

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

I'm glad that we're going to be moving to Cedarville. I know one thing that I'm really concerned about is I wonder how they're going to get a room big enough to take care of all the students in my wife's classes. I don't know whether you've seen her yet or not. I think some of the senior boys are talking about taking freshman English over again. I don't know what they're going to do about it. I do hope you get a privilege to meet her. I met her in a most unusual way.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:00:27] I didn't attend one of your schools. I attended Tennessee Temple Schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I would say that as a senior in high school in Cincinnati under the Ministry of Mitchell S. Seidler, the Norwood Baptist Church, and the Lord led me to go to Tennessee Temple and I got on a train. When I got off at the station in Chattanooga, I only knew two people on that campus. One was Don Sewel, and the other was the girl he was going with, who now is his wife. They picked me up at the train, and they took me over to the school. I'd been standing there about five minutes on the campus, and the great big fella ran over to me and he said, "My name's Vernon Blackburn. I believe you know yours."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:01:11] I never had an introduction quite like that. He said, "I'd like you to be my deaf and dumb brother." I said, "You what?" Said, "I want you to be my deaf and dumb brother." I said, "You got to be kidding." Now, listen, these folks who can't speak, who can't hear are not dumb. They're very intelligent. But that's what he said.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:01:32] He said, "Listen, Paul, we'll have the time of our lives. We'll just tell everyone that you come to school and you can't speak. You can't hear." Well I said, "Now, Vernon, I'm a dignified college student. I don't believe I can do that." He said, "Let's try." And I said, "All right!"

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:01:42] So he called a group of kids around. He said, "This is my deaf and dumb brother from Pensacola, Florida." I'm like this. Boy they got so excited about that thing, they started calling other the kids around. They ran over, and some of them would talk real loud. And he'd say, "Can't hear a thing you're saying." Others would enunciate very distinctly. He said, "He's not even a very good lip-reader." I guess they figured, "How in the world's that old boy going to make it?" I mean, that campus went into an uproar.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:02:12] I went to the basketball game that night and watched the basketball game. You ever try to watch a game, can't shout, can't cheer, just got to sit there? At the game, was all riled up, across that basketball court came one of the most excited, pretty teenage girls I'd ever seen in my life. She was a junior in high school. She came across that floor and she came running up to me and she looked at me with those flashing southern-bell eyes. I don't know what she was coming over to me for.

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:02:39] She stood there. All of a sudden she started going... She worked with the deaf people there in the Highland Park Baptist Church. She translated messages for Dr. Lee Robertson. She'd heard about this fellow come to school. Took her about five seconds to blow that thing to pieces. She found out. She found out that I wasn't deaf. We got married three and a half years later, and she still says I'm the dumbest fellow she ever met. She's a great gal.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:03:24] We are looking forward to moving to Cedarville and Pat teaching there. I'm thrilled with the young people in the churches. I get excited about all you going to these churches and you find that the young people are supporting the meetings. Many times you find the young people right down in front. We find them coming with their Bibles. We find them bringing all the young people into the services. Many times at night, we see the young people walking down the aisles, bringing their buddies to Jesus Christ. And I'm excited about the young people of our day.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:03:52] I'm excited about the young people at our schools. I was very much impressed last year with the spirit of the campus at Grand Rapids College. I've been there at Cedarville twice. We were there in January. Just a tremendous spirit. The Lord moving on campus and moving in the hearts and we hear the reports of it all year long, what God's doing on these schools. And then to hear these groups from these colleges, and to hear about the other schools. It's thrilling and it's wonderful what the Lord's doing.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:04:20] And you pray for your colleges and for your bible schools, and pray for your young people. Let's pray that the Lord will thrust them out into his harvest. And even this week, many of them, God laid upon their hearts to preach the Gospel. The Lord will lead many of them to go on to some of these Christian schools. I imagine they can take some more students. I'd love to see every school just packed and jammed with the young people. I didn't get to hear the message yesterday, but I heard about it by brother Wendell [Kimpton 00:04:43] about this business of the young people being in the schools, and they said it was thrilling. And we thank the Lord for what he's doing with young people in these days.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:04:51] We've been singing a song as young people. And I'd just like for the teenagers to sing it with me. No musical instruments. "Christ is All I Need." We sing it, you listen, and then we'll all sing it together. All right, gang. Lift it up. Sing it out.

