His own received him not

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Donald Macdonald

[0:00] Now let us turn to the portion that we read in the Gospel according to John, in chapter 1. And we shall read at verse 11.

The Gospel by John, chapter 1, reading at verse 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name.
The passage, the words, have a little historical background.
And when they say that Christ came unto his own, it means that he came into his own country.
[1:09] That is after he began to go. He came into, he came to Nazareth, to his own village. The Gaelic Bible puts this far better, as it very often does with many things, than the English does.

The Gaelic Bible says that he came into his own country, and that his own people received him not.
Now that is a perfectly correct translation, because that's exactly what it says.
He came into his own country.
How people have people believing on him. Many people believed on him. Well, we're going to talk a little about them tonight. And in talking about them, we can trace a little of the spiritual history of our soul.
Of our newborn soul. Now the first thing that we see, and that we have to say, is that regeneration is the first step in the history of our believing soul, of our believers.
[3:02] And we must not forget that. And we must not forget that. I hope we don't. The first thing that happens when our heaven is converted, is not, and I want to advise this, It is not that our heaven believes in Christ.

Now, I have a purpose for, reason for saying this. Because, as you know, perhaps I am old-fashioned. I was brought up in an old-fashioned way.
But I was brought up under a gospel ministry that left nothing of these things in touch, for which I am profoundly thankful.
And I do fear that, in our old days, many, even a wealthy church young people, think that faith is the first step in the history of our believers.
In the spiritual history. Well, no, it is not. And I want you to remember that. The first step is regeneration.
[4:27] Before a person can't believe, he must be made alive. A dead person can't believe anything. And a sinner is dead in trespasses and sins.

And the first thing that happens to him is that he's made alive. Now, that is the act of God.
If you want to put it this way, that the first thing which the sinner himself does, is to believe, then that would be quite right.
That's good theology. That is the first thing that the sinner does. But God does something else before that.
And that is, he regenerates the person. And it is after God regenerates the person that the person is unable to believe. Now, this, my friends, is absolutely fundamental.
[5:32] I'm not talking about trivialities at all just now. I'm not talking about something that is not important. I'm talking about something that is of heart and importance.

And indeed, our whole outlook on the rest of theology is colored by the view we have of this particular thing.
If we do not take the act of regeneration with regard to the sinner to be an act of God, then the rest of the believer's life is more or less not an act of God, or only partly an act of God.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:46:30

And it will not do to look at his life like that. So it is an act of God. And his reception of Christ, his receiving Christ, is the fruit of regeneration.
When a child is born into the world, and he feels hungry or thirsty, and he cries for food or for milk, then the reason for which he cries is that he's living.
[6:58] He's been born. And so, he needs something to sustain him. But before the child is ever born, the child is fed.

The child is fed in the womb, so doctors tell us. The child is fed in a mysterious way by the mother's life. And the child is fed because the child is alive.
A dead child could not feed on its mother in the womb. The child is living. There is a generation. Something has been generated. And this generation needs life, and seeks life, and gets life. And then afterwards, it is born, and we see it.
And we see the fruit of what happened of regeneration. We see the fruit of that in life. Well now, that is exactly what happens. In a spiritual life, there is regeneration coming first of all, and then everything else follows from that.
[8:19] Now, regeneration regeneration is an act of God only. This human being has nothing whatsoever to do with it.

Nothing at all. I've heard somebody in this book putting it like this, which is quite right. In regeneration, the soul is passive.
Well, that's just another way of putting it. In regeneration, regeneration, the soul is not doing anything. Now, friends, I say this to people who, really, out of the very best intentions, try to have both, to bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ.
But you'll never bring anybody to the Lord Jesus Christ if you go about it in the wrong way. Never. If anybody wants to know the way between, say, Inverness, one part of Inverness and the other, if anybody wants to go to Dutney or out to reach more, and you start guiding him and you start following, it's not very likely that he's going to get his way to the place he wants.
You have to start right. Well, now, you have to start with the sinner telling him that regeneration is an act of God.
[9:49] It is not an act of man. And that there's to be regenerated before he believes. There are two things which really keep us sinners from believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is, first of all, his, his, his deadness. The fact that he's depraved and dead and a dead man, as I said, cannot believe.
He can't do anything. And now we have to realize this. you and I who do Christian service. And it is something that is not realized in modern evangelism at all.
You read, you read a lot of magazines. And indeed, some magazines in which you wouldn't expect to see this and some books, you read them and this is the very thing that you get.
But the first thing that must happen is that our sinners must believe that the first act is the sinner's own. Now that's entirely wrong and we never, we will never really succeed in gospel propagation if we're going to begin like that.
[11:08] That is not the case. But I said there are two things that keep the sinner from believing. There is the fact that he's dead and there is the fact that he's prejudiced.

