

What is a Christian? Conversion

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[0:00] This is a question that we asked the other time, and the question is, what is a Christian?! There are a lot of answers to that question, and I'm just doing one at a time.

The other day he said, a Christian is a forgiven sinner. That's a true and profound statement. This time I thought I would answer it this way to say, a Christian is a convert.

Now, whether you think that's a good answer to the question or not remains to be seen. I'm a little bit in two minds myself, actually. But that's what we'll work with this morning.

A Christian is a convert. Now, what does convert mean? So, let's do the vocabulary. So, we can use convert as a verb to convert something.

We can use a noun, conversion, or an adjective, converted. Or convert can be a noun as well.

[1:02] A convert, a converted person. So, here's some example. You could do this on Google. You could do this on your phone while we're doing it, at this very moment. Google, convert £25 sterling into dollars.

And they'll tell you how many dollars it was. Yeah? That's a conversion. What is the conversion rate? £25 into dollars. So, you turn one thing into an equivalent other thing, but different.

So, pounds sterling are different to dollars. Some of you may have seen or may have even experienced a roof conversion. A loft conversion.

That's what I should say, isn't it? A loft conversion. Or a barn conversion. So, this is where you have a building and you change it. So, you take a barn and you change it into a house.

Or you take a loft, which had just got spider's webs and junk in it, and you turn it into a beautiful room with en suite and everything like that. You modify a large structure for a different purpose.

[2:09] You make it actually bigger and better. That's a conversion.

Conversion. If you're into dieting, you would know that your body turns carbohydrates into fat if you don't burn up the carbohydrates before they get that far.

Converting. Conversion. So, that's turned one chemical into a different chemical with different properties. Okay? Conversion.

Convert. Religiously, people talk about converting to Islam or something like that. So, we use the word of particular meaning religiously.

But let's think about conversion. Conversion. So, I'm saying that the answer to this question, what is a Christian? Or one of the answers is a Christian is a convert.

A Christian is somebody who has experienced conversion. A Christian is somebody who has been converted. Or a Christian is someone who has converted to Christianity.

[3:15] Christianity. That's what I'm going to try and persuade you of this morning. That's what I want to try and think about this morning. So, I wouldn't want you to go away believing it just because Philip had said so.

But I would like you to go away believing it if Jesus says so. And if the Bible says so. Okay? Okay? So, before we get on, somebody's objecting.

And they're saying, the Bible says a Christian is a believer. I know that. I believe in God and Jesus. That's enough, isn't it?

I don't want to be converted as well. Various people might be saying that. They might be confused. Well, they might say, being converted or converting sounds a bit fanatical.

It sounds a bit radical. I don't really want to do that. I just sort of believe a bit. I believe in God. I don't want to be converted, though. So, that's an objection. To which the answer is, I'm glad you're

a believer.

[4:24] But we find that the Bible is... Oh, dear. What have I written here? We will find that the Bible is not saying that the key is not faith. So, describing the specific sort of faith.

Click. The deep attitude of faith. And what goes on in the heart and life if somebody really has the sort of faith God wants. In other words, if you really are a believer, then you will be somebody whose faith goes so deep that there is a change.

And it's also true that you are a convert. That's what I'm going to try and get at this morning. So, as an objection. Go back to where we were before.

What does Jesus and the Bible say about being a convert? Conversion. Converted. Now, I begin with, first of all, an unfortunate admission.

An unfortunate admission is that the Bible doesn't use the language of convert, conversion, very much at all. Depending on which version of the Bible you use.

[5:31] But if you went through it with a search, look for convert, conversion, converted. You don't come up with very much at all. So, that means that there's either going to be a very, this is probably both of these things, either going to be a very short sermon.

Or a misguided choice of theme by the speaker. Probably a bit of the latter. On the other hand, there is in the Bible a powerful insight.

Because the Bible does use a couple of other words. In a crucial way.

Meaning and describing and conveying the same idea that we had when we talk about conversion. Because it uses the word turn a lot.

And it uses the word, which means change of mind or repent a lot. And I think when I gave the examples at the beginning, turn would work as a word.

[6:44] So, you turn dollars into pounds sterling. You turn your loft into a useful space. What was the other example I gave? Yeah, the barn.

Yes, you turn the barn into a wonderful house. So, turn. Although it's the same word, it's the same idea. And the Bible does have that a lot. The numbers there, you think, why do you put numbers? In case you wanted to look it up on your computer. That's word number 1,994. And that's word number 3,340.