Audience:

[00:05:05] Christ is all I need.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:10] Sing.

Audience:

[00:05:11] Christ is all I need. All I need. Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need. All I need.

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:42] Everyone sing that with us.

Audience:

[00:05:44] Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] You believe that?

Audience:

[00:05:52] All I need.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] Let's live life.

Audience:

[00:05:52] Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need. All I need.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] He was crucified.

Audience:

[00:05:52] He was crucified.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] For me he died.

Audience:

[00:05:52] For me he died.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] On Calvary.

Audience:

[00:05:52] On Calvary.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] That's why I know.

Audience:

[00:05:52] That's why I know.

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:05:52] He loves me so.

Audience:

[00:06:52] He loves me so.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:06:58] He's all I need.

Audience:

[00:06:58] He's all I need.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:07:04] Now let's really lift it up and think about it.

Audience:

[00:07:06] Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need. All I need. Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need. All I need.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:07:23] Father, thank you for such a savior. Lord, help the truth of the song to be ours. Not by might, nor the power, but by thy Spirit, make this an hour that we'll never forget. May souls be saved in this hour, we pray. Lives changed. For Jesus' sake and Jesus' glory, amen.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:08:17] Take your bibles, please, and turn to Matthew chapter 16. The theme of this conference is behind me. "The New Testament Church in the 20th Century." And in Matthew chapter 16, I've heard this chapter referred to several times in this conference, where Jesus said upon this rock he would build his church, and the gates of Hell would prevail against it. But I want to back up a little bit this morning to what started this whole conversation. When we read in verse 13 of chapter 16, when Jesus came to the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?"

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:09:01] I call your attention to that question. "Who do men say that I, the son of man, am?" What are people saying about Jesus? Who do people think that Jesus is today? Well in the last seven and a half, eight months, a new opera has come out that says what a lot of people are saying about Jesus Christ. It's called "Jesus Christ Superstar." For those of you who like to just take some brief notes... and I do, and I encourage you young people to do this in the services at home with your pastor and so forth. I want just to notice these three things we're going to build on this morning: Jesus Christ Superstar, The Age of Aquarius, and Jesus Christ Bright and Morning Star.

Paul H. Dixon:

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

[00:10:03] This "Jesus Christ" Superstar is not just one song. Perhaps some of you heard it on the radio. They play especially two songs from the album. In reality, it's an 83-minute rock opera consisting of 24 songs. It was written by two English composers, Andrew Lloyd and Tim Rice. One of them is 25 years of age. The other's 21 years of age. It's supposed to tell the passion story of Christ. There's a script that goes along with the album. It's two records, four sides, and you really have to have the script to understand all the words. Many people say as adults, we can't understand the words, but the young people can. Don't you believe it. I've talked with them. They can't understand most of them either. You got to have the script to really know what's going on. It's an opera. It's done to be put on the stage, and it's being put on the stage across the country.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:11:14] And you have to know who's talking. Judas may be singing one part, Jesus may be singing another, Peter another, Caiaphas another, Mary Magdalene another. And you have to have the script to know who's talking. I have the script with me, and we'll be reading from it in just a little bit. There are 11 characters in this rock opera, backed by an 85-piece orchestra, several choirs, and it took over 400 hours for them to record it, which is quite a long time. It's already a gold record. In fact, two-fold. It has sold two million dollars worth of records in the United States alone in the last eight months.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:11:54] It's being widely received. It's being acclaimed by many religious organizations and churches. One young man came to me last night. He said, "Paul, I want to hear the message tomorrow morning." He said, "At school, we have to hear it all the time. My English teacher plays it. My speech teacher plays it. We just have to listen to it in school." They're playing it in the schools. They're playing it in the churches. The Jesuit father, Joseph Pellegrino, who's the program director for Vatican Radio, plays it over the air in Italy. He was asked why he played it, and he said this: "Because in this modern piece..." speaking of "Jesus Christ Superstar"... "the suffering of Christ is seen with more human insight, and the figure of the Redeemer is brought even closer to mankind than through the holy scriptures."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:12:41] One critic said of "Superstar": "It puts new faces on characters who have become all too tired and familiar. It revitalizes the Gospels in a way that no updated Gideon could. In 'Superstar,' the apostles no longer are bearded reflections on a kitchen wall, but they know the value of laughter and companionship." I've heard of different denominations, churches get together, even in the Sunday night service, or maybe in a youth service, and they play this. And they go away saying what great spiritual value they've received from it.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:13:17] A St. Louis Post Dispatch reviewer said, "Philosophically, 'Superstar' has something for just about everyone." The Christian Century magazine maintains "Superstar's" not only a landmark in the field of contemporary music but worthy of thoughtful response.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:13:34] I heard a tape that came from the radio station of Wheaton College. And I'll be frank with you, folks, I'm sorry to have to say this. I don't accept the criticisms of all these schools that I'm hearing today. I'm a little bit weary... a lot of folks, they hear one little thing about a school and they turn it off

