

## YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Text: "Ye must be born again." John 3:3, 7.

The most straight-forward answer Jesus Christ made to human need was to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." Nicodemus was typical of the average man. He was Mr. John Doe of his day. He was not a bad man--that is he was respected and admired as a good citizen. He had some education, ~~for~~ he was a Pharisee. He had attained social success for he was a ruler of his people. But like the average man of the world, there was a gap in his life. When he met Jesus he knew that here was the answer. So he went to see Jesus when he could talk with him privately one night. He opened his conversation with a general remark which shows that like a sick man who cannot diagnose his own illness, he felt a need which he could not define, but which he knew Jesus could both diagnose and cure. Jesus put his finger on the sore spot at once: "Ye must be born again." Jesus did not always use the same language to describe the trouble, but He never failed to find the ~~seed~~ <sup>root</sup> of man's dissatisfaction with life and yearning for something better, in the fact of human sin. A few days after this, Jesus met a woman beside a well in Samaria and quickly spotted her immoral and adulterous life of sin as the cause of her almost fatal thirst for the water of life. Jesus would point to you and me today and say "Ye must be born again." Until you know you are born again you cannot be fully happy in this world, nor absolutely certain of heaven. Face the question for yourself then, "Have you been born again?" Jesus speaks to your heart, "Ye must be born again."

I. The necessity of the New Birth. There is as much urgent necessity in these words, "Ye must be born again" as there is in a doctor's voice when he points to the meaning, pain-wracked patient and declares, "We must operate at once!" (From S. P. Journal, Oct. 1, 1952\*\*) A woman had just been told by her physician that she needed a major operation. She became agitated and expressed fear that she might not wake up from the anesthetic. The usual assurances were unavailing and finally, with tears streaming down her face she said: "Doctor, I am afraid because I am not a Christian." With this admission the whole story followed in a confusion of words and tears--an unhappy home and a brutal father--running wild with a godless group of young people--a drinking party in which she did not participate but during which she drank a doped soft drink and later awoke to find she had been taken advantage of--a hasty marriage two months later "to save the name of my baby"--three years of unhappy marriage and two more children, ending in a divorce court--a later marriage with a similar termination--a third marriage to a decent man and two more children from this union. Then: "Six months ago I was baptized and I want to be a Christian but I have three husbands living and people tell me I am living in adultery. My husband says he wants to be a Christian but 'What's the use, we are in such a mess?'" Thank God for Jesus Christ and His salvation. In His infinite love and mercy He not only can save but he can and will overrule this entire tragedy for His own glory. He says to all such sinners, "Ye must be born again."

New Birth is necessary because of sin. "The reasons for this necessity are partly in man, and partly in God. The reason in man is the blindness, the deadness, the depravity, the enmity of his heart. The Bible represents the sinner as blind, as dead; it represents his heart as deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; it represents the unregenerate as enmity against God, as hostility itself. The blind are disqualified for vision; the dead are disqualified for action; the corrupt are disqualified for goodness; hearts of enmity and hate are disqualified for love and friendship." (JBGreen, p. 105). The wages of sin is death,

Billy Graham: "God is basically, essentially holy. Fundamentally God is a God of holiness and the holiness of God flows against sin."

and all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is probably no more difficult fact for each of us to face than this: I am a sinner in desperate need of salvation! "Ye must be born again."

II. The source of the new birth. What Jesus said to Nicodemus was actually "Ye must be born from above." The word which the writer of the Gospel uses, means from above. It is the same word which Jesus used in speaking to Pontius Pilate as he was standing trial before his crucifixion. Speaking to Pilate of the source of his authority, Jesus said, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above." Both terms are the same. The source of the change of life we sinners need is from above. The significant feature of this statement of Jesus is that man must experience a change (rebirth) which has its source outside of and above himself. This overthrows any human attempt at salvation through our own good works, or through any other humanly engineered plan. It puts our new birth into the category of Divine acts. It involves a supernatural or miraculous element. No wonder Nicodemus with his background of rigid Jewish adherence to a set pattern of "good works" and "law observance" was puzzled. No wonder Jesus repeated this same expression for emphasis several times. "Ye must be born from above."

How often we modern men have made the same attempt as did those ancient ones who built the tower of Babel on the plain of Shinar in a vain attempt to save themselves from destruction by the effort of their own hands! Such efforts result only in confusion. Men today are trying to use the latest achievements of science, the ~~wealth~~ and power of concerted effort, the alliances and treaties of the United Nations, the best that modern medicine, psychology, and sociology can produce--all in an effort to build a perfect world and secure happiness for every human being. But the result is confusion and unhappiness multiplied. Why? Because salvation is of our God. "Ye must be born from above." Only a soul properly infused with a God-given life from above can be transformed and useful human being.

III. The object of the new birth. "Except one be born ~~again~~ <sup>anew</sup>, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Seeing and entering this new realm, the kingdom of God, were one and the same in John's thoughts. Only those who "enter" are able to "see" the Kingdom. The two ideas of "seeing" and "entering" may have been suggested by the language of physical birth which is the event which marks the beginning of a new existence for a baby--not only with reference to location but also with reference to the senses of perception.

In our natural station, we men can no more survive the atmosphere of heaven than a fish can live out of water. A man accustomed to thinking filthy thoughts on earth, would find such thoughts intolerable in heaven. If he is used to taking God's name in vain on earth, or denying the existence of God on earth, or refusing to obey God's commands on earth--he would find himself in an impossible situation in heaven where God will reign among those who eternally chant their praises around his throne. God does not have to send us to hell--we are already on the way there by ourselves and that is where we are bound to end up, unless we experience the new birth which will fit us for the life of heaven. "A beautiful swan alighted by the banks of the water in which a crane was wading about seeking snails. For a few moments the crane viewed the swan in stupid wonder and then inquired: "Where do you come from?" "I come from heaven!" replied the swan. "And where is heaven?" asked the crane. "Heaven!" said the swan, "Heaven! have you never heard of heaven?" And the beautiful bird went on to describe the grandeur of the Eternal City. She told of streets of gold, and the gates and walls made of precious stones; of the river of life, pure as



crystal, upon whose banks is the tree whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations. "Finally the crane asked: "Are there any snails there?" "Snails!" repeated the swan; "no! Of course there are not." "Then," said the crane, as it continued its search along the slimy banks of the pool, "you can have your heaven. I want snails!" This fable has a deep truth underlying it. How many of us turn our backs upon the sight of the kingdom of God to search for snails! Which is more important? If you want to ~~XXXXXX~~ enter and see the kingdom of God, hear the words of Jesus, "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

IV. The Sign of the New Birth. "Except be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

#### IV. The Nature of the New Birth

not physical and material. <sup>not natural</sup> but spiritual

The false philosophy: let us be natural, in is natural.

John 3:6 Salvation not inherited - must come as a new birth

Nature of new birth contrasted to natural birth

Ezekiel 36:26-27

How can these things be? - <sup>and delving</sup>

#### V. Mystery of the New Birth - <sup>and delving</sup> mystery of Graham reveals we cannot fathom the mystery.

Faith is essential

Baptism is a sign revealing the inner mystery

Consider: John 3:16. What is faith

The alternative to faith is fear. Graham says: "Fears are the most disruptive thing we have. I know a lady who is in mortal dread of germs. She stays inside her house, the prisoner of her own fear, but she must live. She doesn't know that fear itself is ten times more deadly than the germ. I know a school teacher who had a brain fear which brought on a stomach ulcer; ~~when~~ when she got rid of the fear, she got rid of the ulcer.

Fear even affects the animal kingdom as well as the human kingdom. When bad dogs are around cows, the cows often refuse to give their milk, and even when they do give it, the milk which is fit to cause will cause colic, so "milk from contented cows" is no mere slogan, it is a necessity.

A former psychologist says, "Fear is not natural, but faith is. I am so made and constituted that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life. Faith is oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt and anxiety."

Scripture Reading: John 3:16-18; 14:6

Text: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me." John 14:6.

After the morning service at a suburban church my wife was waited outside the door, unknown to people about her. She overheard this flattering comment about my missionary sermon: "I can't see why we need to send missionaries to those people over there." They have their own religions which are just as good; they are better off that way; why disturb them?" That person might have added, "Why disturb me?"

This attitude is not uncommon. It assumes that all religions are separate but equal paths to the same heaven where an all-loving God welcomes everyone. It breeds complacency and non-concern about everyone outside our own snug and easy little world. Make no mistake! Jesus actually did claim: "I am The Way...no one comes to the Father but by me." Was He deluded? Was Peter wrong in claiming: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among <sup>us</sup> me, by which we must be saved?"

Surprisingly as a missionary dealing with hundreds of new Christians this question was seldom raised. One would expect them to question God's fairness in apparently denying salvation to friends and ancestors who die without faith in Jesus. Instead, they are overwhelmed with joy because by God's grace they have been snatched off the path to destruction and set on the way to eternal life. Other Christians may hesitate to accept Christ as the only way, but these new believers express their boundless gratitude by inviting all others to join them in the way of salvation in His name. They accept God as the Creator, the Almighty, who in justice and mercy saw us dead in our trespasses and sin and demonstrated his love for us so that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

One Sunday night during the Korean War I was tired after travelling and laboring among rural churches, so I asked my assistant, a Korean deacon to preach for me. He said, "As we drove here in the missionary's jeep, we passed many police check-points. Because of the danger of communist guerrillas and agents the police usually stop all vehicles to examine the identification of every passenger. Today, because I was with the American missionary, no one stopped us or asked for my card. The missionary was my pass. So I have found with Jesus. As a sinner I deserve eternal punishment, but God accepts me because I am with Jesus. It is just as He said, 'I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.'" For him Jesus is THE WAY, the only way, for there is no other way.



Some interpret the mission of the church merely in terms of maintaining good relationships with Christians in other lands, helping to meet physical and social needs, but neglecting the desperate plight of millions living in need of eternal salvation from sin. But our mission begins and ends with the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ as THE WAY. All the work of the church as a fellowship of believers, exercising compassion upon those in need, and working for justice and peace in society are ~~the~~ <sup>important</sup> fruits of His Spirit, but the ultimate solution can only be found in dealing with the root problem in the human heart.\* For 2000 years, proclaiming Jesus as THE WAY has been that solution in millions of hearts, especially during the past century of Protestant missions. Some may claim that the missionary effort has failed...don't you believe it! Nothing could be further from the truth!