He's biased in the wrong way. He's dead and he cannot believe. And he's living in sin. He's living in the realm of sin.
I don't mean inactive sin or inactual sin. I don't mean that but I mean he's living in the realm of sin. And living in the realm of sin is biasing his mind against believing in Christ.
Though you sit with a man and it doesn't matter how nice he is or how religiously minded he is, he is not a believer in Christ and you sit with him and he talks to you and responds and answers back. Now supposing that man I'm not judging his time but supposing that he's an unbeliever to say that he's very promising well then that man with all the promisingness about his prejudice against believing in Christ.
[12:28] This is in us all friends. I'm not talking about just the man here and there. I'm talking about us all. This is the way we own our.

We don't want to believe. Now somebody may say well I can't remember ever the day in my own spiritual history that I didn't want to believe in Christ.
You may say that. In my early days I was brought up so well and brought up in a church and I always wanted to believe in Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:46:30

why did you not believe in him? Then if you didn't if I came when you did believe in him why did you not believe in him in those earlier days when you wanted to believe in him?
Just because you didn't want to believe in him although you thought you did. Either that or you had already believed in him and you didn't know it. One thing or the other.
[13:31] I don't know which of these may be true but it's one thing or the other. So then there is this point of regeneration to as many as received him.

But I want to lay the emphasis on this particular point that before the receiving of Christ comes there is this act of regeneration on the part of God towards the sinner.
And do you know then when you feel any response in your heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ if it is a saving and respect to thy response you can take it from me as sure as God lives in heaven that comes from God.
You don't need to fear that you're not a Christian. give you an example you are. You don't get a response a real response willing spontaneous response to God in your heart until first of all God regenerates you.
Something has happened inside you. Something has happened in your heart. God has regenerated you. And it's because this has happened that you respond to what God says in his word and through his preaching and in the sacraments and in the ministry and in the ordinances.
[15:02] this is why you respond to this thing. Otherwise you would not respond. Otherwise whatever feeling you might have would be merely emotional and soon fade away.

but when you respond with a lasting response with a willing response a whole hearted response depends upon it friend.
God has done a work in your heart. You didn't see him doing it and you didn't even know that he was doing it. Nobody knows that God is regenerating you.
You don't know that. You may know the day you believe in Christ but you do not know the moment you will regenerate it. Nobody knows that and you never know that.
But God did it all the same. And you had nothing whatsoever to do with it. Nothing at all. And so friends there are two things coming before my mind here.
[16:04] I didn't intend clearly to speak on it at such length but I know that it is very important. There are two things that come up before my mind. First of all it is this that no glory whatsoever belongs to the preacher who is the means of bringing your soul to Christ.

No glory at all. You say such and such was the man who was the means of bringing you to Christ. He has a coffee box. He was the means of making you come consciously to the Lord Jesus Christ. But before that Pippin ever came on the scene. Before that Pippin and you came face to face. Before you ever heard him say a word God had regenerated you.
The work of regeneration had gone on in your soul and the reason for which you responded to this man's appeal in the name of Christ is that you had been regenerated by God already.
So no glory belongs to him whatsoever. And in the second place there is this that no glory belongs to the sinner himself.
[17:22] None at all. All the glory belongs to God for all that we are. And tonight friends if we are true Christians if we belong to the Lord Jesus if we have received him oh how fortunate we are how marvelous it is that we have received him who is like unto the always soul a people saved by the Lord happy unto them but in the midst of happiness give the glory of the dawn to God he did it he did it to you you are what you are because of what he did and this will be the theme of our praises not only in this life but forever and ever and ever more he did to God be the glory great things he had done in his name and his name the same thing but as many as received him to him he gave power even to many as believed on his name now receiving

Christ means this that Christ is in the tree offer of people who receive him they receive him as being offered to them in the gospel and they receive him as a matter of their own will but as a matter of will that is operated on by the spirit of God the point is that when we receive Jesus Christ as I have already stated we receive him because something has already taken place something is prior to that and we receive him but receiving him is our art but not about the free will in free will would never receive the Lord Jesus Christ but in regeneration the will has changed the whole being has changed our regeneration means that heaven is completely made new he's been given a new bias to his will a new inclination he's made completely new and what he wanted to refuse before now he wants to accept the