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

and they put them in the evangelical camp and say, "We don't have anything to do with it anymore." I don't receive something just because a bunch of other preachers or other people have said it's no good. I want to know first-hand. And I'm sorry to tell you this, I heard this first-hand. Four professors from Wheaton College evaluated "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:14:23] And I must say this, I only heard one portion of it, but I heard enough to make me sick. One fellow said when he heard it... this is a professor now... when he heard it, it just made him weep. Just touched his heart so. Another guy said, "This is what's needed. Too long have we not emphasized the humanity of Christ in our churches." And he said, "I'm glad that something has come out to emphasize the humanity of Christ."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:14:51] Some people are hailing "Jesus Christ Superstar" as the greatest thing that's been written since Handel's Messiah.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:14:59] Now I really think this is typical of the day we're living in. They hail this day as "The Age of Aquarius." That's the hit song for the new musical "Hair." The song goes something like this, "This is the dawning of a new age." If you've studied the astrology at all of it, you know that the Age of Aquarius... new ages come only periodically, and this new Age of Aquarius supposedly has brought in a new emphasis upon the humanity of man. All the emphasis upon man, man, man. I think it's very typical that "Jesus Christ Superstar" should occur in supposedly such an age as this, the Age of Aquarius.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:15:47] Let's see what "Superstar" says. I've talked to many teenagers who mean well and who've listened to it and who say that this is the way to reach other teenagers. And they're Bible-believing churches, and they feel this way about it. Do you know who the composers are? Do you know what they think about "Jesus Christ Superstar"? Lloyd Weber said, "We're not trying to pull people's beliefs away, but I personally don't think that Jesus is God. We tried to put over what we think might have happened, and I think that Christ as a liberal reformer was a huge success." That's what the composer said about, that's what the author said about it. He doesn't believe that Jesus is God.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:16:28] Here's the script. Let's just go through it, pick out some excerpts, and see what it says. First of all, there's one place where the crowd looks to Jesus and says, "Christ, you know I love you. Did you see I waved? Now I believe in you and God, so tell me that I'm saved. Christ, you know I love you. Did you see I waved? I believe in you and God, so tell me that I'm saved. Jesus, I'm with you. Touch me, touch me Jesus. Jesus, I'm on your side. Kiss me, kiss me Jesus."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:16:59] Now personally I think that's a mockery of salvation. As you go through this thing, they know far more about us and fundamental Christianity than you think that they know. They know a lot. And I personally think when they talk about, "Did you see I waved?" they're knocking at this thing of salvation

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

and evangelistic services and all the rest. Mary Magdalene says... coincidentally is presented as a harlot, and it's quite suggestive. She says, "I don't know how to love him," talking about Jesus. "What to do, how to move him, I've changed, yes really changed in these past days when I've seen myself, I seem like someone else. I don't know how to take this. I don't see why he moves me. He's a man, he's just a man, and I've had so many men before. I never thought I'd come to this. What's it all about? Yet if he said he loved me, I'd be lost, I'd be frightened, I couldn't cope, just couldn't cope. I'd turn my head, I'd back away, I wouldn't want to know. He scares me, so I want him, so I love so."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:17:57] The apostles, at the Last Supper, start singing this: "Look at all my trials and tribulations, sinking in a gentle pool of wine. Don't disturb me now, I can see the answers till 'this evening' is 'this morning', life is fine. Always hoped I'd be an apostle. Knew I'd make it if I tried. Then when we retire we can write the gospels, so they'll still talk about us when we die." Do you know what that said? That said that the gospels were written by the apostles after they got plastered. In other words, the gospels were just written by a bunch of drunks!