Strong churches abroad exist today because God has transformed ordinary men and women into ambassadors of outstanding ability, zeal, and dedication to Christ. Grave stones in cemeteries in distant lands are silent tribute to those who sacrificed their own lives and those of scores of their children amid primitive living conditions, complex cultural differences, and baffling languages. Line upon line, and precept upon precept they proclaimed Jesus as "THE WAY, the truth and the life;" brought converts into the body of Christ; and by example and training taught them how to be lights in a dark world. They instilled their soul-winning fervor so that in Africa and Asia alone approximately 1,000 new churches are started every week, and each day welcomes a net increase of at least 78,000 Christians on this planet.\*\* They battled disease, hunger, poverty, illiteracy, and injustice...not with banners and slogans or street demonstrations but in quiet unobtrusive ways. They, rather than the communists, have been the true revolutionaries...turning the world upside down for Christ. They have motivated new Christians to better their world. In 1986 the government of Korea awarded one woman from each of her 9 provinces for outstanding leadership in community development to improve housing, health, and cleanliness of millions of rural villagers. A Christian lady from a village near us was so honored. When the 9 ladies met in Seoul, they were astonished to discover that all 9 were Christians! Surely the proclamation of Jesus Christ as "THE WAY" not only points the path to eternal life but also makes this world a far better place to live!

Over a century ago, a missionary in Manchuria met some Koreans with whom he translated the New Testament. One assistant became an ardent evangelist and walked 370 miles south to Seoul with ten copies. By sharing his faith and the written Word, he won converts ready for baptism when the first missionaries arrived. Since then their proclamation of "THE WAY" has continued during the collapse of the Korean monarchy, 40 years of Japanese oppression, division of the country, was with communist North Korea, and constant political turmoil. For 38 years we were privileged to participate in the

phenomenal 8% per year growth of the Korean church, and then<sup>to</sup> return last fall to visit old friends, witness the development of Christian institutions, and drop in for a pop call at over a hundred churches. Everywhere we found growing congregations and can report that the condition of the church of Korea is very, very good...and those who find "THE WAY" are multiplying daily! Your investments there have paid off!

Why this growth? Your missionaries faithfully proclaimed Christ as "THE WAY," and taught the centrality and authority of the Bible. They insisted on an independent, self-governing church. They identified with the people in their struggles for freedom from ignorance, poverty disease, oppression, and superstition. The Holy Spirit created strong Christians, able to serve and thrive under persecution, and stoutly loyal to Christ for whom they felt compelled to witness. Today new converts are won primarily as <sup>Christians</sup> ~~they~~ witness to family and friends. Virtually all Christians are organized into Friday evening neighborhood prayer groups. Non-Christian neighbors are invited and find Christ through friendly hospitality and exposure to the joy of people who sing and pray and share the blessings of God's Word. At Sunday morning worship new members and the persons who brought them<sup>to Christ</sup> are introduced and welcomed with congregational handclapping and a prayer by the pastor. Teen-agers have their own separate service, largely run by themselves. At one large church we visited last fall the bulletin announced their meetings for seven A.M. Sunday! 600,000 young men in the armed forces are pastored by Christian chaplains and the percentage of Christians often exceeds that of the civilian population.

In 1948 we reached a poverty-stricken Korea and were assigned to help start and develop new churches in rural areas of southwestern Korea. In the early years my wife was busy raising our 4 children and teaching them through the 6th grade, while working with the Women of the Church, hospital and orphanage visiting, and participating in the life of a local church. Meanwhile I travelled in rural areas on terrible roads and worked amid the primitive conditions of village life. Ordained Korean pastors were few, so the Presbytery usually assigned me oversight of 30 to 40 little new churches to visit, encourage, settle problems, examine new converts for church membership, preach, hold sacraments, arrange for a lay evangelist to pastor the flock, and find ways to support him and build a small church. After our youngest child went off to boarding school, my wife and I travelled together in this ministry for nearly 20 years...so far as I know the only missionary couple in Korea doing this. She taught the children Bible stories, visited the homes, knew who was sick and who had a new baby, and was always welcomed as an important part of the missionary team.

Church planting usually began with a Korean layman, perhaps a refugee from North Korea, who won a few converts in his village and then appealed for the missionary's



help in starting a church...an opportunity we confronted a dozen or more times a year.

> For instance, Deacon Chin was sent as an elementary school teacher <sup>to</sup> at Chang-gum-ni in a remote and economically depressed area. There was no church, but he held Sunday School for the children, and was recognized for helpful community service. After he was assigned to a city school, he felt continued responsibility for that village and asked me to join in a meeting with the village leaders, who agreed they wanted a church. Near the school he arranged to pitch a tent, given by a city church, and went on Sundays as often as possible to help. A young <sup>young man</sup> chaplain's assistant, just discharged, volunteered to serve while attending seminary. We visited to preach and encourage these new believers. Last October I found the young evangelist had been ordained as a minister, married a fine young lady, built a beautiful little pre-fab chapel, had half the elementary school children in Sunday School, and was busily establishing the Chang-gum-ni church. We witnessed scores of similar church-starts during our 38 years. To be able to return and see how God continues to prosper His church is full proof that He blesses the proclamation of "THE WAY"...from thousands of rural congregations to the 50,000 member Young-nak Presbyterian Church in Seoul.

A missionary once wrote: "More than being a soul-winner himself (which, of course, he is) the missionary's most important task is to create a soul winning church."\*\*\*

> "Operation Lighthouse" is an organization starting churches along ~~southern~~ <sup>southern</sup> Korean's rugged <sup>southern</sup> coasts and islands. Begun by missionaries, it is now led by the ~~Rev.~~ <sup>Rev.</sup> Ahn Ki-chan, one of the most energetic, innovative and enthusiastic Koreans I know. He has been instrumental in starting several hundred churches. His October report shows him working with 94 new ones with 450 new believers in four months. He discovered that > half of Korea's 500 inhabited islands had no churches, and most of the ~~of~~ had less than 30 families. He also learned that when one person on such an island becomes a Christian, very soon he evangelizes the entire island. "Aha!" he thought, "Win won and we win the whole island!" So last summer he sent two-man student teams to such islands with instructions to win at least one person to Christ. He gave them some expense money, but when they returned they still had their money! "How come?" "The islanders were so happy to have someone visit, someone who cares for them, that we were feasted and entertained and didn't need your money!" This past winter vacation > he planned to send out 20 <sup>times</sup> ~~times~~ to start such house churches...and give them no money!

> But that is not all. How can these small leaderless groups be shepherded? Mr. Ahn > has decided to choose one person from each house-church to his city for several weeks' training each year, teaching them how to hold a simple service, lead Bible studies, and prepare converts for baptism when ordained ministers make periodic visits. Interestingly enough, Mr. Ahn is proclaiming "THE WAY" exactly as your missionaries did when they pioneered work in Korea a century ago!

Let me quote again: "The missionary task is never finished until the missionary-receiving church becomes a missionary sending church."\*\*\* The Korean Church is now our partner in world-wide missions. The Rev. and Mrs. Suh, friends we met when working on Cheju Island, south of Korea, are now missionaries in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates on the Persian Gulf. While pastoring 2 small Korean congregations, he witnesses in that Moslem land where Christianity is proscribed. He holds Bible classes with policemen from Africa, Moslems from Somalia and Bangladesh, a Hindu from India, 4 doctors from communist China, and others. He writes: "Jesus said, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel, but instead of going everywhere on earth it seems that all the nations are gathered<sup>now</sup>. We have 43 embassies and people from 50 nations." So he visits these embassies and finds from many nations and races some who listen, and some who attend his classes. Who know what wide influence they will have in proclaiming "THE WAY" when they return to their scattered homelands?

How challenging to live in this time of unbelievable change and opportunity for proclaiming Christ as "THE WAY!" China reports thousands of new churches and millions of new converts. Eastern Europe is experiencing freedom of religion. Even in Iran, during the Ayatollah's 11 year reign, more Bibles were sold than in all her previous history and the number of Christians grew by 5-fold. Almighty God is stirring up His world. People who have lost their way by following false philosophies and corrupt leaders are now open to the Good News. They want freedom, they want food...but they must learn to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to [them]." May our Presbyterian Church not "dally far behind the battle line" but proclaim Him who declared: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me."

We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful time,  
In an age on ages telling; To be living is sublime.

Hark! the waking up of nations, Hosts advancing to the fray;  
Hark! what soundeth is creation's groaning for the latter day.

\* G. T. Brown, "Presbyterians in World Mission," pages 18 and 19

\*\* Harvey Conn, in Decision Magazine, Jan. 1990, p. 6

\*\*\* Quotes from Dr. Arch Campbell



Scripture Reading. John 6:32-30

Text: "My father gives you the true bread from heaven." (Jn. 6:32b)

Man's basic need is food. Our heavenly Father recognizes this. Before He created man, God first made vegetation, fruit trees, animals, birds, and fish, so that people would have something to eat. When the Children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the wilderness of Sinai without normal food supplies, God provided food from heaven every day in the form of manna. Knowing this need, Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Unfortunately there are millions in our world who are without food, millions go to bed hungry every night, children die of starvation...because of war, ignorance, neglect, economic inequity, or natural causes...especially those who live as refugees far from their homelands. We Christians surely have every obligation to help them in their suffering and to support those organizations which serve their needs on massive scales impossible for us as individuals. I well remember how just 30 years ago now, the people of Korea were nearing the end of a devastating war and almost everyone about us lacked food and many were starving. I was living in what is now the Shaw house and we had approximately 10 tons of rice stored in the living room, to be distributed in the lean months of February and March. People were hungry. More than anything else they needed food, and our best efforts seemed totally inadequate. It is appropriate at Christmas to remember the poor and hungry with gifts of food.

But at Christmas we also remember how God meets the basic need of all men with the most important food of all. We have just observed our holiday by exchanging gifts with family and friends, and we should never cease reminding ourselves of the greatest gift of all, the most important food of all, donated by our Heavenly Father. Jesus expressed it this way in Jn. 6:32 "My father gives you the true bread from heaven." There is no question as to what He meant by the "true bread" in vs. 35 He plainly stated: "I am the bread of life." Jesus put the plan of God for the salvation of men not in the often incomprehensible verbiage of theologians but in simple terms easily understood by everybody. "My father gives you the true bread from heaven."

