

## CONTENTS 1949

Radio Messages of Pastor Robert L. Donnelly -

*WONDERFUL WORD*

- Jan. 9 - THE BIBLE – A LIGHT
- Jan. 16 - GOD’S WORD – A FIRE
- Jan. 23 - GOD’S WORD – Like a HAMMER
- April 3 - GOD’S WORD – SEED
- April 10 - GOD’S WORD – SWORD of the SPIRIT
- April 24 - THE BIBLE – WORD of the LORD
- May 1 - THE BIBLE – The LAW of the LORD
- May 8 - MOTHERS of the BIBLE
- May 15 - PEOPLE of the BIBLE – ISRAELITES, GENTILES, CHRISTIANS
- May 22 - PEOPLE of the BIBLE – ENOCH, DAVID, RUTH, PETER
- May 29 - CHRIST – OUR HOPE
- June 5 - CHRIST – OUR PEACE
- June 12 - CHRIST – OUR LIFE
- June 19 - THE MAN CHRIST JESUS
- July 3 - THE DEITY of CHRIST
- July 10 - JESUS – THE PROPHET
- July 17 - JESUS – THE PRIEST
- July 31 - JESUS – THE KING
- Aug. 8 - JESUS CHRIST – JUDGE of ALL
- Sept. 4 - JESUS – JEHOVAH-RAPHA – THE GREAT PHYSICIAN
- Sept. 11 - JESUS – Rose of Sharon, Lily of the Valleys, Root & Offspring of David, Morning Star
- Sept. 18 - JESUS – THE SHEPHERD
- Sept. 19 - THE BIBLE – BOOK of STANDARDS
- Sept. 25 - JESUS – THE BUILDER
- Oct. 9 - JESUS – THE ROCK
- Oct. 16 - JESUS – THE SAVIOUR
- Oct. 30 - JESUS – THE POWER of GOD
- Nov. 6 - CHRIST – THE WISDOM of GOD
- Nov. 13 - JESUS – THE WAY
- Nov. 20 - JESUS – THE BREAD of LIFE
- Nov. 27 - JESUS – THE LAMB of GOD
- Dec. 12 - JESUS – JEHOVAH TSIDKENU – THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS
- Dec. 19 - JESUS – EMMANUEL – GOD WITH US
- Dec. 25 - JESUS – THE GIFT OF GOD

THE BIBLE – A LIGHT

My text this morning is *“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* (Psalm 119:105). My subject is, *The Bible, a Light*; and, for the next few Sundays, as the LORD leads, we want to study with you what the Bible *IS*, rather than the great truths it contains. Now, let us think of the Bible as a Light and a Lamp. The simile used in my text – *“a lamp unto my feet”* is very significant. The picture drawn by these words is of a traveller on a journey: the night is dark, and the way unknown, but this traveller has a light which shines out around him, showing the path that he must immediately follow. This is a very true and lovely description of one who is on the journey of life, who has taken the Bible as the lamp for his feet, and a light for his path. Please note:

– *It is a Lamp for the Feet* – While it is blessedly true that the Bible enlightens the mind, and reveals truth to the intellect, it is only to this end: that we might walk in the Straight and Narrow Way. In other words, all facts of History or Prophecy in the Bible; all its Poetry and Drama; all its Doctrines and Parables, recorded by inspiration and preserved by divine Providence, are designed for this one purpose – to show us the way to walk – the path to take, to lead us safely through the darkness and dangers of this evil world. In short, all the truth of Holy Scripture is designed to change our nature; to affect our character; to show us how we may walk and please God. *“Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.”*

– *It Lights the Path to God* – The Bible, first of all, illuminates the path *to* God. How to properly approach the Majesty in the Heavens is a very important matter, to which we should give very earnest consideration. If we don't know the way to God, then certainly we can never know the way to God's Heaven. The first word of Scripture that I would bring to you this morning, as to the way to God, is found in John 14:6 *“No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* These are the words of the LORD Jesus Christ. John the Baptist said of Jesus, *“That was the true light which lights every man that cometh into the world”* (John 1:9). Then again, in 1 Timothy 2:5, *“For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man – the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.”* That “due time” is *NOW*. I declare unto all who hear today, you may come into the Presence of the LORD of Glory by and through Jesus Christ. And once again I would remind you, that you can't come to Him by *ANY OTHER* way. There is no other path that leads to the Throne of God, except by Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

– *It Reveals the Nature and Character of God* – Not only does the Bible light the way to God, it lights up the Being, the Nature and the Character of God. Do you want to know what God is like? The Bible illuminates Him. Come with me now to a few Scriptures that reveal the Character and Nature of our Creator. Let us begin with the Book of Genesis 2:9, *“And the LORD God called unto Adam and said unto him, ‘Where art thou?’”* Do you not see God in this picture, seeking man who is hiding because of his sin? Do you ask why does He seek him? Read on and you will see. It is not to punish him for his sin (sin brings its own punishment, as many of us have already found, to our sorrow); He is seeking only to save, to provide a suitable covering, now that sin has robbed man of the glory wherewith he was once arrayed. Here we find in the early records of our race, that God takes the initiative to restore His sinning creatures to Himself. If you read the Bible through and through as I have done, this picture shines clearer, and yet more clear, from Genesis to Revelation. God is seeking man, because He longs for his fellowship. I may be speaking to one who is hiding from God. You have often heard Him call your name. You know He is seeking you, but as yet you are afraid to meet the all-seeing eye of our God. Let me assure you again, He seeks you only to save you. Read it today in Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

– *It Reveals the Power of God* – Stand with me in the Book of Exodus, and see how the Scriptures reveal the power of our God to both save and to keep. He brought His people out from under the cruel hand of the oppressor, and sustained them 40 years in a desert land, a waste and howling wilderness. The Bible declares in 1 Corinthians 10:4 *“For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ.”* With such a revelation of the ability of our God to supply every need of an entire nation by supernatural means, can you, my troubled anxious listener, not trust Him to supply all your

needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus? Jesus said, *“Consider the sparrows, consider the ravens, God feeds them. How much more will He feed you, Oh you of little faith!”*

We could go through the Bible, book by book, each chapter shedding more and more light on the *Being* of our God – still we could not know Him as He is, were it not for the marvellous manifestation of God in Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 3:16 says, *“God was manifest in the flesh.”* My text says, *“Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet.”* I followed that light and it led me right to the feet of Jesus Christ, even as the star of the East led the wise men to the house where Jesus was.

I had walked life's way with an easy tread,  
had followed where comfort and pleasures led,  
Until one day, in a quiet place,  
I met the Master, face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,  
much thought for my body, but none for my soul,  
I had entered to win in life's big race  
when I met the Master face to face.

I had built my castles and reared them high,  
with their towers that pierced the blue of the sky;  
I had sworn to rule with an iron mace,  
when I met the Master face to face.

I met Him, and knew Him, and blushed to see  
that His eyes full of sorrow were fixed on me;  
And I faltered and fell at His feet that day  
while my castles melted and vanished away.

Melted and vanished, and in their place  
naught else did I see but the Master's face;  
And I cried aloud: 'Oh, make me meet  
to follow the steps of Thy wounded feet.'

My thought is now for the souls of men;  
I have lost my life to find it again;  
E'er since that day in a quiet place,  
when I met the Master face to face.

– *It Reveals the Will of God* – Not only does the Bible light the way to God, and enlighten us as to His nature and character; but it also sheds its light on the path we must follow if we would do the will of God. Having led us to the source of all light, we are enjoined in John 1:7, to *“walk in the light as He is in the light.”* *“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet.”* How many thousands of people there are in our land, who profess a desire to know what is the will of God for their lives, yet they show no intention of walking in the light as He is in the light. This Word, which is a light for our path, only shines so far as we walk in that path. The principle of divine guidance is: we are shown the next step to take, but no more until we take that step. Just as a man carrying a lantern on a dark night can see only a short way ahead, if he would see more of the path he must walk forward on the path he does see. We cannot see the end of the day as morning comes upon us, nor can we see the end of life's way as we begin to walk with God. But light is given as light is accepted. One cannot know what it is to be a Christian until one has accepted Christ. *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path.”*

– *It is an Ever-Increasing Light* – *“But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble,”* Proverbs 4:18-19. Then again, in 2 Peter 1:19 *“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”* Notice, both these Scriptures speak of the light growing brighter until it is lost in the greater brightness of a new day. The further on we go with the LORD, the brighter becomes the way, and brighter shines the light from that City of Gold. *“Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known”* (1 Corinthians 13:12). So many of life's experiences are dark and mysterious – things happen that we cannot explain – sorrows overtake us, we know not why.

*Friends we have loved in their beauty and bloom; Are snatched from our side and laid in the tomb.*

Friends can sympathize, neighbours may comfort, but God's Word says that *“all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28).

– *It Lights up the Tomb* – I must close now, with this blessed truth. The Bible puts light in the tomb, takes the darkness from the grave, points us safely through the gloom and assures the dying Christian in words like these, *“I AM the Resurrection, and the Life: he who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”* (John 11:25, 26).

Do you believe this?

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GOD'S WORD – A FIRE

Jeremiah 23:29 – *“Is not My Word like as a fire? says the LORD; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”*

I am sure we have all, at some time in our lives, experienced the fact that words can burn. Perhaps some of you can recall words that were spoken to you, years and years ago, that have left an indelible impression on your memory. You can never erase those words, such was the force and fire by which they were spoken. Now the Word of the LORD has within it such a peculiar penetrating and heart-warming quality. Often times men and women have been so gripped by its message, and stirred by its burning appeal, that their lives have been completely transformed. They have been spoken of in history as “men and women, on fire.” JEREMIAH, was such a man. He is the writer of the Book from whence my text *“Is not My Word like as a fire? says the LORD”* is taken. Jeremiah spoke words like these: Why should I speak anymore in the name of the LORD? People only mock at it, and make a sport of me. *“Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name. But His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay”* (Jeremiah 20:9) That is, “I couldn’t keep it in. It was so hot, it burned right to the marrow of my bones.” Surely the Word of the LORD is as a fire.

I can appreciate something of the prophet’s experience in this respect. How could one be a preacher of the Gospel, an ambassador for the KING of Kings, giving the greatest message that ever fell on the ears of mortal man, and not feel something of the heavenly fire burning in his heart? Moses also, to whom God spoke out of the bush of fire, was one who experienced that burning in his heart. There was something in those words that so gripped his heart, that he started right off to Egypt, to bring his people out of their bondage and slavery. No wonder Mrs. C. F. Alexander wrote of him:

This was the bravest warrior that ever buckled sword;  
This the most gifted poet that ever breathed a word;  
And never earth’s philosopher traced with his golden pen  
On the deathless page, truths half so sage as he wrote down for me.

There was DAVID, sweetest singer of Israel, whose Psalms have been read and sung around the world; and ELIJAH, who was called the prophet of fire; and ISAIAH, who prophesied and said *“... Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”* (Isaiah 33:14). Then there was JOHN THE BAPTIST, who appeared in the spirit and power of Elijah. Though he prophesied in the wilderness of Judea, yet such was the burning truth of the message he brought, that the Scripture declares *“Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him”* (Matthew 3:5). John rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and King Herod for his adultery, and declared unto all the people that he was but the advance agent of One who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire, *“Whose fan is in His hand; and He will . . . gather His wheat into His granary, and will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”* (Luke 3:16, 17).

Time would fail us to tell of men like LUTHER, KNOX, BOOTH, FINNEY, SPURGEON, MOODY, JONATHAN EDWARDS, and many, many others in whose hearts the Word of God so burned, that they would say, even as Jeremiah of old, *“... His Word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not”* (Jeremiah 20:9). It is true even in our day that *“He makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire”* (Psalm 104:4). Yes, this precious Book is a *“Book of fire”* – hell trembles when men are kindled by its sacred flame.

The Bible *must* be a *“Book of fire”* because it is the *“Book of God”*. In Hebrews 12:29 it is written that *“our God is a consuming fire.”* Again, it must be a *“Book of fire”*, because it deals with the sin-question, and sin is proof against anything but fire. (There is a sense in which sin is in itself a fire – the Bible speaks of the unruly tongue as a fire that *“sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”* (James 3:6). The best way to fight fire is with fire.)

The best way for you, my listener, to fight the fires of evil passion, of filthy habits, of unholy desires, is with the fire of the Word of God. *“Is not My Word as a fire? says the LORD.”* Read the Word. Make it

your constant companion. Let its message go right to your heart. Let it warn you and alarm you of the certain end of sin. Let it show you the only cure, the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, on whom fell the fires of Judgment. Take your position there, under its shadow. The fires of sin were not at the Cross with the fire of Judgment. There you will be safe.

Let me emphasize again the fact that sin is proof against anything but God's Word of fire. *Philosophy* may try to explain it away; but it's still there. *Education* may describe sin in more pleasant terms, but it's just as ugly as ever it was. "*Mind over matter*" people may prove that sin doesn't exist, but that is just another phase of sin's delusion. *Will-power* may repress it, *Culture* may cover it, *Resolution* may control it and *Environment* reduce it; but hear me, only God's Word can cure it, and that by *FIRE*.

The water of the *Church's Baptism* cannot loosen the sinner from his sin; nor can the sacrament of the *Communion Service* deliver him from its awful dominion. *Joining a church* will have no more effect on the sin-question than joining a Lodge or a Club. Writing your name on a *pledge card* will do no more for you than writing your name in the sand of the ocean's shore. *Reading good books* may serve only to make you a good sinner. But if you will read *God's Book* with an honest heart, I declare unto you on the authority of the Word itself, YOU WILL KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO PASS FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE! And *then* you will be ready for the ordinance of Baptism; *then* you will have the assurance that your name is written down in the Lamb's Book of Life; *then* you will have the right to the Communion table. It will not be necessary for you to sign a pledge, because God Himself has pledged to keep all those who put their trust in Him.

Now, let us go to Luke's Gospel (24:32). Here is the setting: two of Christ's disciples are travelling along the dusty road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Their hopes are dashed to the ground. They are joined by a Stranger who enters into conversation with them, and shows a remarkable insight into the holy Scriptures. So, arriving at their village, they persuade Him to come in and stay for supper. As they are seated around the table, He takes the bread and breaks it, their eyes are opened, and He disappears. Then they realize they have had in their company, their risen LORD, who they had thought was still lying in the tomb. Now listen to what they said, "*Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?*" (Luke 24:32). Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us? My text again: "*Is not My Word as a Fire? says the LORD.*"

Here is the message I would leave with you: you may be travelling along life's dusty road, oppressed by your cares and worries, disappointed, discouraged; the bottom has dropped out of your basket, dashing all your hopes to the ground. Listen, my friend, there is a Stranger travelling with you. He is right by your side right now, while I speak. If you will hear His words your heart will burn as did the heart of Cleopas of old. Hear Him speak words like these to you:

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matt.11:28)

*"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"* (John 7:37).

*"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

*"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:14, 15).

*"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid"* (John 14:27).

*"In my Father's house are many mansions: ... I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2).

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GOD'S WORD – LIKE A HAMMER

Jeremiah 23:29 – *“Is not My Word like as a fire? says the LORD; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”*

We are turning again to Jeremiah 23:29 in our study about the Word of God. *“Is not My Word like as a fire, says the LORD; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”* Note the connection – Fire first, and then the Hammer. We are all familiar with the proverb: “Strike while the iron is hot;” but in this case, it is a rock that must be struck. It is a rock that must be broken.

The picture suggested by this text brings to my mind an experience of some years ago, when we were trying to clear our homestead of brush and rocks. Up there, about half way between *BRIGHT SAND* and *TURTLE LAKE*, when we found a rock that was too big to move, we would pile brush and wood around it and burn it. Keep piling on more wood and brush, until the rock was just about red hot, and then throw a pail of water on it, and go at it with the sledge hammer. And we could usually break up the rock to the depth that the heat had penetrated. Some rocks were so large and so solid that we would have to repeat the process several times before we had the thing whittled down small enough to handle. Many years have passed since then, and I am still in the “land-clearing” and “rock-breaking” business; but for the past 16 years the land has been the lives of men and women, boys and girls; the rocks, those unregenerate and sin-hardened hearts that defy all natural means of breaking up and breaking down. But, thanks be to God: *“Is not My Word like as a fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”*

So, I just keep on heaping God's Word around their vain hopes, useless excuses, and miserable works of righteousness. (Those things can never meet the requirements of God's eternal standard of holiness, nor atone for innumerable transgressions and deeds of iniquity.) Then they are set fire with the Words of the Almighty; and, while the heart is hot with Holy Ghost conviction, one can go at them with the sledge hammer of the Word of God. Words like these found in Romans 5:6-9 can be used: *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”* Or again, Romans 6:23 – *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our LORD.”*

Then, here is one in Isaiah 53:5-6 that has broken many a heart: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”*

You remember the story in Acts 8 about Philip the evangelist, and the man from Ethiopia, a minister of finance, if you please, for Queen Candace of Ethiopia. The setting is this: the great man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, Jerusalem being the religious capital of the Eastern world. He had been witness to all the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. He had seen the sacrifice of possibly dozens of animals, and blood flowing like water around the Jewish altar; but now he is returning to his own country, as dissatisfied with himself and as hungry for God as ever he was before. He is reading this very verse that I have just quoted from Isaiah 53:6. Philip the evangelist is running along the highway, and is invited to share a ride. The great man asked Philip about his verse, saying, *“Of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?”* Now please notice, Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. The story closes with the Ethiopian being a born again, baptized believer, going on his way rejoicing.

I would like to bring the Hammer of this Word down again on your hearts this morning, until the impact of it is felt to the very foundation of your being – until all your respectability and personal integrity is smashed to atoms – until you know as you have never known before that *“All we like sheep have gone astray, and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* – until you know that you never have done, and never can do anything to merit God's favour, or earn an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I'm sure we all realize that the Bible abounds in metaphors – figures of speech, so apt and descriptive

that we immediately gain the proper concept and idea of what is intended. The figure of a hammer, used here, is very suggestive. We are made very conscious of its importance these days, when there is so much prominence given to the country of Russia, which has adopted the symbol of the hammer and sickle as its banner of progress and conquest. Originally it signified only that industry and agriculture were united in a common work for a common goal. But in later years it has taken on a more destructive and sinister meaning. Indeed, it has become just as much a religious instrument as the four-armed cross, the Swastika of the Nazis. So much so, that cartoons have been published showing a disciple of Karl Marx climbing a ladder to heaven with the hammer and sickle to put God off His throne. I realize that many thousands of people are carried away by communism's deceptive and destructive materialistic philosophy that "all we need is plenty of good food that can be provided by agriculture, which in turn is provided with the best of mechanical equipment, by industry." Yes, there are millions of people who would never consider themselves as communists, but are nevertheless as thoroughly atheistic and anti-God as the most devout of Stalin's followers.

I would like to point out that the best equipment, and the finest crops, will never meet the need of the human heart. The hammer and sickle may be alright for the body, but we need the Hammer of the Word of Truth to shape our lives, to form our characters – to govern our behaviour – to fit us at last for Heaven, the land where the fruitful "*tree of life*" grows in the midst of the Paradise of God. Furthermore, I would like to remind you that God has His own way of managing the food production of this good earth. Famine and plagues are already visiting parts of the world. Scripture declares that "*the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*" (Psalm 9:17). Many people are growing very much alarmed at the progress of the nation that marches under the banner of the hammer and sickle – alarmed at the fearful spread of communism; as though the only way this can be defeated is by force of arms, colossal battleships, and super flying fortresses.

Just listen while I tell you (and you know it's true): If our country and our neighbours to the south, all professing to be Christian people, would just begin to practice the great principles of Christianity, by the power of the risen Christ indwelling our hearts and lives, communism would be stopped at our borders.

I submit to you this morning, this evident fact that the only reason we are afraid of communism is because we know that our own profession of being a Christian land is so obviously false, and that the rule of the dollar has entirely supplanted the rule of our God. We have created a condition that is, on one hand, ripe for revolution, or, on the other hand, ripe for revival.

I must close; but before I do let me say: Do not expect this revival to begin in Ottawa. Do not wait for our legislators to begin crying out to God. It may be too late, then. This revival must begin where a revolution begins – with the common people. Folks like you and me. Let us line up under the Banner of the Bible, the Word of God. "*For is not My Word like as a fire, and like a hammer? says the LORD.*"

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GOD'S WORD – SEED

For our study this morning we have chosen the subject “The Word of God is Seed.” For a text nothing could be more fitting than Luke 8:11 *“The seed is the Word of God.”* This verse is taken from the Parable of the Sower found in Luke 8:4-15. *“Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell on stony places, some fell among thorns, others fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.”*

Jesus taught some very simple yet profound truths, using the figure of a farmer sowing his field; and, seeing the times in which we live, we would do well to give attention to them. I would like you to see, first of all, that the sowing of the fields is the responsibility of the owner of the fields; and that you and I are God's field. *“It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.”*

We could note, just here, in passing, that we are all made of the dust of the ground, for it is written, *“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”* (Genesis 3:19).

You have probably noticed that neither seeding nor cultivation is necessary to produce a crop of weeds – they thrive on neglect and carelessness. What must one do to be a waster – a failure? The answer is, “Nothing.” What must one do to produce thorns and briars? The answer is, “Nothing.” Just neglect it. Just let it alone. What must one do to produce a profitable harvest? The answer is, “Work!” (Just here, let us notice that to produce fruit, or grain, berries or vegetables, the care of the soil is entirely in the hands of man. Whereas the sending of rain and sunshine is in the hands of God. And God always looks after His part.)

Now the soil in this parable is your heart and mine, having a tremendous capacity to produce, according to the seed that is sown and the care given to the soil. According to Luke 8:15, good soil is an honest heart. That is all God asks of anyone – just an honest heart. If anyone is honest with God, they will be honest with God's Word; and when you are honest with God's Word, it will grow and produce a bountiful harvest. It is perfectly reasonable for God to desire some profit from His farm, some fruit from His field; and that He should supply the seed and supervise the sowing is to be expected. My text says, *“The seed is the Word of God.”*

I am thinking just now of some of the great characters of the past who very early in life had the Word of God planted in their hearts; and what a blessing they have been to all succeeding generations. How fruitful and fragrant was the life of *JOSEPH*, for instance. What an unending source of inspiration and encouragement has been the story of his life, found in the Book of Genesis (ch. 37 to 48). What is the explanation for the greatness of men such as *PAUL*, the Apostle; *LUTHER*, the Reformer; *WILBERFORCE*, the Emancipator; *WHITEFIELD*, the Evangelist; *CAREY*, the Missionary; and *BOOTH*, the poor man's Friend? There is only one answer: their lives had been planted with the Word of God; and because they saw to it that the soil of their heart was kept in a suitable condition, they brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold.

Now the Word of God has transforming power. 1 Peter 1:23 says, *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which lives and abides forever.”* Think of it, *“Born again, by the Word of God.”* We know that in the beginning God created all things by the Word of His power; also, that His Word was contradicted by Satan and disbelieved by Adam and Eve. The result was death, *“For man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”*

Since death came by doubting God's Word, it is evident that life can be restored by believing God's Word – and that is the message of the Gospel. Here is a word – believe it and you shall pass from death unto life: *“If you confess with your mouth the LORD Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Romans 10:9-10).

Now the Word of God is planted to bring forth fruit. It grows in human hearts, just like a seed grows in the soil. A seed sends out roots and lays hold of the elements surrounding it. Such is its power, that these dissolve – they come to an end. In the same way, the Word of God lays hold of evil desires and sinful habits and iniquitous practises in our lives, and causes instead the fruit of the Spirit to grow – *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance* (Galatians 5:22).



The original plan and purpose of God was, *“Let us make man in our image”* (Genesis 1:26). Quite evidently, the work has been terribly spoiled, and ruined by sin; but the Word of God has transforming power. Therein is revealed as in a mirror the power and glory, the majesty and mercy, the justice and compassion of the One True and Living God. In this Word, we learn the complete and utter wretchedness and ruin that sin has wrought in the human heart. In this Word, we are shown the absolute helplessness and hopelessness of the human will to cope with the situation. And in this Word, we are shown the all-sufficient remedy, the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ. For *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”* (2 Corinthians 5:21). And so, the inspired Apostle John declares, in 1 John 3:2, *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”* That phrase, *“when He shall appear,”* leads us to our final thought for this morning.

The Word of God is incorruptible seed. That is to say, it is imperishable - it is not affected by the ravages of time. The floods, plagues, and pestilences that have swept over this world in ages past have not in the least interfered with the germinating power of this wonderful seed. Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”* (Matthew 24:35). By this we understand that all those in past ages, who have been buried in the earth, who carry in their hearts this precious incorruptible seed, shall rise again.

When the trumpet of God shall sound, proclaiming the end of sin’s dark night, and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings, they shall spring up from the graveyards and cemeteries. A mighty army, a multitude which no man could number, they shall rise from ocean depths and riverbeds, from Greenland’s icy mountains to India’s coral strand, from every continent and the Islands of the sea. The Word of God planted in their hearts in ages past has suddenly sprung up and a glorious harvest is gathered in.

But that is not all, for *“we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD,”* we who have received the Word by faith, and are born again, the Bible says we *“shall be changed”*; nor will it take a season, a month, a week, nor a day; but, *“in a moment,”* says the Bible – *“in the twinkling of an eye”* – when the eternal springtime breaks, and the LORD of Glory appears in the clouds of heaven, this incorruptible seed shall suddenly spring up and by so doing ‘twill burst asunder the robe of flesh and we shall find ourselves with a body like unto His body.

*“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the LORD Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD. Wherefore comfort one another with these words”* (1 Thessalonians 4:14 - 18).

*“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”* (1 Cor. 15:52).

