worry about it. If you're on the staff retreat, you can do this at the staff retreat. You should probably get with someone on the staff. Is that okay? Why don't you, staffers, just hold off getting with someone if you can't see someone here, and you all can pair up during your retreat? Okay.

May the Lord Jesus meet you tomorrow morning. Now then, you're going to take one minute. I'm going to dismiss this meeting right now. We'll have the announcements. We're going to dismiss this meeting, and I am leaving it on your scout's honor to get with someone in this group. If you don't know the person, just grab them and say, Hey, you. You'll be together all week. You're going to meet tomorrow morning. We're going to meet here on Tuesday morning. Then you are going to get together again on Thursday morning, and then on Sunday morning and Sunday night, you're all going to come to a... I'll tell you that.

Do we have announcements? Will someone call me Sunday night about midnight and tell me how this all worked out? I would prefer that sisters meet with sisters. You may be mad at your husband that morning, and if not that one, the next one for sure. How are we going to dismiss? Would you all stand up back there with us again?

Do we have a song that we can all sing?