I The Donor. For every gift there must be a giver, a donor. Our text plainly tells us the Donor about whom Jesus spoke. "My Father gives you the true bread from heaven." Jesus' listeners had just remarked that God gave bread from heaven to their ancestors for 40 years when they wandered in Sinai. Jesus replied by speaking not once, but seven times in this one chapter of the gift of true bread from heaven. When He used this same expression "from heaven" seven times, surely He intended that there be no mistake about the source of the gift.. "From heaven" (vs. 32,33,38,41,50,51,58) It's beyond me how anyone could read this chapter and deny the divine origin of Jesus, His claim to be God, or His special mission as Saviour of the world. There was nothing anonymous about the first Christmas gift. God planned, effected and superintended the sending of His gift long before the foundation of the world as part of His plan for the universe.

God, the Donor, promised this gift long in advance. When man first sinned in the garden of Eden, God gave Him His first word of hope for eventual victory over the Evil One. Through the patriarchs He promised the coming of One through their seed who would be a blessing to the whole earth. Through the prophets He predicted the Messiah, the anointed One who would bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, and by whose scourging we would be healed.

God, the Donor, sent His gift by means of a miracle, the holy birth. For the Eternal Word who had been with God from the beginning, to become flesh required an act of God...the conception by the Holy Spirit of a baby in the womb of the virgin Mary.

Mary. Unfortunately some who call themselves Christians seem unable to accept this miracle. The fact is, either we accept God's ability to perform miracles, or we don't. Either God is Almighty, or He isn't. Either the Bible is true, or it is untrustworthy. As for us, we accept the Biblical account that almighty God who empowered His Son to heal the sick, who raised Him from the dead, could also use extra-ordinary means to send us His gift.

God, the Donor, made special announcement of His gift by angels. An angel told Mary, "You shall bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High." To Joseph, her betrothed, an angel announced that Mary would bear a son, "and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Shepherds on the hillside heard the angel announcement, "To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

To me all of this...the promises, the predictions, the miracles, the angelic announcements...bespeak of one fact...that God, our heavenly Father, was the Donor of a Gift, a gift of divine origin, a gift who Himself was divine, a gift whose purpose was that all should recognize and honor and receive with rejoicing. "My Father gives you the true bread, from heaven."

II. The Gift. Our text plainly tells us the nature of the Gift. It is the true bread from heaven. The early part of this chapter relates how Jesus used 5 loaves and 2 fishes to feed 5000 hungry people, an act which perhaps drew more public attention than any of His miracles, so much so that the people were about to try to make Him king. Jesus withdrew across the Sea of Gallilee but still the multitude followed Him. He chided them for wanting more free food, and told them instead to seek the food which endures to eternal life. This was the setting of His discourse here about the true gift..."My Father gives you the true bread from heaven." We know several things about this Gift.

It is true bread. The food they had received when Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes was strictly for physical purposes. The same was true of the manna which God gave their ancestors. That food had nothing to do with the spiritual life of man. It could not relieve the hunger of souls for fellowship with God. It could not slack the thirst of those for whom the world and its pleasures were hollow and empty. Those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness found no nourishment in that bread. Jesus offered the true bread which could satisfy all the desires and hungers of sinners who long for that which brings true life when they are reconciled to God their heavenly Father.

It is eternal bread. It provides life <sup>in</sup> an entirely different dimension from ordinary bread...it gives eternal life. Those who ate manna died in the wilderness. But here in this chapter Jesus plainly declares four times: "I am the bread of life" and makes the same assertion with other words. What Jesus says is: "I am the One who fulfills the deepest needs of men. My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed (55). He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him (56). As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." No wonder Jesus used the same symbolism of bread and drink in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by which we commemorate His death for our sins...the supreme example of how God's gift from heaven came to give eternal life to those whose sins are forgiven through faith in the One who died in our place...a gift to be appropriated, that is, taken within ourselves, just as food is injected to satisfy physical hunger.

It is costly bread. Even on the human plane certain gifts are valued because they cost the giver. A young man, often at great sacrifice, seals his engagement to the girl of his choice with a costly diamond. A child toils for hours over some bit of art-work as a gift to please his parents, but the gift is treasured not



because of monetary value but because of the love and devotion it represents. I think that is why the sacrifice of Abel was more pleasing to God than that of Cain...somehow it expressed a cost in terms of love and obedience...a cost which God Himself would feel when He gave His Son as the lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. So when Jesus here spoke of the gift of God, the true bread, Himself...He knew there was a cost to God...but it was worth that cost to meet our deepest need for forgiveness, for restoration to the bosom of the Father, for eternal life. No wonder Paul could exclaim: "Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift." (II Cor. 9:15)

III. The Recipients. "My Father gives you the true bread from heaven." Jesus clearly means by "you" the whole world. Vs. 33: "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." John liked to use the word "world" to describe the whole company of mankind, and it is a common expression through his gospel. Our most familiar verse tells it plainly: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (3:16)

Jesus was careful to define just who receive the gift of the true bread from heaven. This bread gives life to the world, but not all the world receives it. In his first chapter, John wrote: "He was in the world, and the world was made thru him, yet the world knew him not; he came to his own home, and his own people received him not." The bread is here for all, but not all will accept. Those who are the receivers are described clearly in 6:35... "He who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." It is wrong to accept part of Jesus' message and reject the rest. True, God sends the true bread for the world, but we must never overlook that Jesus says the only recipients are those who come and those who believe. Commitment to Him, acceptance of Him... these are required of those who would eat the bread which brings eternal life.

Nor can we <sup>disposed</sup> overlook the truth that so far as God, the Donor, is concerned, no one is disqualified, no one is excluded, no one is rejected. How much comfort and hope verse 37 has brought to untold number of poor, ignorant, diseased, outcast, helpless, downtrodden peoples of the earth! "All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out." The world may reject and discriminate because of race, or status, or class, even churches (sadly) may censure and cold shoulder, but not the Savior. Him who comes to me I will not cast out. There is a lesson in the narrative of those who came to worship in Bethlehem when God sent His gift on that first Christmas. Proud and learned and wealthy wisemen from the east came with costly gifts for the infant Savior. But no less acceptable to Him was the humble obeisance of shepherds who had been keeping a lonely vigil by night over their flocks...men at the bottom of the social and economic scale. For any recipient of the bread of life there is no discrimination or prejudice because of race, social status, physical condition. Him who comes to me I will not cast out.

In conclusion two thoughts come to mind as at Christmas time we thank God for His gift, the true bread which comes down out of heaven. Remember the gift is not for ourselves alone, but multiplies with the sharing, even as 5 loaves and 2 fishes were multiplied. "As the Father has sent me, even so send I you." 20:21

The other thought is illustrated by a K&S TV show I saw yesterday morning. Grandfather Santa Claus had had a long busy night, and as he wearily stepped over the threshold with gifts for the last household, he stumbled and fell. A little girl came running out, helped him up, and brushed off his clothes with loud exclamation of how wonderful he had been to work so hard all night long. Then she brought a beautifully wrapped package and placed it in his arms. "What's this?" asked a surprised Santa. "It's for you, grandfather Santa Claus." And at once other children appeared with gifts for old Santa. As he departed other grandfathers met

and asked, "Why are you weeping?" "I weep for joy," he said. "Long have I been giving away gifts to others, and now for the first time these children have given me gifts!" Funny thing about accepting God's gift...when rightly received, its recipients begin to give...they give the gift to others, but most of all, they give themselves back as gifts to the Giver...which is all He ever wanted all along, from the very beginning!

## The Basis of our Loyalty

Scripture: Jn. 6:52-71.

Text: "Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." Jn. 6:68-69.

Intro. John 6 an account of two days--all that John tells of the two year central part of Christ's ministry. Reflects the growing tension between belief and unbelief on part of those who heard Jesus. A great crowd following Jesus. Probably teaching here was characteristic of that for two years, but given particular interest against background of two miracles in first part of chapter (feeding of five thousand and walking upon sea). These teachings confused some, antagonized others, convinced a few. Many listeners began to desert him, including some disciples: "Upon this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." Perhaps in sadness, perhaps to test, perhaps to strengthen conviction by allowing it to be expressed, Jesus asked question: Would ye also go away? Reminds us of question of Josh. 24:15 "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served...or the gods of the Amorites

Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." By his answer Peter declared that (1) Apart from Jesus there is no answer; (2) Jesus has the answer; (3) Jesus is the answer. So far as Peter was concerned all the important questions of life had only one answer.

I. Apart from Jesus, there is no answer. "Lord to whom shall we go?"

A. John six is full of questions of people.

v. 28 "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?"

v. 30 "What then dost thou for a sign, that we may see and believe thee? what workest thou?"

v. 42 "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?"

v. 52 "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

v. 60 "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?"

v. 68 "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Question of Peter at once answers and puts to nought all the quibbling questions that others had been asking.

B. The world today asks questions, but they are following the wrong answers.



a. Humanism--belief that man can pull himself up with his own bootstraps.

b. Rationalism--that man's reason can work out the problems of the world.

c. Evolutionism--that progress is inevitable.

d. Communism--that society can be refashioned into an efficient machine that disregards the law of God and the natural longings of men.

e. Paganism--that in inferior gods life can be found.

f. Materialism--that in supplying man's animal needs is ultimate satisfaction.

g. Science--that the fruits of science can give happiness. "Years to life, but life to years."

*John: Christ is life, not a substitute*

II. Jesus has the answer. "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

A. The teaching of Jesus in this chapter alone grounds for Peter's answer. He may have been an unlettered fisherman, and without question did not understand all he had heard Jesus say that day, but shrewd enough to know that these were words of eternal life. *Saw in Jesus a spiritual treasure house*

a. Not physical bread but the assimilation of a spiritual is required of men. v. 27.

b. Man's part not to perform works of law but to "believe." v. 29.

c. Jesus' claim to heavenly origin. v. 33, 35, 38, 51, 58. Contrast with manna of Moses. v. 32, 58.

d. Jesus' claim to oneness with His father, v. 46.

e. Life-imparting powers--appropriation of Christ (his flesh and blood) by faith. v. 35, 51, 53-56.

B. Jesus has the answer for present happiness. Jn. 8:31-32 "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Remin of beatitudes.

C. Jesus has the answer for human relations. Jn. 13:34. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

D. Jesus has the answer to salvation from sin. Jn. 10:15 "I lay down my life for the sheep." Jn. 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me."