*“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Amen. “Even so come, LORD Jesus!”*

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GOD'S WORD – SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 6:17 – *“Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*

Coming now to the message of the morning, we have chosen for our study *“the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”*. What a variety of contrasting ideas we have found since beginning this study with you on the Wonderful Word. Last Sunday we found the Word to be Seed, previous to that it was Bread, and now it is a Sword – the Sword of the Spirit. The passage in which this is found, Ephesians 6, speaks of warfare; but not the battle between men or nations. Here it is written that we *“wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places.”* Please note the phrase *“rulers of the darkness of this world”* – who are they? Well, they are not flesh and blood. Make no mistake, the real enemies of our country are not the secret agents of a foreign state, nor the mighty armies of an aggressor nation – not some human despot who rises to great power for a few short years and then goes the way of all flesh. But back of all human pride of place, and passion for power, there are the rulers of the darkness of this world. Back of all human strife and conflict there is a spiritual cause. Whether it be in the home, the community, the state, or in the international field. Principalities and powers – spiritual wickedness in high places – the rulers of the darkness of this world; they are the moving, motivating forces, driving men and nations to their confusion, distraction, and destruction.

Listen, if all our suffering and sorrow, poverty and pollution, crime and corruption had its source and origin in ourselves, then we could cure ourselves. We would long ago have completely eradicated the last remains of any and every form of wrong. But the fact of the case is that we are more deeply involved and more completely enslaved by the awful powers of sin and Satan than ever before. All our fine legislation and advanced education, all our progress in arts and science, have come miserably short of reaching, cancelling or curing the deep-seated problems of the human family; or defeating and destroying the power of old fashioned sin. The reason for this is not lack of effort, nor indifference; it lies entirely in the fact that we have not used the right kind of weapons. It is perfectly obvious that since the enemy of mankind is a spiritual being using spiritual weapons, we must use spiritual weapons to defeat him. To try to conquer evil habits and sinful passions with good intentions and fervent resolutions is just as futile as trying to defeat modern machinery of war with bows and arrows. Spiritual battles can only be successfully waged with spiritual weapons, as we read in 2 Cor. 10:4, *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, (or natural) but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”* My text says, *“The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*

You have no doubt read that thrilling story in the Book of Judges, chapter 7, of how Gideon led his little company of three hundred men to victory over the great host of the Midianites. You remember the battle-cry they sounded out from the three sides of the enemy's camp: *“The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!”* That is to say, the Sword of the LORD is Gideon's sword. He had come into possession of heaven's armaments. His soldiers were equipped with divine munitions. They were out to conquer, not by sheer weight of men, nor by superior military strategy, but by the Sword of the LORD. Now the Sword of the LORD is the Word of the LORD. We come now to that great verse in Hebrews 4:12, *“For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* The word *“quick”* is an old English term for *“living”* – the Word of God is living, alive, it breathes the breath of God. Its pulse is the heart-beat of the Almighty. It speaks, and its words are eternal verities: *“Forever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven,”* engraved, as it were, in eternal brass. Not only is God's Word living, but it is powerful. The Sword of the Spirit is *living and powerful*. No feeble excuses, nor flimsy arguments! God does not temporize or compromise. His words are fraught with the power of the infinite. *“Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God”* (Heb. 11:3), and again, *“upholding all things by the word of His power.”*

Read of the mighty angel with the little book in his hand, standing with one foot on the sea and one on the land, *“he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roars: and when he cried, seven thunders uttered*

*their voices*” (Rev.10:3). How typical this is of the power of the Word of God on earth and sea. Now turn to Hebrews 12:26 where it speaks of His voice shaking heaven and earth: “*Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*” Hebrews 4:12 says the Sword of the Spirit is not only living and powerful, but it is “*sharper than any two-edged sword.*” Think of it – a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. On one side, it will sever the chains of Satan’s bondage, and deliver captive souls bound by sin’s awful slavery and oppressed by his tyranny – the Sword of God’s Word penetrates even to soul and spirit, cutting away old carnal desires and fleshly lusts, the way a farmer prunes and trims his vines. And that’s not all, it is also the blade whereby we may defend ourselves from the dangerous and treacherous attack of the devil who comes even as an angel of light to deceive and destroy –coming in religious garb as “new light,” or “new truth,” often so subtle and enticing so reasonable and desirable, that unless we had the “*more sure Word*” of Scripture, he would certainly overcome us. Thanks be to God for the Sword of the Spirit! But what about the other side of this two-edged Sword? This is the part that many of us would avoid, and try not to think of – some even declaring they will have nothing to do with it. They will not believe it, but here it is nevertheless. It is the *Divine Blade of Judgment*. It is the Executor of heaven’s retribution. It is the instrument wherewith and whereby the enemies of the LORD and of His people shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of His power. Read it in Revelation 19:15 “*And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*”

My listener, this morning, let me earnestly and honestly, in the fear of God, point out once again that this very same Bible which is filled with such glorious promises to the believer – which offers protection to all who will take shelter in the ark of safety – which offers pardon to all who will accept Christ Jesus as Saviour – which comforts and sustains the frail and weak who lean on their God; this very same Book, I say, declares that nothing but a certain “*fearful looking for of judgment*” shall be the lot and portion of all who refuse God’s offer of mercy in the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ! (Hebrews 10:27). This two-edged sword, which delivers and protects the penitent sinner, is the judicial instrument whereby punishment is visited upon the impenitent. Just as the laws of our land protect and preserve those who obey them, they also are a terror to the lawbreaker. That honest policeman who walks our streets in the dark hours of the night has a two-fold mission: – to protect the life and property of the law-abiding citizen; and then, – to apprehend the lawless one. The one bright spot in the dark picture of world affairs is the revived interest in, and study of, the Word of God – and the many agencies employed with, and sending out the Word. Think of the thousands and millions of copies sent out by the *GIDEONS* – the *BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY* – and many other organizations. This brings us to our final thought for the morning. We need to learn how to use this wonderful weapon. If we do not, we will probably do more harm than good. It’s not a Book to play with – not a magical affair, that all we need is to shut our eyes and put our finger on a page, and take the verse as a message from God. “*Study to show thyself – Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Tim.2:15). Here are a few simple rules for Bible study that I will leave with you now:

- Read it as a letter from your best friend – not just snatches of verses or choice selections, but read it all.
  - Read it with the prayer, “Open thou mine eyes.”
  - Don’t worry about parts you can’t understand, be willing to admit that God knows more than you do.
  - Be sure and note who is the speaker, and to whom he is speaking; and about what, in the various parts.
  - Read it in faith; it is the Word of God. And now for that troubled, defeated, and despairing soul –
    - You have tried in vain through years and years  
to conquer the evil that in you reigns;
    - Take thou God’s Word, the Bible true,  
find there a promise, you can be sure it means you;
    - With courage bold upon it stand –  
my God will deliver you with His strong hand.
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THE BIBLE – WORD OF THE LORD

2 Peter 1:21 – *“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

Hebrews 1:1-2 – *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds...”*

In our study of the Wonderful Word, it has occurred to me that we ought not to lose sight of this very simple yet profound truth: that the Bible is the Word of the LORD. It is the written Logos, the expression, or written, concept and thought of the Almighty. In all the world of living things, which God hath made, there is evidence to show that each specie has the faculty of communication within its own family. Recent studies in this realm indicate that even fish (which had long been regarded as entirely mute) give evidence that within their various kinds they appear to make sounds which cannot be heard by the human ear; but are apparently understood by those of their own kind. When we come to the human family, what a wonderful thing it is that God has made us with the capacity to transmit our ideas and concepts to one another, and through the medium of speech share with one another. Those deep, heart-felt thoughts become the richer by the telling of them. How pitiful, the affliction of those who have been robbed of the power of speech; or even those with serious speech impediment. How they struggle to express themselves; and what a relief, when some method of transmitting ideas is found.

Now, it is the burden of my heart this morning to bring to your attention this fact: that the Creator who equipped us with the power of speech must also have that ability. He must also be able to speak; but, in order for us to understand Him, He must speak in a language we understand. This He has done. He has given us His Word in written form, so that it can be transmitted from one to another with the greatest accuracy. Not only so, but it can be preserved from generation to generation. It has been sent to us down through the ages, and is found in our time to be identical with the Word He spoke from the beginning. My text says, *“God spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.”* This leads us to another verse, which we have referred to so often in this series of studies. 2 Peter 1:21 *“Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* God can speak, and God has spoken. Let me say again, that He has spoken in the language we can understand.

Though it is true that many scholars, and men of degree, have by their theology made much of the Bible an extremely difficult and complicated book, the Bible itself is written in the language of the common people. It abounds with illustrations and parables that can be understood by a child. Though it is true that there are statements made and ideas expressed, at times, that have to do with things we know very little about, it is just because we know so little about them that God would speak to us. He wants to instruct us and inform us, so that we might be wise. It has been truly said that no one can be properly educated if he remains ignorant of the Bible; for therein is found the wisdom of the ages – the voice of the Creator. The words of He who is the source and fountain of all true knowledge. It is in the Bible that God tells us about Himself. Though it is true that all creation is a demonstration of the creative power and genius of the Almighty; and that *“the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork”* (Ps. 19:1), yet creation is silent as to the Creator’s attitude towards men. As David, the Psalmist said, *“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?”* (Psalm 8:3-4). If we had only the voice of creation to tell us of God, we would know only His power and wisdom and nothing of His love and compassion. So again, let me say, that in the Bible God tells us about Himself. I’d like to repeat a statement I made some time ago on the *BROADCAST*: *“Throughout the universe, no one has been so slandered, so misrepresented and lied about, as has our God.”* That’s why, to cancel all lies and correct all false conceptions, God has written to us and told us about Himself. Then to make sure that we gained the proper idea of His Person, He came down and lived among us in the Person of His only begotten Son, our LORD Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said to Phillip, *“He that has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:6).

Not only does God tell us about Himself, but He also tells us about ourselves. There is not a book in all the world that gives us so much information about ourselves as does the Bible. God tells us what, who, and why we are; and unless we know these three things, we'll never be what we were intended to be. Granted, when God starts to talk to us about ourselves, He often does so with embarrassing frankness. I think that is one reason why many people do not want to listen to Him. But if we are honest with our own heart and conscience, we will agree that He is telling the truth. *"There is none righteous, no, not one. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way."* (Romans 3:10; Isaiah 53:6).

As a wise physician who must properly diagnose the disease before prescribing the remedy, God probes very deeply. Then He shows very clearly just what the trouble is; and what, the cure. I often think that it would not be necessary for many people to go to the psychoanalyst and psychologist to find out what is wrong (and many times, to the medical doctor), if they would realize that their trouble is not caused by some organic disorder; but just a plain case of old-fashioned sin – the disorder of the human soul, adrift without God, and without His Christ – the nerve-racking strain of living in a sin-ridden world without that abiding trust in the Almighty God.

Then, not only does God talk to us about ourselves, but He also tells us about His plans for us. Yes, God has plans for us, even as for every creature in His universe. We are not here by chance, nor do we exist by accident. God has a plan for us. A plan for you and a plan for me. Did you ever sit down before the Book of God and listen while God tells you of His plans? I'm sure that if you have, you can never be the same again. You could never be satisfied to fix all your hopes and ambitions on the beggarly and fleeting things of time. You could never consent to consume your God-given energies and faculties in the service of this world, which will quickly fade and pass away.

I could never, in the space of time left me now, even begin to tell you of the plans God has for your life and mine. I would like to point out, however, that God's plan is for eternity, and includes the present experience of knowing God as your heavenly Father by faith in Jesus Christ. The inner assurance and certainty that though *"we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"* (Eph. 2:3), we have been adopted into the heavenly family and the Spirit of the living God *"bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"* (Rom. 8:16). 1 Corinthians 2:9 declares that *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."* Yes, God has included you in His plans, and has told us so. Have you included God in your plans?

Before I leave you this morning, I must point out that though it is true that we have in the Bible the Word of the LORD, that God speaks to us by His Word, that in itself is of no value unless we hear it. How often in Scripture we find these words, *"he that hath ears to hear, let him hear."* It is written of some that though they have ears to hear, they hear not. I'm afraid this is a condition that is altogether too common in our time; for certainly there has never been a time when the Word of God was proclaimed in so many languages by so many methods and agencies as we have in these days. Think of the millions of people who hear the word of God by radio, and yet I often wonder do they really hear it with the ears of the soul? Does the Word of the LORD reach right down below the collar and awaken the sleeping conscience to the tremendous fact that everyone of us must give an account of himself to God? That though we live our allotted time of threescore years and ten, it will soon be past, and then eternity somewhere. I wonder if you, my listener, though you have often listened to the *WONDERFUL WORD*, do you fully realize that God is using this as a medium of communication? Have you heard His voice saying, *"My son, give me thine heart"*? You have often heard Revelation 3:20 repeated on this program, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"*; but have you ever heard the gentle voice of the Son of God saying it to you?

This brings us to our text again, *"God, who at sundry times and divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son ..."* (Hebrews 1:1-2). Christ is God's final appeal. Christ is God's final effort. It is the Spirit of Christ who speaks through the apostles and disciples of the New Testament, and it is the Spirit of Christ that constrains us to appeal once more today, *"He that has ears to hear, let him hear."*

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THE BIBLE – The LAW of the LORD

Psalm 1:1-3 – *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”*

For our subject this morning, nothing could be better than the verses of our text, which speak of God’s “blessed” man. By the help of the LORD, I would like to show the necessity of law, and how blessed it is to have the Law of the LORD. There is a great promise back in the Book of Joshua, 1:8 – *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”*

For some unaccountable reason, the idea prevails in many minds that law is a bad thing, and that any attempt to regulate or control the activities and energies of the individual is to be resented and opposed – that anything that savors of discipline should be regarded with contempt and suspicion – that for anyone to be required to respect and acknowledge the authority of another is intolerable – that life could only be complete if we are all given free reign and allowed to do whatever we desire. I am quite sure, however, that no one who would advocate such a state of affairs would want to live under such conditions. I just read recently of a soap-box orator in *HYDE PARK* in London whose main theme was *“The world is ours and we have a right to anything there is in it.”* He advised his listeners to just help themselves, should they desire anything within reach. He made at least one earnest disciple – after his discourse, he found that his bicycle, which he had leaned against a tree, had disappeared. *NO!* Life without law is impossible. Everything in this universe is governed by law. From the mightiest planet, to the tiniest insect. Everything is regulated by certain fixed principles that could not be altered without bringing disaster. Now, when it comes to the regulating of the affairs of the human family, we find that we *must* be governed. We *must* be controlled and directed. There *must* be fixed principles by which the pattern of our lives are worked out. I submit this morning that nothing can be better than to accept the Law of the LORD – the Word of God.

Let us consider, now, that there are some laws which we keep because we cannot do otherwise – and very thankful we are, for some of them. I cannot but be grateful for the law of gravity. It gives me such a sense of security to know that I can walk out the door and be fairly certain that I will not float off into space. Then there is the law that governs time, which none of us can change; and if we would make the most of life, we must have due regard and respect for the passing of the hours. When you waste time, you waste life. For time is the stuff that life is made of. We often hear the expression, “killing time;” but you cannot kill time – it is time that is killing you. You have no doubt heard of that one who “... revelled underneath the moon, and slept beneath the sun; he lived a life of “going to do,” and died with “nothing done.” Then, there are other laws that we keep by choice, realizing that they are best for our own welfare. As the laws of our government. But we are concerned this morning with the law of the Lord. Psalm 19:7 declares, *“The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.”* My text, again, says, *“Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the LORD.”*

Let me point out, just here, that the “law” that is spoken of here has to do with the moral and spiritual realm – that part of our being which cannot be managed by human legislation. No law on the statute books of any country can make liars into honest men, nor thieves and drunkards into respectable citizens; but the Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul. Just here let me remind you that we are just as subject to law in the moral and spiritual realm as we are in the social and political realm. While it’s true, we are free moral agents, we’re only free to choose whom we shall serve and in whose kingdom we shall dwell.

Let us examine some of the laws in the spiritual realm. Come with me to Romans 7:22, 23 *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:”* That is to say, that in his heart of hearts he recognized that the Law of God was ideal – it was perfect. Just as most people of our land do today. Nothing could be lovelier, than a community where everyone practised the Golden Rule. No higher standard for social relationships could be found than this: *“Thou shalt love your neighbour as yourself.”* Who could ask for a

better way of life than that proposed in the Sermon on the Mount? Well then, if these things are so desirable, why not let's have them? Why not begin to practice them without delay? The answer is found in Romans 7: 23 – *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”* Here it is again. We are controlled by laws that we cannot break, though often we may try with all our might and main. The law referred to in that verse is the *“law of sin.”* Possibly you had never thought of sin as a law. You may have supposed it to be only a habit or a temporary weakness or the result of an unfavourable environment; but the Bible declares it is a law. Not all laws suggest authority and dominion. They suggest the right or the ability to dominate another, and certainly when we think of sin nothing could be more fitting than to call it a law. It is a fixed principle that governs the human heart with a tyranny more exacting and cruel than any human despot has ever ruled his subjects. Think of the suffering and misery, the crime and heartache, that fills this poor wretched world today. What one word best describes the cause? There can only be one and that is *SIN*. Think of the multitudes throughout this land whose lives are held in the most abject slavery by laws they cannot break. That poor drunkard who holds his aching head this lovely LORD's Day morning. I'm sure he did not go out on the bender last night because he enjoyed the prospects of rolling under the table and having someone put their feet on his stomach. No, it was a law that he could not break that drove him to do the things he did, and now we find him with an empty pocket book, and a life full of regret.

But my subject this morning, is the *LAW of the LORD*. We've found, in Romans 7, that the law of sin works in our members, ending in death. But the very next chapter, 8:1-2, gives the glad proclamation of deliverance. Hear these triumphant words: *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”* Here we find the tremendous discovery that though we were bound by laws we could not break, and ruled by a kingdom against whose power we had no might, there is found another law whose power is greater than the power of sin and death. This is called the *“Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”* No wonder the Psalmist calls that man blessed (happy) who meditates in the Law of the LORD. Who wouldn't be happy to find that they could go free from the dominion of sin and Satan? And that, my friend, is just why this message is called *“the Gospel”* (*“Good News”*) – preaching deliverance to the captives, opening prison to them who are bound. *“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). The idea of freedom is not always associated with law; indeed, there are those who believe that freedom can only come when there is no law. They would have us believe that submission to the authority of the Bible is a life of bondage; but while they promise liberty to those who'd rise up and shake off what they called *“fetters of tradition,”* they themselves are the servants of corruption. We cannot escape the very evident fact that we must serve. Whether sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. We are free only to choose *whom* we will serve.

As we come to the end of our time once more, let's examine the Law of the LORD in detail. There is a comprehensive term which includes the sum total of the rule of our God. Christianity is a way of life – a rule of living. It's voluntary servitude to Him who took on Himself the form of a servant being obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose that the Christian life is governed by restrictions – *“you mustn't go here, mustn't do this, mustn't do that.”* The Law of the LORD is not a fence around us – it's a rule within us: *“I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”* The Christian who comes under the law, or rule, of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, finds that at last he is free to do the things that his own heart and conscience has always told him he ought to do. He is no longer ruled by the passions, lusts, and evil habits that he has tried in vain a thousand times to break away from. *The Bible will keep us from sin, or sin will keep us from the Bible.* The daily habit of reading, prayerfully, a portion of Scripture will do more to liberate us from the bondage of sin's seductive snare than any other single factor. For *“the Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul”* Psalm 19:7.

Finally, the Law of the LORD is the law of peace. For He reigns within, who is KING of Kings and LORD of Lords. That's why He taught us to pray, *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”* (Matt.6:10).

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MOTHERS OF THE BIBLE

Genesis 3:20) *“Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.”*

(Exodus 2:2, 3) *“The woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink.”*

(Mark 7:24-30) *“He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet: the woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, LORD: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs. And He said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.”*

Now let us turn to the Word of the LORD. We would like to take up with you now, a series of studies on some interesting things in God’s Book. As we are beginning on Mothers’ Day, the first message will naturally be “Mothers in God’s Book.” We will go right back to the Book of Genesis, for our first text, and also for our first mother. Genesis 3:20, *“and Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.”* The background is the garden of Eden, and the LORD God has just pronounced the curse upon the earth and the promise of death to both Adam and Eve because they had sinned. Verse 19 says, *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”* And, in the face of this tragic declaration, Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. What a paradox – that vested in this woman, who had led him into sin which brought death, was the power of life. What a declaration of faith! Though, as yet, no children had ever been born into the world, and now both parents must die, Adam did not believe that this was the end. He called his wife the mother of all living. What a prophetic statement! It was as though he looked down through the corridors of the ages and caught a glimpse of that One, *“born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law”* (Gal. 4:4) and who would *“through death destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil”* (Heb. 2:14).

Let us look at this case a little more closely. There are great and fixed principles wrapped up in this story of the mother of us all. We would do well to give our attention to them! The first one: God, because He is just, must condemn sin; yet, because He is merciful, He wants to save the sinner. Also: satan used the woman to bring in ruin; but God used a woman to bring in everlasting Salvation. Then, more practical and personal, in the hands of mothers rest the destinies of men and nations. Mothers are either the blight or the bloom of the world. They lead upward, or downward. They are ministers of God, or tools of satan. Though they are called the weaker sex, that weakness is one of the body only. *“Though she may run from a spider, and scream at a mouse, she will tackle a man as big as a house.”*

A man can build a mansion and furnish it throughout;  
 A man can build a palace with lofty walls, and stout;  
 A man can build a temple with high and spacious dome;  
 But no man in the world can build that precious thing called *“HOME.”*  
 It is the happy faculty of women far and wide  
 To turn a cot or palace into something else beside -  
 Where brothers, sons, and husbands, tired with willing footsteps come,  
 A place of rest, where love abounds, a perfect kingdom - *“HOME.”*

There’s always hope that our nation’s mothers will be found in paths of righteousness and peace - that their joy will be found in making home what only God and a woman can make it. But the most alarming factor in all the dark world picture today, is the failure of so many mothers in this generation to realize that they are the mothers of all the living. They don’t realize that they will leave, indelibly imprinted, on



the minds and hearts of their offspring qualities which will either make or mar – that will lead them to God, the Bible, and Heaven; or into every form of sin & iniquity and, finally, into everlasting ruin.

Just here, let me make an appeal for “Bible mothers” – for mothers who are conscious of the tremendous responsibility and privilege that is theirs – for mothers who will resolve, by the help of God, to be instruments in His hands to lead young lives in the path that leads upwards to God on His throne. God has committed the children to mothers’ care. With these principles as a basis, let us move on and find another one of God’s mothers. In the Book of Exodus, we find a woman of faith. She lives in a very dark and trying time. She is a member of a despised and oppressed people, racial hatred and fear was very prominent then, even as it is growing now. The people to whom she belongs are so hated, that by order of the king all male children must be slain. In which time, says the Bible, Moses was born, and was exceeding fair; and they were not afraid of the king’s command (Hebrews 11:23). True enough, this little one was born under the sentence of death; but the mother had faith in the God of all life. You are all familiar with the story, how she finally did carry her baby to the river and cast him in; but not before she had put her faith to work and built a tiny vessel – an ark made from the bulrushes that lined the edge of the river. She placed the little bundle in this little nest. Then the small ship, with its precious cargo, was placed in the water, where it anchored itself to some reeds and rushes. It was all very wonderful, was it not? How Pharaoh’s daughter came to bathe and found Baby Moses, and then delivered him unknowingly to his own mother. The baby’s life was preserved and a future leader was trained in Pharaoh’s courts.

But the lesson I want you to get out of this is that she was a woman of faith. Not faith in some tea cup reader, nor astrologer. Not faith in some crystal gazer or spiritist medium; but faith in the living God, who had revealed Himself to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – God, who had given abundant witness to the reality of His Being to everyone who would open his eyes to see and his ears to hear. The faith of this long-ago mother saved the life of her son, and through her son all Israel was later delivered from Egyptian bondage. Listen, while I tell you – there is a great and crying need for mothers of faith in our day – for mothers who see great possibilities of greatness and goodness in those little lives committed to their care. A mother of faith is not afraid of the ruler of the darkness of this world; she puts her faith to work and builds an ark of prayer and worship. She surrounds that little one with such an influence of purity, of peace, of love, of heaven that, like Moses, when they come to years, they will choose God’s way – like Moses, who “*refused to be called son of Pharaoh’s daughter* (the licentiousness and debauchery of modern civilization), *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*” Not only so, but I further submit this great fact, that the world’s benefactors will come from mothers of faith.

Did you ever stop and consider that a few short years from now, if our LORD Jesus waits, there will be a great need for men and women who will stand out amid all the chaos and confusion, amid the moral decay and social degeneracy, and lead their fellow man to the God of the Bible – to old-fashioned holiness and quietness – to a life of usefulness and tranquillity? Mothers, those future leaders are now being carried in your arms, nurtured by your care, sheltered by your home, and guided by your example. Are you a mother of faith? Or have you, like thousands of others, turned the spiritual welfare of your children over to the Sunday School teacher? Or, worse still, are you among the thousands who have not given a care as to whether their children believe in God or not? – whether they have any training or guidance in eternal realities? – whether they grow up entirely ignorant of the great purpose and plan of God for their lives? Children of mothers like that are in danger of becoming a prey for the errors of a thousand false cults and creeds, and instead of being leaders for God and Evangelists for Christ, they become agents for Satan – missionaries for evil – ambassadors for hell.

I see by the clock that time is running out; but we have time for one more mother in God’s Book. A Syrophenician mother (Mark 7), called a foreigner by leading people of that country. But, thanks be to God, with Him there are no foreigners – no preferred groups – no racial superiors. This mother was a *mother who prayed*. Her daughter was possessed of an unclean spirit, *but mother prayed*. The disciples of the LORD were not sympathetic, *but mother prayed*. They became antagonistic, *but she prayed*. The LORD Jesus Himself seemed not to hers, *but she kept on praying*. Finally, Jesus said, the bread is for the

children, not for the dogs. She said, truth, LORD, but the dogs get the crumbs. And Matthew tells us her daughter was made well the self-same hour. My closing plea: *MOTHERS, PRAY!!* Pray for that wayward daughter – pray for that rebellious son; pray past the indifference of other Christians, and the seeming indifference of the LORD Jesus Christ. Be assured, victory will come. Healing is promised. Deliverance is certain. Pray on!

Women, how divine your mission, here upon our natal sod;  
Keep – oh, keep the young heart open always to the breath of God.  
All true trophies of the ages are from mother-love impearled;  
For the hand that rocks the cradle, is the hand that rules the world.