There's a way of giving numbers to words. Anyway. Let's think about those words. What have I done here?

Jesus talks about turning. Repenting. The Old Testament talks about turning and repenting.

[7:46] So, let's look at some examples of those. That's what I want to do this morning. I think I've got five examples to pick out and to try and persuade you that a Christian is a convert.

It's somebody who has turned. It's somebody who has repented. So, let's look first of all at an Old Testament example. And it is Ezekiel 33. If you have a Bible, please turn to it and find this.

Ezekiel 33 from verse 11. So, somebody might kindly give us a page number for Ezekiel 33, verse 11.

864. Thank you very much. So, we're looking in the Bible. We're looking in the Old Testament. So, this is before Jesus.

Ezekiel is one of the prophets prophesying to the Jewish people, the people of Israel. And I want to ask whether it says anything about turning and if so, what it says.

[8:55] So, let's read what it says. It says here. Say to them, that's say to the nation of Israel. As surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.

Turn. Turn from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel? So, I won't confuse you by giving any more.

There's a little bit of context, but let's just take those words as they stand. Did you notice turn? Did you notice how strongly God feels about it?

Let me just read it again. As surely as I live, declares the Lord. That's a strong statement. As surely as I live, declares the Lord.

I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather. Well, what's the rather? What should they do instead? But rather that they turn from their ways and live.

[10:11] Turning's there, isn't it? Turn. And then it's addressed, not just about those people, but to them. Turn. And then it's repeated.

Turn from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel? This is quite... I'm being a bit shouty this morning because it's actually very emphatic, isn't it?

You know, if God was speaking, I think he'd say it in a loud voice. Turn. Now, what can we learn from this? God means people to trust what he's saying.

So, faith is not mentioned as a word, but it's there, isn't it? It's whether you believe God when he tells you this. And the faith that God is looking for is a faith that will people say, well, I trust God on that, therefore I will turn.

It's a faith which turns. And the choice in this text is binary. I thought whether I should use that word.

[11:16] You know what binary means. It's just two, isn't it? Binary system has got two numbers in it. And the choice is binary. You have two...

There are two possibilities and two only. And what he says is you turn, turn and live, or you don't turn and you die.

Isn't that right? Is that what the text says? Surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. So, two choices. The death of the wicked, or they turn and live.

Doesn't give you half a... God doesn't say... On the other hand, they could sort of three quarters, or two thirds, or 75%. It's one or the other. Rather, the death of the wicked, but rather they turn and live.

And then it said again, turn from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of people? Two choices. Binary. And they turn from something. They turn from their evil ways.

[12:24] Verse 14 says, I'll say to the wicked, you will surely die, and then he turns away from his sin. So, we're understanding that the turning is from sin, from their evil ways.

And they... So, this is spelled out with some specifics. So, where are we? Verse 15. So, here's somebody who's turned from their evil ways.

He gives back what he took in pledge for a loan. He returns what he has stolen. He follows the decrees that gives life. He does no evil. That's somebody who's turned.

So, he doesn't oppress the weak. He stops stealing. He stops being disobedient. And we can enlarge on it and say, one of the things that they used to do was worship idols.

And I think we can assume that they turn from worshipping idols to God. So, they stop doing things practically. And they do do things.

[13:28] They do give money back. They do break a habit of doing wrong. They had an idol that was a god. They stick it on the fire and get rid of it.

Chuck it out. Burn it. If they've been cheating on their taxes, they write in a note to HMRC and say, actually, this is the correct tax situation. Jesus would have said, if your eye is offending you, you pluck out your eye and get rid of it.

They act in expression of turning. And God says, turn from your evil ways and turn to God.

And God says, the reason I'm telling you this is because if you just go on the same way as you're ordinary going, you'll die. And that gives me no pleasure at all. I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

You say, put it the other way around. What I'd be really pleased with is if you turned. I care about this. I care about you. That's the reason I'm shouting at you, says God, because I don't want you to die.

[14:38] Turn, turn. Turn. Turn to God.

start walking in his ways. Do things that are just and right. I think that's referred to in verse 46. Why have I put 46? Because that must be wrong.

Why did I put that? No idea. And, I'm assuming this, to start humbly calling on the Lord.

I think we can assume that it's turning from something to the Lord. And he says, turn. Why will you die?

So, would I be correct in saying that's a very good example of where God tells people to turn? It's powerful. It's meant deeply.

[15:44] And it's a call on people to turn from sin to God. And you might say, well, I thought this was a Christian church. I, I, we don't do Old Testament.