E. Jesus has the answer for eternity. Three times in this chapter assertion that ~~xxxxx~~ if a man will appropriate by faith the benefits offered by Christ, "I will raise him up at the last day." Jn. 11:25. "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

*John: little girl Jesus, golden nugget in Calif. p. 65.*

III. Jesus is the answer. "And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

A. Purpose of John's Gospel. Jn. 20:31 "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." John ~~xxxxxx~~ selected signs---testimony. A sign is something that proves something else. Two signs in this chapter.

B. Miracle of feeding five thousand. People: "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." Attempted to make Jesus king.

C. Miracle of walking on the water. Demonstration that while he had withdrawn into the mountain to avoid letting the people forcibly make him their kind of king, still he was a king and could demonstrate his divine powers to those of his disciples perceptive enough.

D. Impact of the man Jesus, and His suffering and resurrection. Those who question these facts and the Christian beliefs as to the interpretation of them can find no better answer.

Illus: "Sailor's Home fire" p. 39

Nicodemus (3)

Samaritan woman at well (4)

Infirm man at pool of Bethesda (5)

Man born blind (?)

Raising of Lazarus (11)

ONE THING I KNOW

Text: "One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." (John 9:25)

Scripture Reading: John 9:1-12, 24-34

The disciples of Jesus must have enjoyed many a quiet chuckle as they recounted Jesus' cure of the man born blind, recorded for us in John 9. The humor in this amusing incident lies in the unexpected defeat of the legalistic Pharisees by their own arguments from the mouth of an ignorant but absolutely honest man for whom facts were more important than theories. We like this fellow "with his sturdy independence, and his refusal to be cowed or browbeaten; with his loyalty to his benefactor, with his blunt and direct mode of speech, with his daring...which faces the terrible prospect of excommunication...with his shrewd common sense...no ordinary person but a real man ." (IB 615) Today let's look at the facets of this Biblical jewel for the light and beauty they shed on how the Holy Spirit led one man step by step until he accepted in faith the truth that he had indeed confronted his Savior, Jesus Christ.

"As he passed by." What looked entirely accidental, was by no means an accident. In this Gospel, John, the writer, chose a series of eight great "signs" as the framework for his life of Christ, and the healing of the blind man is the seventh. Each "sign" illustrated a theme. The account of this particular miracle follows the teaching in chapter 8 where Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world." Here a man in physical darkness is brought into the light so that he could see the fields, the flowers, and the faces of his family...a spectacular witness to the power of Jesus to cure and an illustration of His purpose to bring perfect light to those in the darkness of sin. Yet even in an incident which seems almost accidental, Jesus found and recognized an opportunity. In the same way much of what we do for the Master is found in incidental opportunities or chance meetings with others...what we call accidents...but which are arranged by God Himself...as taught in this story.

This is the only record of our Lord's dealing with congenital disease. Overlooking an opportunity for a healing miracle, this afforded an opportunity for the disciples to settle an old argument. "Whose sin, this man's or his parents, caused him to be born blind?" It was a popular notion that physical disability is the result of sin. The Pharisees shared this view as shown in verse 34 where they spurned the blind man, declaring, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" Some even argued that such birth defects could be caused by sin on the part of an unborn infant! How many discussion groups, or theological classrooms have consumed endless hours trying to solve these problems of the reason for suffering, the causes of pain, the origin of sin!



Jesus refused to argue the question on this occasion. He turned attention at once to the opportunity at hand for service. Since the Greek original has no punctuation at all, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan suggests a somewhat different rendition here: "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, we must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day." Jesus was teaching that God put this blind man there beside the road so that we can do His work. Would that we could so regard every misfortune, every problem, every obstacle cast in our paths! Jesus said, "I am not here to explain the mystery of evil. I am here to solve these problems. I am here to remove the cause of them." The world would be far better off if we spent less time arguing and more time trying to bring God's solutions to bear on the "blind men" he places in our paths. For Jesus, this was an occasion to demonstrate His words, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

The account of the miracle is brief. Jesus spat on the ground, made clay with it, and anointed the man's eyes, ordering him to wash in the pool of Siloam. We do not know why He used this method, although spittle was supposed to be good for blindness. Elsewhere Jesus used other and simpler methods such as merely laying His hands on the person to be cured. "Without means, or with means; it is always God who heals." (Morgan 166) The man had nothing to lose by going and washing in the pool of Siloam, so of course he did so and returned seeing. From this point on we have an amazing account of the growth of UNBELIEF in the critics of Jesus and of BELIEF in the man He cured.

Initially it was understandable that there be non-belief. For this familiar beggar who had sat for years beside the road to be instantly cured was difficult to believe. Everybody who knew him instantly raised this question, "Is he really the man who used to sit here begging?" Some said he was, others that there was only a strong resemblance. When questioned himself, this former blind man said tersely, "I am the man." These questioners seem to have accepted his answer, but because of the magnitude of the miracle, led him to the Pharisees.

This became the best attested of all the miracles of Jesus. Those Pharisees first interrogated the man himself, then his parents, and then the man a second time. Initially they refused to believe anything had happened, suspecting a hoax. Impossible things just don't happen, they reasoned. Hence, they questioned the man's parents who confirmed that this man was their son and that he had been born blind. However they refused to comment on how he was cured because of the risk of being thrown out of the synagogue as the Jews had threatened to do to anyone confessing

Jesus to be the Christ. Any disinterested party seeing this rejection of clear evidence would be forced to exclaim: "These Jews are blind...blind to facts, blind to testimony, blind to the truth!" At the end of this chapter Jesus came close to saying so: "For judgement I came into the world...the kind of judgement that separates all men into those who believe and those who do not believe...that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Even the Pharisees caught the implication and retorted: "Are we also blind?"

What caused this blindness, what was the "hang-up?" Essentially it was blind rejection of clear facts in favor of stubborn adherence to their own fixed idea of how God deals with men. For them, God was revealed through the law of Moses of which only their interpretation was the true version. The law said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." They claimed that this prohibited the making of clay or the anointing of the eyes with spittle on the sabbath...and that was that! Because Jesus had done these things on the Sabbath, He was a sinner. Because he was a sinner he could not have performed the miracle. Because a miracle could not have happened at the hands of Jesus, the blind man was lying. Ridiculous!..we say. How unscientific to reason from theory to fact, rather than vice versa! Ignore the glorious fact that a man's eyes were opened! Forget that the darkness of a whole life with all its discomforts and discouragements and exclusions from normal living had been dispelled, and a miserable wretch was now allowed to live fully, freely, and normally! Oh no!...keeping the law of Moses as we Pharisees construe it is more important than meeting human need! Failure to follow our way is sin!

How many modern counterparts are just as blind to truth, unwilling to accept facts and give glory to God! God's world is all about us, but many fail to recognize it as such. God's Word reveals Him, but many deny that record! Since miracles contradict the laws of nature, of human reason, of scientific knowledge, they are unacceptable no matter what evidence there is to the contrary! Lives are changed by the miracle of Christ taking up His home in their hearts...but families and neighbors and enemies refuse, like those Pharisees, to see the facts!

The response of the blind man was the exact opposite of the Jews. He is the hero here. Because he was blind he must have been uneducated. Unable to earn a living, he was poor and depended on begging. He was accustomed to cruel taunts and the unkind bantering of those who take fiendish delight in teasing such unfortunate people. Possibly that was how he had learned the value of the brief retort, and a certain cool practical logic in free debate. For all their training in scholarly reasoning and thinking the Pharisees found their match in his irrefutable argument. In this

chapter, Jesus is the speaker in 8 verses and the blind man in 13. His remarks show steady progression from initial acceptance of an incontrovertible fact which had changed his whole life, to a reasoned conviction about the One who had brought about that change and acceptance of Him as Lord. Listen to the dialogue in 4 scenes:

### 1. THE BLIND MAN AND HIS NEIGHBORS.

Neighbors: "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?"

Some: "It is he."

Others: "No, but he is like him."

Blind man: "I am the man."

Neighbors: "Then how were your eyes opened?"

Blind man: "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me: Go to Siloam and wash; so I went and washed and received my sight."

Neighbors: "Where is he?"

Blind man: "I do not know."

Here is the bald statement of the case, not dressed up with any details. All the blind man knew was that "a man called Jesus" gave him his sight.

### 2. THE BLIND MAN AND THE PHARISEES. (First interrogation)

Pharisees: "How did you receive your sight?"

Blind man: "He put clay on my eyes; and I washed, and I see." (Here he gave only an abbreviated summary.)

Pharisees: (Now divided among themselves)

Some: "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath."

Others: "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?"

Again: "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?"

Blind man: "He is a prophet."

The Pharisaic argument was not lost on the blind man. No matter which side of their debate was right, he could see that the only conclusion was that Jesus was more than an ordinary man. So his opinion of Jesus advances a step further with the declaration "He is a prophet." This put Jesus into a class with prophets such as Elijah or Elijah.

3. THE BLIND MAN AND THE PHARISEES. (Second interrogation, after confirmation by the man's parents.

Pharisees: "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner."

Blind man: "Whether he is a sinner I do not know, one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see."

The Pharisees were trying to establish that God had directly healed the blind man, that Jesus had had nothing to do with it because (to them) He was a sinner. The blind man deferred to their superior wisdom about the sinfulness of Jesus, but insisted that



he was sure he had been blind and that Jesus had cured him. Even the Pharisees realized they could not make their argument stick that Jesus had nothing to do with the healing, so they asked again:

Pharisees: "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

Blind man: "I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?"

He was irked at having to repeat the account already clearly related several times. Perhaps he saw an attempt to trap him with some verbal inconsistency in his account, but with the instincts of a keen debater he went on the offensive with a brilliant thrust: "What's the matter...are you interested in becoming a follower of Jesus too?"

Pharisees: "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

Blind man: "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshipper of God and does his will God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

Pharisees: "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?"

Prodded by the Pharisees, the blind man's thinking had reached the very conclusion they feared: faith in Jesus! Their argument that Jesus was a sinner and could not have performed a miracle brought him to the conclusion that Jesus was not a sinner but actually came from God because he knew the fact that a miracle had cured his blindness. Actually a growing faction of the Pharisees was reaching the same conclusion and were saying among themselves about Jesus: "These are not the sayings of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" Facts were overcoming prejudices!

4. THE BLIND MAN AND JESUS. Now the Pharisees "cast out" the blind man, but Jesus had come with a special mission to those cast out whether by society or by the religious establishment. True to His nature, he sought this man out.

Jesus: "Do you believe in the Son of man?"

Blind man: "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"

Jesus: "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you."