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## PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE ISRAELITES, GENTILES, CHRISTIANS

Our subject this morning, People of the Bible, is very interesting and vital. From beginning to end, the Bible is filled with people – people of all kinds – great people and small people – good people and bad people – old people and young people – people who walk, and people who talk – people who sing, and people who pray – people who make war and people who make peace – people who live in cities and people who live on farms – people who serve God and people who serve the devil – people who tell the truth and people who tell lies – people who do great things and people do nothing – people who spoke to God and people to whom God spoke. In the Bible, we have the teacher and the scholar; the physician and the afflicted; the buyer and the seller; the builder and wrecker; the statesman and the citizen; the patriot and the rebel; the judge and the criminal; people who make laws and people who break them; people with sorrows so great that one can almost hear the sob and expect to find the next page marked with tears. Then there are people with joys so abounding that the very sentences describing their triumph seem to dance and sing. Here we have a people so humble and devout, so God-fearing and honourable, so industrious and thrifty, so hospitable and generous, that the angels of God do not hesitate to come down and visit with them. Yes, even God Himself at times is found in friendly converse with these people of the Bible. Strange as it may seem, it is also in the Bible that we read of a people so wicked and perverse, so ungodly and immoral, so dissipated and depraved, so violent and rebellious, so sinful and degenerate, that the demons from the pit seem to feel quite at home in their society and that old serpent called the devil and Satan seems to have made their habitation his headquarters.

In short, the Bible is a cross-section of the whole human family. Not only from an historic point of view, but chiefly from a spiritual and moral point of view. The Bible not only tells us what people did, but also why they did it. And when you know the motive of a man, you know the man. Well, that will serve both as an introduction and an outline for this message on “The people of the Bible.” Let us move up a little closer now, and examine in more detail, and so become better acquainted with these folk whose lives are set forth by the pen of inspiration. The people of the Bible can be generally divided into three groups – the *Israelite* people, the *Gentile* people, and the *children of God* – those people who are neither Jew nor Gentile, neither barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free – those who by faith in Jesus Christ have become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

As to their racial origin, the people of Israel are descendants of Abraham to whom God Himself made promise that *“In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed”* Genesis 12:3. I would like to point out just here that whatever else we may think of the Israelite people, as a race they have made a greater contribution to the lasting good of the world than any other people. They stand in history as a people who have kept alive a living faith in the one true and living God. Read the Book of Romans, and if this evil spirit of anti-Semitism has been rankling in your heart, I’m sure that if you believe the Bible, it will cure you. Listen to the words of Romans 9:4 *“... Israelites; to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises.”* What a catalogue of blessing, whereby the whole world has been blessed. Time would fail me to tell in detail how that everyone listening to my voice today is receiving benefits that have come to us through this people.

Let me briefly sum them up, before we pass on to other people. So far as we can know, every piece of revelation that goes to make up this Book we call the Bible, was given to a descendant of Abraham, and preserved through the centuries as a sacred trust to unborn generations. Furthermore, during the early history of the race, when it seemed that man was determined to forget God, and live and die without the knowledge of the Highest, it was a son of this peculiar people who spoke out the truth of God’s Word, and God’s Will. None can tell, this side of Heaven, what their testimony meant to the preservation of the race. Think of the message of Jonah, to that mighty city called Nineveh. And who can tell what a tremendous effect the ministry of Daniel and his three friends must have had in that day when the Empire of Babylon enlarged its boundaries to encompass all the peoples of the known world? Then there was the ministry of Nehemiah, in the court of the great king Artaxerxes. But that is not all, remember that in the realm of jurisprudence, every bit of legislation that has spelt justice for man and protection for the

individual stems right from the laws of equity which God gave to Moses. The much renowned bill of Human Rights is simply another interpretation of the Bible truth that “all men are equal before God.”

But now, lest any might consider that these things I have mentioned are of small consequence, let me remind you that the world’s greatest Benefactor, the One who has brought the most lasting good to the greatest number – the One who has brought hope to the hopeless and strength to the weak, and lightened the dark dungeon of the soul’s despair with the radiant message of the Gospel – He who hath robbed death of its sting and taken the victory from the boasting grave – great David’s Greater Son, met the same giant in the spiritual sense, and slew him. As David of old met Goliath, with five dripping stones from the brook and slew him in the valley of Elah, our LORD Jesus Christ went out in the darkest hour of human history, met the king of terrors, and triumphed over him with five bleeding wounds. Indeed, says the Bible, “*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it*” Colossians 2:15.

Through no fault of their own, Gentiles were not born of the people of Israel. Where do they fit into the scheme of things? They have no rights nor privileges as to either Israel or the kingdom of Heaven. And what hope is there for any of them? I’m so glad to be able to tell you that the victory of Jesus Christ on the Cross was of such a nature that its benefits could not be confined to the Jewish people only. Though it is true that Jesus was a Son of Abraham, He was also a Son of Adam. Though He was tried by the Jewish Sanhedrin, He was condemned by a Gentile judge. Jews and Gentiles shared the guilt equally and they equally share the benefits. It was from the lips of a Jewish man that we first received the message that “*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved*” (Romans 10:13). Let me read for you these “*WONDERFUL WORDS*” found in Ephesians 2:11, 13. “*Wherefore, remember that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*” Dropping down to the 19th verse: “*Now therefore Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.*”

Not only can Gentiles now be saved, but according to Acts 15:14 God is now making a special visit to them and to take out of them a people for His name. Romans 9:10, 11 makes it quite clear that by national Israel rejecting their Messiah, salvation has come to the Gentiles. For nearly 2,000 years they have been repeatedly appealed to, to receive the Christ of God, whom the people of Israel have rejected. I believe that God is making a final effort in the days in which we live, to bring as many as possible of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is *our* day. This is *our* opportunity. Let us make the very most of it.

Finally, the third group – *the children of God*. They who are spoken of in Galatians 3:26-29. Those who have lost their racial identity and are no longer either Jew or Greek. By becoming citizens of Heaven, their nationality has lost its importance. The barriers which separated one from the other have been broken down, and the prejudices that had often provoked enmity were swallowed up in the love of God. Not only have these people lost their racial differences, but they are peculiar in other respects as well. It is written of some that they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in Heaven they had a better and an enduring substance. It is written of others that at midnight with their feet fast in the stocks, their backs bleeding from the lash, they prayed and sang praises to God. Again, it is written of others, that they went forth and preached everywhere, the LORD working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following. They laid hands on the sick, and they recovered. They commanded the lame to walk and the blind to see. But above and beyond all, these wonderful things, the chief characteristic of these remarkable people was in the fact that they expected to leave the world at any moment, whether by the way of the grave or by their LORD coming for them and taking them up. The chief source of their joy was not that mighty signs and wonders were wrought by their hands, but that their names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Though many of these were not of the wise and mighty of this world, such was the wisdom of their words and power of their testimony that kings trembled on their thrones, and one of these was known to have cried out, “*You almost persuade me to become a Christian.*”

My friend, this morning, let me ask you this question before we leave the air, “*Of what people are you?*”

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PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE – ENOCH, DAVID, RUTH, PETER

Let us turn now to the Scriptures for the message of the morning. We have chosen the very interesting and vital subject, “People of the Bible.” I would like to set before you some great characters from among the people we mentioned last week. It is a never-failing source of inspiration and encouragement to me to note the importance given in Scripture to the individual. While it is true that God holds the nations in the hollow of His hand, and raises up kingdoms and puts down kingdoms according to His own perfect will, yet the Bible gives far more prominence to the individual than it does to nations. A man or a woman, a boy or a girl, in God’s sight is not just another number on a census paper – not just one more creature added to an innumerable multitude; but every one of us holds a distinctive place in His plan, and has a specific claim on His affections.

This truth needs to be emphasized very strongly in these days, when there is so much thought of mass production – so much talk of regimentation – so much importance placed on statistics. Today there is much effort made to boil down all individual personality into a common mould until we’ll all think alike – talk alike – behave alike – live alike – and die alike. Nothing can be more discouraging to the human soul, more frustrating to personal ambition, or more deadening to the voice of conscience than for one to accept the stupefying doctrine, which has found its way into our schools (and many of our churches), that man is just a link in an endless chain of accidents, begun by accident millions of years ago (nobody knows just how) ; just another knot in a string of circumstances over which he has no control ; just another cup on an endless belt that dips a small portion of life from the river of time which hurries on to empty it in the ocean of eternity. What a pity that many of our would-be educators and teachers have nothing more constructive and edifying to pour into receptive young minds and hearts than a philosophy that rules out the inherent value of the individual. This philosophy destroys self-reverence as a creature of God’s handiwork; it effectually drowns the voice of conscience. (Conscience is that wholesome and healthy monitor of the soul which would faithfully warn us we are individually responsible to our Creator for our behaviour, and personally accountable for what we do with the life God has given us.)

Thank God, we have the Bible. And in it we find these matchless words: *“The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”* Again, *“He calls His own sheep by name, and leads them out.”* The recognition of this great truth is what made the great characters we find in Scripture. Let us talk with some of them, and learn from them how we too can really amount to something, not only for time, but for all eternity. There is a great deal of truth in these words of Longfellow:

Lives of great men all remind us, we can make our life sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us footprints on the sands of time.

*ENOCH* – The first person I would like you to meet this morning is Enoch, who lived in the very infancy of our race, the seventh from Adam. Not much is said of him in three brief verses in Genesis 5; but a world of meaning is packed into the words, *“Enoch walked with God.”* No higher tribute could be paid, nor could any higher privilege be granted to any mortal man. Think of it, *he walked with God!* Fellowship. Communion. And the brief biography closes with the words, *“He was not, for God took him.”* It was as though, in one of their daily walks, they got so close to Heaven that God said to Enoch, “You might as well come home with Me, it’s closer.”

Hebrews 11:5 sheds a little more light on this remarkable man, Enoch, whose earthly life ended in such a remarkable way. Here are the words, *“By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”* Please note: it was by faith he *“walked”* and by faith he *“was not”* and he became a very early example and type of the person in the closing hours of the day of grace - the person who by faith walks with God and talks with God. When the evening shadows lengthen, and the world is about to enter the dark night of tribulation, (even many of Enoch’s generation were destroyed by the flood) it will be said of this one, too: *“and he was not, for God took him.”* Yes, there are men and women, boys and girls, living in our day, who walk with God. I trust that you, my listener, are one of them.

*DAVID* – Let us hurry along, as there are several others in this gallery of fame I would like you to meet. Here is a young lad, youngest of a family of eight boys. Because of his youth, he has the monotonous job of herding the sheep while his older brothers have the interesting and exciting life of a soldier in the army of King Saul. But just because he is left alone on the hillsides of Bethlehem, Judah, don't ever think that God has forgotten him. No. His very solitude became an opportunity to get acquainted with the Creator of the ends of the earth. We are speaking, of course, of David, who afterwards became the King of Israel. Hear him give his testimony a little later, when standing before King Saul. *"The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."*

I am speaking to someone, this morning, whose life seems so monotonous and tiresome. Others move on into the forefront of the world's affairs, while you must stay at home and mind the sheep (I speak figuratively) – an invalid mother, an aged father, a crippled sister or brother. It seems you are alone, and you are tempted to think that God has forgotten you. Oh, perish the thought! As soon believe that God would forget to allow the sun to shine, or make the birds to sing, as to believe that He has forgotten you. This broadcast this morning will be a very profitable service, if through its ministry we can persuade one soul that God is very near to your heart – that he longs for your communion – that He waits for your fellowship. You may have thought that your life is too trivial, your talent so small and your ability so limited that you could be of no value at all to Him whose wealth is measured by planets and constellations. Remember: David was promoted from the sheepcote to the throne. It is written *"he who overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne"* (Revelation 3:21).

*RUTH* – Here is a young lady, whose acquaintance you would do well to cultivate. She is back a little, in point of time, from King David, but her life of devotion makes her a character any generation would be glad to own. I now present to you a young widow whose name is Ruth, born of heathen parents, raised in an idolatrous land. In our day, we would say, her environment is against her; there is little hope for such as she. But God comes into the picture somehow, we know not how. She married an Israelite, but lost him to the grim reaper, death. Her mother-in-law decided to return to her own country, and tried to persuade Ruth to remain with her own people; but her reply is the most beautiful statement of consecration in all of literature. Listen, while I read it from Ruth 1:16-17 *"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following you: For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."* You know the rest of the story. She found a wealthy Israelite for a husband, and became the ancestress of the great king David, and of the Greater King, the LORD Jesus Christ; for all things are possible with God.

*PETER* – Now into the New Testament for our final character study. You have probably heard of Peter from early childhood, so I'll not need to take much time with him. Observe though, that his nature cannot be regarded as good material from which to make an apostle. He is hasty, impetuous, changeable. He has the unhappy faculty of doing the wrong thing and the right time. We find him asleep in the Garden, when he should be praying. He is wielding his sword, when he should be submitting. And not long after, he is denying the LORD, when he should be testifying for Him. In short, he has a nature like the rest of us.

Peter's intentions were good, but he just didn't seem to have what it takes to carry them out. One day he said he'd be willing to die for Christ, and the next day, refuse to live for Him. But something happened. I can't tell you just how, but he had a personal meeting with the resurrected LORD. Speaking of those to whom Jesus appeared, 1 Corinthians 15:5 tells us, *"He was seen by Cephas,..."* What a world of meaning in that little phrase. It explains Peter's future triumphs and future suffering for the sake of Jesus' name.

My friend, whatever your nature, your character, or your environment, Christ died and rose again for *you*. He lives to intercede for *you*; and, if you so desire, when He comes again, He'll call for you personally, too.

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CHRIST – OUR HOPE

Romans 8:24-25 – *“For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”*

On this anniversary Sunday, marking one full year with you on this *WONDERFUL WORD BROADCAST*, we would like to begin a series of studies on the most important Person in this Wonderful Word, even our LORD Jesus Christ, whose name is called *“WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the PRINCE OF PEACE.”* It is our firm conviction that Christ is the answer to every problem, the remedy for every sickness, and the only permanent cure for that awful disease called *“sin.”*

When the Apostle Paul came to the city of Corinth (which at that period was a great commercial metropolis, where luxury and licentiousness walked hand in hand), he unfurled the banner of the Christian Church and established a thriving Christian community by preaching nothing among them *“except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”* (1 Cor. 2:2). When Philip went down to the city of Samaria, a great revival broke out among the people because he preached Christ unto them. When Peter was called to the home of the Roman military leader, Cornelius, he preached Jesus Christ to him and his friends and neighbours.

As it was then, so it is now. Whenever and wherever the attention of people can be directed to the Son of God, so they see only His face and hear only His voice, there is *REVIVAL* – there is spiritual awakening. Sins of years are rolled away, and darkest stains become as snow. Mighty signs and wonders follow the preaching of His Word. Oh, that we could take our eyes off human organizations and man-made plans, turn away from man’s wisdom (which is but folly to the mind of God), cease depending on human speculation and philosophy or science (falsely so called), and fix our hopes on *“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29).

To open this inexhaustible theme, we have chosen the subject *CHRIST, OUR HOPE*. For a text we go to Romans 8:24 *“For we are saved by hope ...”* We are all creatures of hope. The problems of today are patiently borne with the hope of a better day tomorrow. A crop failure is accepted with resignation, in the hope that next year will be better; a day of suffering and pain is only borne with fortitude, because there is hope that tomorrow will bring relief. Thus, we see, that hope has to do with the future – that entirely unknown and unpredictable future. The future would be filled with dread and fear, with gloom and despair, were it not lightened and brightened by hope.

When it comes to *eternal matters*, it seems that hope plays an even more prominent place than it does in the things of time. Indeed, I’m very much afraid that many people’s only religion is hope (and that, a vain hope). They hope that somehow things will turn out alright for them after this life is finished. This is what we would call a “hope so” religion. It is a hope based on nothing but chance. But when it comes to our eternal destiny, nothing can be governed by chance. The issues are so important that it would be the very height of folly to ever leave so important a question to uncertain “hope so’s”.

I’d like to point out that though we may leave the question of our spiritual welfare to the “winds of fate,” God does not do so. The affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven are not run by unpredictable methods. Not one person will arrive in the “Land that is fairer than day” by accident. No one will be in Heaven because “the winds of fortune” blew favourably and guided him safely into that port. But, as it is written of that forever blessed company of immortals, *Their Names Were Written in the Lamb’s Book of Life*. Again, when the question was asked over there in Revelation 7:13, *“What are these, which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?”* The answer in verse 14 was, *“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”*

In other words, this passage speaks of those who are saved by hope; but not a vain hope, nor only a “hope-so” belief. Rather, they found a true and certain basis for their hope in Christ, as we read in Hebrews 6:19, *“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil.”* Let’s read it again: *“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil.”* In short, it means that while casting about on the stormy sea of life for something on which to anchor their souls, they found the Rock of Ages, the eternal, immutable,

and omnipotent Christ of God. Fastened safely on Him, they were safe from being wrecked on the rocks of sin and unbelief. All hope fixed *in* Him and *on* Him, they were saved. My text again: “*We are saved by hope.*”

1 Peter 3:15 says, “*Be always ready to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you.*” If I were to ask each one of you this morning to give a reason for your hope, what would your answer be? Here is one who says, “The reason for my hope is I live in a Christian land, and attend church quite frequently.” Here’s another, who says, “I have been very active in church work for years and years, and so was my mother before me.” Here’s another, who says, “The reason for my hope is that I’m honest and respectable, and pay all my debts and speak evil of no man.” These all seem to be very good and substantial reasons. They might be accepted if we were judged by man’s standards, but the One who will judge us on that Last Day will be the Son of God. The Law, by which He will judge, is a righteous and holy Law. On that Day, the question will not be, “Have you ever committed any great or terrible sins?” but, “Can you say you have *never* sinned?” For “*he that will keep the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of all*” (James 2:10). *NO!* The *only* reason I would give for the hope that is within me is found in these words of Charlotte Elliott: “*Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy Blood was shed for me.*”

In this subject of *CHRIST, OUR HOPE*, let me remind you that Christianity is not a “*hope-so*” religion; rather, it is a “*hope-filled*” experience. It’s not a vague and uncertain feeling that things will take a turn for the better somehow or some way; but the deep settled conviction that having cast all our care upon Him, tomorrow will be bright with Heaven’s blessing resting on our soul.

Here is another verse on this subject: Romans 5:5 “*Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*” Hope makes does not disappoint! As to our present condition, we may be among the poorest of this world’s poor, but because we hope in Christ, we are not disappointed, for “*God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him*” (James 2:5).

Finally, not only is the Christian’s hope in Christ, but *CHRIST HIMSELF* is our hope, as we read in Colossians 1:27, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

The only hope of the worldling is that some change for the better may be effected by a change of government, or by some international conference; but the hope of the Christian looks far beyond earthly governments and political strategy. The hope of the Christian is expressed in Titus 2:13 “*Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*”

The only hope for this poor old world is in Christ.

The only hope for the perishing sinner is Christ.

The only hope for the youth of our land is Christ.

The only hope for the struggling saint is Christ.

The holy hope of the Church of today is Christ. And the only hope for tomorrow is Christ. “*For we are saved by hope ...*” Christ is our Hope, and we are “*looking for that blessed hope ...*” (Titus 2:13).

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CHRIST – OUR PEACE

Ephesians 2:14 – *“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.”*

Let us return now to the *WONDERFUL WORD* for another message on the theme, The Most Wonderful Person in the Wonderful Word. Our subject this morning is *CHRIST, OUR PEACE*. Our text is Ephesians 2:14, *“For He is our peace.”* Our purpose is to show that peace is to be found not merely in the absence of all trials and difficulties, not only when circumstances are favourable and to our liking; but peace is found in a Person, and that Person is our LORD Jesus Christ. If peace were dependant on local surroundings and conditions, it would be a most uncertain and elusive experience. If we only could have peace when the weather, the government, the crops, the neighbours, the relatives, the car, the house, our health, our wealth, our business, our church, were all found at last to be in perfect harmony with what we would desire them to be, then there would hardly be a chance that more than once in a lifetime this happy state of affairs would come about, to give us peace. Furthermore, it would be mockery even to speak of peace, or offer peace to anyone, since most of these things I have mentioned are beyond our power to manage or control. But my text says, *“He is our peace.”*

First of all, let me point out that before anyone can have peace, he must be *at peace* with God, and you cannot have peace with God except through our LORD Jesus Christ. ‘But,’ someone will say, ‘I have no quarrel with the Almighty; I am quite satisfied to let Him run the affairs of the universe as it pleases Him; I do not question His authority, nor interfere with the working of His Providence.’ That is all very fine, but the point is: *are you at peace with God?* I might say, I have no quarrel with the polar bears of the arctic, nor the lions of the tropics – I am quite satisfied to let them run their course and fill their place in the scheme of things. But all that wouldn’t prove that I’m at peace with those creatures. No. To be at peace with God is to be in that state of harmony and fellowship which enables each to enjoy the fellowship of the other. Before this condition can obtain between sinful man and a thrice holy God, there must be some settlement of the sin-question. Sin is the transgression of God’s Law, and you cannot go on breaking God’s Law and still be at peace with Him, any more than you could go on breaking the laws of our land and be at peace with the officers of the law.

Let me say just here, that worship which makes profession of fellowship with God while at the same time rejecting and despising His commands, completely ignoring His offer to put away the cause of all strife and rebellion (even our sins), is blasphemy. That religion is hypocrisy. Listen, while I read Romans 8:9 *“... the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* I submit this self-evident fact: There cannot be peace in the world, nor can there be peace in our hearts, until we are at peace with God. Isaiah 57:21 says, *“There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.”*

When all the instruments in the orchestra are perfectly tuned to the piano, they are in tune with each other. When we are in harmony with God, we are in harmony with all that is of God. We will love all that God loves, and hate all that God hates. As we read in Romans 5:1 *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”* Let us go now from the thought of peace *WITH* God, to the peace *OF* God. Philippians 4:6, 7 says, *“Be careful (anxious) for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* Here is the divine recipe for peace. Please note the phrase, *“peace of God.”*

This question is often asked: “How can God look on a world so full of crime, wickedness, and injustice, and do nothing about it? How can God be at peace, when the world is at war with Him and at war with one another? Does He not care? Is He not interested in what takes place on this earth?” Yes, He cares! He is interested! But the storms that trouble us cause Him no alarm. Come with me to Matthew 8:23-27, and we will see a lovely ‘working-out’ of this principle. The disciples are with Jesus in a little ship – Jesus is asleep, when suddenly a great storm sweeps down upon the lake. How often our own experience follows this pattern. We start off on a pleasant journey, having Christ as our Companion; the prospects are that we shall have just a wonderful time of fellowship in quietness and peace. Suddenly for no accountable

reason, things take a change. A storm sweeps down upon us, and just when we need the LORD most, He seems to have left us or be most indifferent to our plight. But read the story again. Notice that what filled the hearts of the disciples with terror, caused no alarm to the Christ of God. They awakened Him with the cry, *“Don’t you care that we perish?”* Scripture records how, with the majesty of deity, He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm. My listener, this morning, this message is for you. Can’t you trust your all with Him who gave His all for you? Can’t you see that the KING of Kings, the LORD of Glory is greater than your affliction, than your financial loss, than your failure at college? This is why Paul could say, *“I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and how to abound; to be full, and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me;”* and again, *“I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”* My text says *“For He is our peace.”*

This explains why God can rest when a world is in turmoil. This story of the disciples on the Lake of Galilee is not only an historical fact, but a picture of the Day that is yet to be, when the Prince of all the princes of the earth shall arise, and rebuke the storm swept waters of this world’s affairs, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our LORD and of His Christ. *Some Day of days! Some Dawning, yet to be!* This Gospel that we preach is called “the Gospel of Peace.” It is written, *“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”* (Romans 10:15 and Isaiah 52:7). Galatians 5:22 says, *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ...”* What a blessed triplet. Notice, it is called the fruit of the Spirit, and set forth in contrast with the works of the flesh. Peace is not given us all in a lump sum, so that we are immediately filled with peace, as soon as we have accepted Christ. It is a fruit of the Spirit, and following the laws that govern the production of the fruit, we note that all the possibilities and potentialities of the fruit are buried in the seed of the apple. But it must grow. It must be given its proper environment. It must be watered and nurtured.

What, then, are the rules that govern the production of this blessed characteristic of the Spirit? They are few, and very simple. Here is the first, and most important – *ABIDE IN CHRIST*. In following this, fruit will be certain – peace will be sure. John 15:4 *“Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”* What does it mean to ‘abide’ in Christ? It is to have no sin unconfessed, no interest that He cannot share. The abiding one takes all burdens to Him, draws all wisdom, life, and strength from Him. In short, it means that daily communion with God through our LORD Jesus Christ, which brings into our hearts the deep settled peace referred to by Isaiah (26:3), *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.”*

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CHRIST – OUR LIFE

1 John 5:12 – *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

Let us come now to the message for the morning – another in the series of studies on the most wonderful Person in the Wonderful Word. Our subject, “*CHRIST, OUR LIFE.*” Last Sunday we had “Christ, Our Peace;” and we began the theme the previous Sunday with “Christ, our Hope.” Let us turn to our text, 1 John 5:12 *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”* The preceding verse says, *“And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”* The subject of LIFE is a thrilling one for any person to study, whether it be the scientist in the laboratory with his test tubes or the farmer out in his fields watching the waving grain; but neither of those could possibly know the thrill that comes to a Gospel preacher when he is dealing with this most vital and interesting subject. The life *they* see is but for a moment, since it is related only to time; but the life *we* have to do with is FOREVER, and is spoken of as ETERNAL.

