

**Three Magic Words**  
**by Dr. Lee Roberson**

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Mark 10:43-45: *But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Isn't that beautiful? The Son of God, our Savior.

Now turn with me John 12:24. You must have this verse. You must make it real in your life. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

My friend, when did you die? Have you reckoned yourself to be dead? Are you still alive to self? When did you die? We'll come back to that verse in a moment, so hold it there if you will.

I want to speak tonight briefly on three magic words. I don't want you to miss them. Write them down. Memorize them. Think about them. Then God will move your heart.

Some years ago, I came out of Louisville, Kentucky, my hometown. Driving south, I came through Hodgesville, Kentucky. Hodgesville is the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. I drove into that little town, and I was met by what seemed like an avalanche of cars, and trucks, and buses, and people jammed and packed the streets. I said, "Man, what on the world is happening?" I stopped my car and got out. I said to a man, "Say, I'm going through this town, and what in the world is taking place?"

He said, "Don't you know?"

I said, "No."

He said, "On the court square (they have a big courthouse in the middle of town) there's a man who's going to drive a car blindfolded."

I said, "You mean drive a car blindfolded?"

He said, "Absolutely. He says he can do it."

Now, I know some people who can't drive a car when they can see. They can see, but they still can't drive.

I parked my car and walked up there. Man, what a crowd of people. Those country people in Hodgesville, Kentucky near the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln were all gathered in there. I stood there and watched. After a while, the mayor of the city came and introduced a man, a very normal, average looking man. He said, "This man is going to drive a car completely blindfolded. In this city, jammed with people, you will find that he will drive the car."

I said, "Man, that's something."

The fellow came out to the front, and stood there and talked a while. He said, "I'm going to drive a car here. There's a beautiful new black Chevrolet parked at the side of the grandstand". He said, "I'm going to get in that car completely, totally blindfolded and we'll drive the car around your city. I promise that I can do it. You may follow me if you want to, but I will be blindfolded when I drive the car." He said, "Now if you'll bring up the mask for my face, and so forth..." They tied the heavy cloth around his eyes, and down over his face. Then they brought down a big, heavy cap and tied it down over his head and tied it around here. Now he had his eyes blindfolded, and the cap on and all of it.

I know some folks who can't drive a car when they can see. Here this guy is going to drive blindfolded.

I said, "Man, what a man."

He walked out to the edge of the platform and said, "Before I drive the car, I have three magic words I want to say. And he opened his mouth and said three magic words. What they were, I do not know. I could not understand the words at all. But he said three words. He walked off the platform by himself, and down the steps like you have here, out to the car, opened the door, and got inside. He turned on the ignition, and started the car and began driving.

He drove all over Hodgesville, and brought the car back to the stand and stopped it right in front next to the great mass of people. He got out of the car and walked up there and back up on the stand. They removed the cap from off his head, the big heavy hood off his head, and took the blindfold off, and he stood there.

He said, "I had to say three magic words." What they were, I do not know, but I want to give you three words tonight that you do know.

Number one, write down the word "Life". Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life in John 14:6. Now my dear friend, that means that Jesus' Word says life. He's the Son of God. He's the eternal Son of God. That means he is the Way of life. Now this world is full of all kind of ways. There's just one way to heaven. There's one way to be saved – that's Christ. I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Again, He's the Giver of life.

*“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish...”* John 10:28

Here is life – life eternal in Him. Now we have to see that. It does not matter who you are: young or old, Jew or gentile. There’s one way of life. For you to reach Heaven, there’s one way, one way only and that is by faith in Christ. There is no way of life you may live. That doesn’t touch it. There is no way of life you may live. That doesn’t touch it. You’ve got to come and say, “I know that Christ is my Savior, and is all of my life.”

Christ is the source of life. Christ is the satisfaction of life. He satisfies the life. He is the solution of all of life’s problems. Watch it again. Salvation is free.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephesians 2:8,9

Salvation is full!

Salvation is forever!

*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand.* John 10:28

It is free. It is full. It is forever: salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I got saved at 14 years of age. I knew nothing of the Bible. I knew nothing of the teaching of the Word of God. A little Sunday school teacher named Mrs. Daisy Hawes stood in front of her class. I went in as an ignorant country boy. A friend took me. I heard that lady tell about Christ the Life. I said, “Hold it.” I put my faith in Jesus Christ and He saved my soul. I kept going to Church, and when I did, my mother and dad followed me down the other aisle and they got saved on that occasion. I am pointing out the fact of “Christ the Life.” He is the Life!

Here tonight, I care not who you may be. You may belong to this church, or any church in the world. Without Christ, you’re lost. There’s one way to be saved, and one way to have life, and that is your faith in the Son of God – a simple child-like faith in Jesus who died on the cross, and shed His blood for you, that you may have life everlasting. The life is in Him.