Blind man: "Lord, I believe." (And he worshipped Him.)

This man was never one to waste words, but he said all that was necessary. "I believe"..."I accept you, accept your cure of my eyes, accept you as the light of the world." I believe he continued to live in that Light and to let the Light shine in his life. How different from the Pharisees who failed to see the light because of their stubborn adherence to their own little rules blinded them. Organized religion excommunicated a man, but that man in fellowship with Jesus excommunicated organized religion!

I think the blind man was still present when Jesus finished His discourse which continues into half of chapter 10. Here Jesus proclaimed two more "I am-s." "I am the door of the sheep." "I am the good shepherd." How comforting to a man born blind, miraculously cured, cast out by his own people, to know that Jesus stood by as the "door" and as the "good shepherd!" Because that is what Jesus does; He not only brings the miraculous cure, he stands as guard, as comforter, as companion, as source of sustenance, as a living Presence in our lives. the shepherd is the Biblical figure of authority. The former authority, the Jews, excluded this man. Jesus became a new center of authority. He opened the door to a new economy, and assumed authority over it.

Sir George Adam Smith told of travelling in the Near East with a guide and coming across a shepherd and his sheep. He fell into conversation with him. the man showed him the fold into which the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls, with a way in. Sir George said to h, "That is where they go at night?" "Yes," said the shepherd, "and when they are in there, they are perfectly safe." "But there is no door," said Sir George. "I am the door," said the shepherd. He was not a Christian man, he was not speaking in the language of the New Testament. He was speaking from the Arab shepherd's standpoint. Sir George looked at him and said, "What do you mean by the door?" Said the shepherd, "When the light has gone, and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, an no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf comes in unless he crosses my body; I am the door." (Morgan, 177)

Is it surprising that at the end of such a miracle and teachings, even some of the Pharisees said of Jesus, "These are not the sayings of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Amazing grace...how sweet the sound...  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.  
John Newton

THE MIND OF CHRIST

4/5/87 Porter  
4/5/87 Dennis Clark  
1/8/89 Canten  
4/5/07 Rosta Kelly  
4/1/07

Scripture Reading: John 13:1-17

Text: "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14.

"The world is full of people who are standing on their dignity when they ought to be kneeling at the feet of their brethren." (Barclay, "John" p. 162) On the evening before His crucifixion, Jesus used a stunning example to teach this to His disciples. The most effective teacher is always one who practices what he preaches, and that is exactly what the Greatest of all teachers did that night. This object lesson was also an illustration of the whole purpose and manner of His coming into the world, which was "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." Knowing that soon He would leave His disciples, Jesus longed to have them follow His example, and thus to truly represent Him in the world. The key verse here is John 13:14. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." As we approach the celebration of the Lord's Supper, it is appropriate for us to look at the setting, the service, and the symbol found here in one of the greatest moments in the teaching ministry of our Lord, as He prepared to institute this sacrament.

I. THE SETTING. This passage is remarkable not only for what it tells us of the physical setting, but also for its description of the mind and mood of Jesus. He was with His disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem which had been prepared by them on instructions from the Master for the celebration of the Passover feast. The table was set and the couches on which participants would recline were arranged around it. To one side on a stand was a basin of water and a towel waiting to be used. But the most important part of this setting was the mind of Jesus Himself.

1. JESUS KNEW THAT HIS HOUR HAD COME TO DEPART out of this world to the Father. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." He knew that the next day not only death but a terribly painful and agonizing ordeal awaited Him. Not only physical death, but the burden of the penalty of human sin would be His. More than many other great men who have been calm in the face of death, Jesus wanted to use every moment to make that death meaningful to His followers both then and now. Rather than showing fear and anxiety about Himself, He demonstrated again the love for others He had always exhibited during His ministry and which He would show supremely on the cross on the morrow. Even with Judas present, He loved those disciples "to the end"... and that expression "to the end" means not only to the end of the time He had with them, but also in the widest and fullest possible dimensions. He loved them even



though He knew they were shamefully involved in bitter disputes among themselves as to who was the greatest, and though they were guilty of unloving behavior as a result. Despite their wrangling and with the shadow that "the hour had come" hanging over Him...Jesus was full of love "to the end."

2. JESUS KNEW WHO WAS TO BETRAY HIM. He knew all about the sinister preparations Judas had made to betray Him. He knew that Satan had entered the heart of Judas, that all the plans had been laid, and that the betrayer was merely waiting to see what Jesus was likely to do the rest of the evening before leaving the upper room. For most of us a situation like this would have aroused bitterness and resentment and hatred. There is nothing which can stir these emotions so quickly as the knowledge that we are being deceived or betrayed by those whom we have loved and trusted. So far as Jesus was concerned, loving even Judas "to the end" meant giving him every possible chance to repent. "The astounding thing about Jesus was that the more men hurt Him, the more He loved them...but Jesus met the greatest injury, the supreme disloyalty, with the greatest humility and the supreme love." (Barclay 161).

3. JESUS KNEW THAT THE FATHER HAD GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HANDS, and that He had come from God and was going to God. We have just pointed out that Jesus knew that His hour of humiliation on the cross was near. He also knew that the hour of His glory was approaching. "All things" were committed into His hands...what an awesome realization: all creation, all authority, all opportunity to bring His Father's saving power to bear on sinful mankind! Not only so, but He was deeply conscious of His own origin...He had come forth from God, and of His own destiny...He was going to God. He knew who He was...the Divine Son of God! But rather than take pride in this or boast about Himself, He chose to think of His disciples and to offer words of comfort and encouragement: "Let not your hearts be troubled," He said, "I go to prepare a place for you," and "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it," and "I will send you another Comforter...the Holy Spirit." Rather than claim the obeisance and service of others, He chose the path of humility. He knew that the powers and prerogatives of God Himself were in His hands, but He took a towel into those hands and washed the feet of ordinary men!

II. THE SERVICE. "When Christ serves, He serves perfectly." (Westcott, "John", p. 190). The account is brief, but it is descriptive and accurate, and it is abundantly evident that the writer was an eye-witness of what took place...a fact of which John frequently prided himself when writing. Seven simple motions completed the service:

1. The rising from His place at the table.
2. The laying aside of His outer robes.

3. The taking the towel.
4. The girding Himself with the towel.
5. The pouring of the water.
6. The washing the disciples' feet.
7. The wiping with the towel.

All of us delight in seeing something done flawlessly, whether it be a painting, a basketball game, or a surgical operation. So with Jesus on this occasion. The people of Jesus' day wore sandals on their feet. Because roads were usually hot and dusty it was a simple sign of courtesy to provide cleanliness and comfort to guests by having their feet washed. There were always great waterpots near the front door, and a servant stood ready with dipper and towel to wash the feet of entering guests. But when servants could not be afforded, the youngest would naturally be expected to substitute. On this occasion competition and pride prevented the disciples from complying with the demands of circumstance even though they could not help but recognize the need.

In this situation it was the Greatest who was willing to stoop the farthest. This one incident is a miniature illustration of the whole role of Christ in divesting Himself of heavenly glory to come to earth. The King became the Servant. As Paul expressed it in Philippians 2:7-8, "Although He existed in the form of God (He) did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant..." The disciples had been claiming "first place" and as a result were afraid of lowering themselves to do what Jesus now did. But for Jesus to wash their feet must have been deeply embarrassing and unacceptable to all of them. Yet only Peter gave vent to the question in the hearts of all of them.

"Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You don't understand now, but you will later on." "But, Lord, you must not wash my feet." "If I do not wash your feet, you have no part in me, Peter." Characteristically Peter impulsively reversed himself, "Lord, if that's the case, don't just wash my feet but my hands and head as well." A moment ago he told his Master He was doing too much; now he tells Him He is doing too little! Jesus replied, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." Jesus was talking about the custom of going to a bath-house before attending a feast, in which case after walking along a dusty street only the feet had to be washed. I think by these words Jesus was teaching us that the person who has received Christ as Savior by faith and thus has his sins washed away in the sight of God, does not need to be repeatedly justified before God again...like taking repeated baths...but because in his daily

life he constantly does commit sin, he must come repeatedly to God in repentance and ask for forgiveness...like getting feet washed every time he enters a house. Jesus was using every situation to instruct His disciples and us.

Gathering at the Lord's table for the communion service is a time to remember that by His death, Jesus has already saved us. In this sense, by our faith in this Savior, God has accepted us as righteous. Like a person emerging from a bath, we have been cleansed of our sin...as symbolized in the sacrament of baptism. But the communion service is a time to examine ourselves and to confess to God the daily sins which displease our Father in heaven and which beset us as we walk this sinful world. We can compare this with the washing of Peter's feet, when Jesus declared, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet." That is why we are baptized only once, but may partake of the Lord's Supper many times. Paul instructed us: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." (I Cor. 11:28) Each of us here today should use this occasion to examine our own hearts and lives, confess our sins to God, and by partaking again of the symbolic flesh and blood of our Savior, be cleansed anew for service to Him, confident that He has forgiven.

III. THE SYMBOL. Having washed His disciples' feet, Jesus put on His garments and resumed His place at the table. Now He drove home the most important lesson from His example of foot-washing by saying, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right; for so I am. IF I THEN, THE LORD AND THE TEACHER, WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." Jesus was deeply concerned and distressed over the disunity, the in-fighting, the lack of mutual love and harmony among these men who had been with Him for three years. Instead of being concerned about what was about to happen to Jesus, their Lord and Teacher, they were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest. Each one of them wanted first place in the Kingdom of God. Each wanted his own way. Each wanted to rule over the others.

Jesus was facing the disease which has afflicted the church all down through the ages and has caused dissention and division and unhappiness and bitterness among Christians down to this day. (1) Rivalry for position, (2) greed for lording it over others, (3) wanting to have our own way, (4) demand for loyalty to human leaders rather than to Christ...all these have been at the root of immeasurable suffering and trouble in the church. Jesus saw all this right there among His disciples, and by washing their feet he demonstrated that even the Son of God whom they rightly called Lord and Master had come to be the servant of all. Somehow I believe that those men learned that lesson that night. There may have been some disagreements among them

later on, but there is no record that among these disciples there was ever any power struggle again.