Of course, we do do Old Testament. And I would say, this is so fundamental that for Christians, this hasn't changed. It isn't that God says to Christians, oh, you don't have to bother turning. That's Old Testament. The same, the same thing is true. I want you to turn. It's just the way of turning is more radical and more clear through Jesus Christ, as we shall see in a minute. But God's saying that to us this morning. Turn. Why will you die? It's a turning in stopping thinking and doing some things, and starting thinking and doing other things. Okay. Okay. Let's look at another example. So let's come into the New Testament. Let's look at John the Baptist. So this is in Luke's Gospel. Chapter 3.

[17:05] So John the Baptist was, in a long line of prophets, down the hundreds of years up to Jesus.

And when Jesus comes, he's the prophet who announces him, and Jesus comes directly after John the Baptist. And what are we told about John's ministry?

In Luke 3, verse 3, says he went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

I won't go into all the rest of it. There's a lot there. But just take that sentence. What did John the Baptist do? He went out into the countryside. He spoke. He preached a baptism.

So baptism meaning dunking people in water, sort of washing. For, and it was to do with repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

[18:08] That's what John the Baptist did. And he said things like, in chapter 3, verse 7, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

And he said, produce fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father. Jesus said, God can raise from these stones children of Abraham, but you have got to repent.

So, we understand that John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus.

We understand that John the Baptist doesn't bring the full deal that comes with Jesus. We understand that. But he does say repent. And he expected people, he called on people to believe what he said.

Believe me on this. You do need to repent. Believe me on this. The Lord is coming. Believe me on this. You do need to be ready. Believe me on this. The way to be ready is to repent.

[19:24] And he does talk about forgiveness of sins, doesn't he? A baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. So, even though Jesus hadn't yet died on the cross, John could say, God does give forgiveness of sins.

You can be forgiven. baptism is what he called people to do. It's a sort of sign of, isn't it?

It's a sign of saying, I'm rather dirty, I need a shower, I need a bath. And believe in God when he says, if we turn to him, we get that washing. But the target is repentance.

Turn. Can't we go on the same way as we've always done? No, you need to turn. And mercy is the motive of it because God doesn't take pleasure in the death of the wicked.

And the choice, again, is binary. You see the way that John spells out the choices. He mentions in verse 7, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

[20:38] Wrath is coming. God's judgment is coming. That's the reason we need to repent. And he spells this out in practical terms too.

In verse 8, he says, produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And then he spells it out, for example, in verse 11. The man with two tunics should share with the one who has none and the one who has food should do the same.

So, he says, if you're going to return to God, you're going to let go of your possessions. You're going to hold them very loosely. If somebody needs something and you've got money, you're going to share it with them.

And then somebody else asked him, what should we do? It's a tax collector. Verse 13, John says, don't collect more than you're required to. So, he's saying, be honest in your business.

And some soldiers ask him, what should we do? Verse 14, and he says to the soldiers, don't extort money, don't accuse people falsely and be content with your pay. So, the soldiers were in a position, as you will understand, to get money out of people by taking them down a little alley and pointing a sword at them, things like that.

[22:00] And he says, you have power, so don't abuse your power. Be compassionate and truthful.

And he also talks about being content, be content with your pay, don't try and squeeze money out of people like a protection racket sort of thing. Those are all to do with self in a way, aren't they? Using my position to get something for myself, to get money and power, and he says, you don't do that. If you're turning to God, that's not the way it works. But he does say turn, doesn't he?

Repent. You might say, oh well, he's not Christian, is he? He's John the Baptist. You just told me this is before Jesus Christ. And I'm going to say, yes he is before Jesus Christ.

He doesn't give us the full deal. But Christianity is not less radical. It's more radical. And if John the Baptist could say, you need to turn, then Jesus says it all the more.

[23:06] Well, that's example number two. Let's see what Jesus does actually say. So let's go to a few purges further on in Luke chapter 10 verse 13.

And these, this is when Jesus' ministry had gone out through his helpers. Jesus had sent them out to say things in the locality.

And in Luke 10 13, Jesus gets critical of some of the villages which either he has visited or his followers have visited or perhaps both.

so Chorazin and Bethsaida were local villages. Listen to what Jesus says. Woe to you Chorazin.

Woe to you Bethsaida. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon what would they have done?

[24:23] they would have repented long ago sitting in sackcloth and ashes. It will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

And you Capernaum will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. And he's talking about the local towns and villages. And I'm speculating a little bit here but I think what he's saying is that they're sort of respectable, Jewish villages and they have their traditions and their respectability and they weren't that interested in what Jesus had to say.