I want to direct and dedicate this message particularly to all young people, with the prayer that God will show the Youth of our land this tremendous fact – LIFE IS FOUND ONLY IN CHRIST. Life is at its best when Christ is the dominating Factor, the guiding Principle, the inner Fountain and the soul’s only Objective. There is a verse – Philippians 1:21 – which you could take as the motto of your life. If you do, you will find it to be the ‘Key’ to open for you the richness of God’s blessing – the ‘Key’ which unlocks the storehouse where the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus are laid up for all who open the door. Listen carefully while I read the inspired words of Paul the Apostle, *“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* Let us examine the first part of the phrase *“For me to live is Christ ...”* One translation puts it this way, *“Life means Christ to me.”* Christ was the reason for his existence – the goal to which he pressed and the prize he hoped to gain. For someone living such a life, death could be nothing else but gain. John 1:4 says, *“In Him was life and the life was the light of men.”* I’ll just repeat the first part of that verse: *“In Him was life . . .”* The word “*life*” is very mysterious and difficult to define or analyse. The best definition I’ve found is this: ‘Life is simply the sum total of those things which resist death.’ Death is a natural state, life is supernatural. Were it not for the sustaining and restraining hand of the God of Life, we would speedily return to the dust from which we came. The Life we want to consider this morning is that which is more than only a conscious, active existence – more than a state of being. We want to consider Life which can be enjoyed – where we not only have power to move about, but move in the *right* direction, and find that *“in His presence is fulness of joy; and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore”* (Psalm 16:11).

This all leads up to another angle of the subject of “Life.” The idea that life only exists for pleasure is mistaken – that unless we can have plenty of pleasure there is little use in living. This philosophy would not be so dangerous if we were directed to the right Source of pleasure; for certainly it *is* the chief end of man *“to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”* But it is nothing short of tragic when the Youth of our land are led to believe that real life is found in dissipation – that the chief end of man is to drown himself in the concentrated essence of distilled damnation – that the body was designed as it is, so that the head could be turned into a smoke stack, the mouth into a cesspool, and the stomach into a garbage can; and that, when you’ve finally succeeded in making these adjustments, you are now ready to live. Whereas, the fact of the matter is this: you are *already* dead and looking after the embalming process before you are buried. *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life!”* Notice, that life consists not only in *being*, but in *having* (not in the possession of earthly things, such as silver and gold, houses or lands – you could have all these and still not have Life).

Read the story of the rich fool again, in Luke 12:16-21. Note that though he had great possessions, he lacked the greatest Possession. Scriptures do not condemn him because he had much goods laid up for many years. They condemn him because he lacked what would have given him life. He is not condemned as a thief or a liar, a drunkard or a blasphemer. He is simply called a fool. He made the fatal mistake which hundreds and thousands of people are making today. He supposed his soul could live on stuff you store in barns or bank vaults – that life consists in the abundance of things you possess; but life is not found in things any more than it is found in pleasures. Life is found in a Person – in Jesus Christ our

LORD, the only Person who ever dared to make the statement: *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10). Mohammed talked about life – so did Buddha and Confucius; but of none of these could it ever be said, *'In him was life and that life was the light of men.'* But of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, it can truly be said, *"He who has the Son has life!"*

Let us consider this *"more abundant"* life. Evidently there are degrees of life; since we have the statement of Jesus Himself, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* This distinction is plainly seen in the physical, natural realm. We know the Vegetable Kingdom has a form of life, as does the Animal Kingdom; but certainly, the Animal has a higher form of life than does the Vegetable. I submit to you this morning that, regardless of the so-called findings of so-called scientists, the Human Kingdom has a higher form of life than the other two. In the human family also, there are degrees of life. There is a striking contrast between someone who can live a rugged outdoor life, and the invalid in the wheel chair or hospital cot. Yet it must be said of both that life is uncertain, at best. There can be no positive assurance that the robust physique of the athlete will outlive the emaciated frame of the afflicted one. Furthermore, it is certain of both that *"it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the Judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). This is where *"more abundant life"* comes in.

Just as surely as there is a difference between Vegetable and Animal, there is a difference between the Natural and the Spiritual. There is a form of life that is higher than that which supports this physical frame. There is a life not subject to the same laws as govern this mortal man. There is a fountain of eternal youth where one may drink and live forever. There is a bread whereof one may eat and have one's youth renewed. The one whose soul is fed, soars like an eagle mounting into the air. *"They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint"* (Isaiah 40:31). Do you ask, *'Where is this enchanted isle? Where can this mystic substance be found, which cannot be seen with human eye nor handled with human hands?'* If I could give you assurance that it was on some island in the South Pacific, you would be well advised to make it your life's mission to travel to that sacred place until you had that abundant life. But, if that were the case, some of you could never go. Your body is too frail for such a journey, or you are bound by ties of home and loved ones you could not forsake. Thank God, you do not need to go. *JESUS CAME!* He said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* He did not come from an island in the South Pacific, nor from some famous corner of earth's vale of tears and strife; but, He came ...(what is that song?)... *"Out of the Ivory Palaces..."* Read Romans 10:6-7 *"Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven?... Or, who shall descend into the deep"* in search of life and life eternal; but *"the Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart . . . the word of faith, which we preach"* – *"He who has the Son has life!"*

Now, finally, let me point out that the life of which we are speaking came to us through death. Jesus said, *"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit"* (John 12:24). There's a sense in which you, too, must die before you can live. Either the Life of Christ will crowd out self-life, or self-life will crowd out the Christ-Life. Abundant life follows abundant death. To go "all out" for Christ is to have Christ "all out" for you. To the measure you give yourself to Him, to that measure He gives Himself to you. If you really want Life, *real* Life – if you want to live not for pleasure, not for possessions, not for things, but for Christ, then you will find the pleasures that endure – the possessions which will never fade – and the things that will remain when earthly things have crumbled into nothingness and the elements have melted with fervent heat. If you want to live when the stars have burned out, and the sun has ceased to shine, when the heavens have passed away with a great noise and the elements have dissolved, when the earth also and the things that are therein, shall be burned up (2 Peter 3:10-12) – if you want to live when and where all that mars or causes pain shall be no more (Rev. 21) – if you want to live in the eternal glories of where myriads of angelic beings strike their golden harps and lead the everlasting orchestration in the songs of His glory (read Rev. 4) – if you want to live where the principal City is twelve-thousand furlongs cube; twelve stories high, with streets of gold as transparent glass, where the only light is the glory of God, and the only inhabitants are forever clean and pure and blessed (read Rev. 21) – then listen while I tell you once again, *"He who has the Son, has life!"*

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THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

John 19:5 – *“Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, Behold the Man!”*

Let us turn again to the Wonderful Word for the message of the morning. The subject for consideration is “The Man Christ Jesus;” our text is John 19:5 *“BEHOLD THE MAN!”* The scene is the Judgment Hall, the speaker is Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor; and the man he calls us to behold wears a purple robe and a crown of thorns. Notice that Pilate calls Him not *a* man, but *the* man. Jesus is not just another member of the numerous progeny of Adam; but He is the *ONE MAN*, the only One of the whole human race, whom *ALL* the race is called to “Behold.”

Perhaps you will remember that in the very beginning the first child born into the world of Adam and Eve was called Cain. “For,” said his mother, *“I have gotten a man from the LORD”* (Genesis 4:1). No doubt, she hoped this little bundle of life, that she held in her arms, would be the Man promised by God; the one who would bruise the serpent’s head and deliver them from the slavery of Satan – from the one who had gotten dominion over them because of their transgression. Sad to say, Eve lived to see the day when this man she had *“gotten from the LORD”* became an apostate and a murderer. From that time on many a father and mother, as they received the gift of a son into their home, hoped and prayed that he would be the one – the emancipator – the deliverer – *“the MAN”* who would set men free. But generation after generation came on the scene, and left again without producing the one at whose command and by whose power the race would be saved from all its sorrows. As the centuries rolled by, God often sent His messengers and sometimes appeared in Person to give assurance that One would come to be the Saviour of the world; but the passing of time seemed only to strengthen the power of sin and the devil – burying the race ever deeper in social degeneracy and moral decay.

At the time when the words of my text were spoken, there was scarcely a light to show the way; and scarcely a soul who would walk in the light if it should chance to shine on his path. But a Call was heard early one morning in the long ago, and that Call has echoed and re-echoed around the world. And, today, I would sound it out again on this broadcast of the Wonderful Word: *“BEHOLD THE MAN!”*

Come then, and let us behold this MAN to whom the Roman Governor refers. First of all, I would like to point out that He *is* a man in the highest sense of the word – a man in the ethical sense. It is possible for someone could be called a man simply because of his physical qualifications, and yet be anything *but* a man, as to character and behaviour. He could wear the clothes of a man, and yet be referred to as a *“wolf”* or a *“fox”* or a *“snake”* or even a *“weasel.”* But to be a MAN in the truest sense, is to have qualities most consistent with God’s original pattern, when He said: *“Let us make man in our image”* (Genesis 1:26). And now, for the first time since the Fall, a MAN appears, of whom the verdict of the Roman court is, *“I find no fault in Him at all”* (John 18:38; 19:4, 6). Not only so, but when this MAN was about to enter His life’s work at age 33, having been raised in the little oriental town of Nazareth, (of which it was often said, ‘Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?’) – when He received water baptism at the hands of John, a voice came from the Majesty in the heavens, saying, *“This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* (Matthew 3:17).

Not only was Jesus a MAN in the sense of being free from those sins which mar and pervert God’s plan and purpose, but He was a MAN in the active, aggressive sense; unsparingly denouncing the hypocrisy, the sham, the pretence, that filled the religious life of His people. See Him with a whip of cords, as He drove the sheep and oxen out of the temple, along with those who owned them, turning over the tables of the money-changers and the seats of the that sold doves and said unto them, *“Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise!”* (John 2:16). There is nothing insipid or colourless, nothing weak or spineless in the Manhood of the Christ! And I would add just here, that there is nothing flabby or flimsy – nothing wavering or wobbly – nothing cowardly nor contemptible – about the one in whose heart the Spirit of Christ rules. The Bible says, *“The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion”* (Proverbs 28:1).

Now let us behold *The MAN* as a member of the human race, subject to all its weaknesses, and temptations, for He was *“in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). Though, as to character, He was *“holy, harmless, and undefiled”* (Heb. 7:26); though He *“did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth”* (1 Peter 2:22); yet He spoke of Himself as the *Son of Man* – sharing our problems – feeling our sorrows. Indeed, one of the names given Him by the prophet Isaiah was *“Man of sorrows”* (Isa. 53:3).

Behold, then, the *“Man of Sorrows”* – behold Him at the grave of Lazarus (John 11), the two sisters of the deceased are weeping; the Jews who came to comfort them were also weeping. And then we have the shortest verse in the Bible; just two words, but so expressive: *“Jesus wept.”* It would seem, as they stood before the tomb which held the decaying body of one most dear, that Jesus beheld the great tragedy of death. In the tears of Mary and Martha He saw the tears of multiplied millions. In the groans and sobs of Jewish friends and neighbours, He heard the cries of the heart-broken world, over and throughout all Time. He wept not only for His own grief, but He was *“a Man of Sorrows”*. He had the capacity to enter into and feel for the afflictions of others. In all our afflictions, He is afflicted, says the Bible, and again, back there in Isaiah 53:4, *“Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.”*

For just a few moments, now, I would like you to behold the MAN, Christ Jesus, in contrast with the man, Adam. *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (1 Cor. 15:21, 22). Then later on in the same chapter (vss 45, 47) *“The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is the LORD from heaven.”* These verses indicate that each one was the head of a race, or family. Those born of Adam all die; those born of Christ all live. The children of the first man, Adam, are soulish; the children of the second Man are spiritual. Adam’s descendants are earthly; those of Christ’s are heavenly. Let us think of the contrast in still another way.

The first Adam began life in a beautiful garden. He was tempted of Satan and fell. As a result, the earth brought forth thorns and briars. The second Adam met Satan among the thorns and briars of the wilderness, He defeated him there; and as a result, the Scriptures declare, in place of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, for in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert. We are living in days when man is looking to man for a way out of problems. Hopes are fixed on international conferences and political strategies. The world’s cry is for a man to lead us out of our difficulties, and solve our problems. God has long ago given us such a MAN – we led Him outside the city wall and nailed Him to a cross of wood. And now all the world is summoned to *“Behold, the Man!”* Let us come again and behold Him, this morning.

We opened this subject with The MAN in the judgment hall. Now we have The MAN on the cross. Notice again, it is not a man, but *“The MAN.”* It is as though He has incorporated in Himself all the race, with all their sins, and all their sorrows; with all their guilt and all their weakness. He is hanging there as the Son of Man. As the Son of Adam. It is a representative death; it is a substitutionary death. It is an expiatory death. It is a judicial death. It is a death for sin, but not for His own. He dies – God’s well-beloved Son dies – as a condemned one must die; but He dies so that man need die no more.

Our final picture of The MAN Christ Jesus, is on the other side of the tomb. Death has run its course for the Son of Man, but this MAN was also the Son of God. Though He was the Seed of David, according to the flesh, he was *“declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead”* (Rom. 1:4); *“For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He lives, He lives unto God”* (Rom. 6:10). Now this MAN, on the Resurrection side of the tomb, is The MAN of the hour. He is The MAN to whom God has given rulership of the world. He is The MAN who one day will rule all nations with a rod of iron. This MAN has thousands of agents who are making an earnest and fervent effort to contact every son of Adam or our generation. They are going into the jungles of Africa, across the burning sands of India. The fever swamps of the Amazon, throughout Europe, Asia, North America, preaching the Gospel to every creature. And the Gospel is: This MAN died for all men – this MAN lives to save all men – this MAN is coming to rule all men. *“Behold the MAN!”*

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THE DEITY OF CHRIST

1 Timothy 3:16 – *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”*

Let us come now to the message of the morning. Our last subject had to do with *CHRIST AS MAN*; now we have the great truth of *THE DEITY OF CHRIST*. That He is God, is just as necessary as that He is Man. In our text, we have the complete Doctrine of the Incarnation all pressed into one verse, and the opening phrase declares that it is a great mystery. Since it is a mystery, we will make no attempt to explain it; there’s no reason to avoid it, just because it is a mystery.

There are many mysteries connected with our lives, too deep for us to fathom – many things we cannot explain; but they are nonetheless so real that we cannot explain them away. Someone has put it very well by saying: ‘If the plan of Redemption were not too great for our mental comprehension, then it would be too small for our spiritual necessity.’ In other words, since we cannot explain our spiritual condition and behaviour, how can we expect to understand or explain the method of our deliverance? Then again, there is such a thing as the mystery of iniquity. The unreasonableness of transgression – the depth of iniquity into which we have sunk, that requires a work to be done that is beyond our power to properly explain. I cannot tell you how two natures could be in One Person, how Christ could be both God and Man; but I do know that the One who dies for me *must* be a Man, and the power to save me *must* be the power of God.

Let’s consider the Scriptures which set forth the fact of His deity. First, we’re told of His *Pre-existence* – that He lived before He came to Bethlehem as a little Babe. Read in Prov. 8:22, 23 *“The LORD possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.”* Then again, in John 8:58: *“Jesus said unto them, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.”* Scripture clearly teaches that creation itself is the work of His hands: *“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist”* (Colossians 1:16, 17).

His deity is confirmed by His attributes. Think of His *Omnipotence*, His almighty power – Matthew 8 sets these forth in a very wonderful way. Read it today – note His power over all sickness and disease; His power over the elements – even the winds and the sea obey Him; and His power over demons. Matthew closes his Gospel with Jesus’ words, *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth . . .”*

Then there is His *Omniscience* – wisdom and knowledge – His understanding of the very thoughts of those with whom He had to do. Remember when the Priests and Pharisees sent officers to take Him? They listened to Him for a while, and then returned without Him – their explanation: *“No man ever spoke like this Man!”* No wonder Apostle Paul cried out, *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out”* (Rom. 11:33).

Just in passing, let me point out that Power and Wisdom are the two attributes ones most coveted by man. *“Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”* was the argument that Satan used to induce the fall of man. But even though man fell while snatching for these things, he has not given up the struggle to obtain them. We are now living in days when knowledge has increased, and man has more power than ever before. He has power to harness the forces of nature. The waters of the rivers, and the energy of the atom obey his will. His wisdom has unlocked the secrets of chemistry which make conveniences and appliances possible, that were never known until recent years. These things have resulted in the building of great industrial kingdoms, which control and have power over hundreds and thousands of lives.

It is evident, however, that this wisdom and power is not sufficient to solve our spiritual and moral problems. It is not sufficient to meet our need. Indeed, in many respects our problems have become more complicated and difficult. It is written in 1 Corinthians 1:25, *“The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”* And so, we preach Christ crucified, *“unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God”* (vs. 23). For *“The fear of the LORD, that is*

*wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding*" (Job 28:28). Again, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). My friend, this morning, I commend unto you a Saviour whose wisdom is the Wisdom of God and whose power is the Power of God.

Beside the attributes of Wisdom and Power, we have the fact of His *Omnipresence*. His promise of "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20), has been and is now a living truth of the Gospel of Christ – a personal experience enjoyed by countless numbers of sincere believers the world around. There are many thousands of God's dear children living under deplorable conditions in exile in Siberia, whose only comfort is the presence of the Christ of God. Likewise, there are many in various parts of Europe and Asia, South America, and the Islands of the sea, whose only joy is the joy of Salvation, and whose only comfort is the fellowship of His presence. Not only so, but I'm sure I speak to some this morning who are shut away from Christian fellowship by affliction or other circumstances. Your life would be unbearably lonely were it not that He is near. But you too can sing,

"And He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known."

In olden days, men pictured the world as divided by boundaries such as rivers, mountains, or oceans; each area being under the jurisdiction of the god of that place, whose power was limited to those who lived there. There's an interesting story of this in 1 Kings 20 – the Syrian army met the Israeli army in the hill country, and was defeated. They gathered another army, equal to the one they had lost, saying, "We will meet them this time in the valleys, for their God is a God of the hills, but not a God of the valleys" To their surprise they were defeated in the valleys also, for Israel's God is God both of hills and valleys.

We may read these accounts and think with pity of the ignorance of those primitive people; but I have found there are a great many people in this enlightened day, and in this enlightened land, who think God is localized to a certain area, and can be found only in a certain place, and only on certain days. Is it not true that there are thousands of people who enter churches, cathedrals, and places of worship, putting on a sanctimonious air and joining in songs of praise and worship, using expressions, words and phrases which they have not and would not use in any other place? How reverently they sing to the strains of the old organ, *My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour Divine!* But when the benediction is pronounced, and they leave that place; and there is nothing to show, from the time they ascend the church steps until they leave, that they ever *do* look up with faith to the Lamb of Calvary, or that they really *do* believe that Jesus could or would take all their sins away. Their God only lives in the church they attend – He is never to be spoken of on the street or in the home. But Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always..." He is not confined to a building made with hands. He is just as near you in your home, out in the fields, in the car on the highway, travelling by train, in the café, in the hospital, yes, even in prison. He is closer to us than our breath and nearer than our hands or feet.

Finally, for our purpose this morning, the outstanding proof of His Deity is not only in His Power nor His Wisdom, nor His Presence – for all these would be terrible and terrifying things for men who are born and raised in sin and iniquity. One more thing is necessary. *HE MUST BE ABLE TO FORGIVE SIN*. It is a true saying that to err is human and to forgive, divine. Remember the story of the paralytic in Luke 5. Men brought a man taken with palsy, and lowered him in his bed, through the roof, into the presence of Jesus. They heard Him say, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." This provoked an argument among the listeners, for they reasoned, and rightly so, that only God can forgive sins. All sin – every sin – every kind of sin is against God; for sin is the transgression of Divine Law. So, therefore, only God can forgive sin. But He can, and He will – for it is written "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

When John the Beloved closed the Gospel that bears his name, after giving a very brief but convincing synopsis of Christ's ministry, he says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:30-31). Amen.

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JESUS – THE PROPHET

1 Peter 1:10-11 *“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”*

The subject of our message this morning is *JESUS, THE PROPHET*. From time immemorial, the world has had its prophets – men who claimed to speak for God, to be God’s mouthpiece to bring God’s message to the world – who communicated to the people in their native tongue ‘the plan and purpose of the Almighty.’ Some of these men were true prophets of God, others were speaking the deceitfulness of their own heart. In the history of nations given us in the Old Testament, there are many outstanding and interesting characters – men and women, renowned for their abilities and virtues. Chief among these is the Prophet. Indeed, to my way of thinking, there is no more important and colourful figure in all history than the Old Testament Prophet of God. He stands out from the men of his generation, a living witness and testimony to the reality of the unseen God. God’s Righteousness, Justice, Judgments, Mercy, and Love are themes that give rise to the prophets’ inspired sermons and impassioned declarations. It was through their ministry that a true concept of God was kept before the people while most of the world’s populations were wholly given to idolatry. Not only did the prophets teach the people as to the character of God; but it was through them that God was able to inform them as to what He required of them, and what He was prepared to do for them. Not only so, but it was also the ministry of the Old Testament Prophet to keep alive, in God’s people, a hope in the promise of a coming Redeemer. Now, all this is just by the way of introduction to the subject *JESUS, THE PROPHET*. I mentioned last Sunday that one proof of Jesus’ Deity was His existence prior to Bethlehem. The Scripture declares that the Old Testament Prophet was given his ministry and message by the Spirit of Christ. Read it in 1 Peter 1:10-11: *“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”* There is no better preparation for, nor introduction to the LORD Jesus Christ, than to come to the New Testament with the mind thoroughly saturated with the Old Testament fore-view of His Advent.

Come with me this morning, and we will visit some of these holy men of God, and learn from them the great truth that Jesus Christ is *THE* Prophet of God. It is what *“His Spirit in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.”* The first prophet mentioned in the Bible is *ENOCH* – seventh from Adam. Two things are said of him as to his earthly career –he walked with God and –he talked with God. (Let me point out here that from that day to this, the man or woman who talks *for* God had better walk *with* God; and that person who really walks *with* God will most certainly talk *for* God.) But now, what did this prophet Enoch say? What was the burden of his message? Read it in Jude 14, 15: *“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the LORD comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all...”* It’s the message of the Coming One - the One who is coming to *“to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*

Here it is, back in the very infancy of our race – a prophecy of Coming Judgment. I can almost hear someone say, ‘There he goes again, talking of coming judgment! Turn it off!’ Just before you do, please give me at least one more minute in to show you that the preaching of the Coming Day of Judgment is universal whenever and wherever the Spirit of Christ is given the right-of-way. Whether it be the seventh generation from Adam, or the seventh millennium, the fact of a Coming Day of Judgment is most prominent and vital in the doctrines of Scripture – and, could I add, the most essential truth that you and I are called to consider.

Someone asked Daniel Webster what he considered the most important thought that ever entered his mind. Without hesitation he replied, “It is this, that everyone of us must give an account of himself to God.” I would point out to you that the preaching of a Day of Judgment has produced more lasting good in the

minds and consciences of men and women (yes, and boys and girls) than any other single truth. Furthermore, I would show you that the fact of a Coming Day of Judgment is the only hope for this poor old world. You know as well as I do that there are thousands of crimes, injustices, and deeds of oppression perpetrated every day and there is no hope of obtaining justice or mercy for them. Even reason demands that there should be retribution for the wrongdoer and rewards given to the righteous; but many a wicked one goes out of this world without atoning for his transgressions. Likewise, many a godly man or woman has received only abuse, privation, poverty, and often martyrdom, as the only reward for their righteousness. But the Spirit of Christ cries out through the lips of mortal man, "There is a Judgment Day to be!" Read Psalm 37:1, 10, 11 again, and learn to "*fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*" This subject, *JESUS, THE PROPHET*, is much too large to be crowded into this brief period – let us hurry on.

The next prophet on the list I have chosen is *MOSES* – the man with whom God spoke face to face – who came before his people with the authority of "*thus says the LORD.*" The outstanding feature of Moses' ministry was the giving of the Law – the bringing down from Mount Sinai those precepts and principles which were to govern and control the life of Israel in their worship, in their service toward God, and their relationship with each other – regulations which applied to their religious, moral, social, and economic life of the nation. Now, of course we understand that many of the specific instructions applied only to that people in that Dispensation; but here is the principle we must acknowledge: it was the Spirit of Christ within the man which enable him to first of all receive the Law from the mouth of God, and then to teach that Law to His people and not only to teach the Law, but to exercise judicial authority over them.

This, then, is the lesson that we would draw: our lives *must* be regulated and controlled. Someone must discover what is the will of God for us in our day, and teach us those precepts. I submit to you, my listener, that *JESUS CHRIST, the Prophet of God*, is the One divinely appointed to fulfil this mission. –As to our relationship with God, Jesus declared, "*Ye must be born again, Ye must be born of the Spirit.*" –As to worship, Jesus taught that eternal pattern-prayer, which opens with "*Our Father, which art in heaven,*" and closes with "*If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.*" –As to our relationship with each other, Jesus commanded us to "*love one another; . . . love your enemies, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.*" –In our business life, Jesus taught us that it pays to be honest and give good measure, "*for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*"

I must draw this message to a close. For some reason or other we have come to think of a prophet as "one who foretells – one who can see into the future and tell us all about it." Though actually, that is only one phase of the prophet's ministry. However, the *PROPHET* Jesus Christ has certainly unveiled the days that are yet to be, and has written the history of the Church, the nations, and the Jews before it comes to pass. For He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. What, then, does this *PROPHET* say regarding these things? (For every one of us belongs to one group or the other.) As for the *Church* - there are two lines of truth and two different kinds of churches spoken of – *outward* and *hidden*. The one – rich and making a splendid outward show; but wretched and miserable in the eyes of God. The other – invisible to the human eye, but known to God and to His Christ. As for the *Nations* – nothing to expect but the judgment of God and the certain reaping of the sad effects of rejecting God's Prophet, our *LORD* Jesus Christ. (Read Revelation 2:14-19; 3:7-13; 19:7-9; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

As for the *Jewish People* as a race, Jesus said they would have a time of trouble such as never was since there was a people. Read it in Mark 13:14-20. That very briefly is the picture of the future. What has this *PROPHET* to say about the *present*? I only have time to tell you that "*Whosoever believeth on Him shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life .... For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*" (John 5:24; 3:17).