Do you suppose that Jesus meant for His disciples to take water and towel and literally wash each other's feet? There are some church groups that do this. Many years ago when we had a pastorate near Roanoke, there were many Brethren churches around us. Their members were exceptionally fine people, wonderful dairy farmers, good neighbors, and devoted Christians. They had the practice of having periodic foot-washing ceremonies just like we hold communion services. I was told that it was the elders who took the basins of water and towels and washed the feet of the church members. There is certainly nothing wrong with taking the words of Jesus literally as they do, especially since their lives showed so well the spirit of Christ.

But more than a literal obedience, He wants us to have His mind. That involves humility, the spirit of lowly service, willingness to take the last rather than the first place, and love of one another and even of our enemies. All too often we Christians have been guilty of thinking that foot washing means looking at others and telling them they have dirty feet...being critical, accusing, hostile...but Jesus here teaches us to be gentle, considerate, and forgiving. I once heard that the late Dr. George Manford Gutzke, well-known as a Bible teacher all over our South-land, one day stated in his class at Columbia Seminary: "None of us can do what Jesus did...we cannot perform miracles of healing, or walk on the sea, or die on the cross for the sins of others. We cannot do what He as the Son of God did." Some days later one of his students came and asked, "Dr. Gutzke, didn't you say we could not do anything Jesus did?" "Yes." "But," said the student, "Can't we wash one another's feet?" "Right," replied the professor, "you have read your Bible better than I. We cannot do what Jesus did in other respects, but we can wash one another's feet!"

In the Presbyterian Church when ministers and elders and deacons are ordained, they are asked to "study the purity and peace of the church." That means to work for the holy conduct and doctrine of the church on the one hand, and for her unity and harmony on the other. Jesus wanted to make sure His disciples learned this before He instituted the Lord's Supper that first time. He pronounced a special blessing in verse 17 upon all who learn this lesson: "If you KNOW these things, you are blessed if you DO them." As we again partake of the bread and wine in remembrance of the flesh and blood of our Savior, may we hear again these words of Jesus and apply them to ourselves, the lives of our families, and the life of this church: "IF I THEN, THE LORD AND THE TEACHER, WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET."



## Motives, Revolutions, & Results.

I. Motives. Jn. 14:6. Jesus is our pass. Modern paradox. Will all souls be finally saved and good triumph universally? Careless and fuzzy thinking.

A. Rethinking mission phil. New Orleans illus.

Why? Mistaken idea of God. Question seldom raised by new Christians. False picture of God.

God in history. Sinners are lost. Jn. 3:16,36

Are not many Christians guilty of blasphemy. All of Jn. ~~14~~ 14 must be accepted.

B. Text spoken in shadow of cross.

1. Way from condition of sin & guilt to forgiveness and fellowship.

2. Way by which to live. Younger Christians know the difference.

3. Way beyond the grave. I am res. and life... I go to prepare a place for you.

4. Am col. student illus.

C. Jesus straightforward. No bigot. Spoken in love.

Universal gospel, not universalism. Failure to note difference weakens Gospel.

Why evangelize.

"Rescue the perishing" From Greenland's icy Mountains

Two brief glances. Not just physical, but eternal.

The scaffolding of the eternal palace.

## II. Revolutions. Upheavals? Crises?

A. Three facts of life in Korea today.

1. The 38th parallel.

2. Political revolution, affects all society.

3. Growing pains in the church.

B. Moments of crisis in past three years.

1. Sept, 1959, church split.

2. April 19, 1960, student revolution, era of anarchy. Degeneration. Communist danger.

3. May & June 1960 anti-mission demonstrations.

4. May 1961, military revolution...has brought order, resp. for law, curbed corruption.

C. Through all this no restriction on freedom to preach.

## III. Results

A. Growth through splitting.

B. Political revolution has taught Christians the seriousness of the moment.

- C. The Seoul Story
- D. The Namwon story
- E. Blind school boy.
- F. Anniv. of Gen Assembly.
- G. Lee Ki-yuk plan

Churches invited this fall

Kunje - Moh-san

Namwon - Chu-Ian

Kal-chi

Wanjo - Shin-dub

## Prayer

Scripture: Jn. 14:12-14; 15:7,16,23-24; Mt. 17:19-21.

Text: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Jn. 14:13.

Intro. Andrew Murry "With Christ in the School of Prayer" based on disciples' request "Lord teach us to pray." ~~xxxTxxxxx~~ "Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, only how to pray" p. 6

Great men of the Bible, also men of prayer. Abraham, Moses, David, Nehemiah, Paul, Jesus above all. Also great men of Church history, down to present.

Prayer like telephone system. Involves many components. Battery, wire, connections, switches, diaphragms, speakers, listener, non-interference. Text.

*Prayer and God*  
A spiritual experience.

a. Harmony between God and worshipper. "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Jn 14:23.

i. Not confined to time and place--"neither in this mountain nor in Samaria shall ye worship"

ii. But in spirit and truth. God's gives Spirit. Jesus is full of grace and truth. Actual fellowship with God.

iii. Man made in image of God. "Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to His Divine original" p. 137.

iv. Man meant to fill, subdue and to have dominion as God's representative on earth. "His prayer was to have been the wonderful, though simple and most natural channel, in which the intercourse between the King in heaven and "his faithful servant man, as lord of this world, was to have been maintained." 139

v. Sin spoiled this. But "altho sin has for a time frustrated God's plans, prayer still remains what it would have been if man had never fallen: the proof of man's Godlikeness; the vehicle of his intercourse with the Infinite unseen One, the power that holds the hand that holds the destinies of the universe." 140

b. The Father gives the spirit--greatest of gifts. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Luke 11:13.

i. Best gift a good and wise father can bestow on a child on earth is his own spirit. 49. The father can bestow no higher gift than His own Spirit.

ii. If there is one thing on earth we can be sure of, it is this, that the Father desires to have us filled with His Spirit that He delights to give us His spirit.

c. Prayer is in the Name of Jesus.

i. "The free use of the Name of another is always the token of great confidence of close union." 187.

(a) Legal union--illus merchant & clerk.

(B) Life union.

(c) Union of love. Marriage.

ii. "The name represents the person; to ask in the Name is to ask in full union of interest and life and love with Himself as one who lives in and for Him." p. 190.

iii. From His throne Jesus can do through others what He Himself could not do. "Greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father."

iv. Prayer in His name is the way to share in the mighty power which Jesus has secured of the Father for His people.

2. Prayer and Faith. "Because of your unbelief--"For all time, the Master's explanation and reproof of impotence and failure in His church. 95.

a. We can pray with assurance--certainty of answer. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Mt. 7:7. "Chief thing in prayer is the assurance that prayer will be answered."

b. Prayer is two-sided--"The human is the asking the Divine is the giving." 35.

c. We sometimes are afraid of the answer "It is far easier the flesh to submit without the answer than to yield itself to be searched and purified by the Spirit until it has learnt to pray the prayer of faith. 35.

d. Faith links the two sides. In one aspect there must be faith before there can be prayer, in another the faith is the outcome and growth of prayer. Believe that ye have received. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have them and ye shall have them." Mk 11:24.

e. "The power to believe a promise depends entirely, but only on faith in the promiser." 86. Value of the promise depends on the promiser. Faith in the promise is fruit of faith in the promiser.

f. Faith is the hand or mouth by which we take and appropriate what is offered to us. It is also the ear by which I hear what is promised, and the eye by which I see what is offered me."

g. "When faith is in full exercise as eye and ear, as the faculty of the soul by which we see and hear God, then it will be able to exercise its full power, as hand and mouth, by which we appropriate God and His blessing. The power of reception will depend on the power of spiritual perception." 89

h. Illus: Physician--to put more strength in arms, build up whole physical condition. "So the cure of a feeble faith is also to be found in invigoration of our whole spiritual life by intercourse with God." 90.



3. Prayer and Life. Successful prayer linked to way we live.

- a. Pray as a child requests father.
- b. "Life as a child of God, then you will be able to pray as a child, and as a child you will most assuredly be heard." 40. Fatherlike giving is the response to childlike living." 41.
- c. Relation with fellow-men must be clear. "And whosoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one: that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mk. 11:25.
- d. Disobedience to the law of love to men is the great sin even of praying people, and the great cause of feebleness in of their prayer." 104.
- e. If God dealt with us after our sins, not one prayer could be heard. 105.
- f. Life is a whole, and the pious frame of the hour of prayer is judged of by God from the ordinary frame of the daily life of which the hour of prayer is but a small part" 106. "Not according to what I try to be when praying, but what I am when not praying, is my prayer dealt with by God." p.107.
- g. "If ye abide in me." Obedience and faith must go together. "The abiding of the branch in the vine is a life of never-ceasing growth." 165.
- h. Faith is obedience at home and looking to the Master; obedience is faith going out to do His will." 162. Fruitbearing is a part of our lives; a prerequisite of faith prayer.

4. Prayer and its methods.

- a. Jesus recommended a secret place of private prayer. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." Mt. 6:6.
  - i. The first thing in closet prayer is: I must meet my Father. *Faith & prayer.*
  - ii. My Father sees, my Father hears, my Father knows.
- b. Power of united prayer. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven." Mt. 18:19.
  - i. We learn to say not only "My Father" but "Our Father"
  - ii. Marks of true united prayer.
    - (a) Agreement as to the thing asked.
    - (b) In the name of Jesus
    - (c) The sure answer--It shall be done for them of my Father.

iii. Paul's stress on fact that we are members of a body.

c. Intercessory prayer.

- i. The boldness of God's friends. Lk 9
- ii. Prayer is an appeal to the friendship of God. "If we are God's friends, and come as such to Him, we must prove ourselves the friends of the needy; God's friendship to us and ours to others go hand in hand." 56.

iii. We must be living as His friends.

iv. Jesus taught disciples that they must pray, and how but seldom what to pray. 63, but he did command that we pray for laborers for his harvest.

→ v. Need for definite prayer--not a vague appeal to His mercy, an indefinite cry for blessing, but the distinct expression of definite need." 71. Illus. Trained troops of Europe vs. Transvaal Boers--latter learned to shoot at game like target.

d. Persevering prayer.---this is a great mystery.

i. Like plowman taking 10,000 steps, and sowing 10,000 seeds---looking to eventual harvest. 119.

ii. God is long-suffering. "God does not live in time with its past and future." 153.

iii. "A child so often wants to pick the half-ripe fruit; the husbandman knows to wait until the proper time." 120.

e. That the Father may be glorified. Text.

i. The glory of the Father must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer."

ii. Our selfish prayers--so often "the thought of our joy, or our pleasure is far stronger than any yearnings for God's glory." 156

O Thou, by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way;  
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;  
Lord, teach us how to pray!