And they weren't that impressed by what Jesus and his followers did. And Jesus compares these villages with some foreign places that you would think of as being far from God and wicked Tyre and Sidon.

So in the history of Israel they would be thought of as foreign and wicked and far out. And Jesus says, woe to you, you respectable nearby villages because you didn't repent.

repent. You heard it, you saw it, but you did not change anything. You did not turn.

[25:58] Those wicked places would have turned if they'd heard what you heard and saw what you have seen. So the point that Jesus is making is they should have repented but they didn't.

Hence me saying a Christian is somebody who has repented, a convert, somebody whose life has changed. They would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. We don't wear sackcloth and ashes these days except perhaps to make a very bizarre fashion statement.

But it's to say, in those days it's saying it's an expression of sadness. We were so wrong. our lives were so much against what God wanted.

We are so much to blame. That's why they'd wear sackcloth and ashes. And Jesus says, if you had really understood, you would have done that too.

You would have gone home with a few tears in your eyes. You would have gone home with an aching heart. Think, I need to get my life right with God.

[27:05] God. And it's a binary thing, perhaps not as clearly, but Jesus says, he who listens to you listens to me.

He who rejects you rejects me. He who rejects me rejects the one who sent me. And Jesus gives those two choices, listening or rejecting. No halfway. Three quarters way.

So three quarters a Christian, 25% not a Christian. it's a total thing. You either listen or you reject.

And if I don't know whether I'm stretching a point here to say there's a heaven versus hell thing going on here. Capernaum, you would be lifted up to the skies, would you? Actually, you're going

down to the depths.

Very stark, isn't it? And the way Jesus says, woe to you. Woe to you. And he wanted them to listen. [28:11] He wanted them to listen with faith, but he wanted them to listen with a faith which said, I will change. To turn away from sins with sorrow and disgust, and I can ask the question, are you like Chorazin?

I put up there, I took the liberty of putting in the name of some visitors to the local to us, Stenning and Patchham and Hurstbier Point. Woe to you, Hurstbier Point. Woe to you, Patchham. Woe to you, Stenning. If the things that you had seen and heard from Christians had been seen and heard in Tyre and sign, they would have repented, but you didn't.

That sort of thing, you see. What are you like? What are you like with the things of God? Do you deeply, trustingly, radically listen?

Or have actually you got to the point where you sort of half listen and half can't be bothered?

Something to repent of, isn't it? It's a serious warning.

[29:19] is your life in the situation where you would say, I've turned. In every way, there is no part of my life that is not touched by the call of Jesus.

And in my thinking, in my behavior, in my habits, I have turned away from sin and to God.

I have a bit. No, he's not saying a bit. He's saying a turn from to, binary, that way or that way. Let's see what the apostle Paul wrote.

He was a great man for faith, but the faith that he was talking about was always faith that was repenting. let's look at Acts chapter 20.

So if you go ahead in your Bible a little bit to Acts chapter 26, verse 20, this is when the apostle Paul, so Paul is one of the first followers of Jesus, and after Jesus was gone from this earth, Paul, like many others, carried on telling people about Christian faith.

[30:39] faith. And at this point in Acts 26, verse 20, he's giving a sort of talk about his life and his convictions.

And he says this to King Agrippa, and you could imagine King Agrippa saying, come on, tell us what you do, Paul, tell us what sort of activities, how do you see your mission in life.

And in Acts 26, verse 19, Paul says, so then King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven, first to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

Sounds rather familiar, doesn't it? Paul could have given other summaries of his ministry, he could have said, I wrote quite a bit of the Bible actually, but what he chooses to say here is, I told people, and what did you tell them?

I told them that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

[32:13] Quite striking, isn't it, that he should say that? So let's fill that out a little bit. Why was this all going on?

Well, a little earlier, Paul says that Jesus had touched his life. Well, that would be an understatement. Jesus had appeared to him and radically changed his life.

In verse 17 and 18, I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I'm sending you to them to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

It's all good stuff, isn't it? I want them to have light. I want them to have forgiveness. I want their eyes to be opened. I want them to be delivered. And that's why, Paul, I'm sending you to tell people to turn.

So there's a very kind motive. If you saw a child about to run into the road where there's a lot of traffic, you would say stop, wouldn't you?

[33:39] And people would say, how unkind to shout at a child like that. Well, it didn't, is it? It would be a very kind thing because the child was just about to get run over. you need to say something emphatically and clearly.

