

# "Jesus Doin' Those Things He Do"

There was a commercial on TV a while back where there were three mechanics sitting on the hood of a car eating lunch while the service manager had the frustrated owner on the phone telling him, *"I've got my best men on it right now."*

We can relate because we've all had the experience of something we've left for repair taking too long and wondering what they've been doing all the time it's been there.

Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Forty days after He rose from the dead, He ascended into Heaven.

While His disciples looked up, wondering, two men appeared, and said to them, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into Heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11).

**That was two-thousand years ago.** It begs the question, *What has the Lord been doing all this time?*

Let me back-up for a minute. We understand that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (Second Peter 3:8).

We know, too, that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (Second Peter 3:9).

We're therefore not challenged, or stumbled, that it has been two-thousand years since the Lord was physically on the earth.

So when I ask, "What has the Lord been doing?," it isn't to complain, or to be critical of Him. Not at all.

On the contrary, it is to *celebrate* Him, because Jesus has been doing some amazing things.

I want to talk to you about three particular things - three very personal things - Jesus has been doing, and is now doing, for me... And for you.

**First**, Jesus is all about *perfecting* you. Hebrews ten states, "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God... For by one offering He has **perfected** for ever them that are sanctified" (v10-12, 14).

The Greek word for "perfected" means *to complete, to accomplish, to finish, to fulfill or to make perfect.*

When I was first a Christian, there was a lot of bumper-sticker theology. Sitting in traffic, behind Christians, is where I first encountered the phrase, *Ready or Not - Jesus is Coming!*

Also popular was *Get Right - or Get Left;* and, *My Boss is a Jewish Carpenter.*

Two of the most common messages were, *Christians Aren't Perfect - Just Forgiven,* and *Be Patient With Me - God's Not Finished With Me Yet.*

Those sentiments should not be used as an excuse for our bad behavior. Nevertheless they are accurate in that every Christian is a work in progress.

The verse we quoted says, "He has **perfected** for ever them that are **sanctified.**"

Does that mean He is done - that the work is already finished?

Yes and no. It is finished in the sense that He will complete it. But all you need do is look at yourself, if you're a Christian, to see that you are far from perfect.

The perfecting we are talking about takes place in three stages:

- First, there is a once-for-all positional separation unto Jesus Christ at the moment of our salvation.
- Second, there is a practical, progressive holiness in a believer's life while awaiting the return of Jesus Christ. You are to be growing more-and-more like Jesus.
- Third, when we are resurrected or raptured, we will be changed into His perfect likeness.

The three-fold work of perfecting you is captured in this incredible promise:

Php 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

The work has "begun"; it will be ongoing until the "day of Christ Jesus" when He will "complete" it.

"The Day of Christ Jesus" is the day I see Him face-to-face at his coming for me, either to resurrect me or to rapture me.

We read in Romans 8:29,

Rom 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

This is often misunderstood to mean you are predestined (or not) to become a Christian. It isn't a verse about getting saved; it's about what happens *after* you are saved.

After you are saved, you are predestined “be conformed to the image of His Son,” Jesus Christ.

What is simply but wonderfully being taught is that God will continually perform His work of making you more like Jesus Christ until the day you are either resurrected or raptured and His work is finished.

This is what the apostle John understood when he wrote, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (First John 3:2).

Charles Stanley puts it like this, "Jesus Christ is actively working within you to shape your character and empower your obedience."

What does this practical sanctification look like? If you read the biographies of saints who have preceded us to Heaven, you'll note that they all grew more-and-more sensitive to sin.

For example, eighteen years after his conversion the great apostle Paul writes in First Corinthians 15:9, “for I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle ...”

Six years later he wrote in Ephesians 3:8, “ ... I am less than the least of all God’s people...”

Five years later he wrote in First Timothy 1:15, “... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.”

What was the matter with Paul? Had he become worse? Was he backslidden?

No. He only realized more and more that God was at work perfecting him.

Along those lines, Christopher Ash writes,

When we first repent and believe, we do not then leave repentance and believing. We need repeated [reminding] because by nature... we will ‘move on’ from the simple Gospel of daily repentance, daily taking up the cross, daily faith, to a supposed higher life... in which repentance and faith are too ordinary and simple to be practiced. Every Scripture calls us **today** in some manner to **repent** and **believe** afresh, for the Christian just as much as for the non-Christian.