A mother came to Chattanooga. She had a loved one that died and I went to see her. We were sitting there talking and she came to the funeral of the loved one in Chattanooga. She began to tell me, “Brother Roberson, have I ever told you about my boy?”

I said, “No, you haven’t.”

“I have a son, a very sick young man. As a boy, in his teens, he was sick. He was a good one who played, and went to school with the others and we cared for him very carefully

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at home. I'm a Christian, and my family's all saved, but the boy's not. We were troubled about him, and we'd witness to him and I'd read the Bible to him every day, but he'd say, 'No, mamma.' He got in his twenties, and still lost. I couldn't do a thing with him. We kept trying and trying, and my heart was broken with him. We were sitting one night in the living room. We have a big family. The family's gone except the two of us, my son and me. We were sitting there. The radio was turned on, and on came the voice of B.R. Lakin preaching from Indianapolis. Remember those old days? He gave the message of the gospel. My boy sat there and listened. When he got through, I went over and turned off the radio, and said, 'Son, he was talking to you.' He said, 'Yes, mother, but I'm not ready.' Then he stood up, and started to leave the room and go to his bedroom. He had been a sick boy for years. We had sent him out west to a western climate for a long time, and then brought him back home. He was still sick, and puny, and light. When he got to the door to go out, he turned and said, 'Mamma, I'll think about it.' Then he walked out and went to bed."

Then she said, "I just think of that night. I didn't sleep at all. I prayed for my boy all night. I get up at 5 in the morning. I had a big family and had to cook breakfast for the whole family. They had to go to work early. I was in the kitchen cooking breakfast when down the hall, I heard steps coming. My boy came down, my sick boy. He walked down the hall and stood there facing the stove. He reached up and put his arm around me and said, 'Momma, you've got a new boy this morning. I got saved last night. I accepted Christ as my Savior.'"

That little mother sat there and wept and told that story about her boy, and she kept on talking.

Then she said, "Brother Roberson, there came the day when the doctor came to see my boy. We had built a little room for him outside the house where he had plenty of fresh air, and TV. We had built the room, and the doctor came to see him. I was back in the kitchen working and praying and waiting to see what would happen. After a while, the doctor came back and said, 'There's nothing I can do. He'll be gone in just a very short time.' Oh, my heart was broken."

The doctor said, "Mother, if you want to, you can go in and speak to him now and I'll wait for you."

She said, "I walked in the sick room, and my boy was facing the wall. When I came in, I spoke his name, and he turned and faced me and said, 'Mamma, don't cry. It's all right. I'll meet you just inside the eastern gate.' He had said that, he turned and faced the wall and he died in just a few hours."

Now wait a minute, friends. I'm pointing out to you the greatness of salvation – knowing Christ as your Savior. Life! Life!

Are you saved tonight? Rejoice in it. Praise God. Tell people about it – life.

Let's come to the second word. Put down "death". First the word "life", and the second word is "death".

Now I want you to hold a minute. Here's something important. John 12 and verse 24 I read:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

What's it talking about? He's talking about dying to self. Paul said in I Corinthians 15:31:

"...I die daily."

The new book that comes out of England called When Did You Die? Think of it, Christian. If you're saved tonight, you need to be reckoning self to be dead. You need to die – die to the things of this world; die to the temptations; die to the world, the flesh and the devil and reckon self to be dead.

In Romans 6:11:

**"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin..."**

That's all the way through your Bible: this matter of dying, and dying to self. When did you die? Are you still alive to the world? Do you still respond to the world and the things of the world, or have you reckoned self to be dead?

Someone asked the famous George Mueller, that great man of prayer who fed thousands of children through his prayer life, "What is the secret of your success?"

He said, "I'd rather not say."

He was a very timid man, a godly man.

They said, "Sir, we'd like to know what is the secret of your success. What have you done to get answers to prayer, and feeding children, and helping thousands of people? What is your secret?"

After a long time, he put his hands up in the air, a big, tall, willowy man, way over 6 feet tall. He bent over and touched the floor and said, "There was a day when I died."

He died to self. He died to compliments. He died to criticism. He died to riches. He died to poverty. He died to all of it. And that's for you and me and we're to come to the same place and say, "I die daily. I'm dead to criticism. I'm dead to compliments. I'm dead to all of it. I just want to serve God, and love God and keep on reckoning self to be dead."

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The Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ." What a lesson to all of us. This service tonight can re-make your life and give you new joy and new peace in the midst of your troubles. If you're dead, the world can't hurt you. God has his hand upon you and your life.