## JESUS – THE PRIEST

Hebrews 4:15 – *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

Now for the message of the morning. I trust you are enjoying our study of the most wonderful Person in the Wonderful Word. I can assure you that no other subject affords the Gospel preacher such an infinite field of inspiration and never-failing spring of satisfaction. Last Sunday we considered briefly the subject “Jesus, the Prophet.” Today we want to think of Him as *JESUS, THE PRIEST* – filling the office of, and performing the ministry of Priest. Prophet and Priest are always outstanding figures in religion. It seems that every religion demands these two offices – whether it be the true Christian faith or demon worship of the heathen. A prophet is needed to bring God’s message to the people, and a priest is needed to bring the people’s case before God. There were men in Old Testament times who, in themselves, were both prophet and priest – i.e. Abraham, Samuel, David. These were early “types” of our LORD Jesus Christ who was to incorporate in Himself *all* the offices and ministries of leadership found in the Bible. Today, first we will see the *necessity* of our having a Priest; and then, that Jesus Christ *fills every requirement* of that office.

The fundamental idea suggested by “priest” is: “one who appears before God on behalf of others.” In very early times – that is, in the days of Noah, Abraham, and Jacob – the head of each household was its priest. He was the one who supervised and led the family in daily worship; the one who had the authority to preside over all religious matters. We read of Noah ... how on that first glad day, when the family left the Ark and found the earth purified by water, ready again to support the human family, he built an altar and led his family in praise and worship. We read of Job ... how he called his children together after each feast day and sanctified them. Then there is Abraham ... whose life is characterised by the altars he built.

(Just by the way, I’d like to point out that, according to 1 Peter 2:9, there’s a very real sense in which the New Testament Christian is a priest, *“but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation ...”*; and Scripture clearly teaches that the head of each Christian household should lead the family in daily worship and supervise the spiritual activities of all under his care. The necessity of the priesthood grows out of the fact that too many of Adam’s wayward children either cannot, or will not come before the one true and living God in an acceptable manner, and they need someone to represent their case.)

Now let us consider some requirements of that one who would properly fill the office of a priest. The first all-important requirement is that he must be appointed by God. Hebrews 5:4 says, *“No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.”* His is no human appointment brought about by human scheming and human ambition. But, since it is God’s law that has been broken, and God’s authority that has been despised, it must be God who appoints the mediator. Now there can be no question but that Jesus Christ is God’s appointed Priest. As we read in the Book of Psalms 110:4, *“The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”* Then, the priest must be compassionate. He must feel for those whom he represents. There can be nothing cold or mechanical about his ministry. He must be able to make the need of another his own need. In this connection let me read for you Hebrews 4:15. *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* Let us stop awhile just at this point, while we consider that the very essence of Christianity is the love of God for sinful man. Whatever has been done to bring help to the helpless, light to those in darkness, and life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, has grown out of the great compassionate heart of God. How often we read in the Gospel that Jesus was moved with compassion. I would like to say just here that the mightiest force in the universe is the love of God. It is truly written:

The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
It goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell.  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled, and pardoned from his sin.  
O Love of God, how rich and pure, how measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure - the saints’ and angels’ song!

There is no place in the Gospel of Christ for a cold intellectualism. True Christianity is not a religion that follows the dry, lifeless path of philosophy, or decides all its policy on the basis of reason only. If this

were so, the shepherd with the ninety-and nine (Luke 15:3-7) would have concluded that the effort required to find and restore that one that was lost would be greater than the thing was worth. And, had his life been governed by pure logic, the father (Luke 15: 11-32) would not have bothered running out to meet his prodigal son, nor order a special feast prepared. He would have reasoned thus, 'No! This boy has already cost me many times more than he will ever be worth; I'll spend no more on him.' But because he was *more* than a parent (he was a *father* with a father's heart of love for his own flesh and blood), the joy of having his son home again was a joy far greater than he could ever find in those things the prodigal had squandered. That's how it is with our FATHER God. Jesus said, ". . . *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents*" (Luke 15:10). May the LORD save us, as a church, from ever settling down and deciding our service toward our fellow man or toward God on the basis of whether it will pay off in dollars and cents.

Now, what has all this to do with Jesus, our Priest? Just this – we have an High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmity – read Hebrews 4:15 *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."*

I want to remind you again this morning, that there is one who really is interested in your case – One who really cares. Not only must a priest be compassionate and have a real heart-felt concern for those whom he represents, but also, he must bring an offering. It is written in Hebrews 8:3, *"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer."* All through the history of religion, priests have always been associated with offerings. In olden times when two parties were estranged, the offender would choose a mediator – someone to approach the offended party. With gifts and offerings, the mediator would bring about a settlement and the two were united once more. We need not take time this morning to show that as a race we have offended the Majesty in the Heavens. We have transgressed His laws and broken every covenant that has been agreed upon. So deep-rooted is this separation that the Scripture declares that the world of men is at enmity with God. Yes, the natural mind is at enmity with the God of all grace. But although the world is at enmity with God, I am glad to be able to tell you that God is not at enmity with us. He has given us a Mediator, a Go-between – a great High Priest – who brings unto Him an offering, thus making peace. What, then, is the offering that this Priest brings to effect a reconciliation? Here it is in Hebrews 10:5 *"Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me:"* Then verse 10, *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."* He offered the greatest gift any man has the power to offer. Jesus offered Himself.

Let me make a personal application of this truth. You can't have peace with God until you offer Him yourself. I am speaking to someone this morning, who has been trying, possibly for years, to gain favour with God. You have attended church religiously and performed all your duties toward your fellow man; but still you do not have peace. Listen carefully – "You can only be blessed, and have peace and sweet rest, when you yield Him your body and soul."

Let us turn to Ephesians 2:13-14 and read about the offering that Jesus our Priest has brought to God: *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation."* Now, verses 17 & 18: *"And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."*

Our time has run out on us again. I'll just sum up for you the truth we have been speaking of:

- *We must have a priest.* Our sins prevent us from entering into the presence of the Thrice Holy God.
- *This priest must be appointed by God, since He is the offended party.* This priest is none other than our LORD Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.
- *The offering and sacrifice Jesus has brought to God is His own sinless body.*

We have access to God through Christ alone; only through Him can peace come to our hearts.

Isaiah 6:5 *“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”*

Our message from the Word this morning is all wrapped up in a verse of Scripture found in the Book of Isaiah – just these words, *“mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts”* (6:5). We have already learned that Jesus Christ is both Prophet and Priest - both God’s voice to the people *and* the voice of the people to God. Our subject today is *JESUS, THE KING*.

The words of our text are taken from a very dramatic and stirring portion of Scripture. Here is the local setting. One of Judah’s greatest kings, Uzziah by name, has gone the way of all flesh. Ascending to the throne at the tender age of 16, he reigned 52 years in Jerusalem. Uzziah proved to be a leader of extraordinary ability and energy; his people prospered and were protected. Read the story of his conquests and accomplishments, recorded in 2 Chronicles 26. He fortified the city of Jerusalem and it was through his military genius (during his reign great engines were invented to shoot huge stones, and arrows) that Judah was delivered from the oppression of the Philistines. He also took an active part in building up the nation’s agriculture. At the time of our text Uzziah had died and all Judah was in mourning. Isaiah, Judah’s prophet, was concerned about the future of his country. Then he experienced a transforming vision – it is recorded in Isaiah 6. The chapter opens with these words: *“In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.”* Then in verse 5 the writer cries out, *“Woe is me! For I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.”* With this for a background, let me set before you Jesus Christ, KING of Kings and LORD of Lords.

In our study of *JESUS, THE PRIEST*, we found first that we *must have* priest, and that Jesus Christ alone meets all the requirements of that office. Let us take the same approach to this subject, and consider this quite obvious fact. *WE MUST HAVE A KING!* We must have a ruler! We need someone to govern us - to organize and direct us. While the prophet and priest have to do with our spiritual affairs, the king presides over our social and domestic affairs, to give guidance and direction to all our energies and capabilities. The idea of a king is ever associated with law and order – suggesting government – legislation. This in turn provides for protective preservation, prevention of crime and extension of benefits and blessings.

I want to remind you again this morning that we are living in the days spoken of in 2 Peter 2:10, when people *“... despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”* We are living in times when even children are taught to despise authority and rebel against discipline. Men and women foolishly and vainly talk of freedom from all rule (except the rule of one’s own desires), not realizing that one who is ruled by Self is under bondage to the most cruel and exacting tyrant that ever occupied a throne.

Read the Book of Judges, back there in the Old Testament, and note the key verse which is repeated several times, *“In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”* The result was complete and utter confusion and chaos – moral corruption and Satanic oppression. No! We *must* have a King, a Ruler; for we are not more qualified to govern ourselves now than were the people of that ancient time. *WE CANNOT RULE OURSELVES.* We need a King to save us from ourselves; for it is still true that man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.

You may recall the consternation and terror that was caused by that radio play, *WAR OF THE WORLDS*, produced by Orson Wells. It pictured men from Mars invading this planet. Such was the fearfulness of their appearance and the effectiveness of their weapons, that no one could stand before them. I understand that many people fled from their radios to hide; others frantically phoned the police, the radio station, the army headquarters, to find out where the battle was taking place. But it was only a play. We have nothing to fear from Mars. But we have an enemy much nearer than that; one whose power cannot be defeated by weapons forged in the great blast-furnaces of munition makers. I’m speaking of the prince of the power of the air – that mighty spiritual being, Lucifer, before whom *“even Michael, the Archangel durst bring no railing accusation, but said, The LORD rebuke thee”* (Jude 9). No one can save us except Jesus Christ. And there can never be peace between men or nations until Jesus Christ is acknowledged as King and LORD of all.

This leads up to the second part of this message. Only Christ is truly qualified to be King and LORD of all; *ONLY JESUS IS WISE ENOUGH TO BE OUR KING*. There are three essential qualities that one must have to properly qualified to rule all men. First, he must be wise enough. For wisdom is the principal thing. That is the great difficulty we have when choosing human leaders (and, by the way, we do need human leaders). But the difficulty, I say, is to find a man who is wise enough. Human wisdom is so limited; human vision, so short-sighted. A man may fill an elected office, and administer the affairs of his nation with all sincerity, certain that his policies will lead to peace and prosperity, and yet actually be causing the ruin of his people. But let me point out must here that Jesus Christ possesses the Wisdom of the Ages. Indeed, says the Bible, in Jesus, the Son of God are hidden “*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Colossians 2:3). He never makes mistakes; He never makes a wrong move, nor gives the wrong direction. He knows the end from the beginning.

Secondly, this world ruler must be mighty enough. He must have the power to carry out his programme. He must have the authority and ability to effectively deal with all opposing forces. The very best of plans will fail if one does not have the power to carry them out. The idea of putting a bell on the cat by the council of mice was a splendid one, indeed; but who could carry it out? I’m sure I am speaking to someone this morning, who has a very sound plan to better your own life and make your own way less sinful and sorry – more honest and honourable; but deep down in your heart you know you lack the power to carry it out. But hear a Word of Scripture. (Matt.28:1) “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*” and, John 1:12 “*To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God;*” again, (Rom. 1:16) “*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God.*”

*ONLY JESUS IS MIGHTY ENOUGH TO BE OUR KING*. My friend, will you hear it again? The Christian Way is not one of wishful thinking, nor impractical dreaming. It is not a fanciful theory that has no relation to fact. But it is a doctrine of power – and that power is the Power of God. It is a Power that saves men from the dominion of sin – from the slavery and tyranny of Satan. Before I leave this point, let me give you another Scripture. Acts 1:8, “*But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... to the uttermost part of the earth.*”

Not only must this king be wise enough and powerful enough, there must be one more quality before he is fit to rule – he must be kind enough. For surely, wisdom and power would be terrible attributes unless exercised by a loving heart. This is the one thing that is sadly lacking among the men of wisdom and power of our day. What a blessing to humanity would be the findings of science, did all men know the science of loving God, and then loving men who were made in the image of God. But, having had two world wars in one generation, we have seen the result of wisdom and power dwelling with evil and sin.

It is not necessary to prove that Jesus Christ most completely and adequately meets the requirement of kindness – *ONLY JESUS IS KIND ENOUGH TO BE OUR KING*; but while it is not necessary to prove it, there is real pleasure in preaching it. An old hymn writer declares:

“The love of God is broader than the measure of man’s mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal is wonderfully kind.”

Just before we leave the air, let me once more make a personal application of these truths we have set before you. Who is *your* king? Do you say, as did the Israelites of old, ‘We have no king but Caesar’? (Cruel. Murderous, wicked Caesar!) Or can you say, ‘Jesus is my King, my wonderful Saviour’?

“*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! Selah.*” (Psalm 24:7 - 10)

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JESUS CHRIST – JUDGE of ALL

John 5:22 – *“For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son”*

Let us turn now to the Word of the LORD for our message for the morning; we would like to take you still further in our study of the most wonderful Person in the Wonderful Word. Let me present to you *JESUS CHRIST, THE JUDGE OF ALL.*

There is a stirring scene pictured in Daniel 7:9-10 which provides a very suitable background to this most vital subject - the account of the Daniel's prophetic vision of the end of the ages. It pictures the Ancient of Days clothed in a garment white as snow; the hair of His head, like pure wool; and His throne like a fiery flame. Thousands and thousands ministered unto him, and ten-thousands time ten-thousand stood before Him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened. There is an old saying, “There is nothing awful, but the Judgment Day.” And certainly, when we think of the dreadful majesty of the Judge of all the earth, the millions and multiplied millions who stand to be judged, and the eternal issues that hang in the balance for every soul that will be judged, we must agree – it will an *AWFUL* day.

John the Beloved says, in Revelation 20:12, *“And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.”*

In things pertaining to this present life, the law reaches only up to death. Death carries the transgressor beyond the reach of judge and jury. The laws of our land will pursue the guilty up to the grave, but beyond that they cannot go. But the Judge of whom I speak today, and the Law which He stands to administer, has to do with eternal verities which Death cannot disannul. And though Death may rob the law courts of the opportunity to secure justice, it is but the portal through which the guilty must enter and become available to Him who holds the keys of Death and the Grave. And so, the Scripture declares, *“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.”*

Let us consider the Judge who is to try their case. Who is He? Who appointed Him? And is He qualified to fill the office that holds such tremendous responsibility? I want to answer these questions for you from the Word of God.

– Who is He that will judge the whole world? Let me sound it out to every listening ear, this morning, it is Jesus Christ! It is He who stood before Pontius Pilate and king Herod. Though they found no cause of death in Him, yet they gave the verdict that He should be crucified. These very men, though many centuries have passed with their bodies slumbering in the tomb, will one day stand and be judged by this One whom they once condemned. John 5:22 says, *“For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”*

Before we leave this question, let me make a personal application of the truth. Jesus Christ is still on trial. Right now, you are the judge. Tell me, *“What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?”* Do you believe Him to be the Son of God with power? Do you confess Him to be your King? Your Priest? Your Prophet? If so, then He will not be your Judge; rather, He will be your Saviour. If, on the other hand, you reject His claims and refuse to accept Him as the Son of God, you thereby judge Him to be an impostor and liar; for He did say, *“I am the Son of God.”*

Let me here remind you again, that though you may judge Him now, He will judge you on *that* Day.

– Who appointed Him to be Judge? Turn with me to Acts 17:30-31, where we find the Apostle Paul preaching that memorable sermon to the men of Athens. He closed with this message, *“Now He commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”*

Here it is. God has ordained that His Son should be the Judge. And though we condemned Him and nailed Him to a cross of wood, though we buried Him in a sepulchre of stone, God raised Him from the dead and in due time He will come to judge the world in righteousness.

– Is He qualified to fill this office that has such tremendous responsibility? The Scriptures just quoted speaks of His righteousness. This is the quality and virtue that cost Him His life at the hands of the

scribes and Pharisees. Because His standard for right and wrong was so much higher than theirs. They were constantly being embarrassed by His unalterable code of ethics. When they would wash only the outside of the cup and platter, He would show them how filthy was the inside and how unreasonable was a religion that was only on the surface. When they would stone a woman taken in adultery, He showed them that they had no right to do so, unless they themselves were without sin.

The Scripture records of that instance (John 8) *“They, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one beginning with the eldest.”* In short, it was His very righteousness that so infuriated His judges. They condemned Him in spite of Pilate’s verdict: *“I find no fault in this man.”*

No doubt, this is the principle reason why Christ is not more popular today. He still refuses to compromise. *“Forever, Oh LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven”* (Psalm 119:89). He makes no special concession to certain individuals because of their position. He does not change His Gospel to suit a twentieth century revision of moral standards. When we read in Hebrews 13:8 that Jesus Christ is *“the same yesterday and today, and forever,”* we are taught the He is changeless towards the sin-question. That He still demands truth in the inward parts, and salvation is of the heart and not the head only. Because He is righteous, it follows that He must be just. The office of Judge requires that justice must be meted out to equally everyone, regardless of place of station.

Let us take a few moments with the word JUSTICE. The idea suggested is that of ‘receiving the due reward for the deeds done, whether good or bad.’ It is evident, then, that for anyone to face the Judgment Seat with confidence, he must have the assurance that he is absolutely innocent – that he has never broken any of God’s laws – that he has never at any time transgressed the divine commandment. Either that, or has received a full and free forgiveness for all wrong doing, and has full assurance of pardon for each and every sin. For it is written, *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”* (James 2:10).

I wonder, my listener – how is it with you this morning? Would you declare that you have never at any time been guilty of so much as one sin against God? Can you say that you have no fear of the Judgment Day – that you are ready to stand before Him whose eyes are as lamps of fire and establish your innocence? If not, then there is only one alternative. Please listen carefully while I preach the Gospel once again.

Here it is: *“For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:14 - 16); *“For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Corinthians 5:21); *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ...”* (Romans 8:1-4); *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:6); *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God ...”* (Romans 5:1).

In short, Jesus Christ must be either your Saviour or your Judge. Your sins were judged at Calvary, but if you will not accept that settlement, then you must face the Great White Throne and the One who sits thereon from Whose Presence *“the earth and heaven flee away; and there was found no place for them”* (Revelation 20:11).

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JESUS – JEHOVAH-RAPHA – THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Exodus 15:26 – *“If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.”*

Let us turn to the Word of the LORD for another message; we trust it will be of help and blessing to all who hear. Our subject today is *“Jesus, the Great Physician”*; and for our text let us turn to Exodus 15:26 – *“I am the LORD who heals you.”* The local setting for this declaration is very interesting and instructive. Israel had journeyed from the Red Sea three days without water, coming to the waters of Marah. They could not drink the waters, for they were bitter. Moses cried unto the LORD, and the Scripture says, *“the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet ...”* (Ex. 15:25). Thus, the LORD revealed Himself to them as Jehovah-Rapha, *“The LORD who heals you.”*

The typical and spiritual value of this account is rich with meaning to our hearts today. The waters of Marah stand for the bitter experiences on the pathway of life. The tree can be nothing else than the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, where all the bitterness of all human experience was placed upon the sinless body of the Son of Man and *“by His stripes we are healed”* (Isa. 53:5 and 1 Pet. 2:24). When this Cross is cast into our bitter waters, they are healed – sweetened – we can drink them joyfully and they slake our thirst. As the Apostle Paul says, *“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”* (2 Cor. 12:10).

The subject of *“The LORD our Healer”* is gaining a good deal of prominence in recent years, and many who hear my voice today could testify to a definite and supernatural touch of God upon their bodies. And for many others who are afflicted, I would encourage you to take the Bible and follow every reference to healing you can find. Look away to the Lamb of God, of whom Isaiah prophesied, saying, *“Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses”* (Isa. 53:4 and Matt. 8:17).

There is a poem, a prayer of EDWARD PLUMPTRE, which expresses the desire of many of us today:

Thine arm, O LORD, in days of old, was strong to heal and save;  
It triumphed o’er disease and death, o’er darkness and the grave;  
To Thee they went, the blind, the dumb, the palsied and the lame,  
The leper with his tainted life, the sick with fevered frame.  
And lo! Thy touch brought life and health, gave speech and strength and sight;  
And youth, renewed and frenzied calmed, owned Thee the LORD of Light.  
And now, O LORD, be near to bless, Almighty, as of yore;  
In crowded street, by restless couch, as by Gennesaret’s shore,  
Be Thou our great Deliverer still, Thou LORD of life and death,  
Restore, and quicken, soothe and bless, with Thine Almighty breath;  
To hands that work and eyes that see, give wisdom’s heavenly lore,  
That whole and sick, and weak and strong, may praise Thee evermore.

There is, however, a great deal more to this doctrine of healing than strength for the body; though I am very much afraid that many who are seeking health are concerned only with the physical. Their only thought is that they might be free from pain – that they might have the strength to pursue their own ambitions and follow more earnestly the things of this life – that they might have a more pleasant journey through this vale of tears and strife – that they might be more carefree while they spend their strength for the devil. If we seek for health just for health’s sake, we have missed the point entirely. There is only one legitimate reason why we should seek to be strong and that is for the sake of the One who owns us, spirit, soul and body – for we are *“bought with a Price”* (1 Corinthians 7:23).

What a different world this would be if we were as much concerned about our spiritual and moral health as we are about our physical. What expense and effort is involved in training doctors and nurses - in building and equipping great hospitals with the best that science can afford, to minister to the body and restore to health a man or woman whose chief concern is to serve the lusts of the flesh. But this Jesus, of whom I speak, is Physician primarily to the souls of men and women. He is concerned about those diseases that medical science is helpless to cope with, and, blessed be His name, He can cure them. The medical

profession has divided itself into specialties for every part of our anatomy. Our LORD Jesus Christ is in Himself a specialist for every ill in the catalogue of human ailments, whether physical or spiritual.

There is a disease of the mind, spoken of in Scripture, as *“blindness of the mind”* (2 Corinthians 4:4); a *“reprobate mind”* (Romans 1:28); a *“carnal mind”* (Romans 8:7); *“vanity of the mind”* (Ephesians 4:7); *“defiled mind”* (Titus 1:5); and *“puffed up because of a fleshly mind.”* (Colossians 2:18) – a polite way of saying that they were suffering from a swelled head.

Briefly, the symptoms of this disease, to which Scripture refers, are as follows: The one so afflicted does not think he is sick, and sees no need for a physician. Read John 9:41. This disease has robbed the patient of the ability to understand spiritual things; indeed, the very preaching of the Cross is to him foolishness. See 1 Corinthians 1:18. This affliction has the peculiar effect of turning man who owes his very existence to the Almighty into a state of enmity with God. See Romans 8:7. We could mention many other things resulting from this disease; but time will not permit, but against all these symptoms there stands out a mighty Word of Promise – here it is in Hebrews 8:10, *“I will put my law into their minds and write them in their hearts.”* We have this wonderful statement by the Apostle Paul, speaking to the Church in 1 Corinthians 2:16, *“We have the mind of Christ.”*

Then there is a disease of the eyes for which the oculist or optician can do nothing. 1 John 2:11 says, *“But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”* Think of it – people blinded by darkness – living in the dark so long, their eyes can no longer see. This disease is not confined to drunkards, harlots and deep-dyed sinners. Jesus spoke of religious leaders of His day as being blind; but, evidently, they did not know it, for they offered their services to lead the blind with the tragic result that both fell into the ditch. Of all the afflictions that the human body has fallen heir to, it seems to me that blindness is the most sad. Those so afflicted call for every possible consideration. Think of missing for life the glorious sunset – or the beauty of a quiet night with a full moon riding high as queen of the heavens, escorted by a million glittering stars – or one of Saskatoon’s gorgeous flower gardens, a perfect riot of colour.

How much greater is the tragedy when one is suffering from blindness of the eyes of the soul! He will never see the King in His beauty – never see that Land that is fairer than day. His eyes will never behold the glory, the wonder, the infinite grandeur of the New Heavens and the New Earth wherein righteousness dwells; but evermore must dwell in the kingdom of darkness, where, says the Bible, they *“gnaw their tongues”* for pain. Oh, what eternal wretchedness is the lot and portion of the spiritually blind. They have never seen themselves in their filthy rags of self-righteousness; nor have they seen *“the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.”* They have never seen that glorious Robe and Wedding garment - the Righteousness of Christ which God could clothe them with, if they would but accept Christ as Saviour. But once again, there is a Word of Promise, even for the blind. Read it in Revelation 3:18 *“anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see”* for *“I am the LORD who heals you.”*

Finally, let me plant this truth before I leave the air. Jesus Christ is a Heart Specialist - that deep-seated disease – those deep-rooted plagues, which fasten themselves to the heart. For from the heart, Jesus said, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. What a fountain of wickedness! What a factory of evil! What a garden of iniquity! No surgeon in all the world has the skill to discover, nor can his instruments remove, so much as the least of these things just mentioned. There is not a physician in our land, who would ever dare to offer a prescription that would cleanse the heart of all its sin. But will you listen carefully just now while I tell you:

There is a fountain filled with Blood  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.

Amen.

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JESUS – ROSE of SHARON, LILY of the VALLEYS, ROOT & OFFSPRING of DAVID, MORNING STAR

(Song of Solomon 2:1) *“I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys.”*

(Matthew 6:28-29) *“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”*

(Numbers 24:17) *“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.”*

(Revelation 2:28) *“And I will give him the Morning Star.”*

(Revelation 22:16) *“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”*

We are ready now for our Sunday morning meditation on the Person of our LORD Jesus Christ, who is referred to in Scripture as the *“Rose of Sharon,”* and the *“Lily of the Valley, the Root and Offspring of David,”* the *“Bright and Morning Star.”* These titles provide us our subject this morning, and suggest such a wealth of ideas and such a broad range of comparison, that we will be hard pressed to do more than outline the wonderful truths suggested by these verses. Let us consider them in the order just quoted.

The ROSE OF SHARON. *“I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys”* (Song of Songs 2:1). I have read somewhere that the rose of Sharon is a flower that is a great favourite in the land of Palestine, where it grows and flowers profusely on the hills of Carmel and the plain of Sharon, tinting the landscape with a beautiful shade of red, as seen from a distance. It was greatly prized for its fragrance. This is the message I would bring to you from the Rose of Sharon – the fragrance of Jesus Christ – the fragrance of His character – the fragrance of His love – the fragrance of His mercy; how it sweetens the atmosphere where sin and wickedness abound. What a privilege is ours, to carry such a flower into the dark and dismal corners of earth’s suffering, oppressed and sin-blighted habitations. What a joy is ours to send messengers of the Cross to those who have never heard the sweetest story ever told. This Rose is the poor man’s flower. It grows by dusty highways that the weary traveller may be refreshed. It grows on the rocky hillsides, thus indicating that no difficult and toilsome experience but will provide a suitable field for the growth of this beautiful flower. I am speaking now to someone whose lot in life is difficult and trying, whose field of life is rocky and unproductive. It will not produce grain for the hungry, nor fruit for the thirsty. Listen carefully while I tell you again, your field will produce the Rose of Sharon. Indeed, the fragrance of our LORD Jesus Christ is the richer for its difficult and stony background.