Christian maturity isn't growing insensitive to sin; it is growing ever more sensitive to the subtleties of sin, so that we might cooperate with the perfecting of God.

Everyone here - myself included (obviously) - is called upon to repent and believe, every time we encounter the Lord in His Word.

If you are not a Christian... God is showing you your need for salvation. Jesus has delayed His coming these two-thousand years on your behalf, because He is not willing that you perish, but that you would receive the forgiveness of your sins and gain eternal life.

We've been tossing around the word "perfect." Are you perfect? Are you morally, internally, perfect? Of course not; and because you're not, you cannot go to Heaven.

If you repent, believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins, God can accept you in Jesus, and He will begin His good work of perfecting you.

If you are a Christian... Paul once said to us, "Follow me, as I follow Jesus" (First Corinthians 11:1). That includes repenting of sin you are becoming ever more sensitive about.

Let's be thinking about what the Lord is showing us about repentance, and about what we are going to say to Him, because as our service ends, we will have an opportunity to reflect on what the Spirit of God is saying to us through God's Word.

I said there were three things Jesus is doing right now for you, personally. **Second**, Jesus is all about *praying* for you.

Heb 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

This verse is packed with great stuff, and it pairs-up nicely with what we've just talked about regarding Jesus perfecting you.

Jesus is "**able** to save to the uttermost." "Able" means He has abundant power to "save."

Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. His resurrection, among other things, displays His power over sin and death and Hell. It shows His power to save.

By "save" it means the entire process of we just discussed - your initial salvation, when you are born-again, but also perfecting you until you see Him face-to-face and are finished.

I've often heard the phrase "to the uttermost" explained as if it is "from the guttermost," meaning no one is beyond the Lord's ability to save.

While that is certainly true, "to the uttermost" means you will definitely arrive at the final destination of being conformed into His image. Jesus IS the uttermost.

This promise is being made to all "those who come to God through Him." You "come" when the Gospel is preached and you respond to it.

No one can come to God on their own; but everyone can come. You come when the grace of God acts upon your heart, freeing your will to be able to say "Yes" to God.

If you are not a believer, God the Holy Spirit is here to show you the Savior, and your sin, and to thereby draw you to Jesus Christ.

So far, this is mostly a restatement of what we just learned about being perfected. What is new, and wondrous, is we read that Jesus "always lives to make intercession" for you.

**Jesus prays for you.** Stop and take that in for a moment.

Then read again where it says He "always **lives**" to pray for you. It doesn't just mean Jesus is alive; of course He is.

It's like when we describe someone who is so passionate about someone or something we say, "he *lives* for this."

Jesus *lives to pray for you.*

It's not uncommon for people to go on a pilgrimage to some supposedly 'holy' place, to wait in line to meet and be prayed for by some supposedly 'holy' person.

The Pope, for example, is a big deal when he travels; people can't wait to be blessed by him.

Pope Francis concluded his trip to Asia with an open-air Mass for a rain-drenched crowd in Manila that the Vatican and the government said drew up to seven million people, the largest crowd ever for a papal event.

All the while, the Son of God, the Second Person of the trinity, your Savior Who died for you, is incessantly praying for you.

Let me state that another way. Christians can sometimes wonder, on account of circumstances they find themselves in, if Jesus hears their prayers. Well, not only does He hear them; He has already been praying for you - **even before your circumstances occurred.**



The night before He was crucified Jesus had this to say to Peter:

Luk 22:31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

Luk 22:32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

A severe trial of Peter's faith was coming. The devil himself would be involved. Jesus prayed for Peter ahead of time. Peter would deny Jesus three times, but his faith would not fail, and he would return to the Lord. Not only that, but he would go on to "strengthen" other believers with his evangelistic ministry.

Ever wonder exactly what Jesus prays for you? Well, that same night before He was crucified, He prayed for you, and I think it gives us a good indication of how He still prays.