Now Paul was dead to self and he kept on going. Now some people stop and give up. He kept on going, and he kept on believing, and he would not doubt. Doubts were everywhere, but he would not doubt. Paul would not doubt, again, and with an untarnished influence and life counting for God every moment.

*"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Phil. 1:21

Again, Paul lived a lasting testimony. He would not change. Some people always change, always shifting around. No! Put your faith in Christ and stand true till the end of the way. You need to say goodbye, and lift up your hands till the entrance into heaven you're rejoicing and praising God. Say, "Now Lord, I'm not quitting, and not giving up." You need to make up your mind to do it.

Sunday school teachers, you can't quit. Deacons, you can't quit. Ushers, you can't quit. You have to say, I'm going on. I've had it all with the quitters. I spent 40 years and 6 months in Highland Park, in one church. I've been preaching since 1928. Figure that out. 1928. This is 1996. I've seen a lot of things. I've seen a lot of quitters. I've seen them. We had them at Highland Park.

We had a little lady, a wonderful Bible teacher. Oh, she knew the Word. She memorized the Word. She was a teacher – one of the best, but she was always quitting. If a little trouble would come into the class, she would quit. She resigned almost every week. She resigned all the time. Finally one day, she wanted to see me.

She said, "Well, I tried to resign my class, and they won't let me."

I said, "I'll take it."

I took her resignation. She got mad. She left the church to go to another one. Wait a minute. Some people are like that. You have to say, "Oh, God, I want to be right."

You have to reckon self to be dead. I baptized one on a Sunday morning. I had the exquisite joy of baptizing 61,000 people in my 40 years at Highland Park. I loved it. I finished and came out the back door to go home. We lived right on Bailey Avenue. I came out that door and met a lady, as mad as she could be – a nice lady, a gray-haired lady.

She said, "Preacher, I'm mad."

I said, "What in the world could be wrong?"

She said, "You ought to know."

I said, "Well, I don't."

She said, "Someone got my seat."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "I've been sitting in the balcony. (You remember the old church, in the balcony.) In one place, I've been there for years. Every Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night, I sit there. I came in this morning, and there sat a man. I said, Sir, You'll have to move. That's my seat. He said, Lady, I'm not moving. I like it here."

Then she said, "He would not move. I had to move to another part of the building. I couldn't see. I couldn't hear. I didn't enjoy a thing. Preacher, you get my seat, or I'm quitting the church. I'm giving it up."

She was mad, and she paused a moment.

I said, "Ma'am, have you ever heard of the great secret of dying to self?"

She said, "No."

I said, "You're going to hear it." I took my Bible and showed her what I meant to reckon self to be dead.

"I die daily."

I gave it all to her. When I finished, she walked away and never said a word. I came back Sunday night. I got at the pulpit and looked up to that place where she had been sitting for years. It was empty. I looked around, and there she was, down front, and smiling big. That never happened again. She learned her lesson.

That's for all you teachers in Sunday school and ushers and deacons in the church, and members and choir members and all of you. You reckon self to be dead and say, "Lord, I want Christ to be seen in my life. I give all."

There's life and death. I give you a third word and I'm through. Put down the word "service".

Life and death and service: three magic words.

"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: (the servant) And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mark 10:43-45.

You've got to be a servant. You don't ask for the big place, you just serve God. Don't be high and mighty, but say, "Lord, I want to serve you with all my heart." God will bless you.

Serve God how? Serve God lovingly. Serve God lovingly. Love Christ and love people, and serve God lovingly.

Again, serve God willingly. Paul said:

*For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. I Cor. 9:17*

Serve God willingly. Don't let people beg you into something but say, Here I am. I am ready to go.

Again, serve God unselfishly. Don't seek something for yourself. Serve God faithfully.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant..."* Matt. 25:23

These are the things of a servant: lovingly, willingly, unselfishly, faithfully, and with determination say this one thing I do. I am serving God. I am living for Him every moment of time. I want my life to count for him.

Now, God has a will for your life. Are you in the will of God? Think. Are you in the will of God?

Pastor, you have been pastor here for seven years, right? For you work to be successful, and joyous, and fruitful, you have to be in the will of God. When you are in the will of God, you can say, "Praise God. I'm just where God wants me to be."

Jimmy, you're an evangelist. You could be a pastor. You could do other work if you wanted to do it. But if God called you, you have nothing else to do. Say, "I want to be in the will of God for all of my life, and that's what counts."

Most people are not in the will of God. That's why you have trouble. That's why you have difficulties in America. That's why you have trouble in Washington. You see, this goes for all of us. Mr. Clinton has to be in the will of God or he's going to have trouble, and we'll have trouble, too. See what I'm getting at? You have to say, "God, I want to be in your will. I want your will to be done in my life." You have to say, "This is it, and I give myself wholly and completely to Him."