Stop! And in this theme of the Bible, there is an emphatic and clear statement which is turn.

I preach to people, says Paul, that they would turn. Turning is a wonderful thing to do. Remember the prodigal son, the boy who went off, behaved obnoxiously, went off, spent all his dad's money. Now, he didn't get shouted at, but something went on in his heart which said, what a stupid place I've got to. What a stupid place.

I had all of that and I've blown it and I've messed my life up. I've behaved so obnoxiously I'm going to turn round, I'm going to turn, I'm going to go back to my dad and I'm going to say to him, I've been a complete idiot, I've been a complete idiot and I want to come back to you.

[34:58] I'll be quite happy just to be treated like a servant. And you remember how his dad is watching, he's been waiting months for his boy to come back and he's watching and he sees him and he runs to him and he says, so pleased to see you.

Dad, yes, I know you have. And how he's welcomed back. Now, there's two aspects, there's the shouting, turn and there's the wonderful welcome.

So let's get both of those. God isn't shouting at us just to upset us or threaten us.

But let's be honest, most of us are so spiritually stupid. I'm talking about myself here, that we need to be shouted at occasionally.

Which way are you going? You need to turn. Paul says, I preached, well he certainly preached faith, I preached repentance.

[36:04] I told people to turn to God and to not just talk about it, but for that so to affect their lives that their deeds show their repentance.

It's an interesting point, isn't it? The change affects their deeds. I used to, but now I don't. That was my habit, but now it isn't. That was the way I thought, but now I don't. That is a profound change.

And that's what God is looking for. What sort of things did those people that Paul spoke to, what sort of practical things might he have asked them to do and look for?

Well, they would stand fast to Jesus, to turn from idols through Jesus, to turn from the world's ways. Some of them lived immoral lives.

[37:11] Some of them had idols. Some of them just didn't put Jesus first and they turned to doing that, putting Jesus first. Some of them weren't that concerned about anybody apart from themselves and now they become lovers of the brethren, lovers of the Christian congregation.

And they start living like Jesus. They turn. And show it in practical ways. A Christian is a convert, someone who has turned in repentance.

Now, for some strange reason, I've failed to do clicks on this, so we will just look together at the last book of the Bible. And this book, the bit that I'm going to draw attention to, is addressed to Christians.

It's the book of Revelation, so if you want to find it, you go right to the end of the Bible and work back in a little bit, I was going to look at chapter 2. This is addressed to a church.

So you might be thinking, well, most of what he was saying this morning didn't really apply to me because he was talking about people who had never, ever turned to God and that they should get that straight in their lives, they turned to God.

[38:24] I say, yeah, fair enough. This bit is addressed to Christians or a Christian church. Revelation chapter 2. This is to the church at Ephesus and Jesus says, I know your deeds, your hard work, your perseverance.

I know you cannot tolerate wicked men. You've tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. You've persevered and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary, but I hold this against you.

You've forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you've fallen. Repent.

Do the things you did at first. That's a thing for Jesus to say, isn't it? The words of Jesus to Christians. You need to repent.

I thought I'd finished with all repenting. I thought I did that when I became a Christian. I repented then. No, he says, I want you now to repent. I want you now to repent because for this church it's very appropriate for them.

[39:31] He says, you've got lots of good things going for you, but somewhere something has gone missing and it is the first love that you had for me.

And that seems to have evaporated and you need to repent. You need to turn around again and to keep turning and to keep turning because we know what we're like and our hearts are so wavered, aren't we?

It doesn't take long for us to go off course. He says, I want you to keep turning back to me. And here he says, do what you used to do. You don't do that anymore.

Isn't that right? The repenting is, he says, do the things you did at first. He says, if you don't repent, I'll take away your lampstand. you won't be a church anymore.

You have forsaken your first love. What did you used to do? Oh, when people become Christians, it isn't the same with everybody, but quite often, there can be a real enthusiasm right at the beginning.

[40:44] Now, we know you can't live on enthusiasm forever, but he says, do, just think about what you used to do. I don't know what you used to do. Maybe you used to get up really early to pray and it really mattered and now you're not that bothered really whether you pray.

And when you first became a Christian, you couldn't wait to get to Christian meetings because you knew you'd learn something and you'd see people, you'd be involved in something that you couldn't be involved in anywhere else and that's what you used to do.

And you used to love reading your Bible and every time you read it you thought, this is fantastic.

