

## Reflections on the message by Steve Kerry on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2010

### Transformed for Life – How to become all that God made you to be (Romans 12:1-8)

There are tremendous resources available to help you to live sin-free. Whatever your calling there is a plan for your life.

Drew Goodmanson, an innovator in church planting in San Diego said, “the gospel is not just a means of salvation but it is the very way we grow as Christians”. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the model and methods of evangelicalism with its altar calls and enquiry rooms were those of D L Moody and Billy Sunday following Charles Finney in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, who made revival a method. But their model is an incomplete gospel. The complete gospel, as preached by earlier 18<sup>th</sup> Century revivalists like Jonathan Edwards in the United States, John and Charles Wesley and George Whitfield in Britain, is a life completely given over to Christ. The gospel is not just freedom from the penalty of sin, but also from the power of sin. Romans 16:26 speaks of “the obedience of faith”. The Letter of James makes it clear that true faith is that which gives one’s life wholly to Christ.

Too many believers today talk about *my* life, *my* home, *my* career, and so on. At the centre of all sin is a going “their own way” (Isaiah 53:6). Humanity’s problem is that they are the boss. But ... *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life* (Romans 6:4, ESV). Don’t be distressed if this is not your experience – there are resources to help you to do this and to overcome sin.

There are people who believe the truth about Jesus Christ, but don’t want to live the Christian life. But the Christian life is an outflow of belief in correct doctrine. Everyone who has preached holiness has seen great things done by God. We so easily water down the gospel and play down the need for holiness. But God is not schizophrenic. It is the same for the nation of Israel as for New Testament Christianity. People are not saved by doing good. In the Torah it was not obedience but being brought out of Egypt that made the people to belong to God. Obedience is evidence of this deliverance. Paul tells his readers to test their faith (2 Corinthians 13:5) because he knew there were resources to help them live the godly life. Leonard Ravenhill said:-

"If I was to ask you tonight if you were saved? Do you say 'Yes, I am saved'. When? 'Oh so and so preached, I got baptized and...' Are you saved? What are you saved from, hell? Are you saved from bitterness? Are you saved from lust? Are you saved from cheating? Are you saved from lying? Are you saved from bad manners? Are you saved from rebellion against your parents? Come on, what are you saved from?"

Though the gospel that many of us have believed is true, it is incomplete. Our generation idolises celebrity. People always worship something: “*[Men] exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator<sup>1</sup> who is blessed forever! Amen*” (Romans 1:25). Pursuit of something outside the context where it should be is wrong.

There will come a day when God’s people will be free of all sin. For now we are not talking about sinless perfection. But stepping outside of God’s plan is placing ourselves on the throne of our hearts. Jostling for something is not being led by God. It is self worship. We need to move to God-worship. We have a right mindset when we say, Lord God, I am yours. If we say, I want my life to be *this* way, it is self-worship. We need to move self of the throne and worship God.

Romans chapters 1 to 5 are about how Jesus Christ died for you to be free of the penalty of sin. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that taking this part of the gospel to extremes leads to anti-nomianism (living without the law). Chapter 6 is about how to be free of the power of sin. Chapter 7 shows that the Law is impotent, and so, Chapter 8, God gives you His Spirit. We can train our mind to settle the presence of the Lord in it, but the Holy Spirit can be grieved.

Leonard Ravenhill said:-

"And there's no room for Him in the inn. He got a bit older, there was no room in His family, His family turned on Him. He went to the temple, no room in the temple, the temple turned on Him. And when He died there was no room to bury Him, He died outside of the city. Well why in God's Name do you expect to be accepted everywhere? How is it that the world couldn't get on with the holiest Man that ever lived and can get on with you and me? Are we compromised? Are we compromised? Have we no spiritual stature? Have we no righteousness that reflects on their corruption?"

The gospel is about laying your life down. It is not your life, but Christ's life. You have become the property of Jesus Christ through faith. The Lord Jesus saw sin in the world so seriously that He was willing to die for us. It is a slur, a slap in the face of God, for us to stay in our sin. If you saw a man carrying a cross you knew he wasn't coming back. Take up your cross. We are pilgrims passing through. Truly saved people are aware of their sin. Don't let sin settle in your life. *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.* (1 Corinthians 10:12, ESV). Be transformed (Romans 12:1). Put on the new self (Colossians 3:16-17). If you understand the complete gospel, laying your life down, then you can truly start living.

Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether your mission field is at work or in the home, say, "I will live my life *wholly* for you, Lord". It is not about trying harder, but working smarter. The gospel has been spoken so much but we don't necessarily understand what it says. Ephesians 2 says that God has prepared good works for us to do, but you will not do them until you understand that the gospel is also a life laid down.