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:46:30

Jesus that he didn't want before now he seeks them and wants them at all costs his will is made and this is why he receives the Jesus that is offered to him freely in the gospel and he is not applied then but he is freely offered to us in the gospel and there is this also like that receiving Christ means that we must acknowledge of them before we receive them and here I say don't delicate ground in as far as experience is concerned and I am never very happy when I am dealing with this particular point for the simple reason that I am terribly much afraid of hurting anybody who is a true Christian I would rather anything in the world happen to me than that
I don't want to hurt anybody who is a true Christian I certainly would like to hurt people who think they are Christians and are not I would like to keep them from sleep for a week or more I wouldn't mind hurting them but oh God would this that I should turn to the tender Christian I don't want to do that no sense there are people of God real true people of God and experience to them is so vague they do not remember anything above the receiving Christ they cannot give you details they cannot go into the matters at all as all other people can do they can't go into it they can't when they receive it there is so much vagueness so much obscurity in it for them and when
I say that the different can receive Christ without having the knowledge of them they may not even know what I am talking about they may say wait did I know I can't remember if I did or not I can't trace the working of my own mind sufficiently to be able to say that I knew Christ before I received him you might have been so young that this might have been the case but I think if you look back and examine yourself you will find that this is true now when I say that you must know it means just this that your understanding is enlightened to know the kind of pressure that is offered to you you get to know things about Christ which nobody in the world could tell you you understand them and nobody could tell you them but you understand things about the
[23:40] Lord Jesus Christ and the whole thing may feel more emotional than intellectual to you it may but it's intellectual as well as emotional and it's intellectual first of all and because it is intellectual it becomes emotional but to you the intellectual of the thing may not be just may not be recalled at all may not be experimental at all but there was this friend there was this intelligent looking at Christ intelligent knowledge of Christ you knew him you knew him in such a way that you did things which you would never have done otherwise your knowledge of Christ made you do things you saw his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the father you saw his land and he felt his land but you could never define what you felt but you felt the door the same you wept perhaps and you didn't know why you were weeping but you were melted you were melted by a power that was operating on you and you didn't know what the power was and yet you were melted as a block of ice could be melted by the warm sand and you couldn't tell what was working on you but you were melted and the very name of Christ served it sweetly in your ears well there it is that is the effect of regeneration and you saw in it all you saw you saw the suitableness of Christ you want to love them and there again when I say that you saw the suitableness of Christ there are people who were converted when they were older and more intelligent and more mature and oh they can trace all these steps quite easily they can trace how they saw how they saw themselves lost how they tried to build their righteousness for themselves and they couldn't and then they saw how suitable

Jesus was in all his offices as a prophet priest and king now for my part I can't say that I knew anything like that in my own young days when I was converted if I ever was I can't say that I ever saw anything like that I couldn't trace these things at all but some people can but what I'm trying to say to you is that you can't be converted without being able to trace these things experimentally but at the same time they are experimental and they make do things and these things although they don't mark themselves in your life and even although you can't even look back upon them as being peculiarly episodes to be remembered yet they are theirs and moving back you can't but know that they are theirs now there is one thing which
I'm going to mention and that is the appropriation of the heart and that includes everything else it sums up really everything else it sums up the consent of the will the enlightenment of the mind it sums up Paul puts it in Philippians chapter 3 you know he hasn't the kind of confession that I was talking about at all he had a conversive experience he had a master experience he knew all about the steps that were taken with and by the Lord at least he knew much about perhaps not all but he knew much about far more than most people do but this is what I'm going to bring before you you came to the stage I hope and you did if you were a Christian when Christ had all the approbation of your heart now that's something of everything that I can say you came to the stage that

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:46:30

Paul said in Philippians I count the door things for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord did you come to that friend do you remember that you ever said like that do you remember that you said to yourself well the world doesn't mean anything to me what of its fame and what of its goods and property and pleasures and what if I get everything else I would rather have Christ for my soul than everything I ever heard of everything I ever saw and I will never be happy until I have Christ for my soul and you gave your hearts that verbatium to the Lord Jesus Christ now that sums up everything that I said and if you came to that if you came to say I counted everything but dross nothing in comparison with the
Lord Jesus Christ God regenerated you God was at work in your heart before you knew it and that is why you approved of the Lord Jesus Son of the Son in that way of or you may.
[30:14] Now you have the three steps. You have regeneration, and you have reception, and you have adoption. Now these three steps follow the romantical order.