James Montgomery



Scripture reading: John 15:1-17

Text: "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." Jn. 15:8

The Passover moon shone brightly as Jesus led His friends from the upper room, out across the Kidron valley. Grape vines could be seen clearly everywhere...gnarled stunted little vines rooted in <sup>every</sup> spare bit of precious Palestinian soil. The glowing embers of burning prunings could be seen here and there. Jesus had just spoken to His friends of cosmic truths of the Kingdom of God, and now in perfect allegory He gave them an <sup>intimate</sup> personal message encompassing the whole purpose of His three year association with them. The disciples were "naturally, wistfully, staring out beyond, to where He was going, and asking their questions. He answered them, and then in effect, He said, 'Come back now with Me and see what I plan for you on the earth level.'" (Morgan 251).

Here in John 15 Jesus used an allegory with clearly defined elements. I <sup>am</sup> and the vine, My Father is the vinedresser, you are the branches. Only the fruit is not so distinctly defined, yet it is not difficult to discern too. Jesus was using an allegorical figure <sup>so</sup> common in Biblical literature that the vine "actually became the symbol of the nation of Israel. The emblem on the coins of the Maccabees was the vine. One of the glories of the Temple was the great golden vine upon the front of the Holy Place...The vine was part and parcel of Jewish imagery; it was the very symbol of the nation of Israel." (Barclay 201)

The vine was a common figure in O.T. literature

Psalm 80 calls Israel a transplant out of Egypt:

"Thou didst remove a vine from Egypt; (80:8a)  
And it took deep root and filled the land." (80:9b)

Isaiah 5 is a complete parable <sup>allegory</sup> with Israel as a vineyard planted by God.

"My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill (5:1a)  
He expected it to produce good grapes,  
But it produced only worthless ones. (5:2b)  
For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,  
And the men of Judah His delightful plant.  
Thus He looked for justice, but behold bloodshed;  
For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress." (5:7)

Ezekiel 19 pictures Israel's plight as a result of her apostasy from God

"Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard. (19:10a)  
But it was plucked up in fury; (19:12a)  
And now it is planted in the wilderness  
In a dry and thirsty land." (19:13)

See also Jer. 2:21

Yet without exception, Old Testament use of this imagery expresses degeneration... God's disappointment with the failure of His people. Transplanted into fertile soil, nourished with His personal care, protected by His power...every advantage calculated to produce fruit, much fruit, good fruit...yet Israel had failed! Wild grapes, degenerate fruit, vines fit for burning...that was the sad tale.

Against this background of the failure of the "natural vine" (Rom 11:24) Jesus announced a fresh start where Christ Himself is the "ideal vine." "I am the true vine". The original Greek makes the emphasis: "I am the vine, the true." Jesus intended "to put Himself, under that figure of the vine in contrast with all that had gone before. 'I am the vine, the true.'" (Morgan 251) What was it God had been looking for all those centuries? Fruit, much fruit! And so I take it that the key text in our passage is verse 8: "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples." Three other verses show how this <sup>fruit-bearing</sup> is accomplished:

1. Pruning is to cause fruit-bearing. Vs. 2. "He prunes it [the vine] that it may bear more fruit."

2. Abiding is to cause fruit-bearing. Vs. 5 "He who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit."  
3. Call to discipleship is to cause fruit-bearing. vs. 16 "I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit."

1. Pruning causes fruit-bearing. On my Saturday afternoon hike several weeks ago I walked through peach orchards on low hills south of Chunju. The ground was littered with branches, some small, some quite large...pruned off the trees. I thought: "What a waste! How destructive! Plenty of fuel for the omds of the owner!" Yet examination showed a reason. Some branches were broken by the wind, others showed disease or rotted areas something like sores. Obviously the pruning was not to kill but to give better chance of life to the trees. Since the profit of the orchard owner depends upon both the quality and the quantity of the fruit, obviously the only intention of the pruning was to produce more fruit.

Such were Jesus' thoughts as He spoke the words of vs. 2 and vs. 6. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit." "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." "Everything is removed from the branch which tends to divert the vital power from the production of fruit" (Westcott p. 217). Note there are two kinds of pruning.

a. Branches which do not bear fruit are pruned. They were once in the vine, received life from the vine...but they did not produce! "Uselessness invites disaster" (Barclay 204) The nominal Christians, those who render lip-service only, the vine-dresser, cuts off...prunes away. He never does this hastily or without great sadness. Remember another parable of Jesus...of the vine which failed to produce and yet was given further opportunity when the farmer implored a second chance. God may prune away unproductive parts of an individual.

b. Branches which do produce are pruned "so that they may bear more fruit." Jesus left the application to us. Sometimes God cuts off some of our cherished plans, our ambitions. The cutting may involve afflictions for which we see no possible good purpose at the time. He may even remove a gifted leader from His church when we feel his need the most. But always the purpose of God is to give life not to kill, to produce fruit, not to destroy it.

Perhaps for us today a key idea is in that word prune. The Greek word means to cleanse, and it is the same word from which we get catharsis with which our doctors and leave the patient cleansed. In psychiatry an attempt may be made to alleviate fears and complexes by mental catharsis. So God sometimes has to cleanse us...to purge, to prune away. Vs. 3 continues that figure in a way which must have softened the implications of vs. 2 for the disciples (and for us). "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." What was the cleanser? "The Word, the whole revelation to which Christ had given expression was the spring and source, and it is sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12) to cut away the cancers of worldliness and sin. God's word is profitable that "the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (1 Tim. 3:17).

Let us remember that the pruning is done by the Husbandman who causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. The "wicked husbandmen" of yet another parable had done all in their power to deny the owner of the vineyard His rightful share of the fruits. But when Jesus said, "My Father is the husbandman" He assured us that God who prunes, has our good and His glory as His purpose. "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit"

2. Abiding is to cause fruit-bearing. The converse of being pruned is to abide. Anyone knows that grapes can be found hanging only from branches that are a part of the vine. The mysterious essence of life must flow from the vine into the branches where the fruit appears. The quality of the fruit depends upon that of the vine. When Jesus taught that He himself is the vine, and His disciples the branches, He assured us that we belong to a perfect stock, one without blemish, one capable of providing infusion of life infinitely exceeding any other vine. "I have come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." (Jn. 10:10).

How gracious then, these words which are both an invitation and a declaration: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing." (Vs. 4,5). God went to a lot of trouble so that we could be branches of the true vine. In our natural state we were anything but productive according to His standards. Wild grapes, degenerate, bitter, unfit for consumption. <sup>consigned to burning</sup> Such was our lot until by the marvelous grace of His choice we were grafted into the true vine. <sup>In Rom. 11, Paul</sup> speaks of the ingrafting of what is by nature a wild olive tree into a cultivated olive tree (Rom. 11:24). The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of baptism as meaning (among other things) a symbol of our "ingrafting into Christ." Abiding comes not by our own efforts but by God's gracious grafting!

Here is the precious truth that even such seemingly unworthy men as Peter and Thomas could grasp...yet it was to such men as they that Jesus gave the assurance: You are now branches. You may abide in me. "Apart from me you can do nothing..and by inference picked up again in vs. 7, "Abide in me, and you can do everything." For in vs. 7 He says, "If you abide in Me, and my words (the words from which I have already said have cleansed you) abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you." That Greek word is one of the strongest for prayer: "Utter your demands, whatever you are inclined to. Such demand always issues in fruitbearing." (Morgan 255). Whatever you wish! You can do everything when you abide in Christ.. even produce the fruit which is so important! Absolute fulfilment of prayer is connected with the personal fellowship of the believer with Christ.

Note that the "abiding" is not an end in itself, as wonderful, as satisfying, as precious as that may be. There may perhaps be Christians for whom "abiding" becomes purely the inner pleasure derived from intimate association with Christ. Just "feeling good" because we abide in Christ is not the complete fulfillment. The mystics, the hermits, the "transcendental meditators" (whatever they are), pursue a limited objective in assuming that their private spiritual expressions of joy and praise in the Lord are all there is to "abiding in Christ." The impact of the words of Jesus here (and of the Old Testament message as well) in using this <sup>same</sup> figure is that the supreme purpose of the Lord of the vineyard is that the branches produce fruit, much fruit, more fruit. "He in whom Christ lives must be abundantly fruitful, for it is His life alone which brings forth fruit." (Westcott 218) Abiding in Christ, "we can ask whatsoever you wish, and it shall be done for you" and what more should the branch abiding in the true vine desire more than to bear fruit? "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit!" (vs. 8.)

3. Call to discipleship is to cause fruit-bearing. The thought of verse 16 follows logically that of verse 8, so that we could read "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (vs 8) "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you ask of the Father in My name He may give it to you." It is significant that these two verses are separated by a description of what the fruit is which Jesus wants His disciples to bear, the fruit which effectively proves to the world that we are ~~the~~ <sup>what</sup> we claim to be... HIS DISCIPLES.

Look a moment at vss. 9-15. What does it tell us of the fruit?

a. The fruit is love... love perfectly exemplified between the Father and the



Son. Vs. 9: "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in my love." Also Vs. 12 and vs. 17

[b] The fruit is obedience...obedience issuing not from fear or demand of duty but of love. Vs. 10: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

[c] The fruit is joy...The complete joy which is already Christ's is to become progressive..."may be made full"...in you. Vs. 11: "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

[d] The fruit is sacrifice...The fruits of righteousness in terms of love and obedience will often require costly sacrifice. Vs. 13: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

Every aspect of the fruit was demonstrated by Jesus Himself, for His friends. He emphasizes that they are His friends, not His slaves, and with them He has shared His intimate thoughts...the things He Himself heard from the Heavenly Father, the thoughts He knew would bear fruit in the lives of His disciples, and in the lives of all those who follow in their steps, and like them are chosen and appointed. Why? "To go and bear fruit." What fruits did He mean? Those just mentioned, all the fruits of righteousness (a phrase so commonly used by Paul and other New Testament writers), and the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Gal. 6

Jesus said "Go and bear fruit"  
But there were also the fruits in terms of the witness<sup>by</sup> of people truly "abiding in the vine." Fruit-bearing is not merely sitting at the feet of the Master of the Sermon on the Mount, It is not merely the rapture of the Saviour on the Mt. of transfiguration...it is descending among the troubled, the weary, the faint, the sick, and the sinful to rescue and to save souls. Jesus had spoken in Jn. 4:35-36, "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together." I call you friends, says the Master, "partners" that together we may bear fruit to the glory of the Father. I chose you for two things, to fruit-bearing and to asking. In this way you will be effective; "You will bear fruit" and the effect will be lasting, permanent..."Your fruit shall remain."