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:18:41] In Gethsemane, we get a picture of Jesus. He's praying. Talking with the father. "Feel it burn me, I have changed. I'm not as sure as when we started. Then I was inspired. Now I'm sad and tired." You get that? He's uncertain about it all. He was inspired then, but he's not sure that he's inspired now. "I wanna see, I wanna see my God, why I should die?" He doesn't know why he's going to die here. "Would I be more noticed than I ever was before?" Look at the vanity. "Would the things I've said and done matter any more? I'd have to know, I'd have to know my Lord. I'd have to see, I'd have to see my Lord. If I die, what will be my reward? I'd have to know, I'd have to know my Lord. Why should I die? Can you show me now that I would not be killed in vain? Show me just a little of your omnipresent brain. Show me there's a reason for your wanting me to die. You're far too keen on 'where' and 'how' and not so hot on 'why'.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:19:34] "Why then am I scared to finish what I started? What you started. I didn't start it." That's a lie. He did start it. "God, thy will is hard, but you hold every card. I will drink your cup of poison. Nail me to your cross and break me, bleed me, beat me, kill me. Take me now before I change my mind!" The mob cries on one occasion, "Hosanna, hey sanna, sanna sanna ho, sanna hey, sanna ho," and how, "Hey JC, JC, please explain it to me?" Refer to Jesus as "JC."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:20:15] Judas comes out the hero. That's right. He's the hero of the whole thing. They say they thought that Judas got a raw deal in the Bible and that we've downed him too much. And he says on one occasion, "My mind is darkness now. My God, I'm sick. I've been used, and you knew all the time"... he's talking to God... "God, I'll never ever know why you chose me for your crime, for your foul bloody crime. You've murdered me, you've murdered me." It's a slap at the sovereignty of God. And I'm thankful for a sovereign God. But I'm also thankful the responsibility of man. God held Judas responsible, and here is Judas putting it in God's lap.

Paul H. Dixon:

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

[00:21:02] Jesus again says on one occasion, "There may be a kingdom for me somewhere, if I only knew." Judas says again, "Every time I look at you, I don't understand why you let the things you did get so out of hand. You'd manage better if you'd planned. Why'd you choose such a backward time in such a strange land? If you'd come today, you would have reached the whole nation. Israel in 4 B.C. had no mass communication. Don't you get me wrong. I only want to know." Then the finale goes like this: "Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, who are you? What have you sacrificed? Jesus Christ, Superstar, do you think you're what they say you are?"

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:21:39] And the whole essence of this "Jesus Christ Superstar" is it comes out with a humanistic Christ. "Jesus Christ Superstar" puts Jesus Christ on the same level of a John Wayne, a Johnny Bench, a Mickey Mantle, a Babe Ruth. Now you remember in Matthew 16? Jesus said, "Who do men say that I, the son of man, am?" Here, Jesus conceded his humanity. He said, "I am the son of man." But he wanted to know if men were giving him credit for being the son of God. And they said, "Some say thou art John the Baptist." Just another man. "Some say Elias." Just another man. "Others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." They're willing to put you on the same level with the prophets. And here are these men saying, "We're willing to put Jesus on the same level as a social reformer or a superstar."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:22:51] He said unto them, "Whom say ye?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Young people, who do you say that Jesus is today? We know what they say. We know what the world says. But what do you say? Mom and Dads today, what do you say? Who is Jesus Christ?

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:23:26] Let's see what he said. Revelation, the very last chapter. (Silence) Verse 13. Jesus is talking and he says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angels to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He said "I am Alpha and Omega," and Vance Havner said "everything in between."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:24:46] He's the lily of the valley and the rose of Sharon. Jesus Christ is the bright and the morning star. He's not only the son of man, thank God, he's the son of God. And there's no doubt it. He said, "He that cometh from above is above all," and Jesus Christ is above all this morning. Jesus Christ is no ordinary man. He's no superstar. He is the bright and morning star.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:25:14] Man alive, I'll tell you that I think about a bright and morning star, I'm not an astronomer, I'm not a scientist, but from what I know about it, it's the star that shines the brightest. And Jesus is the one that shines the brightest. And the bright and morning star is that star that ushers in every new day. It's