–Was it not from the heart of a ragged fisherman of Galilee that these immortal words came? *“... you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ...”* (1 Peter 1:18).

–George Matheson (1842-1906), who lost his eyesight as a young man, wrote: Oh Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul on Thee, I give thee back the love I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

–Annie Johnson Flint (1866 - 1932), her body was racked by Arthritis, said: Oh set your sail to the heavenly gale, and then no matter what winds prevail, No reef can wreck, no calm delay, no mist shall hinder, no storm shall stay, Though far you wander and long you roam, through salt sea spray o’er white sea foam, No wind that can blow, but shall speed you home.

Do you want your life to be fragrant with the fragrance of Jesus? Here’s a Persian fable: One day a traveller found a piece of clay so redolent of sweet perfume, its odour scented all the room.

‘Whence art thou?’ was the quick demand,  
 ‘Art thou some gem from Samarkand?  
 Or spikenard rare in rich disguise?  
 Or other costly merchandise?’  
 ‘Nay, I am but a piece of clay.’  
 ‘Then, whence this wondrous sweetness, pray?’  
 ‘Friend, if the secret I must disclose,  
 I have been dwelling with the Rose.’

Then we have the LILY OF THE VALLEYS. I noticed, in reading the text, back there in the Song of Songs, that the plural is used, suggesting many valleys of varying depths and running in various directions. The message of the Lily is a message of purity. I have seen water lilies clean and pure, growing in a stagnant, smelly slough. These are lilies that grow sweet and pure in dark and gloomy valleys. This is possible only because it is the nature of the flower to do so. It is not always brushing and cleaning itself. It has the purity of the fountain, that cannot contain that which is vile. It has that happy faculty of throwing off that which defiles, retaining only that which is good.

You remember that Jesus referred to the lily in that Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 6:28, 29. He declared that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. In Palestine, there is a lily known as the *Huleh-lily*. One writer says it is very large, and has three inner petals that meet above and form a gorgeous canopy – such as art never approached, and kings never sat under. Yes, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But what is the practical and personal application of this message of the lily? Just this: *Jesus Christ can make you pure*. Listen to the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 51:7. “*Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*” Hear the promise given by Isaiah the Prophet. “*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow...*”

Not only can Jesus make you clean, but hear this (it’s not less wonderful): He can *keep you clean*, no matter what the local environment may be. It does not depend on pleasant surroundings, nor favourable circumstances, it is dependant only on the indwelling Presence of the Lily of the Valleys.

I see my time is nearly gone, and I still have two more titles to consider.

The ROOT AND OFFSPRING OF DAVID. These words are found in the last chapter of the last book in the Bible. (Revelation 22:17). They suggest a very wonderful truth that we never tire of repeating. Being of the House and Lineage of David, brings Jesus in line for the throne promised to David by God Himself. The story of King David is one that for literary beauty and human pathos is unmatched by uninspired writings. He stands in relationship to Israel as their great deliverer. At the beginning of his conquests, the Hebrew women of old danced in the streets of their towns and villages singing. It was under his leadership that Israel was freed from all her enemies and rose to prominence as a world power. For our purpose, this morning, it will suffice to point out that David’s *Greater Son* is our Deliverer and Emancipator.

Apostle Paul tells of it in words like these: “*Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son ...*” (Col.1:13). And again, “*Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them*” (Heb.7:25).

Finally, Jesus Christ is the BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR. This connects Him with a prophecy given by Balaam, nearly 1500 years before His birth. “*There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel ...*” (Numbers 24:17). The morning star is the herald of a new day. Its message to our hearts is that the long, long night of sin’s dominion and Satan’s rule is about to end. The tyranny and oppression of that old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, will be broken and the “*Sun of Righteousness*” whose radiant effulgence shall penetrate to earth’s remotest bounds, shall “*rise with healing in His wings*” (Malachi 4:2).

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JESUS – THE SHEPHERD

Psalm 23 *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”*

Our subject this morning is JESUS, the SHEPHERD – the Scriptures abound with texts and illustrations. The 23rd Psalm sets forth the experience of a man who claimed the LORD as his Shepherd. The results of this blessed relationship are described in such terms that material is provided for thousands of sermons. Countless thousands of men and women in all walks of life, throughout the ages, have been so mightily moved by the power of God in this simple yet profound testimony that they too have made the LORD their Shepherd. What a wide range of human experience is covered by this brief song!

—For the needy *“The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”*

—To the weary *“He makes me to lie down in green pastures.”*

—To the troubled *“He leads me beside the still waters.”*

—Are you a wanderer? *“He restores my soul.”*

—Do you seek the right way? *“He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”*

—Do you fear death? *“I will fear no evil, for You are with me.”*

—To the hungry *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.”*

—And finally, is your future filled with uncertainties and anxious fears? Hear, then, the triumphant conclusion, *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”*

Many of God’s great men received their early training, following the flock. Think of Moses, with years of training in the University of Egypt, he was *“mighty in words and deeds”* (Acts 7:22), says the Bible; but before beginning his life’s work, God had to take him into the desert, put him in charge of a flock of sheep, and let him care for them for 40 years. Here he learned what would be required of a man who would properly and profitably lead others. As we read his life’s story, it is evident that one great lesson he learned most thoroughly was the lesson of patience. How impetuous he had been at the age of 40: one day killing an Egyptian, and the next day rebuking an Israelite. But what a change, years later, when he was commissioned to lead all Israel out of bondage into Canaan. What patience and unceasing watchfulness he demonstrated through 40 years of desert wanderings. It is true that in many ways human beings are a lot like sheep, and must have a Shepherd.

Come with me to the Gospel of John, which could be called *“The Gospel for Sheep.”* In chapter 1 we hear the cry, *“Behold, the Lamb of God.”* In chapter 5 we see a great multitude of impotent folk by the pool, which is by the Sheep Market. Then, all of chapter 10 is given to a lesson on sheep and the Shepherd. Let us now consider the great Shepherd, described in detail in this wonderful Scripture: The chapter opens with a night scene in an oriental village. The sheep are all securely in the fold, peace and quietness reigns. Suddenly the silence is broken by the sound of scraping and scratching on the wall of the fold. Heavy breathing is heard, and a man’s hand is seen gripping the topmost stones of the enclosure. Then a man’s head appears looking down on the defenceless sheep. A loud, clear voice is heard: *“He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”*

What a dramatic setting, and what a world of truth is wrapped up in the first verse of John 10. First, that sheep are defenceless. Has it ever occurred to you how utterly defenceless the children of men are? Even in the natural realm, how dependant we are! how unprotected! I have seen the young of the prairie chicken, just a few hours out of the shell, run swiftly for cover at the approach of danger. Who teaches the offspring of the wild duck to gracefully swim out to deep water when an enemy appears? I have seen calves born out on the prairies, in cold and stormy weather, and somehow they survive. But how frail and

feeble is the offspring of Man. A human baby requires days, weeks, and months, yes, even years of patient care and protection; or he could never come to maturity.

The same is true in the spiritual realm – here his helplessness is even more apparent. We are no match whatever for Satan’s schemes and snares. We never can be able to stand up and defend ourselves against the prince of the power of the air. We have no weapons with which we can defeat the arch enemy of the race, *“who cometh not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy”* (vs 10). But thank God, He has given us a Shepherd, referred to in Scripture as *“the Lion of the Tribe of Judah”* (Rev. 5:5). Verse 2 gives us the sign of the true Shepherd. It is said of Him, *“He enters in by the door.”* Perhaps you have read *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock”* in Revelation 3:20? I cannot tell all that’s implied by this statement, but this much is evident: the door mentioned here is the door of the heart, and the true Shepherd enters by the door. In other words, this salvation of which we speak – this Jesus of whom we sing – and the voice of Scripture which we have read, all have to do with a heart experience. *“To make any other appeal – to direct the Gospel message to the mind to endeavour by sheer force of logic, or by following the principles of psychology, to lead man to heaven, is to ‘climb up some other way.’”* (General William Booth)

The next thing I notice about this Shepherd is in John 10:3 – *“He calls His own sheep by name.”* Yes, He knows your name. This is a personal appeal, a personal experience, and a personal call. Let the wise men talk as they please about mob psychology, or mass evangelism – let the masters of etiquette argue that it’s bad form to speak to individuals about religion, or the matter of their soul’s eternal destiny; the fact of the case is, *“He calls His own sheep by name.”* That is one aspect of the ministry by radio that is different from that of the pulpit. Though it is true, I am now speaking to a great multitude, this message is being received by individuals, and I’m safe in saying that those giving the greatest attention will be those who are alone – out in the farm home – in that little cabin in the woods – driving along the highway – or in a hospital or sanatorium bed. Listen, Jesus Christ knows your name. He knows your local circumstances, your private life, your personal need. He calls your name. He will lead you out. Read it in verse 4. But someone says, ‘I have never heard His voice, so therefore I cannot start out. He has never spoken to me, so perhaps He doesn’t want me.’ Just a moment now, before going further! This Bible I am reading from this morning is His voice to you, and in it He says, *“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Let me point out just here that He not only leads by His Word, but also according to His Word. He will never lead contrary to His Word. How often we have known of people who do the most ridiculous and foolish things, and then have the effrontery to declare, ‘The LORD led me to do this or that.’

Remember: *“His Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path!”*

Then, please notice: this Shepherd leads. *“He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him”* (vs 4) What endless confusion has come into organized Christianity because people have followed human leaders. And, like poor deluded sheep, they are led away from the simplicity of faith in Christ alone – away from the green pastures of redeeming grace, into the barren lands of human philosophy and natural reasoning – away from the plain old-fashioned truths of cleansing from sin by the power of Calvary’s Cross – away from a life of holiness by the power of the Holy Ghost – from believing in the certainty of eternal punishment for the unrepentant – and eternal glory for the believer – away from the cool and quiet waters of Siloam’s shaded streams, down into the gloomy valleys of the uncertain unbelief with its consequent anxieties. It may be this message is reaching such a wanderer this LORD’s Day morning. Listen, then, to the voice of the Good Shepherd calling, *“Come, follow Me.”* If you heed His call, your testimony, too, will be *“He restores my soul.”*

Before we leave this idea of following Jesus, let us note that *“He leads them out”* (vs 3). I do enjoy that old song that says, *“Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night, Jesus I come, Jesus, I come . . .”* I would like you to see, moreover, that *HE LEADS*. The suggestion is of voluntary agreement. The Shepherd is willing to lead, and the sheep are willing to follow. There is not a sign of coercion or compulsion. It is all by choice and that choice gladly and cheerfully made. This is the very first principle of walking the Christian Way. *“I delight to do Thy will, Oh my God”* (Ps.40:8). is the only obedience that is satisfactory to the Great Shepherd of the sheep. This principle forever disposes of all popery and priest-craft that would rule in religion

by the power of human legislation. Furthermore, this principle does away with all bondage, and provides perfect liberty for the child of God, for *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36). All this is very marked contrast with those under bondage in Satan’s cruel chains. I am satisfied that those poor enslaved victims of sin’s seductive snare don’t want to do the things they do, but just can’t help it. They are dragged along by the power of habits and passions that bind them securely to Satan’s chariot which would hurry them on against their will to sin’s eternal night. Read the last part of Romans 7, and then go right into chapter 8, and when you come to verse 2 let the truth ring out through all the dark dungeon of the soul’s despair, *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free . . .”*

I most close, but before leaving this subject let us read John 10:10, 11 again: *“The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*

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THE BIBLE – BOOK OF STANDARDS

The Bible is *THE* moral and spiritual yardstick by which both actions and motives are measured and weighed. Since *“every way of man is right in his own eyes”* (Prov. 21:2), we need a universal standard by which all might be judged equally. Jesus said: *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). It is said of the times of the Judges in Israel, that *“In those days there was no King in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”* The result was confusion and chaos; moral, spiritual, and social ruin. How impossible it would be, in the building of a house, if every workman on the project was instructed just to do what he thought best, regardless of the plans of the architect. Yet, how many thousands of people think everything will be fine, in the building of “life's temple,” if they just do what they think is right. God always works according to plan. Everything in this universe shows design and order. So also, in the building of character – in our preparation for eternity – the Bible is the standard by which we measure our conduct.

- The Bible sets forth the standard for godly success in the business world. *“Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weight, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee”* (Deut. 25:13-15).
- As for conduct in society, the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 closes with these words, *“Go and do thou likewise.”* The world is sadly in need of the ministry of the “Good Samaritan” in our day; someone who will bind up the wounds of the broken all around, without considering personal gain.
- As to morality, it is high time we accepted the Biblical standard, and that our relationships between sexes be governed by the Word of God.

I will risk being considered narrow-minded and declare that the sacred ordinance of marriage is a divine institution; two lives joined together, one flesh in the sight of God. No man has ever been given the authority to dissolve that solemn union. We need often be reminded, in these times, that adultery is still wrong. It is a sin against God and against society. It is a sin against an unborn generation. It is not wrong because the Bible says it is wrong – it is wrong in its very nature. The Bible says it is wrong because it *IS* wrong. Read that part of the Sermon on the Mount again (Matt.5:27-32). Get God's Word on the subject, and let that settle it for you. Not only is the Bible the standard for our relationship one with another; but also for our relationship with God. Indeed, this is its primary concern. If our relationship with God is right, then we will be right with one another. If all the instruments of an orchestra are tuned to the piano, then they will be in tune one with another. To be in tune with God is to accept God's Word as the standard for all that concerns us. The answer is found only in Jesus. *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

The Gospel is for all races of people, of all ages and stages of development – adaptable to all – one message for all: *“Repent and believe.”* *“There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov.14:12). The Bible-Standard of repentance is found in Matthew 21:28-31 – *“A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went.”* Please note, he repented and went – a complete reversal of his first position – a complete change of attitude toward the Father – from disobedience to the known will, to obedience – from rebellion to submission. *“He repented and went.”* If he had not gone, it would not have been repentance – no matter how sorry he may have been for his sin. That's how it is with faith. There are many kinds of faith; but ‘saving faith’ is according to the Bible-Standard: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Heb. 11:1), and exemplified in action in the remainder of that chapter. ‘Saving-Faith’ is the active element that produces all the fruit of the Spirit. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”* (Gal. 5:22-23). ‘Saving-Faith’ is not simply believing there is a God. Devils also believe, and tremble. Nor is it believing in certain



doctrines about the Being, Attributes, and Nature of God. Real Saving-Faith is a deep, settled conviction that what God says is true. When God says, *“all we like sheep have gone astray,” “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” “there is none righteous, no not one,”* we believe it so literally that we cry out with the Publican of old, *“God be merciful to me a sinner!”* Then, God's Word says, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* We act upon the certainty that all our sins are gone as far as the East is from the West, and sing:

Thank You, LORD, for saving my soul;  
Thank You, LORD, for making me whole;  
Thank You, LORD, for giving to me  
Thy great Salvation so rich and free.

Finally, the Bible sets forth the only standard of service acceptable to God. Three times, Jesus said to Peter, *“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Then feed my sheep”* (John 21:15-17).

Again, in Revelation 2:4, to the Church at Ephesus, He says *“Because thou has left thy first love, therefore, repent.”*

Service to God from a sense of duty, or to gain merit, or to show off our ability, is not acceptable to the Almighty – to the One Who *“so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son.”* Acceptable service is prompted by love – the Love of God filling our hearts and flowing forth in works like that of the Good Samaritan. Only the Spirit of God can enable us to meet God's standards.

Without Him I can do nothing;  
Without Him I'd surely fail;  
Without Him I'd only be drifting  
Like a ship without a sail.

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JESUS – THE BUILDER

Matthew 16:18 – *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

Our message from the Word of the LORD this morning is *JESUS, the BUILDER*. Our text is Matthew 16:18 *“... upon this rock I will build my church ...”* The Rock in question is Himself, as Peter is careful to tell us in 1 Peter 2:3 - 9. *“The LORD ... a living stone ... chosen of God, and precious ...the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence ...”* The LORD Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone, and precious; the building referred to is the Church – a structure of such magnitude, glory and beauty, that when it is finished and the dedication service takes place, all the universe will sing out its praise to the skill of the Master Builder. It’s not by chance that Jesus spent His early life in the carpenter shop of Nazareth. There is in that humble occupation a picture of the life work of the Son of Man who would be building a house eternal in the heavens.

Let us take a few moments with our opening text, *“Upon this rock I will build my church.”* He is both the Architect and the Builder. He would not leave so important a task to the limited ability and wisdom of corruptible man. Though we do thank God that we can be helpers, *“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building”* (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Notice, now, it is a Church that He is building. His is an undertaking worthy of His power and skill. The building of churches, by men, has called forth the highest expression of the art and science. Wasn’t it Sir CHRISTOPHER WREN who designed *St. PAUL’S CATHEDRAL* in London, that masterpiece of architecture? I’ve read that *St. PETER’S* in Rome is possibly the most marvellous and beautiful of all buildings standing today. Then go back into early history and think of that glorious temple which Solomon built, just about 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. The Scriptures record that 150,000 men were employed in gathering and preparing the material, and seven years were spent in the building of this magnificent house of the God of Israel. Historians of that period record that when the morning or evening sacrifices were offered at the rising or setting of the sun, this building on the elevation called Mount Moriah, caught the rays of light and shone with such dazzling brightness that it could be seen a great way off. It was covered with such enormous wealth of gold and silver that, later on, surrounding nations considered its capture a prize – well worth the sacrifice of thousands of soldiers.

The glory of *SOLOMON’S TEMPLE*, however, has long since passed away; *St. PETER’S CATHEDRAL* in Rome is showing signs of age; *St. PAUL’S CATHEDRAL* in London was damaged by bombs during the war. Although these were all wonderful expressions of man’s genius, they have proven to be corruptible. They will pass away, and the place that knows them now shall soon know them no more. But, the Builder of Whom I speak is the eternal Son of the living God, and the Church He is building now shall stand forever. Even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Where is he finding material for this remarkable building? How is it gathered and fitted for its place in this eternal edifice? And, what has all this got to do with me? These are questions that naturally come into our minds as we consider this most vital subject.

First, let me say, He is not using stone or timber, gold or silver, nor anything that is lifeless or inanimate. The material He is using is nothing else and nothing less than men and women, boys and girls – children of Adam. Frail creatures of the dust; and yet, in the hands of this Master Workman, they become living stones of most enduring substance and jewels of the most excellent brightness. We read in 1 Peter 2:5 *“You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

This is a wonderful truth of the Gospel – a theme that calls for unceasing praise to God for His matchless grace. When choosing material to build an eternal habitation for Himself, He sought it not on the celestial mountains of eternal paradise; nor in the priceless substance of which angels have their form; nor yet in the dazzling brightness of which the sun was made. Rather, He chose to come to a planet where all His creatures had turned against Him, and committed high treason against His government – where Satan in all his diabolic wisdom had turned the human race to hate their Maker and hate one another – where evil, wickedness, sin and crime of every sort is practiced openly and unashamedly. It is of these

children of darkness that He would find the material with which to build the most enduring and glorious building that has ever been known. This would be a building with a glory of such surpassing architectural beauty and skilful workmanship as to make Solomon's temple appear, by way of contrast, hardly suitable for a woodshed – a building that will endure when the stars have burned out, and the sun has ceased to shine. When the elements melt with fervent heat and all material things are dissolved, the Church of Jesus Christ, built on the Rock of Ages, will shine forth with all the glory of the ever blessed and most adorable Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Amen, and Amen!

The question is: 'How can the Master Workman make such a wonderful building out of such unlikely and unlovely material?' This is, indeed, a great mystery. I cannot explain the process, nor understand His methods, but I do know that only Jesus can make a saint out of a sinner – an honest man out of a shyster – an honourable man out of chiseller – an industrious citizen out of a drunkard – and a virtuous woman out of an harlot. Only Jesus can open the miser's hand so that he gladly shares his gold with the unfortunate, the needy and the helpless. Only Jesus can take the poison out of that backbiting tongue and send the one thus cured with a message of peace to friends and neighbours. Only Jesus can take that chronic pessimist, whose life has turned sour and all the world seems therefore sour, and put in his heart the joy of salvation until the corners of his mouth turn upward and he carries a song instead of a sigh.

In short, Christ is a Builder of human lives. Whereas men of this world go into the mountains of granite to quarry blocks of stone with which to build a palace for some earthly potentate, He goes to the mountains of sin, and by the power of His Gospel (the Gospel is the "dynamite" of God), blasts from them men and women whose hearts were hard and cold, dead in trespasses and sins, and breathes the breath of life into them. They become the "living stones" with which He is building a temple for the King of Kings.

Just a few words, now, regarding the preparations of the material, the shaping and fashioning of each member for its place in this temple eternal. How wonderfully this Master Craftsman deals with each of us after He has saved us. Anna McLure puts it this way:

When God wants to drill a man, and thrill a man, and skill a man to play the noblest part;  
When He yearns with all His heart to create so great and bold a man  
That all the world shall be amazed, watch His methods; watch His ways!  
How He ruthlessly perfects whom he royally elects.  
How He hammers him, and hurts him, and with mighty blows converts him  
Into trial shapes of clay, which only God understands,  
While his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands.  
How He bends, but never breaks, when his good He undertakes;  
How he uses whom He chooses, and with every purpose fuses him -  
by every act induces him to try His splendour out. God know what He's about!

*"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"* – Philippians 2:12-13. *"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal"* – 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

Returning now to our text *"Upon this Rock I will build My Church ..."* Notice the words, *"My Church"* – not "our" church, or "your" church, or "their" church. It is *CHRIST'S CHURCH*. Some people speak of 'joining' a church in the same way as 'joining' a lodge or a club, or a political organization; but *Christ's Church* cannot be joined in that way. You must be built *into* it. The hand of God must grip your heart – His words must guide your feet.

Its *membership* – names *"written in the Lamb's Book of Life"*;

Its *light* – Jesus said, *"I am the Light"*;

Its *foundation* – *"built upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone"*;

Its *program* – to *"preach the Gospel to every creature"*;

Its *future* – *"He hath made us unto our God, kings and priests and we shall reign forever and ever."*

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JESUS – THE ROCK

Matthew 16:18 *“And I say to you ... upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

The subject for our consideration is JESUS, the ROCK – you may recall that our last study of His glorious Person was *JESUS, the BUILDER*, and our text in Matthew 16:18 said, *“On this Rock I will build my Church.”* Our Scripture reading this morning gives the starting point for our meditation. *“Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”* (Matthew 7:24). Jesus, the Builder and man, the builder, are set forth in these Scriptures. In each case, the foundation is Rock; and it is evident that they both have the same Rock. As for the Church, it is said, *“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* As for the man – rain, floods and wind serve only to reveal the strength of the foundation. First, let us think of Jesus, the Rock Foundation, upon which man may safely build; for mark you well, we are *all* building. As *LONGFELLOW* says:

All are architects of fate, working on the walls of time;  
some with massive deeds and great, some with ornaments of rhyme.

When it comes to building a life, the first thing to consider is the foundation. What shall we build on? What sort of material will provide a safe and solid base to support us amid the raging storms of life? Hear these words from Isaiah 28:16 *“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.”* Notice, it’s a *“tried stone.”* This Gospel we preach is not a new experiment, nor unproven theory, for if it were new it would not be true and if it were true it could not be new. Time would fail me this morning to tell you of the many ways this sure foundation has been tried, and never once has there been a sign of it failing. It has been tried by suffering; but the suffering one found that his relief was only in Christ, and called out even as Job, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”* (Job 13:15). It has been tried by persecution; but those so afflicted only held more closely to the Rock of their Salvation. The storm finally ceased and in the following calm a song was heard: *“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death”* (Philip. 3:10).

We are living in times when foundations are being tested and tried – some are crumbling and falling. What a shock it must be to those who have placed hope and confidence in their foundation to find it swept away overnight. My heart goes out to our college and university students, whose only foundation is a nominal Christianity. They’ve given mental assent to the teaching of Scripture; but have never dug down to a bed-rock experience of certainty. Oh, that they could say, when faith is under attack by atheistic professors and infidel teachers, the words of this old hymn: *“But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I committed unto Him against that Day.”* Let me repeat, you are building some sort of a life. What is your foundation?

Be true to yourself at the start, young man, be true to yourself and God;  
Ere you build your house, mark well the spot, test well the ground, and build you not  
On the sand or the shaking sod.

Dig, dig the foundation deep, young man, plant firmly the outer wall;  
Let the props be strong and the roof be high, like an open turret toward the sky,  
Through which heavenly dews may fall.

Build slow and sure: 'tis for life, young man – a life that outlives the breath;  
For who shall gainsay the holy Word? "Their works do follow them," saith the LORD,  
"Therein there is no death."

Build deep, and high, and broad, young man. As the needful case demands;  
Let your title-deeds be clear and bright, till you enter your claim to the LORD of light  
For the "House not made with hands." Charles E. Cock

I’m reminded of the immortal words of Apostle Paul: *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that*

*neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our LORD*” (Rom. 8:35-39). Before leaving this part of our study, let’s remember: *“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner”* (Ps. 118:22).

*“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”* (1 Cor. 10:1-4). Notice – they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ. In Exodus 17:5-6, the people of Israel were in a state of revolt and ready to stone Moses, their leader, because there was no water. Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do?” Then follows a mighty miracle, a wonderful picture of Calvary and an abundant supply of water. I’ll read this to you, with a prayer that they will carry a message right to your heart, *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with you of the elders of Israel; and your rod, wherewith you smote the river, take in your hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of all the elders of Israel.”* What a wonderful picture of God’s grace – of His unspeakable mercy to rebellious men. I’m always profoundly moved by the wonder and spiritual beauty of this sacred account. Like when Moses stood before the burning bush, he heard a voice saying, *“Put off thy shoes, for the place where you stand is holy ground”* (Ex. 3:5). We, too, are on holy ground. Let me remind you – they drank of that spiritual rock, and that Rock was Christ.