Regeneration takes place first of all in the darkness, as it were, in secrecy, an act of God entirely, given a little to do with it.
Then there is reception, which is your act. God doesn't receive Christ for you. You receive Christ for yourself. And then, after your reception of Christ, you are given the Spirit of God to say, Abba, Father.
You're given sonship. These three things follow, one after the other. But don't you think of them, although I said they follow chronologically, of course they do, but don't you think of them as one happening yesterday, and one happening today, and one happening tomorrow.
They don't happen like that. Though they take place chronologically, they take place practically at the same time. They are, as somebody put it, like the spokes of a wheel on an axle.
[31:30] Well, if you look at the spokes of a wheel, and the wheel begins to move, it would be very difficult to say which spoke moves first, if any one spoke moves before the other.

Well, in this matter, if you take it as a wheel, there are spokes that move first. Regeneration, reception, reception, and adoption.
But we've not been able to discern chronologically, to put a chronological difference between these. But to those who receive them, he gives this advantage, he gives this privilege, what's called dear power.
He gives authority, delicate power. But privilege, would be a good word, to become the sons of God.
Now let me just speak of this, not theologically, but experiment, because I have no time to go into the theology of the adoption, the sonship of God's children.
[32:42] But let me speak of it theologically, experiment, for a moment, but just for a moment. He gave them the privilege, of becoming the sons of God.

Now friends, that's the essence, and the climax, of the sweetness, of coming to Christ. That's the climax, of the generation, and the climax, of receiving Christ.
And did you have ever come, come to the throne of grace, and you have spoken to God, in the name of Christ, and asked him to receive you, as a poor, of I's sinners, wherein, you have gone a long way.
It's a marvelous thing, it's a marvelous thing to do that. But my friend, if you're a Christian, you did more than that. You came to the throne of grace, and you addressed God, there, as, my father, my father, father, my father, father, as Jesus addressed, my father, he said, and you, father, my God, and you, God.
The Holy Spirit, witnesses with you, spirit, that you are a child, of God. The Holy Spirit, in you, says, Abba, father, father, and if you, in moments of crisis, and difficulty, by the spiritual, temporal, if you have come, to the throne of grace, and you have said to God, out of the agony, of your heart, out of, out of the, out of the sweetness, which you found, by being in his boost, you said to God, thou art my father, that, my friend, is the essence, of Christianity, that, is the essence, of godliness, do you, do you say that, to God, or perhaps, sometimes, you don't say it, always to God, and I know, that I speak, to every Christian, in this church, tonight, when I say, that you don't, always have that sense, you don't, always have the feeling, that you belong, to God, that God, is your father, you don't, always have the feeling, of that, no, but sometimes, you do have, love, and very often, when you do have the feeling, it's in your very darkest, moments, our God, does it that way, friends, he does it that way, he does it, in other ways, he does it sometimes, perhaps, when you're sitting, at the Lord's table, he does it sometimes, when you're in prayer, in servant prayer, before God, your heart is

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:46:30

lifted up, as Jacob's heart, was lifted up, at Bethany, and you see the glory, and the mediation of Christ, and you know, that God is your father, that, by and large, the times, when you say, is, when it backs, to the wall, and you say,
[36:12] God, my father, you see how, Jesus spoke, the words, my father, that, as came near the end, as he came, to take hold, of the cup, he then used it, my father, he said, my father, and it was, when he needed it most, that the fatherhood of God, was dear and stupid, so then, you'll excuse me, for being overcome, but I know, that this is the sweetness, of the Christian life, more than anything else, and if you and I, if you and I, go down into the darkness, into the shadow of the valley, knowing, and saying,

Abba, Father, what more would we want, to see for a time, Christ, himself lost, this sense, in the darkness, of the cross, but I'm not going, to say to you, but that you will lose it, even when you're down, perhaps, you won't know, perhaps, you won't feel, that God, is your father, then, Jesus didn't, in the darkness, in the deception, he said, my God, not my father, my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me, but then, the darkness, the darkness, wore away, and then he said, at the end, my father, into thy hands, I prevent my spirit, but it was my father, it was a sense, of the fatherhood of God, that he had, as he gave his spirit, into the hands, of his almighty God, now, my friends, we have that, we have all, in his way, oh Lord, we pray that those, help us now, to receive those things, unto ourselves, and to be made partakers, of the benefits, of thy grace, may we know, that the Lord is gracious, unto them, who believe, in his precious, may he be precious, unto us, even if we cannot tell, even if we haven't got, the property of speech, to declare, his glory, unto us, may we live, Christ, and may we know, Christ, and may Christ, be of constant, companion, be thy road, Father, be near to us, in every crisis, be with us, in our sleeping, and in our waking, be with us, in our prosperity, and in our eternity, be with us, in our sorrows, and in our happiness, be with us, always, even up to the end, amen.
Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 06:46:30