

A Synopsis of Todd Friel's sermon:

"The Invigorated Christian Life"

Synopsis by:
Mark Edward Sohmer
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mark@sohmer.net
<http://resources.sohmer.net>

The author of this synopsis highly recommends that you listen to Friel's sermon in its entirety. You can download this sermon at: http://www.wayofthemasterradio.com/listenwatch/ToddFriel_Sermon-Bethel_TX.mp3

Friel's sermon can be divided into three sections as follows:

I. How to tell if you're a true or false convert

- There are true and false converts in the church
- 10-point test based on the book of *1 John*.

II. The cross

- Three Biblical examples of men who became bold authentic witnesses for Christ
- Considering the cross
- Two lessons of the cross
- Why we're not worthy of the cross
- Our reaction to the cross

III. True versus false gospels

- examples of false gospels
 - just believe
 - ask Jesus into your heart
 - God-shaped hole in your heart
 - make Jesus Lord and Savior
 - accept Jesus
 - make a decision for Christ
- our reaction to the true gospel

I. How to tell if you're a true or false convert

- There are true and false converts in the church

Friel expressed his motivation for delivering this sermon as a twofold concern:

- Friel's first concern was in response to Jesus' statements that in a church, there would be wheat and tares growing up together. (See Matthew 13:24-30). This parable teaches that the authentically saved and the deceived unsaved will exist together within a church, and it will not be revealed which is which until the Day of Judgment. Friel concluded that it is probable and likely that there are false converts in the room there.
- Friel's second concern came from the fact that he used to be a false convert himself. He shared his testimony of how he studied to be a Pastor, but was not saved. He was unconverted. He was a hypocrite.

Friel exhorted the audience, between each person and God, to examine him or herself. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

- 10-point test based on the book of 1 John.

Friel then delivered a "Ten Point Test to Gauge Your Spiritual Life" based on the book of *1 John*.

1. 1 John 1:7 - "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

If we are a genuine Christian, we will enjoy the fellowship of other Christians. We might have Pagan friends, but we *love* the fellowship of the brethren!

2. 1 John 1:8 - "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

We must recognize to our core that we are filthy, wretched, and that we have an abominable heart.

3. 1 John 2:3 - "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

True Christians strive to obey God.

4. 1 John 2:15 - "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Do we love the world? Do the things of the world excite us the most?

5. 1 John 2:23 - "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*"

Do we know who Jesus Christ is? Do we have correct *Christology*? Do we have the right Jesus? Do we understand that Jesus is God Himself, in a Trinitarian sense? If not, then we do not have the Father.

6. 1 John 3:2 - "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Is this our hope, to see God? True Christians can't wait to see God! Not because we're tired and weary, but because we *LONG* to see the Savior who we love!

7. 1 John 3:8-9 - "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

This is a tough one. Do we continue to sin without fighting it? The Christian walk is not about perfection (1 John 1:8), but it is about direction. The believer will *grow* in holiness. If we are not growing in holiness, we might not be a true Christian. We ought to be holier than we were last year. We won't reach perfection until God brings us to glory, but we ought to be moving in that direction.

8. 1 John 3:14 - "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death."

Not only do true Christians love fellowship with other Christians, but we actually love Christians as well, and it shows!

9. 1 John 4:6 - "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

True Christians love to listen to good Bible preaching, teaching, and hearing the Word. We love it!

10. 1 John 4:15 - "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

What would you think of a Doctor who had the cure to cancer but was too busy to share it?
Cursed Doctor!

True Christians intentionally proclaim Christ. We don't wait for someone to come up to us to ask us. We intentionally proclaim Christ. How can we not share the Words of life?

II. The cross

▪ Three Biblical examples of men who became bold authentic witnesses for Christ

After the ten-point test to gauge our Christian health, Friel offered three Biblical examples to teach us how to become the type of Christian who is on fire for God, the type who loves the brethren, loves preaching, etc.

Friel offered the examples of:

- James
- Jude, and
- Joseph of Arimathea.

James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus. John 7 says that they didn't believe in Jesus. They lived with God, but didn't believe in Him. Hard hearts! But something happened and they went on to write two books of the Bible. Both start the same way "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1), and "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ" (Jude 1). Each of these men went from unbelieving brother to servant!

Joseph of Arimathea was a secretive believer (John 19:38). Something changed and Joseph went to Pontius Pilate and claimed the body of the Lord. That's bold!

▪ The cross revolutionizes people

What changed these men? The answer: *The cross*.

If we're squishy in our walk, then we don't get the cross - yet.

▪ Considering the cross

Friel suggested that we consider Isaiah 53 (written 700 years before Christ).

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all... Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him" (Isaiah 53:3-6, 10)

Consider that it pleased god to "bruise" Jesus "for our iniquities."

- Two lessons of the cross

Friel suggested that there are two lessons we ought to learn from the cross:

1. God hates sin. He created a place called hell for lawbreakers. Jesus talked twice as much about hell than heaven. Hell is described as a lake of sulfur, a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the worm never dies, and most people are going there. On the Day of Judgment, God will pour out his wrath on those who have refused to repent. We must understand the depth of our sin. This makes the second lesson of the cross amazing.
2. Despite what we are, and what we've done, God died to save us anyway.

- Why we're not worthy of the cross

Friel offered a "Ten Question Test" to see where we are with our walk with Christ, based on the Ten Commandments. (Actually, he only made it through to Commandment number seven, but we get the idea!)