<sup>chosen for fruitbearing... ever</sup>  
Pruned of deadness, abiding in true LIFE, asking of the Father...such characterizes the appointees of the Great Vinedresser...that ye bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit. "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit."

# 385

# 214



10/27/74

Scripture reading: Lk. 8:19-21; John 15:12-17.

Texts: Jn. 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Lk. 8:20-21 My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.

The Korean language has an excellent word to use as a descriptive title for Jesus. It is the word Ku-joo, a combination of two Chinese characters meaning to save, and a lord or master. In English we have to use the longer phrase: "Savior and Lord" for this very neat and expressive Korean term, and on occasions like this are forced to admit that sometimes the Korean language is better than our precious English.

We Christians affirm that God grants us salvation on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ as Ku-joo, as Savior and Lord. Unfortunately Christians the world over, and Korea is no exception, often keep the emphasis upon the "Saviorhood" of Christ and neglect His Lordship. It is so much easier to give mental and verbal assent to the doctrine that Christ has saved us from sin, than it is to adopt a day-by-day lifestyle where Christ is lord and master of every phase of daily activity. For the purposes of our meditation today, we are going to assume that all of us accept the saving work of Jesus on the cross and recognize that we are saved from the power of Satan and the guilt of sin, and the eternal punishment of hell. We have joy and hope and peace as a result. We can look forward to an eternity in heaven because Jesus ~~XXXXXXXX~~ saves us.

But what about the other part? Is Jesus also our Lord, our Master? Are our lives lived each day in the knowledge that He is to be obeyed in all things? Let us each answer this question for ourselves as we remember two texts from passages we have just read: Jn. 15:14 "You are my friends if you do what I command you." and Lk. 8:21: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

1. Those closest to Jesus are those who recognize His Lordship. On one occasion (Lk 8:19-21) Jesus was very busy teaching his disciples and a large multitude, healing their diseases. Only those who have worked in an Oriental village can understand how quickly such a crowd can gather, how closely they pack about, and how urgent each is with his need for help. Someone brought word that His mother and brothers were on the outskirts of the crowd wanting to see Him but unable to do so. Jesus seized the opportunity to make a point: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." More than blood-kinship on the human level, we can belong to Christ's own family when we do what God commands. As people called Christians we bear a surname making us members of the family of Jesus, but the name means nothing without corresponding obedience. In verse 16 just above Jesus had said: "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light." There is no such thing as an inner faith without an outer light. Our lives are lamps upon a stand for all to see, in obedience to God, or they are useless. Kinship, bearing the name of Christian, rests upon obedience in our lives, *recognizing Christ as Lord.*

In Jn. 15:14 Jesus says the same thing in a different way. "You are my friends if you do what I command you." Actually Jesus is here stressing a relationship between Himself and His disciples which was quite different from that of master and servant. <sup>with Jesus' intent</sup> He points out that a servant does not know what the master is doing, whereas He has informed them of what the Father has made known to Him. Therefore he wants to call them friends. Yet even so, this close relationship was to be based on the willingness of the disciples to hear and obey His words. It was a relationship based on love and not on the usual physical subservience of slaves to a Master.

These two passages clearly teach us that those closest to Christ...his mother, His brothers, His friends...are those who do what He commands...who recognize his Lordship. The complete Christian not only accepts Christ as Saviour from sin but assumes a life-long relationship of acknowledging Him as Lord of all our lives. "You are my friends, if you do what I command you."

2. Recognition of Christ's Lordship demonstrates real faith. Quite often among my friends here in Korea I hear someone say: "So-and-so has great faith, he attends dawn prayer meeting ~~fx~~ regularly." Lest we Americans get too smug about this, remember that we do the same thing in a different way using a different phrase: "So-and-so is so deeply spiritual." I hope that these Korean and American friends deserve these compliments but on a far firmer base than these words imply. For if a life of real faith is limited only to certain <sup>parts</sup> functions such as attendance upon meetings, or ability to pray long and eloquently, or even teach a good Bible class, it fails to come up to the expectation of Jesus who wants to be complete Lord of all our lives, attitudes, conversations, etc. *and part to some evidence of piety*

In Mt. 7:24-27, Jesus told of the wise and foolish men who built houses. One built on sand and it collapsed when the winds and the rain came. The other build on a rock and withstood the storm. This parable is at the end of the Sermon on the Mount with its lofty description of the Christian way of life. The point of the parable is that whoever hears these words Jesus has been preaching and ~~does not~~ "do" them is building on sand, but the doer was building on a rock. A faith without real obedience means nothing. The Book of James makes this abundantly clear too: James 2:17: "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

At this point I can hear somebody raise the objection, "Oh, but ours is not a religion of ~~any~~ works...we are saved by faith." That is where we make our mistake. It is a religion where salvation is the gift of God received by faith, but it is a religion of good works. The good works are not the root of the tree but the fruit, and if there is any life in the tree at all there must be fruits. And the fruits are abundant when the life recognizes Jesus as Lord. Paul tells us in Eph. 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." To be complete, to be whole, to be a really "live" Christian there must be both acceptance of Christ as Saviour and obedience to Him as Lord. Neither is sufficient alone. Both are necessary to the other. As we sing in a familiar chorus: *In teaching this right with this chapter*

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

3. Recognizing Christ as Lord governs all of a Christian's Life. Who is the master of our lives? How easy it is for most of us to yield to the constant temptation to replace Jesus with a substitute Master? Usually that substitute is ourselves...our own ~~desires~~, meeting our own ~~needs~~, fulfilling our own ambitions, enjoying our own pleasures. Maybe missionaries are peculiarly subject to this, because it is so easy to elevate the fulfilling of our own dreams for some program above everything else...including accepting the fact that after all Jesus is the Lord of our lives and it is doing what He commands rather than accomplishing the goals we have set (even for His work) which makes us after all His mother, his brothers, and his friends. On the human level servants obey out of fear, or coercion of some sort, or to earn money, but the obedience of the Christian to his Lord is entirely out of love and the desire to please the Master. *we pay the price for substituting ourselves for master in anxiety, frustration, and fear of failure*

It would be easy at this point to list a lot of do's and don't's which would indicate what we mean by doing what Christ commands in order to make Him Lord. If we tried we could not begin to catalogue all this, but they are all in the Scriptures for those who would like to discover them. We can spend time trying to mine all this gold, and never succeed. But I want to mention

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three basic principles whereby we can obey. The exercise of these three are a response to His Lordship of our lives. They are (1) love, (2) sacrifice, and (3) fruit-bearing. Jesus speaks of all of these ~~xx~~ in John 15.

a. Love Here is His great commandment. Just above the text in verse 12, Jesus said: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." Just below in verse 17 He repeats this: "This I command you, to love one another." This is not just some sentimental insipid on-and-off matter...it is the kind of attitude Jesus constantly expressed in His treatment of all about Him, whether teaching His disciples or dealing with the multitudes and their problems. He demonstrated this by His willingness to die, a matter to which He alluded in the verse before this text: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." Here is the living in obedience to Christ's Lordship which makes it possible to keep all the ten commandments and then some. With a love ~~xx~~ like that which lays down life for friends, they will honor their parents, instead of stealing they will give to those who need, instead of killing they will want to preserve life, instead of committing adultery they will exalt the family life in purity, instead of bearing false witness they will always tell the truth, instead of coveting what our neighbor has they will try to help him, instead of anger they will be joy, instead of slander there will be compliments, ~~xx~~ instead of cheating in business matters there will be strict honesty, instead of passing by on the other side, there will be deep concern for a stricken neighbor. When Jesus told us to "do what He commands" it is in the context of the commandment to love one another. The Christian who prides himself upon orthodoxy of beliefs in Christ as Savior but ignores this outright command of our Lord through any improper relationship with others has no right to claim friendship with Christ. Because Christ is not really His Master.

*Can't in heart*

b. Sacrifice. When Jesus becomes Lord of our lives~~xx~~, it means times of sacrifice. He taught this in the last ~~xxxxxxx~~ paragraph of this chapter. 15:18-20.. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you..." Because Jesus is Lord, it is necessary to give up other lords. This is the price we pay. He demands our time, even when there are other things we would rather do. He demands our loyalty above family, above jobs, above public opinion, above every human institution. There can be no other gods before Him. The world does not understand this, or it despises this. Because of our allegiance to a Lord they do not know and love, the world will hate us, it will persecute us, it will discriminate against us, it will reject us. All these things happened to Jesus, and He predicted they would happen to His servants. This means we will sometimes suffer financially, or physically, or socially. That is the price we must pay and perhaps the great temptation of large parts of the church today is to conform to this world, to take the easy way out by compromise with other lords that the Lord Jesus Christ. When Christians are unwilling to pay the cost of making Him Lord, to sacrifice, they are on the road to becoming dead Christians. Jesus said: Mt. 16:26, "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? or what will a man give in return for his ~~xx~~ life?" No indeed, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (vs. 24) Doing the word of Jesus means sacrificing everything...the world...to make Him Lord.

c. Fruit-bearing. Love, sacrifice, fruit. This text is from the great chapter in John about the vine, its branches, and its fruit. It is abundantly clear that fruit-bearing is what Jesus is primarily concerned about and that fruitbearing is the supreme test of ~~xxxxxxx~~ our relationship with Him, our discipleship, our recognition of His lordship: Jn. 15:8 "By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples." ~~xx~~ This is because our Lord wants not only us, but all men to recognize His Lordship. Fruitbearing is



causing other men to accept Him as Lord. This is tied in this verse to glorifying the Father. That is because the real meaning of glorify is to "reveal the true likeness of" "To make known" and when our fruitbearing causes men to accept the Son they glorify the Father because they cause others to know and understand the great love and grace and saving power of the Heavenly Father. And so "doing His word" means "above all else bearing this kind of fruit. Why do the communists succeed?...because they zealously recruit. Why do liquor and tobacco salesmen get rich, because they stop at nothing to advertize. The best advertisement a Christian gives of his product is a life completely dedicated to pleasing one Master. In this he is closer to Jesus than mother or brother or friend, he is demonstrating the true faith which rests all of life on this Lord, and he lives a life of love, sacrifice and fruitbearing. You are my friends if you do what I command you.