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

the star that's last to go out. It's there and it's bringing in that new day, every day, and I thank God that our bright and morning star is the one who one of these days is going to usher in that bright and glorious new day. This isn't the Age of Aquarius. It's going to far surpass any age that's ever been. We ought not to be looking for the undertaker, someone said, we ought to be looking for the upper-taker. The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we with all that remain shall be called together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:26:09] And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Oh, I thank God for him. He's everything he claimed to be. Listen, brethren, adults, young people, let's make much of Jesus. This is the greatest need in our churches. This is the greatest need in our lives. Let's make much of Jesus Christ. They said he didn't know why he came. I want you know he did know why he came, and he said so. He makes this claim. He says, "I came to give pardon." He said in Luke 19:10: "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." John 12:47, he said, "I came to save the world." 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul said, "He came to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Matthew 1:21, the angels said of him, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:27:07] Listen, young people, today you're here. You came in as a visitor. You came in on some of the buses or you're a member of one of the churches. I want to ask you a question, have you ever been saved? Do you know what it is to have your sins forgiven? The Bible says, "All have sinned and come short to the glory of God." But it also says that "God committed His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ God for us." You don't have to go to hell. Jesus came. You don't have to pay for your sin. Jesus paid it all.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:27:37] Adults, you're here. Maybe some of you are with some members of the churches, or maybe they're even visitors have come today. Well I'd like to ask you, you ever been saved? We got a lot of folks in our church rolls never been born again. D.B. Vick in Detroit, Michigan, said he'd doubt 50% of his people have been saved. D.L. Moody, when he'd preach... and that was many years ago, 100 years ago... he said, "I doubt if 95% of the professing Christians have been saved."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:28:03] You're here today, you're a preacher. Have you ever been saved? You're a deacon. Have you ever been saved? You're a Sunday School teacher. Adults, young people, I challenge you to examine yourself to see if you'd be in the faith today. Jesus came to give pardon. He knew why it came. Every step that he had on this earth was bent to one purpose, and that was dying for sinners. And the reason he went to the cause was to save sinners and to pay for our sin and to shed his blood and to take the hell out of our future.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:28:31] And anyone in simple childlike faith will turn to him and receive him as their savior will be saved today. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Jesus paid it off. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow. Jesus came to give pardon. Jesus came

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

to give peace. The whole world's talking about peace. Talk about it at the peace conference there in France. They talk about it every day on the television. We have peace groups. They have a peace symbol. We have young people who marched to Washington and talk about peace. They talk about it in the United Nations. Everything is peace, peace, peace. There's only one way you can have peace, and that's through Jesus Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:29:16] He said, "My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you." Did you ever stop and think about this? You know when Jesus said that? Jesus said that in the last 24 hours before he died. He knew what he would go through. He knew all the suffering. He knew the denials, the betrayals. He knew all the physical torment. He knew the suffering of seeing the pain for your sin and mine. And yet he said the same peace that I have during this time, I want to give to you. If Jesus could have peace during that, don't you reckon we can have peace during any trial?

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:29:59] "There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." Do you ever think about this? Remember when John the Baptist died? You know what his disciples did? Says they went to Jesus. John is dead. His ministry is over. And here are his followers, and they're going through this trial and they don't have any peace. So where do they go? They went to Jesus. Young people, if you want to have peace in your heart... and while other young people are having their hearts torn asunder, they're turning to dope, and they're turning to sex, and they're turning to every thing else somehow to try and find life and to find peace. You turn to Jesus.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:30:38] Only two places where you can find peace. One is in heaven, and the other's in the believer's heart. And Jesus is in both places. He came to give peace. "I've tried in vain a thousand ways, my fears to quell my hopes to raise. But what I need, the Bible says, is ever only Jesus." The bright and morning star.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:31:07] But he also came to give purpose. Not only pardon and peace, but purpose. The First Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Pastor Ben Hayden has a coffee shop. A lot of the young people going through Chattanooga stop off. They sit around there. They're able to witness to them. And they allow these young people to go up to the wall and write anything on the wall they want to as long as it's not obscene. And one young man wrote this: "I fight for nothing. Neither do I rebel. I wandered through the dark, lighting matches." He said, "I don't have any reason to live. I don't have any purpose." Twenty thousand people last year took their lives, and the largest group of suicides in America every year is among the college students of America. Why?