Listen carefully while I tell you what I see in Exodus 17:5-6. First, the rebellious and revolting multitude speaks to us of a world of sinful men. Their thirst aggravates them to do and say the most unreasonable and wicked things. Then the LORD Himself appears, and gives instructions on what to do: *“I will stand upon the Rock and you shall smite the Rock.”* This is one of the best pictures of Calvary in all the Old Testament. I see Jesus Christ on that rocky eminence outside of old Jerusalem walls, called *Golgotha* in Hebrew and *Calvary* in Greek. I see a rod in the hand of a man, but now the man is a Roman soldier and the rod is a Roman spear. I see him step forward as though moved by some invisible hand raising the spear (for it was written by the prophet *“they shall look on Him whom they pierced”* – Zech. 12:10; John 19:37). Now he takes careful aim and plunges it into the side of the Son of Man, Son of God, *“and,”* says beloved John, *“forthwith came there out blood and water.”* Perhaps something of this scene came before Toplady who wrote: *Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the Blood, From Thy riven side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure; Cleanse me from its wrath and power.*

Me-thinks I hear the voice of an ancient prophet crying, *“Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters”* (Isaiah 55:1), and then I hear Jesus, in His conversation with the woman of Samaria by Jacob’s well, saying, *“Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst”* (John 4:14). Again, *“If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink”* (John 7:37). How wonderful, the Grace of God – not only to allow, but to *plan* Calvary, even from the foundation of the world – to allow His only begotten Son to be nailed to a cross by rebellious man, and bring Salvation for all the ruined race out of that desperate deed – to take the Cross (ever a symbol of suffering, torment and shame), and use it as a key to open the dungeon of sin and make deliverance possible for *“whosoever will.”* *“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the LORD Jesus Christ”* (Gal. 6:14); *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”* (1 Cor. 1:18).

My time has gone so quickly and I’ve only begun this inspiring subject of *JESUS, THE ROCK*. Before leaving the air, quickly go to Daniel 2 – one of the clearest chapters, in the Bible, of the future of the nations. It’s the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream image, beginning with Babylon on the head of gold and ending with the final world set-up of a ten-king confederacy represented by the feet with the ten toes. *“You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.”* The interpretation is: *“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”*

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JESUS – THE SAVIOUR

Luke 2:11 – *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the LORD.”*

Let us turn now to the Book of all books and consider again this morning the most wonderful Person spoken of within its covers. The subject is *JESUS, the SAVIOUR*. This particular phase of His ministry is so obvious, that we may never notice it - so prominent that we may fail to examine it; so often repeated that we may lose its meaning altogether. How often it is that we pay the least attention to things we are most familiar with. We become so accustomed to a sign at the railroad crossing that we cross without seeing it. Sometimes it takes an accident or a near-accident to remind us that a railroad crossing is a dangerous place. So it is with the subject of Jesus, the Saviour. It is heard so often in sermon and song, that many fail entirely to discover just what it means to have such a Saviour, and what it is that He saves us from. That message of the angels to the trembling shepherds in Luke 2:11, *“For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the LORD”* is a message filled with such a blessed meaning to every one of us that if we ever discovered the full sense of its worth and accepted literally the full benefits provided in such a Saviour, we would without doubt be the happiest people in all this world. Yes, and everyone would be a missionary carrying the Good News to every creature under heaven. It is my purpose, in the limited time I have with you, to show in a few details what a wonderful Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The fundamental idea of the word “Saviour,” is “Deliverer” – the word was “Joshua” in the Hebrew language; in the Greek, the word is “Jesus”. And for this reason, it is written, *“Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”* The very first recorded sermon of Jesus, preached in His home town of Nazareth, was a message of deliverance. Read it in Luke 4:16 - 19. Notice particularly verse 18. *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised.”*

The idea that sin is bondage, and that salvation is deliverance, is emphasized throughout the Bible. The devil would have us believe just the opposite – that sin is freedom and salvation is bondage. He would urge people through his many ministers that to surrender to Christ would rob you of every pleasure and of every joy; that to be a humble follower of the Son of God would place you under the lordship of a tyrant who would rule with a rod of iron. Your life would no longer be your own. I would like to absolutely repudiate this lie of the devil, and show you from the Scriptures which are abundantly corroborated by human experience, that only those in whose hearts the King of Glory reigns, can really know what freedom is.

Let us go first of all to Hebrews 2:14-15 *“Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Notice here, the deliverance is from fear; and that, from the fear of death. If my memory serves me right, at the historic meeting, when the four freedoms were drafted into the *CHARTER OF LIBERTY* by the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the President of the United States, Freedom from Fear was at the top of the list. Unfortunately, those men responsible for introducing such a *CHARTER* did not have the power to carry it out, and make it work in human experience. I’m quite safe in saying that there is as much fear in the world today as ever there was, and I should add, just as much reason for fear.

But my text says that Jesus came to deliver us from the fear of death. Let me say just here, that without Christ, death is indeed something to be feared. Let the unbeliever make light of it – he does so only to encourage his own heart for the fearful prospect of going out into eternity. Let the atheist make sport of death, if he pleases, and declare it is no more than the falling of a tree or the picking of a flower – he will find all his boasting is in vain when the king of terrors knocks at his door and tells him his last hour has come and the darkness of everlasting despair is waiting to envelop him in that sable mantle called Death. I say unto you, my listener this morning, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God whose mercy has been despised, whose grace has been ignored, whose love has been rejected, whose Word has been contradicted, and whose Son has been blasphemed. Well might that soul draw back in

utter horror when looking into the yawning cavern of Death's eternal embrace – when he hears those fateful words ring out from the judge on the Great White Throne, *“and Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire, this is the second death”* (Revelation 20:14).

1 Corinthians 15:56-57 gives the reason for this fear – *“The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ;”* for He has come *“to deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Apostle Paul said, *“I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the LORD”* – *“For we know that if our earthly house is destroyed, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”* Christ had completely delivers believers from the fear of death.

I must not stop here, though, or some might suppose ‘that’s the same old story – all pie in the sky when you die – we want something that works here and now.’ That is just what we want, too. I fear that too often salvation is held out as just a fire-escape. A safe way out, when all else has failed. But the Saviour we speak of this morning, and the deliverance that He brings, is an experience of the *present* as well as the *future*. It works *here* as in the *hereafter*. Indeed, if it does not work here, it is scarcely likely that it would have any value hereafter. In other words, if Christ were not able to help us in the problems that have to do with Time, how could He meet the more difficult needs for Eternity?

Come with me now to Paul's Epistle to the Colossians 1:13 *“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son.”* Delivered from the power of darkness. The word *“has”* indicates an accomplished fact – a victory won – an experience enjoyed. Think of it! Delivered from the power of darkness. This reminds us of Ephesians 6:12 *“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”* This definitely implies that there is a kingdom of darkness, ruled by the prince of darkness, whose subjects are children of darkness, whose deeds are deeds of darkness. As in John 3:19 *“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light; because their deeds were evil.”* What powers the kingdom of darkness exercises over its unhappy subjects! What abject slavery they are held in, who know not the LORD of Light! In Scripture terminology, darkness is synonymous with sin, wickedness, and evil; as we read in 1 Thess. 5:7 *“For they that sleep, sleep in the night; they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.”* For some reason, night is when crime flourishes and every form of evil is practised. Men and women do things under cover of darkness that they are thoroughly ashamed of with the coming of morning light.

Our text is a declaration of triumph. *“He has delivered us from the kingdom of darkness.”* There is a ‘darkness’ not caused by the setting of the sun – just as deep at noon as at midnight. It's a darkness that blinds men's eyes to their own sinful state, keeping them from seeing the glory of the LORD Jesus Christ.

Before leaving the air, let's go back to Matthew 1:21 – *“...call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”* That word *“sin”* is ugly. How we'd like to dress it up a little and call it *“human frailty”* or *“inherited weakness”* or sugar-coat it with some more pleasant tasting philosophy. But the Bible calls it *sin*. It does not stop there, though, for *He came to save us from our sins*. Human remedies deal only with the surface. Human legislation and social service, welfare organizations and penal institutions, in the very nature of things, deal only with the surface – only with effects; but the Gospel deals with the *cause*, and that's not human weakness, nor lack of intelligence, it's not just a psychological twist or bent, it's that old fashioned disease called *SIN*. But thank God, there is an old-fashioned Remedy! It's the Gospel, is the *“power of God unto Salvation to everyone that believeth.”* It's the mercy of God extended to helpless, hopeless, condemned sinners. It's the grace of God in operation on behalf of man's extremity. It's the love of God demonstrated to those in Satan's bondage. The Son of God, the second Person of the ever blessed and most adorable Trinity, took on Himself the form of man, the sins of man, the guilt of man, and the death of man, *“that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

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JESUS – THE POWER of GOD

1 Corinthians 1:23, 24 *“But we preach Christ crucified to the Jews as stumbling block and the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

The message we want to deliver by God’s help this morning is JESUS, the POWER of GOD – taken from 1 Corinthians 1:23-24. Notice here, that *“Christ crucified”* is the power of God. Not *“Christ the philosopher,”* nor *“Christ the teacher,”* not *“Christ the example,”* nor *“Christ the moralizer”* – but *“Christ crucified.”* It is as though the Almighty, in seeking a way whereby He could communicate His power to poor weak stumbling, tottering humanity – a way to lift them from the mire of sin and despair, chose to send His only begotten Son into the world in human form. And He chose to vest all His power in His Son, and by mutual agreement grant that this power would be released for the good of humanity only after this Son had been taken and by wicked hands, crucified, and slain. That’s why I rejoice in this verse: *“Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities”* Acts 3:26,

Is it any wonder that we preach such a Gospel? –that we sing such songs? –that we take time to worship Him? –that we invited others to join us in honouring Him for His unspeakable mercy? Is it any wonder that we send missionaries to other lands to find those who have not yet heard of our God, and declare to them the Gospel? Is it any wonder that we purchase time on this radio station, and for 30 minutes each Sunday morning sing and read and speak of Him, who to us-ward is the power of God?

Let us take a few moments now and consider this word *POWER*. Men of science are opening doors that lead into the secret chambers of the mighty energies and forces of nature. We are living in the days spoken of by Daniel the prophet, when *“many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”* (Daniel 12:4); days spoken of by Nahum (2:4), when *“the chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.”* All this speaks of power – the power of mechanics – the power of chemistry. This power has completely revolutionized our way of life, and has brought within our reach conveniences and luxuries that our forefathers never dreamed of.

There is, however, a grave danger that this power, which can lift the burden of toil from the weary shoulders of the labourer, and take the drudgery from the daily life of the housewife - which should make the way of the traveller more pleasant and comfortable, will become instead a means of people destroying one another; and what could have been, and should have been, a mighty agent to set men free will instead become a cruel war-machine which will take peace from the earth and plunge our generation into a baptism of blood and tears and sweat. This power of mechanics and chemistry has to do only with the sphere of natural forces. It cannot touch the deeper and more vital moral and spiritual problems that burden us with sorrows and beset us with difficulties. Man’s progress is impeded by obstacles which cannot be moved by any machine made by his own art and genius.

We have better lights for our houses than our grandfathers did; but the question is: Do we have brighter homes? Does the light of heaven grace our table when we gather for that lovely meal, or is the family circle broken by jealousies, suspicion, unfaithfulness, and heartache? When we stop and consider that the average household of our day spends at least ten times as much for alcohol and nicotine as is spent for the things of God, for Bibles, for Christian literature, for the up-keep and extension of the Church’s ministry – when we remember that at least one out of every ten couples who were married this past week is heading for a divorce court – I ask again, do we have brighter homes? Our cities are more sanitary than in days of old, and drinking water is cleared of typhoid and diphtheria germs. We have powerful disinfectants and antiseptics which have almost doubled the life expectancy of every one of us; but how many thousands of suicides are there every year? (After all, why should anyone want to live longer who has no faith in God, no fellowship with his Creator, no peace in his heart, no power in his life, and no hope for the future? By now we ought to see that modern science has made it easier to fill our stomachs and care for our bodies, that we might live longer lives; but science can’t enable us to live better lives. That is why we



preach *“Christ crucified, ..... the power of God, and the wisdom of God”* (1 Cor.1:23, 24).

Let’s move on now from the word *power* to *the power of God*. Think of it – *the Power of God*; that is, the ability of God to do whatever He desires to do – the energy of the Almighty, whereby His will is accomplished in and through the objects of His mercy. Think of His creative power – *“in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* Yes, we’re still so primitive that we accept the Genesis account of the origin of things as most reasonable, scientific, and altogether satisfactory. Indeed, I would not want a God who could not bring this world into being by the Word of His power. But I can commit my present life and future destiny into God’s care with perfect confidence, knowing that *“He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Day”* (2 Timothy 1:12)? But think, I say, of His creative power! I read in Ephesians 3:9 that He *“created all things by Jesus Christ.”*

With this in mind, we go to 2 Cor. 5:17, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* (*“New creature”* could also be read *“new creation”*). It’s not the old man fixed up, with the bad parts repaired; but the Bible says *“new creation”* – a new heart, a new nature, with new ideals, new ambitions, new desires, yes, and new power. For it is written, *“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”* (John 1:12). Gone is the old driving power of passion or pleasure; broken, the power of habit and heredity. That’s why the favourite song of a new convert so often is *“There is power, power, wonder working power in the Blood of the Lamb . . .”*

Nor is God’s creative power limited – in Revelation 21 we read, *“and I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ...”* *“Behold, I make all things new . . .”*

I see by the clock that time is running out on us, we must soon say good-bye for another week; but before we go, I must take you to that verse in 1 Peter 1:5 – just these word *“kept by the power of God.”* We preach Christ, the power of God – power to save, yes, and power to keep. I understand this word *“kept”* is taken from the same root we get our word *“garrison”* – to guard, to protect by an armed guard. How wonderful to have a personal body-guard and that one not less than Jesus Christ. *“For the Angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them”* (Psalm 34:7).

I often think of the testimony of an elderly woman who explained why she had such peace and victory. *“Whenever the devil knocks on my door, I just send Jesus to answer it. He knows how to tend to him.”* I’m sure I am speaking to someone now who has often thought of taking the way of Christ, but has held back by the fear that you couldn’t *“hold out.”* Listen, while I tell you – Jesus will hold you up. He who gives life can also sustain life! He who has power to create, has power to care for His creation. Do you think He’d bring about the miracle of the new birth and then leave the newly born child to die of neglect? Perish the thought! It is written, *“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands ...”* (Isaiah 49:15-16). We are kept by the power of God – and He satisfies.

Moment by moment I’m kept in His love; Moment by moment I’ve life from above  
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine; Moment by moment, O LORD, I am thine.

One more Scripture verse before we leave the air; this time it’s a prayer – *“That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection ...”* (Philip. 3:10) - This was Apostle Paul’s prayer, who had grown old in the service of the KING of kings. He had visited many a pagan city and preached the Gospel which is *“the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes”* (Romans 1:16). He had witnessed the transforming power of Christ. He had seen many a man, who had been born and raised in the darkness of heathen superstitions and fear, and bound by evil habits and Satanic power, set free by the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He had seen many a miracle of healing take place in that matchless Name. And now, as he is coming down toward the end of life’s short day, lying in a Roman prison, chained to a Roman soldier, Paul prays not for deliverance from Nero Caesar, but for a closer walk, a deeper experience, a closer fellowship, a more intimate communion with the LORD Jesus Christ. Listen again to his prayer, *“That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection ...”* Christ’s power is inseparable from His Person. His presence is our protection. His life is a life of power; and that, the power of God. Make this your prayer today, and you will find what God can do with a life surrendered to Him.

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CHRIST – THE WISDOM of GOD

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 – *“We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, . . . Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

I trust that our hearts are ready for our morning meditation on this Wonderful Person, – the LORD Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God. Last Sunday’s message, *CHRIST the POWER of GOD*, leads us to the next statement of fact in the same verse (our text) *“CHRIST, the power of God and the WISDOM of GOD.”* This power and wisdom is of God – revealed only to those who see atonement for their sins, and the provision for their deliverance from Satan’s dominion and sin’s power, *“in Christ crucified.”*

The inspired Apostle Paul wrote to Christians in the city of Corinth – a proud, sophisticated commercial centre, where the culture of Greece and the industry of Rome mingled together and attracted philosophers and merchants from both East and West. But in spite of its wealth and learning, the city was steeped in superstition, idolatry, and all the vices and wickedness found where the one and only, true, living God is unknown. A Christian man had come to Corinth – singularly gifted in educational advantage, and unusual in intellectual ability – well-versed in the religions of the East and the philosophy of the West, and well able to meet either of these in argument or debate. But hear, now, his testimony – *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”* (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

In other words, Paul saw at a glance that this city was not lacking in cultural advantages nor in material prosperity, but these had served only to make people more clever in crime, and more refined in their wickedness. I might add just here that there are a great many cities in *our* day in the very same condition; lacking this moral and spiritual intelligence, that *“the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom”* and to *“depart from evil”* is understanding. (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 16:6, 16-17)

A man with a message has come to the city of Corinth. This message has nothing to do with the political life of the community, nor is it concerned about the latest discovery of science – not a new philosophy nor a new religion. This man isn’t wearing the royal livery of a messenger from Nero Caesar, nor is he escorted by a guard of Roman soldiers. He does, however, speak with the authority of an ambassador and with the fervency of an evangelist. His voice is heard in Jewish synagogues and Grecian homes. Publicly and from house to house, this intrepid Apostle *“ceased not to teach and to preach Christ”* crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness; but to those who were called, both Jews and Greeks, *“... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”* (Acts 5:42; 1 Cor.1:24).

So it came to pass, within a year and six months, both men and women from all classes of society came to him. They signified their acceptance of the Gospel of Christ by sincere repentance towards God and faith in His only begotten Son as LORD and Saviour. They were baptized in water, filled with the Holy Ghost, and became a thriving Christian Church, coming behind in no gift and waiting for the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ. Tell me now, are these Christians less wise than their fellow-townsmen because they no longer bow down to idols of wood and stone? Do they show a lapse of intelligence because they have accepted a message concerning life, death, and the future state; and by the very acceptance of it, a power not their own has been released in their lives, so they are no longer slaves to sinful passions? Do these Christian Corinthians become foolish because they have allowed that peerless One in whom are hid *“all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* to come into their hearts? (Col.2:3) You can only answer these questions with *“Most certainly not!”* And yet, after more than 19 centuries of accumulated evidence, indicating that nothing but good comes from the preaching of the Cross and the acceptance of the Christ, how many thousands of people there are in our land who seem to think that you have taken leave of your senses if you become a Christian. [Some time ago a young man, in a very godless community, accepted Christ as his Saviour and LORD. Of course, some of his old friends tried to persuade him that he was making a fool of himself. One of them said, *“Why Bill, people will think you’re*

cracked;” to which Bill replied, “Well, I guess I am cracked just to enough to let the light in.”]

The point I’m trying to make clear to our hearts this morning is just this: There *is* a wisdom of this world – there *is* a native human intelligence which enables man to discover and utilize the wonderful things that God has put in this world; but while this wisdom enables man to solve complicated engineering problems and build great cities, all his skill and ingenuity cannot prevent a drunken enemy from sending an air armada to bomb that city to ruins. Or even if our cities don’t fall prey to the destructive power of military might, they can’t endure forever. (There are cities buried under the shifting sands of the East, that were as great as any city standing today; but both builders and cities have fallen before the ravages of time.) But I read of a man, who lived in the long ago when great cities dotted the plains of Mesopotamia, who heard the call of God, left all the splendid emptiness called “civilization,” and journeyed to the land of Canaan. And when he saw its mountain peaks and rushing streams he built an altar, not a city. He became personally acquainted with the Maker and Sustainer of the Universe – so well acquainted, that he was called “*the friend of God.*” (Ex. 33:11; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). As a result, he learned about “*a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” (Heb.11:10). Then, after a short earthly pilgrimage of 175 years, he folded his earthly tent and moved over onto eternity’s shore. On Resurrection-morning he’ll be one of the many millions who receive that house “*not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*”

Jesus said, “*Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 8:11). Whenever I read those words something within me says, “LORD, I want to be in that number.” I read in Daniel 12:3, “*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.*”

*Christ, the Wisdom of God.* Everything in this universe bespeaks the wisdom of God. His wisdom is infinite. He is in possession of all the facts that have to do with the dateless past and the timeless future. His knowledge is all foreknowledge. He is able to call those things which *be not*, as though they were. He is never taken by surprise nor faced with a crisis. He never is found in a state of emergency, nor forced to act on the spur of the moment. His wisdom allows Him to take advantage of every circumstance and every event that could possibly happen in all the universe. *Christ, the Wisdom of God.*

I want to make it clear – Calvary was not an emergency – not an unforeseen accident. No other event in history was so carefully planned as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Lamb was “*fore-ordained*” before the foundation of the world (1 Pet.1:20); “*slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev.13:8) – potentially offered to take away sin. Every prophet – from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to John the Baptist – speaks of Him. All the animals slain – from the firstling of Abel’s flock to the turtledoves offered at the circumcision of Jesus – were detailed “types” of Calvary’s Cross. But as the old hymn says, “*Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain, could give the guilty conscience peace, nor wash away our stain; but Christ the heavenly Lamb takes all our sins away, a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.*”

It’s amazing, how the details worked out just as God, centuries earlier, had declared by His prophets that they would – twenty-four prophecies, literally fulfilled within 24 hours. When all that was written of Christ was fulfilled, they took Him from the Cross and laid Him in the tomb. (Read Matthew 27).

How was the wisdom of God manifested at Calvary? Every argument is settled, every mouth is stopped, everyone is satisfied. The Jewish leaders are satisfied – the One they feared is out of the way. The Romans are satisfied – they’ve made peace with the Jews. The law is satisfied – it asks only death for the transgressor, and Jesus became “*sin for us who knew no sin*” (2 Cor. 5:21). Even Satan is satisfied – he had successfully demonstrated his “power of death” over the one Person of all the children of men that he had not been able to lead into sin. God the Father is satisfied – atonement is made for all the sins of the world. Man can do no more. Satan can do no more. But God has one more move. It is the Resurrection. The Roman soldiers are overcome – the Jewish leaders are in consternation – Satan’s power of death is broken. The disciples of Jesus are transported with joy and were commissioned by their risen LORD to carry this Gospel to the ends of the earth, till every creature hears. And to this day the message of Calvary’s Cross is to everyone that believes. “*Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.*”

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JESUS – THE WAY

John 14:6 “*Jesus said him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, but by me.*”

Let us come now to John 14:6, for the message of the morning – *JESUS, the WAY*. The many-sidedness of our LORD is a constant source of wonder. There is, in His character and ministry, that which can be adopted to any life – to any legitimate vocation – to any race and every language. An anonymous author sets this truth before us like this:

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ARE YOU

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| —an Artist? Jesus Christ is altogether lovely.                                   | —a Lawyer? He is the Counsellor, the Law Giver, the Advocate.            |
| —an Architect? He is the Chief Cornerstone.                                      | —a Newsman? He’s the Good Tidings of great joy.                          |
| —an Astronomer? He is the bright and Morning Star, and the Sun of Righteousness. | —an Oculist? He is the Light of the eyes.                                |
| —a Banker? In Him are all the treasures of wisdom.                               | —a Philanthropist? He is the Unspeakable Gift.                           |
| —a Baker? He is the living bread.  | —a Philosopher? He is the Wisdom of God.                                 |
| —a Biologist? He is the life.  | —a Preacher? He is the Word of God.                                      |
| —a Builder? He is the Foundation.  | —a Railroad man? He is the new and living Way.                           |
| —a Carpenter? He is the Door.  | —a Statesman? He is the Desire of all nations.                           |
| —a Doctor? He is the great Physician.  | —a Student? He is the Incarnate Truth.                                   |
| —an Educator? He is the great Teacher.   | —a Theologian? He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.               |
| —a Farmer? He is the Sower of the seed, and the LORD of the harvest.             | —a Toiler? He is the Giver of Rest.                                      |
| —a Florist? He is the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley.                | —a Realtor? He is LORD of the land that is fairer than day.              |
| —a Geologist? He is the Rock of Ages.  | —a Sinner? He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. |
| —a Horticulturist? He is the true Vine.  | —a Christian? He is the Saviour, Redeemer, and LORD.                     |
| —a Judge? He is the righteous Judge, the Judge of all men.                       |  |
| —a Juror? He is the Faithful and True Witness.                                   |  |
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The idea suggested by Jesus’ words, “*I AM the way,*” implies that life is a journey, and that there are many ways that might be taken –that there is a real danger of missing the right way, and as a result, be lost and lost eternally. Proverbs 14:12 declares: “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*” You will note that this wrong way seems the right way, and by the same rule, the right way would seem to be the wrong way to this man. This all goes to show that very often things are not what they seem, and just because a way *seems right*, does not prove that it *is*. Let’s now consider the fact that life is a journey (a very quick one, too – for most of us it will be over sooner than we think).

Some time ago I read of an elderly lady who, for the first time in her life, was going for a trip on a modern streamlined passenger train to visit a relative 50 miles away. The train was moving before she found a seat, then she –took a little while getting all her parcels arranged properly, –took off her coat and hung it up, –fixed her hair and then her hat, and had just settled down to enjoy the scenery when the conductor called to her that the train had arrived at her destination. She told her relatives afterwards that, had she known the journey was so short, she wouldn’t have wasted so much time getting settled. What a picture of the journey of life! How much time we waste trying to –get settled, –get comfortable, –find a house on easy street and move in; only to find that life is nearly finished and we are *so* exhausted with our struggles we can’t enjoy what’s left. Though we may cry out with Elizabeth Allen, “*Turn, backward, O Time, in your flight, make me a child again, just for tonight!*” we know it can never be – we have begun a journey and there’s no turning back. There is no reverse gear in this car of Time, that swiftly carries us onward. But what of the way that we travel? Have we no choice of which road we may take? Have we nothing to say as to what sort of a journey we will have? Yes, indeed, we do. In fact, we have everything to say about it; but let me remind you again that “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” (Proverbs 16:25). Notice, it is “*the end*” that proved so tragic. No doubt the road was smooth and the scenery pleasant, but, if you are going on a journey, you have to think of the

destination –not which way will be the cheapest, or the most comfortable, but which way is the right way, which way leads safely through this vale of tears and strife and into the gates of that eternal city.