He prayed for our preservation

Joh 17:11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, **keep** through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

He prayed for our perfecting (our sanctification)

Joh 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

He prayed for our unity

Joh 17:21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

He prayed for our presence in Heaven with Him

Joh 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

If Jesus prayed for our preservation, perfecting, unity and our presence in Heaven, shouldn't those be the major themes of our lives? Of our prayers?

Let's talk about Jesus praying for our *preservation*. We saw an example of it in Jesus' prayers for Peter.

It's OK to ask to be delivered *from* a situation in the world, but you might want to focus on being preserved *through* it, and to be enabled while in it, or at least after it, to give a testimony to the Lord, of His grace that is always sufficient.

Let's talk about Jesus' praying for our *perfecting*. Don't let any experience be wasted; let it perfect you, as gold is refined in a crucible. Not all things are good; far from it. But with the Lord, all things can work together for the good.

Let's talk about Jesus praying for your *unity*. Be active in the church. Don't remove yourself from fellowship - remain one with the body of believers.

Remember the *Addams Family*? Remember Thing - the disembodied hand that performed a variety of functions?

*There's no such 'thing' when it comes to involvement with the church. You're to be connected.*

Let's talk about eternity. Sometimes, even with Jesus praying, the outcome, from our point of view, is negative. In the two-thousand years Jesus has been gone - in the two days - a lot of terrible things have happened.

No matter how severe things get, you can, and should, look forward to eternity.

There is a **third** thing Jesus has been doing for you and I. He's been *preparing* our place in Heaven.

Joh 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

Joh 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Jesus' followers had every reason to be troubled. After three-and-one-half years of miraculous ministry, He was announcing His departure. It would be a rather violent departure as He would be illegally tried, beaten, then crucified.

You will have good reasons to be troubled in your life. Many of you are troubled, on some level, right now.

Whatever the reasons, though, Jesus in His compassion commands you "Let not your heart be troubled."

The key to overcoming your troubled heart is to "believe." "Trust" would be a good way of defining "believe" in this verse. Despite all the many good reasons to be troubled, trust God. The tonic for heart trouble is to trust.

We are focusing on Jesus preparing you a place. He called it a mansion. Some translations minimize the place by calling it a "dwelling place."

I just read an article about a former shopping mall that has been converted to mini-apartments. Maybe you've seen that Facebook posting of the trend towards extremely small houses.

Or perhaps you've seen the stories about preppers who are planning to live in small shelters or in caves when "it" happens.

Those are dwelling places. **We're getting mansions.**

We're not told too much about our homes, because, after all, they are being custom built to suit everything that the Lord knows about us. My brochure would be totally different than yours.

We do know quite a lot about the construction of the city that our mansions will be in. It's the New Jerusalem, that comes down out of Heaven from God. Seeing how it is planned out and constructed gives us some idea of our mansions within its walls.

Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels...

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal...

Rev 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Rev 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Rev 21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Concentrate on just the building materials. They are the most precious gems and minerals. Extraordinary in their brilliance and size. I mean, who has ever heard of a pearl large enough to be the gate of a city?

What do you think about that? I've heard it said that gold will be so common that it's being used as asphalt.

That's one way of looking at it. But let me ask you this, What do we do with precious stones and gold today? Or, better yet, what do wives want their husbands to do with them?

They are set in the jewelry that we give to the one we love.

Your eternal home will be fully-furnished, rent free, all utilities paid. It will reflect the Lord's love for you in every minute detail. It will be extravagant, but mostly it will be insightful - just what you would have built if you had unlimited resources and knew yourself fully.

There's a line from a Benny Hester song that has stuck with me for the past thirty-eight years. It's about Jesus, and it goes,

*Though some know me well,  
still nobody knows me like You*

Perfecting... Praying... Preparing... That's what our resurrected Jesus has been doing since He arrived in Heaven.

It occupies His time around the clock, day-in, day-out.

And it's all for **you**, Personally... Individually... Intimately.

In the last book of the Bible, in the Revelation, Jesus says to every one of us,

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Today we'd call this a pop-in. Jesus loves the pop-in; He loves the unannounced visit to have a talk with you, and to stay long enough to be invited to dinner.

I told you we would leave time, at the end of our service, for you to spend time with the Lord. That time is now; He's knocking, wanting to pop-in.

Open your heart to Him.