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:32:27] Because they've been told again and again and again to turn from God and that man can solve all of his problems. And there has never been a time when so much money and so much manpower and so much energy has been devoted to solving the problems of man. And we have more problems today than man's ever had. People are looking for purpose and they're looking for meaning to life. Jesus came to give that. He came to give you a reason to live. The Apostle Paul said, "For me to live is Jesus Christ, and to die is gain."

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:33:02] What are you living for, young people? You're only going to live one life? Just one. What are going to do with it? Don't blow it. What are you doing with your life this summer? I just thinking about this on the platform. I'd never thought about it before quite this way. But do you know, I imagine more young people mess up their lives in the summer than the other time of year. You know why? Well, for one thing, there's an informality about the summer. There's a looseness about the summer. There's more free time in the summer. You get this settled right now that this summer is going to count for Jesus Christ. And you, young people, you go back to church, and you go back to your hometowns, and you get together as youth groups and you get together with your youth leaders or your pastor. And let's say, what can we do for God this summer? I want to challenge you to get involved for Jesus Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:34:04] You get together and you start... You go down to the mall, and you pass out some tracts. Or you start a visitation program and go out a visitation program. Or if you got a bus at your church or a half a dozen buses, you'd be the ones and get on some of these buses and start going out and building up the bus routes, and getting some boys and girls people in so they can hear the sound of the Gospel and get saved. And you young people, get involved for Jesus Christ the summer. Pray how you should reach in your bodies for him.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:34:33] I am convinced that right here, that this source for Jesus Christ, if tapped and stirred and revived, can bring revival to all our churches. Sometimes people tell me, well, they're too young. But you know, if you had to be old to live for Jesus, Jesus never would have made it. He died in his early 30s. David Brainerd only made it 29. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, 29. Jim Elliott made it to 26. That's it. God can use you now.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:35:26] You ever hear of John Ring? John Ring was a 15-year-old young man back during the Civil War days. John Ring had the responsibility of polishing the boots and taking care of the sword of Captain Oliver Conwell of the Yankee forces. First Day he took his position as a 15-year-old young man, he was a Christian young man. And it was at night his first night, and he polished the captain's boots, and it was time to go to bed. And as a Christian young man, he had disciplined himself to every night, get on his knees and read his Bible and spend some time in prayer. He thought to himself, "Man alive, can I do this in front of the captain? What will he think?"

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:36:17] It was quite a test. But he finally decided that he'd better get started right. Let me tell you this, always get started right. If you don't start right, you'll probably not end up right. If you go out to Christian school or you go off to secular school or you go in the army or wherever it might be, get started right. The first day, make business for God. He got down on his knees and opened his Bible, and the captain said, "John, what in the world are you doing?" He said, "I'm a Christian. Read my Bible and pray every day, and I just thought I'd go ahead and do it." And he laughed.

Paul H. Dixon:

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

[00:36:56] And as it continued over the weeks, captain got weary of it, and he started cussing him. Finally, one night John Ring got up off his knees and he walked up that captain and he said, "Captain, I love you." He said, "It's a privilege to work for you, to be your servant." But he said, "If you don't get the same Jesus I've got, you're going to die and go to hell." And it gave a clear cut witness to that captain. Boy he really cussed him then. John got down to his knees and finished his prayer time.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:37:30] A few days later, the captain was gone on business, and the Confederate troops came into the camp. They weren't expecting them, and they just grabbed what they could and started running as fast as they could to run over the bridge on the river. And their plan was to set the bridge on fire so that the Yankee forces... so that the Confederate forces could not pursue them. And as they were going across the bridge, all of a sudden John Ring thought about the captain's sword. It was a beautiful sword. He said, "I've got to go back. I've got to get the captain's sword." They said, "John, you won't make it. They'll kill you." He said, "That's my job. I got to get the captain sword."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:38:10] And he ran back and he got the sword. And as he came to the bridge, it was on fire. They couldn't wait for John. And John Ring ran right through the flames. They said, "Jump over the bridge! Jump in the water!" He said, "No, the captain's sword," and he ran to the other side. The flames completely snuffed out his life as he fell to the ground, dead. They buried him. Some hours later, the captain returned to find John dead and the sword and to hear the story. Captain Conwell picked up that sword and walked over to a tree. Bowed his head and said, "Oh God, I've been sinner. And I thank you that the same savior who died for John Ring died for me. And right now, I want that same savior." And he invited Jesus into his heart and was saved.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:39:03] A few months later, he got out of the service. Felt called to preach and went to Philadelphia. Captain Conwell started the Temple Baptist Church that became at that time the largest Sunday school in the United States of America. That captain started Temple University. He started Temple Hospital. And people said, "I never saw a man with so much dedication, enthusiasm and energy as you." Finally, one day, a man said to him, "Sir, how do you get it? How do you do so much?" He said, "Every morning I get up, and I get down on my knees, and I look up on the wall over the head of my bed at a sword. And then I bow my head and say, 'Oh God, give me enough energy and dedication and enthusiasm and strength today for two men. Enough for me, and enough for John Ring."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:40:08] Young people, what God did with John Ring, he can do with you. God can use you this summer to reach many of your buddies for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to give you purpose, and I pray if you haven't decided it that you'll decide it this morning that from now on, Jesus Christ is going to be your everything. He's not a superstar. He's the bright and morning star. Let's bow together all over this auditorium.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:40:45] With every head bowed and every eye closed, I want to ask you a question, and I want you to be honest. This is one of the most difficult things for all of us to do is to be honest with ourselves at a

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

time like this. The devil will get us to try to deceive ourselves. I want you to listen to the question. I'm not asking you are you a member of a church. I'm not asking have you ever been baptized. I'm not asking you if you've been raised in a Christian home. I'm not asking you do you live a moral life. I want to ask you this: Do you know that if you died right now you'd go to heaven? Do you have that assurance?

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:41:29] Everyone who can honestly say, "I know that if I died right now, I'd go to heaven," would you just quietly slip up your hand all over this auditorium. Don't do it if you're not sure. Don't do it if you have any doubts about it, please. I want you to be honest. Don't do it because somebody else does. Thank you, slip them down.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:41:46] All over this building, how many folks would raise your hand and say, "Paul, I heard the message. I know that this Jesus Christ of the Bible is not my savior. Or I have doubts about... I'm not really sure that if I died right now that I'd go to heaven, and I'm concerned about it. And I'm concerned enough about it right now that I want to raise my hand, and say, 'Pray for me today.' I'm not sure that I'm saved." Those who'd say that just slip your hands up, right there where your seat is, all over this building. Men, women, young people, wherever you are, just slip it up. All over the building. "I'm not sure that I'm saved." Or "I know that I'm not."

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:42:25] God bless you and slip them down. Now may I ask this. Of all you young people down here first, and others who might be scattered across the building, how many of you would say, "God has dealt with me as the Christian young person about my life, this morning. And there needs to be a turning point in my life. My life needs to begin to count for Christ. It hasn't been. But by God's grace there's going to be a turning. There's going to be a change in my life, in my Christian life, from this day on. God spoke to me to this effect." All of you who'd say that, can I see your hands, just slip them up. God bless you. Thank God. Many going up all over the building. Thank God. Are there others?

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:43:14] How about some of you young fellows who've been rebellious, hard-nosed. You haven't hurt anyone but your savior. You haven't been living for God. You're playing loose with sin. How many of you young ladies. Everyone thinks you're such a fine Christian at church, but you know better. God's dealing with you. You don't want to go on like this. You're tired of your sin. You're saying, "God spoke to me today as a Christian young person." How many out there? Just let me see your hands. How many more? Yes, thank God. Thank God.

Paul H. Dixon:

[00:43:50] How about adults? You know it's one thing for us to hear all these messages we've been hearing this week. It's another thing for us to do something with them. Are there adults in this building that say, "I've been wasting my time. I'm a Christian, but I haven't been soul and I haven't been used of God. And God spoke to me today as an adult. There need to be some changes made in my Christian life." How many adults would say that? Can I see your hands? Thank God. Any more?

Paul H. Dixon:

Paul H. Dixon
Jesus Christ Superstar
circa 1971

[00:44:22] We thank you Lord for speaking to hearts. Accomplish thy great purpose through the preached word and this invitation in Jesus' name, amen.