And you used to be extravagant with God's work. Nothing was too much trouble for you and probably, it's not unknown for Christians who in their first enthusiasm do some silly things.

I think that was a bit unwise. Let's forget the unwise things. But you used to be, how did you used to be when you first loved the Lord? And he says, you lost that, haven't you?

That's gone a bit dim. And what he says is repent. So you see, it doesn't let Christians off the hook for repentance.

[42:09] We need to be repenting. look at chapter 3 verse 19. It doesn't say repent to all the churches, I don't think, but I'm just picking out these examples.

So chapter 3 verse 19 is another church and the description of them is they're neither hot nor cold. The place where they lived, they had hot water in one place and cold water in another and you could do good stuff with the hot water, probably do washing and the cold water, you'd make a nice cold drink with it, but they were neither one thing nor the other.

It's actually useless. He says as a church you become useless. And what he says in verse 19 is this, those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline, so be earnest and repent.

Here I am, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me. Just take that little bit there.

It's to do with faith, yes of course it is. He wants people to believe what he says. But the faith that he's looking for is a faith that responds to the call of the Lord Jesus.

[43:29] And this church had got self confident, I'm rich, I've acquired wealth, I don't need a thing. And he says I want you to move away from that. I want you to realize once again that you depend upon me every moment.

You depend upon me for, well what does it say here, get gold, I count you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you can become rich and clothes to wear and something to put on your eyes so that you can see.

You need me for those things, says the Lord Jesus. So move and turn to me in that way. Turn away from uselessness because you become just useless.

You're neither hot nor cold. And Jesus says if you do this, now this is a little different picture here, so this is the picture of Jesus knocking on the door and he says when you turn and open the door, so Jesus says I will come in and we'll be together like we used to be.

We'll eat together. We'll have fellowship together. We'll be together together. It's a bit like the prodigal son isn't it, except here was the father and that was the guy coming this way.

[44:50] Jesus says if you move towards me I will open the door and we'll be together. There'll be that communion with Jesus.

There's a very lovely promise isn't it? It's a very lovely promise. Who wouldn't want that? What Christian wouldn't want to be communing with Jesus? And Jesus says that's what it's like but if you're unrepentant that's not what it's like.

You need to be repenting. What is a Christian? A Christian is a convert, somebody who turns, who has turned and who continues to keep turning to the Lord.

Somebody who's turned away from sin and keeps turning away from sin. Someone who has turned from idols and keeps turning away from idols.

Somebody who has turned from unbelief and keeps turning from unbelief. Somebody who has turned from half-heartedness to fully following the Lord. It's binary you see, one or the other.

[45:57] You don't have a sort of percentage on it. Turning to God, turning to Jesus in the way we think, in what goes on in our hearts, in our lifestyle, in practical ways.

What are the practical ways? Well, your money, how you think about time, how you think about leisure, how you think about your relationships, sexual relationships, what you make a conscience of, what people you choose to hang out with.

All of those things, big subject, isn't it? Challenging. It challenges each of us. Are we turning towards the Lord? So let me ask you, are you a Christian?

Are you a converted Christian? Because that's the only sort of Christian that's real. Someone who has turned from to God. Have you realized that it is a binary choice?

It's one or the other, you can't have half and half. That's a tough choice to face, actually. In some ways, you say, well, I like a bit of Christianity and I like a bit of the other stuff, too.

[47:21] And he says, you can't do that. You can't do that. It's one or the other. Have you taken that step in a definite way?

If you haven't, well, either here and now or when you go home, I suggest you just say to the Lord, I really need to get this right. What am I committed to?

Where does my heart lie? Where is my allegiance? Which direction is my life going? It's binary. It's one or the other. And Christians, will you live as a converted Christian?

Do you want to do that? Do you want to hear Jesus knocking on the door? Do you want to open the door? Do you want to walk with him? Who wouldn't? And let's finally remember that picture of the father waiting.

And as his son comes back, he wraps his arms around him and says, so good to have you back. You're so welcome.

[48:28] What's a Christian? Christian is a convert. Let's pray. Lord, we want to turn to you.

We have so many pulls upon our lives. We ask that you would turn us so that we would be turned. We ask that you would redeem us so that we would be redeemed. we ask that you would draw us to yourself in your great kindness, that we might be continually turning to you and knowing what it is to be wrapped by the arms of the father, to be eating and drinking in communion with Jesus day by day.

Hear our prayer in your mercy. For Jesus' sake, amen. Let me. Let me. Let me. Let me. Let me. Thank you.