I pulled into Charleston, West Virginia one afternoon for a meeting. There was a revival in that city. A man met me at the airport up on top of the mountain. I got my suitcases and came down to the parking lot. I had never met this man before – a fine, well-dressed man. He had a big, beautiful, expensive car. He put my suitcase in the back seat. He

said, "You sit up in the front with me", and he began driving. We left that mountain and came down.

He turned to me and said, "Brother Roberson, I asked for the privilege of coming to see you. I need help. I have a job in Washington, D.C. I am highly paid. My salary runs into many thousands and thousands of dollars. I've got everything I want, but I'm not happy. I'm not in the will of God. Somebody told me that you could help me."

I said, "Sir, I can tell you what the Bible says, and that's all I can do. But you'll have to make up the rest for yourself."

You've got to be in the will of God.

He said, "I'm unhappy, and I'm miserable in my work. I don't like any of it. I'm hurting my family. We're all unhappy because of my attitude. I want the will of God. How can I know His will?"

"Get on your knees," I said, "and say, 'Lord, reveal your will to me, and He will. You have to be willing to do it.'"

Be willing to do what God says. We have to live daily in the will of God. Millions of people are not in His will. That's the reason for the crowded penitentiaries, and jails. That's the reason we have to have laws like that. People are not in the will of God. The will of God will mean correction in life, and will mean purity of life, and cleanliness, and joy, and peace, and happiness when you're in the will of God.

You are to say, "Oh, God, I want to be in your will above everything."

And the young people should teach, and the young people should pray, "Oh, God, show me Your will for my life."

And He will show that will. You can know the will of God. Every one of us can know what God's will is for us, and we'll know what to do, and how we've failed. We don't do our best with the young people, to pray if they show not the will of God. And we approve of the sinful world in which we're living quite often. We're doing it now: immorality, and drunkenness, and immodesty and everything else.

We're giving youth a selfish goal for money and position and power and fame. We're not getting it over. We've got to come and say, "Lord, we want Christ to be the center of our lives. We want to be in Your will. We want to work with Him, and serve Him and love Him.

I want you to hold the message for tonight. I'm concerned about everyone. Three magic words: life, and death, and service: how simple. Your life is important. You are somebody. I'm somebody. I'm a child of God in Christ.

My dear friend, believe it or not, I'm eternal. Believe it or not, you're eternal. Pastor, I've got everlasting life given to me by the Savior. It's mine forever because of His infallible Word He has promised. I've got something. I want to be in the will of God. I've got just one life.

I pastored at Highland Park for 40 years and six months. I enjoyed it. I had a thrill that God said one day, "I want you to retire. I've got something else for you." I didn't know what it was. I retired. I was offered everything. They offered me everything. I said, "No. This is it." And I did retire.

As soon as I did so, God began opening doors. I never asked for a thing. I've now been in more than 1600 different churches in the last thirteen years. This year, it'll be 110 churches counting yours. But I didn't ask for that. I didn't ask for anything at all, but I want to be in the will of God and say, "Dear Lord, I want Your will to be done in my life."

Now for you tonight say, "Oh, God, let me know Your will." Life, and death and service will be correct when you're in the will of God.

With this I close.

A famous artist was commissioned by the king to paint a picture of the Last Supper. He painted the picture and made it beautiful. He painted Christ at the table, and the disciples around the table. The cup on the table – it was a beautiful scene, the Last Supper. The picture was finished and put on display. The crowds gathered. They came to see it. The artist was well known. The artist took a hiding place behind the curtain. The people came in and stood before the picture. He heard them begin talking.

One by one, they kept remarking, "Look at that cup on the table."

He had painted the beautiful table with a cup right before the Master, and the disciples and Jesus at the table.

One man said, "Look at that cup."

Another said, "It's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen."

Another man said, "That's not just paint on canvas. That man used some material to make that cup shine and glisten like that." He came up and tried to touch it.

One by one, they all spoke up. Finally, the artist came out of his hiding place with a brush in his hand. He pushed people aside, and walked up to the picture and painted out that beautiful, jewel cup. In its place, he left an ordinary, every day, common clay cup. They pulled him by the shoulder and said, "Sir, you ruined your picture. That cup's the most absolute beautiful thing on the picture and you ruined it all by painting it out."

He looked at them with disappointment in his eyes and said, “My friends, that cup was made beautiful because it was for the Master’s use, but when the eyes see only the cup, and fail to see the Master beyond, the cup has to go. In my picture, Jesus has to be first.”

In our lives, Christ must be first. He must be first before everything in this world.

“Lord Jesus, what wilt Thou have me to do than obey Him?”

There’s the message for tonight.