1. Where is God in your life? Is Jesus Christ precious to you? How many days have you woken up not thanking him for your food, your life? This is the essence of the first commandment.
2. Do we say, "My God would never be so harsh?" If so, we've created a god to suit ourselves, and this shows we've broken the second commandment.
3. Have we taken God's name in vain? Do we call ourselves a Christian, but act like we're not? When we do that, God's name is demeaned as a result of our actions, and we are guilty of the third commandment.
4. Do we keep the Sabbath? (Editor's note: in my experience listening to Friel's radio show and hearing his views on a number of Theological topics, I do not believe that Friel is advocating that we must keep the Old Testament Sabbath. I believe his point is that we ought to give back to God "one day in seven" as an act of worship.)
5. Have we dishonored our parents? We are sinning against God when we do not do as we're told. And God will not forget the sins of our youth when we get older.

- Our reaction to the cross

God's Laws were not given so we could say, "Yeah, I can follow that list and earn God's favor."

That's every other religion.

The Law is supposed to make us say, "I can't do it! God help me."

Jesus took the Law and turned up the heat. The Law says not to murder (sixth commandment), but Jesus said that if you call your brother a fool, you've committed murder.

The Law says not to commit adultery (seventh commandment), but Jesus said that if you even lusted then you're guilty of adultery.

Jesus commanded: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

The Pharisees took the Law and added loads of man-made Laws so they could *think* they were keeping the Law. That's not the right response.

Friel briefly quoted three Bible verses (Luke 8:17, Psalm 94:9, and Romans 2:5-6) which bring out the following Biblical truths:

- Every secret sin is known to God.
"For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad" (Luke 8:17).
- We can hide nothing from God.
"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psalm 94:9).
- The unsaved are every day storing up wrath for the day of wrath.
"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:5-6).

Friel exhorted the audience to think about the first lesson of the cross. If we don't appreciate the second lesson, it's because we haven't understood the first. Think about it and allow it to overcome you.

Jesus Christ knew your thought life - He knew your Ten Commandment test - and He went to the cross anyway. Amazing love!

Isaiah 53:10 teaches that it *pleased God* to bruise Jesus. Why? Because God hates sin, but He loves us.

We ought to respond by saying, "Thank You God, for saving me, so the whole world will look in awe and say, 'What an amazing God!'"

God gets glorified when we get saved. We will all glorify God - either in heaven because we've repented and put our trust in Jesus Christ, or in hell as the smoke of your torment rises before the throne of the Lamb for all eternity.

God has demonstrated that He is a kind and patient God. He should crush us all now, but He gives us time to repent. Do not reject this amazing offer. Today is the day of salvation!

We must be born again - dead to self - done with ourselves. We must repent and put our trust in Jesus Christ.

III. True versus false gospels

- examples of false gospels

Friel warned the audience to beware of "false gospels" that are very commonplace. He spent time giving examples of "false gospels" that are widespread today.

- "just believe"

Have we been told to "just believe?" The demons believe and tremble (James 2:19).

Belief is not enough. You must repent also.

Friel suggested a scenario where a man commits adultery. Imagine the absurdity of him going to his wife and saying, "Honey, I believe in you." No, you must be truly sorry. You must have an authentically broken heart and contrite spirit.

- "ask Jesus into your heart"

Some preachers say that you must "ask Jesus into your heart." Yes, Jesus does promise to dwell in Christians' hearts, but the question is "*how* does He get in there?" Many people have asked Jesus six, seven, eight times to be in his or her heart, but Jesus doesn't seem to stay. That's because that person didn't repent and die to him or herself.

- "God-shaped hole in your heart"

We're told we have a "God-shaped hole" in our heart, but this isn't strong enough. In actuality we have a filthy diseased heart!

Repentance and faith is the gospel message. Anything else is a false gospel.

Editor's note: The "you have a God-shaped hole" tactic leads the preacher to focus on how Jesus will enhance the sinner's life. It makes the sinner's problem that of a lack of *happiness*, when his or her true problem is a lack of *righteousness*. For more on this, please listen to the vital sermon, *Hell's Best Kept Secret*¹, or refer to the book, *The Way of the Master*², both by Ray Comfort.

- "Make Jesus our Lord and Savior"

Jesus already is Lord and Savior! We're living in rebellion to Him. We must submit to Him.

- "Accept Jesus"

We're told that we must "accept Jesus." Couldn't be more wrong! Jesus needs to accept us! And He will if we repent and put our trust in Him.

- "Make a decision for Christ"

Some preachers ask, have you "made a decision for Jesus?" What is important is not if we've made a decision for Jesus, but if Jesus has decided to save us! He is going to get all the credit. And He will if we are completely done with us, and we repent and have faith in Him.

- our reaction to the true gospel

If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. You know if you're saved or not. Examine yourself. Think about your lack of thanks, your lack of love, dwell on it, let it crush you, let it bury you, and when you think you can't stand it anymore because of your filthy sinfulness, take a look at that cross and your God hanging there and it will break your heart. And you will cry out "I didn't know how much you hated sin. How much you love me. Would you please forgive me?" That's the heart God desires. A child-like faith.

¹ The sermon *Hell's Best Kept Secret* can be downloaded for free at: <http://www.sohmer.net/media/hbks.mp3>

² The book *The Way of the Master* can be ordered at: <http://tinyurl.com/aqctp>

When you respond to the true gospel message, that of repentance and faith, God will save you, you'll know it, you'll be on fire, and you'll never fall away. You'll never be snatched from His hand because He'll seal you with the Holy Spirit. You will inherit eternal life, not because you're a good person, but because you're a bad person who has been forgiven by a good God.

If you're not saved, today is the day of salvation.

Todd Friel is host of the fantastic radio show, *The Way of the Master Radio*. The website for the show is <http://www.wayofthemasterradio.com>.

Final Notes: The author of this synopsis highly recommends that you listen to Friel's sermon in its entirety. You can download this sermon at:

http://www.wayofthemasterradio.com/listenwatch/ToddFriel_Sermon-Bethel_TX.mp3.

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