Before leaving this question of “*a way that seems right unto a man,*” I would like to take you to another verse on this same thought. Proverbs 21:2 “*Every way of man is right in his own eyes ...*” This is a most amazing statement, and the longer I live the more I discover its truth. I have visited men in prison who would have me believe they were victims of circumstance, and were only trying to do what was “right”. I have talked with people who were miles and miles from the “Way of Life”, whose conversation was filled with profanity and obscenity, and yet they stoutly declared they were doing “right”. Then when it comes to religion, isn’t it confusing to find so many different ideas, doctrines, ceremonies, rituals? –the proponent of each one of them dogmatically certain that they alone, of all the people of the earth, are the only “right” ones. How often history records the rise of sects that openly declare they are the select 144,000 spoken of in Revelation 14 –there are probably a dozen or more such groups in existence in Christendom today. Each one “right” and each one opposed to the other. Is it any wonder that someone who knows little of the simplicity of the Gospel, and who is looking to religious leaders for guidance, is left in a state of complete bewilderment?

Listen, while I read John 14:6 again, “*I AM the Way.*” It is only when people become followers of the LORD Jesus Christ that they are drawn closer to each other; and though organizations are necessary for the purpose of administration, they are in no sense a barrier to fellowship with others, nor a testimony of supposed superiority. But, “*If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7).

I want to take the time I have left to talk with you about the *JESUS WAY*. Christianity, in its final analysis, is not a religion, it is not a creed, nor a doctrine – Christianity is a way of life. We become sectarian by a narrow-minded devotion to a party or a denomination. We become truly Christian by a wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ and all that He stands for. We hear and read a great deal these days about the Canadian way of life, or the American way of life, or the English way. It seems to me the thing that should be emphasized is the Way of Jesus Christ. I’d like to point out, just here, that the *JESUS WAY* is the *WAY OF PEACE*. The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of peace. The greatest gift, in the long list of benefits left to us in the last will and testament of our LORD Jesus Christ, is *PEACE*. You will remember reading over there in John 14:27 “*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*” Notice, He said, “*not as the world gives.*” The only way the world can give peace is to overcome the aggressor by force of arms, and by fear of the consequences – by keeping the potential enemy in subjection. The only way peace can be kept in a community is to lock up the criminal and hold the fear of the law over the head of the would-be lawbreaker. We are very thankful too, that we have such a peace – it is certainly better than war; but while we rejoice in our national security, and appreciate personal protection by law, the fact still remains that there are many, many hearts in this favoured land that have no peace. Many, many homes with unceasing strife, where that ugly demon of alcohol reigns supreme, or that fiery passion of an evil temper is on the throne. More than anything else, Peace is needed here. But the world can’t give it. All the armies of the world can’t give it. But hear again the words of Jesus, “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.*” Do you want peace this morning? He is the *PRINCE OF PEACE*.

Then again, the *JESUS WAY* is the *WAY OF PURITY*. I rejoice in the of Isaiah 35:8, “*A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*”

I know that this doctrine of holiness is not very popular these days. The plea is for more broad-mindedness in the things of God. But I am afraid that altogether too many of us have sacrificed depth, to accomplish breadth. We have gotten so broad-minded, we are shallow –no deep-settled convictions as to right or wrong of moral principles. We have succeeded in building up a light and frothy sentimentalism that asks nothing more of a professing Christian than to be a good fellow in a general way, not very bad in

anything, but actually good for nothing. “Don’t be narrow,” cries the world; but Jesus said, “*Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*” (Matthew 7:14). “Be more tolerant,” is the argument of our modern philosopher. But did you ever notice how intolerant they are towards anyone who insists that Christianity is a way of holiness, separate from the world as far as darkness is from light? Read it in 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 18.

Time is running out on us again; but before we leave the air I must take you to John 14:6 again, “*I AM the Way ... no man comes to the Father but by Me.*” Mankind has invented many avenues of approach to the Almighty God. We have built many highways to the Throne of Eternal Justice, but none of them are long enough, or strong enough, clean enough or pure enough, to bring us into the presence of Him, before whose dreadful majesty Cherubim and Seraphim cover their faces and cry, “*Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD God of Hosts, and the whole earth is full of His glory*” (Isaiah 6:3). Men today are seeking for salvation in the name of Mohammed, of Buddha, of Confucius – hoping to bring all the race into the very presence of the King of eternity through philosophy, through education, through cultivation. But my Bible says that *JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY* – “*Neither is there salvation in any other*” (read Acts 4:10-12).

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JESUS – THE BREAD of LIFE

John 6:48, 51 – *“I Am the Living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eats of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

We want to spend the time we have left with a message on *JESUS, the BREAD of LIFE*. John chapter 6 gives the background for this great truth, and verse 48 gives the text, *“I AM the Bread of Life.”* The occasion is the day following the feeding of the five thousand (an event recorded in all four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – indicating that this miracle has such significance that it must be told four different times by four different writers). The multitudes were sure, now, that Jesus indeed was *“that prophet that should come into the world”* (John 6:14). John tells us they wanted to make Him their king by force, but He escaped out of their hands. When they found Him the next day, He preached to them one of the longest sermons recorded from the lips of the Son of God. He said, *“You seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him”* (John 6:26, 27).

The problem of food is a very vital one – a problem that is probably foremost in the minds of most people the world around. The Scriptures declare that *“all the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled”* (Ecclesiastes 6:7). Every labouring man will bear witness that he would not work if he did not have to eat. No sooner has he eaten a good meal than he must think of returning to his work in order to provide for the next one. Every housewife will agree with me that not long after the table is cleared and the dishes all washed, she begins to think of what to have for the next meal. Every farmer, as soon as the crop is harvested, begins to get the land ready for another one. He knows that though annually around 400,000,000 bushels of wheat are produced in Canada, that will be quickly disposed of and more will soon be needed. Trainloads and shiploads of foodstuffs of all kinds disappear every day, in an effort to satisfy the hunger of a growing nation.

We certainly ought to be filled with gratitude to our Creator, that our land produces so abundantly the good things that temporarily satisfy the body. We ought to bow our heads before every meal – yes, and every lunch as well, and give thanks to a bountiful and gracious Father in Heaven who gives us so richly all things to enjoy. And He does all this in spite of man’s colossal ingratitude, insatiable greed, and unreasonable profanity. Much more could be said along this line, but this will make clear that we must eat. We must be fed. Life is sustained only by a continuous supply of food that contains the elements necessary to restore, repair, and rebuild all that is being constantly consumed in the business of living. We are not self-sustaining, nor self-existent. We are entirely dependent on food, to live.

Now let us consider that there is something about every one of us that must be fed, and yet can never be satisfied with meat or vegetables. Fruit or confections of any kind will never appease that hunger, nor quiet that clamour for food. It requires no argument to show that man is not and cannot be satisfied only with food for the body. We are not animals to fill our stomachs and lie down to rest until the pangs of hunger drive us out again. North America has the best fed people in the world today, and yet what restlessness – what discontent – yes, what hunger is manifest everywhere. It is truly written that *“man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”* (Matt. 4:4). What a tragic mistake that man made, of whom we read in Luke chapter 12. He said to his soul, *“Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry”* (vs.19). How foolish, I say, to suppose that he could feed his soul on stuff that could be stored in a barn. It is true that the soul must be fed, but not with wheat, oats or barley. Many a man is starving in the midst of plenty. Eating three good meals a day, and yet something is lacking in his diet, and he knows not what it is. What a pity that so much time and effort goes into the gathering and preparing food for the body, and so little in providing for the soul. Let me repeat: the soul must be fed.

I would like to take a few moments here and speak of this matter of feeding the soul. What is the soul anyway? In the beginning, it is written, man became a living soul. It is not that we have a soul, but we *are*

spirit, soul, and body. The best definition I can give for the soul is this – it is the emotional centre of personality. I want to say right now that the poisonous and filthy trash upon which the souls of men and women, boys and girls are feeding in these days is nothing short of criminal. We know that to develop strong and healthy bodies, we must have clean and healthy food, for we are certainly made of what we eat. How then, in the name of reason, can we expect to be emotionally sound and whole if we continually feed on the lewd and licentious literature that is filling our news-stands today? How can we expect to have happy contented homes when the majority of movie scenes, watched by so many, picture the eternal triangle, suggesting adultery; the devastating effects of booze; or the murderous activity of the bandit?

Even much of the music of our day is described by one critic as being three dimensional. You can hear it, you can feel it, and you can smell it. The late *COLONEL SOUSA* (1914) known as the King of March Music, spoke of it as “*syncopated, dissipated, contaminated, addle-pated Jazz.*” Everything in life, whether it be our work, art, or recreation, must have an emotional appeal, or it will never be satisfactory. No one would ever bother about a football match if it did not offer some emotional thrill. There would be no art if it failed to stir our emotions. Poetry would die, unless it had a soul. How cleverly the arch enemy of the race has capitalized on this faculty. Knowing that the soul must be fed, he is busy day and night, cooking the most iniquitous and poisonous filth that can be found in the kitchen of the lower regions, and with a little seasoning of the argument that “everybody does it,” and a little flavouring with “respectability,” he has succeeded in poisoning the mind and conscience of multiplied millions. And while the world and the devil are busily engaged in catering to the soul of man, and concentrating on his emotional life, organized Christianity has almost entirely vacated that field.

Indeed, in many religious circles it is considered “bad form” to have anything about its programme that would have an emotional appeal. Their leaders would have us believe that Christianity is entirely a matter of the head, something to be reviewed by cold reason and discussed by dry logic – that it is highly dangerous to bring the Gospel in to the region of the heart, lest it affect our feelings and we give way to our emotions and become enthusiastic about the greatest thing in the universe and be considered fanatical by a world that goes stark staring mad over a prize fight, a baseball game, or a radio crooner.

The fact of the case is, that we must have soul food, and God has provided the very best that heaven can afford. God knows our need. We are made in the image of God – and I want you to know that our God is an emotional Being. God loves with a fervour that stirs the greatest possible sacrifice. God hates with an intensity that burns to the lowest hell. God knows grief with such pangs as sent this earth into convulsions, caused the sun to cover his face and rent the rocks in twain, when His own Son hung between heaven and earth as an expiation for our sins. Yes, and God knows such fulness of abounding joy that He has employed the services of ten thousand times ten thousand angels with their golden harps to make the universe resound with songs of rejoicing over one sinner that repents.

Not only does God feel in an emotional sense, but He has made us in His image, and we too have that faculty which craves to be satisfied. We have a hunger for affection that can never be fully satisfied until we busy ourselves in the fathomless love of the eternal One and pillow our head on His gracious promises. We have a hunger for fellowship, for our pathway through life is a lonely one. But that hunger cannot be properly fed until our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. For there is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother. There is One who understands us when all earthly helpers fail and comforts flee. We have a hunger for pleasure, and it is a legitimate desire, too, but there is no occupation in life more barren of result than the permanent seeking of pleasure. True pleasure is one of the many by-products of a life of service. Service, first to God, and then to our fellow man. It is only in His presence that we find “*fulness of joy;*” and at His right hand there are “*pleasures forevermore*” (Psalm 16:11).

Finally, we hunger for security – for that feeling of confidence that all is well for the future. When old age creeps on and the body grows weaker, no matter how we feed it, we want to know that we will be provided for. Will you listen carefully now while I tell you – You will never be safer and more completely prepared for the future, than when your life is hid with Christ in God.

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JESUS – THE LAMB of GOD

John 1:29 *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

For some time now we have been endeavouring, by the help of the LORD, to set before you the many-sidedness of the Jesus Christ – the varied and various aspects of His ministry toward the children of men. For our meditation this morning, I have been drawn to that particular phase of His life that to me is the most wonderful of all – *JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD*. Nothing could be better for a text than John 1:29, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* We must go right back to the beginning of things, in order to gain the proper approach to this profound and yet blessed truth. The fall of Lucifer is the first recorded event in spiritual history (Isaiah 14:13). He said, *“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”* Thus sin began in the heavenlies, and it’s still working out its awful course. However, the very next event in spiritual history is the offering of the Son, through the Spirit, to be the sacrificial Lamb. 1 Peter 1:19-20 speaks of *“the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”* How strange are the ways of God, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:8-9). Who among us would choose a lamb or a sheep as a sign, a mark, a name, a symbol, or an example? Who wants the character of a sheep? Is it not highly significant that nations have chosen such animals as the lion, the bear, the buffalo, or such birds as the eagle, to be the symbol of the nation’s ideals and accomplishments? whereas the Kingdom of God has a Lamb, from beginning to end, to show forth God’s ideal and God’s ultimate accomplishment and plan? God has chosen the Lamb for the mightiest work and the mightiest accomplishment of all the universe – a work that will stand throughout eternity. Everything that God has made in the physical creation has a spiritual counterpart. That is why much of the Bible teaching is done by parable – bringing up the natural, such as a vine, the seed, the fish, the fire, the trees; and using each one to carry a message and conveying a truth of the unseen and spiritual realities. To have a knowledge of things in the physical world is very important and helpful – but to know the spiritual lesson that each thing would teach is so much more important and vital to our eternal welfare. For the natural is a fading thing of time – we will bury it tomorrow; but the spiritual is an eternal possession. Now God is the Author of both the passing and the permanent – the physical and the spiritual. Let Him teach us by His Lamb, those things we ought to know.

To know a lamb in the natural is to despise it as a negative helpless thing. To know the lamb as God presents it, will fill us with praise and worship. Let us note, to begin with, the Lamb of God is a sacrificial lamb – a Lamb marked for slaughter – one whose life belonged to another and that for the purpose of death. There is a sense in which the sufferings of the Lamb of God are eternal and date from His fore-ordination, before the foundation of the world. The Cross is a manifestation, to mankind, of that suffering; but all through the Old Testament we have pictures of the suffering of the Lamb. Sin began in eternity, and its effects run on into eternity. When God redeems a soul from sin, He pays the full price; so He can justly say, *“You are not your own”; “you were bought with a price”* (1 Corinthians 6:19; 7:23). So completely does He own each redeemed one, that whatsoever that one does will be done by the will of the Father. This of course, is absolute bondage to the natural man – intolerable. The greatest range of surrender to the will of God is shown in His Lamb, who not only becomes obedient unto death, but in the doing of it, declares *“I delight to do Your will, O my God”* (Psalm 40:8). We must keep in mind the fact that, through the demonstration of His Lamb, God intends to show the basis upon which His eternal work will be done – what His new creation will be like. One of the first principles is that the entire universe will constantly and absolutely be dependent on God. This will be such a fixed principle that eternity will forever be safe from any other insurrection. This will be a Kingdom which *“cannot be removed, but abides forever”* (Psalm 125:1), for there in the midst will be the absolute proof of a tried-out, lived-out, fought-out, eternal principle. We will just add one more thought to this, before leaving this part of our study. It is

this: God has inaugurated a plan whereby the character and nature of the Lamb is transmitted to His redeemed ones on earth. This is the burden of Christ's intercessory prayer in John chapter 17.

Let us think now of the defenceless and helpless nature of the lamb. This is a great mystery when applied to the Son of God; but its very defencelessness explains all the triumphs of the weak. This explains the victory songs of millions of martyrs. They gained by losing – they stood by falling – they conquered by surrendering. They overcame evil with good – they defeated their enemies by feeding them. God deliberately thrust His Lamb into the path of the wolf – He left His Lamb to be devoured by the lion – He sheltered Him not from the serpent. God called all heaven and earth to witness carefully what happened. This was a manifestation arranged by Deity to prove to all the universe, for all eternity, the contrast between good and evil – between God and Satan – between the prince of darkness and the Prince of Peace – between the prince of this world and the Prince of the world to come. Thus the cross with its victim, the innocent, defenceless Lamb of God, exposed the powers of darkness. This is why God arranged Calvary so carefully. The time was ordained, the place was set, all prophecies were fulfilled that led up to it. All the world was represented in the crowd assembled; and, it seems that their final testimony was summed up by the Roman centurion, "*Truly, this was the Son of God*" (Matthew 27:54).

Let us move on, now, to a further development of the *LAMB* idea. This time it is a book, and it is called the *LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE*. To secure our treasures and habitations, we build walls, houses, and cities; to preserve our ideas and thoughts, we put them in writing. In the *LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE*, we see God writing down and eternally living, over and over again, the experiences that give Him pleasure. Writing is one of the immutable marks of personality. All creatures leave their imprint in some manner. For instance, a footprint tells what has passed that way. But only a person, by writing, can transmit to future generations the inmost feelings of his soul. God keeps a record of everything that transpires in this world. How much more would He desire to do the same for eternal things. Before the granite hills were marked by the passing storm, before the sands preserved a record of the ebb and flow of the tides, before the great ether dome above us began to hide away every sound from the earth beneath, God has a Book. In Psalm 40:7 it is called "*The volume of the Book*"; and all that is written therein concerns the Lamb. There are three Books which have much prominence in eternal things. There is the Book we are studying this morning, which we call the Word of God. Then there are the Books of records spoken of in Revelation 20:12 "*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*" The books will be produced at the Judgment Throne. Then, there is also the *LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE*. There are many things about this Book we do not know. We are given little glimpses here and there in the Bible, especially in the Psalms.

Read Psalm 40 and Psalm 110. Here we find David in the spirit, privileged to hear conversation taking place in the heavenlies – a conversation between the Lamb of God and His Holy Father. I cannot tell you all that this Book holds, but I can tell you some things that are therein. John is the only writer that speaks of it as the *LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE*. In fact, he is the only one in the Scripture who calls Jesus the *LAMB OF GOD*, and it is John who tells us of those whose names are written in the *LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE*. (And those whose names were *NOT* written in the Book – read it in Revelation 13:8 and 17:8). No doubt Adam's name is written in the Book of Life, because he was clothed with a robe of sacrifice that God provided. No doubt Abel's name is there, too, for he is mentioned in connection with the "speaking blood" in Hebrews 12:24. Daniel's name is likely there, also, because he prophesied of it in Daniel 12:1. Jesus Himself is the first one in the New Testament to refer to it (Luke 10:17-20), as He reminds His disciples that above the honour and joy of having evil spirits be subject to them, is the joy of having their names written in the Book of Life. The Apostle Paul refers to it when he speaks of the *GENERAL ASSEMBLY*, the *CHURCH of the FIRST BORN*, who have their names written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23). I wouldn't be surprised if everything that concerns the redeemed is written in this Book. Remember, David says that all his tears are written in a book (Psalm 56:8). How precious! I wonder if *your* name is there. I'm sure *mine* is; for the *LAMB OF GOD* has redeemed me by His precious Blood.

Revelation is a Book of books – in it, books are mentioned more often than in all the rest of the Bible. No doubt it is the proper place for them to be all gathered in. They are the books of evidence and will

form the basis for the Judgment of the Great White Throne. The 5th chapter tells of the seven-sealed books that none but the Lamb could open. When the seals were broken, the judgments of God fell on the earth. This has to do with the Great Day of the LORD, when men cry for the rocks and the mountains to hide them from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne, from the wrath of the Lamb. Revelation 12:10, 11 tells of that victorious company who have "*washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.*" Revelation 10:7 tells us that with the breaking of the seventh seal "*the Mystery of God should be finished.*" What is that mystery? It is the Mystery of the Lamb. "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" He who was given to the wolf and to the serpent is now a Lion. Indeed, He always was, and ever will be – "*Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever.*" He is a Lamb, and also a Lion. The enemy was a wolf in sheep's clothing, but God had hidden in His Lamb the conquering Lion. We must hurry now to Revelation 19, for the *Grand Finale*, the glorious consummation. It is the last scene of the Lamb, and it is in heaven – where the "Lamb idea" was first given. It is a wedding now, and it is where the full purpose originated. The Lamb stands, baring His scars – indelible marks of a perfect service; and with Him are all the redeemed. The *one* has become a multitude which no man could number. Whose are they? They belong to the Lamb – by eternal promise, covenant, and inheritance, they are His – by creation and by redemption they are His – by character and nature, they belong to the Lamb. How can heaven best celebrate this eternal triumph? The answer is the *MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB*. The story of the Lamb opened with the awful fact of an heavenly apostasy, and ends with an heavenly wedding. It is God's final answer to the apostate one. As Paul says, "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*" The death of the Lamb killed all death. The grief of the Lamb throttled all grief. In place of the apostate, one who refused to bow in the heavenlies, there is a new race of people – a new creation – who hold their wills as constant burnt offering of utter worship and ascribe eternal praise to Him who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own Blood.

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JESUS – JEHOVAH TSIDKENU – THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jeremiah 23:6 *“In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNES.”*

We turn again to the Book of all books, and draw from its sacred pages another message in this series of studies on the Person of the LORD Jesus Christ. *JESUS, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS* is the subject, and Jeremiah 23:6 is the opening text. Just these words, *“And this is His name whereby He shall be called - JEHOVAH TSIDKENU – THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”* There are a number of ideas wrapped up in this word *“righteousness,”* and we cannot fully cover the subject in the few minutes we have at our disposal this morning. The principal thought carried by the word is, *“guiltless, sinless, virtuous, measuring up to divine requirements, meeting that standard in conduct which God has established and set forth in His Word.”* Fundamentally, it is: to be right with God and, as a result, carrying out the expressed desire and will of God in conduct, in conversation, and in character. In short, it consists in being right and doing right, not occasionally nor spasmodically – not just once in a while or on special occasions: but habitually, daily, and hourly doing only those things that please Him; speaking those words which honour Him and going only where He can best be served.

That God Himself is righteous is demonstrated everywhere and in all things. That man is definitely unrighteous is likewise made very clear by history, by present world conditions, and especially by the Word of God. Turn with me to Romans 3:9-19, and if you ever had the idea that you weren't such a bad fellow after all, these words will certainly correct that misconception, and bring you down to the same level as the most benighted heathen in Africa. Listen carefully while I read this appalling description of the human race from the inspired pen of the Apostle Paul. Note, first, the question – Are we better than they? And then, the answer - No! In no wise are we better; for we have proved that all (Jew and Gentile) are under sin, as it is written, *“There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; they have practiced deceit with their tongues; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”* (Rom. 3:11-19).

Thus, in words such as these, and many others, the sacred Book establishes the awful fact of the absolute universality of sin. Every son of Adam, without exception, is born predisposed to evil, with a bent downward and away from God and His righteousness; with a nature that is opposed to the divine requirements of the One who will judge the world by the standard of righteousness utterly consistent with His own holiness. This is the fundamental reason why the Gospel preacher is never a very popular fellow with the world at large. The average person wants to be told what a fine, upright, outright and altogether remarkable chap he really is, even though down in his heart of hearts he knows it isn't so. But it is the solemn responsibility of the minister of God to preach the Word, in season and out of season, even though the time has come which was spoken of in 2 Timothy 4:3, 4 *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.”*

It is necessary to teach and preach the Gospel truth, that *all men are sinners*, in order to teach and preach the further truth, that *all men can be saved*; for it is only a sinner who needs a Saviour. Jesus Himself declares, *“They that are whole need not a physician”* and *“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* (Matthew 9:12,13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31, 32). So then, a person who declares himself to be righteous, thereby puts himself outside the redemptive work of Calvary's Cross, and confesses that, as far as he is concerned, Christ need never have come from heaven's glory – there need never have been a Christmas, a Good Friday, or an Easter Morning. For him the blood was shed in vain, and the Gospel of redeeming Grace, a message only suited for drunkards, harlots, and adulterers. He is prepared to plead his own case before the tribunal of God's eternal justice, and establish his absolute innocence of any crime, and demonstrate his absolute sinlessness before the all-seeing eyes of the Judge of the whole earth. I

sincerely hope I am not speaking to anyone who could be so utterly foolish, or outrageously presumptive. For such a person would not have the remotest possibility of escaping the judgments of God.

Read the story of the man without the wedding garment in Matthew 22:1-14. Just here is the place where *JEHOVAH TSIDKENU* – the LORD our Righteousness comes into the picture. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 declares that Christ “*became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD’.*”

The tragic mistake that Israel made was in being ignorant of God’s righteousness; and, going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. Of all the different classes of people that Christ had to do with, during His earthly ministry, He reserved His most unsparing denunciation for the Scribes and Pharisees. It is the clear teaching of Scripture that there is nothing so offensive in the eyes of God than a self-righteous spirit.

Listen to these two men praying, in Luke 18:9-14; the *Pharisee*, “*God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.*” Honestly now, doesn’t he just about turn your stomach? (That reminds me of the Laodicean Church, which was “*rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing*” – read of it in Revelation 3. Jesus said of them, “*I will spit you out of my mouth.*” Is it any wonder?) Listen now to the Publican praying, “*God, be merciful to me a sinner.*” Doesn’t your heart warm toward this man? He’s on the right track. He is pulling on a line that moves the very heart of God. His few simple words set in motion the transforming power of the infinite One. “*And he went down to his house,*” said Jesus, “*justified.*” This is “*declared righteousness*” – not because of his past life, but in spite of it –not because he had never sinned, but because all his sin had been laid on the sin-bearing Saviour, and carried away into the sea of God’s forgetfulness to be remembered against him no more forever. (See Hebrews 10:17)

Come with me now over to Luke 15, and take a look at two boys, the younger one a prodigal who had really gone down the line in riotous living, spending all that his father had given him on every kind of sensual excess and dissipation; but he has at last come to his right senses. He has made his sorrowful way back to the old homestead. He said, “*Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.*” But the father, calling the servants to bring forth the best robe and put it on him, with a new pair of shoes, and a ring for his hand, prepared for a real banquet. But look at the elder brother, who had never done anything wrong in his life, (so he thought) and, as far as I can tell, never did anything else either. His conduct had been just as faultless as that of a wax dummy. But while his younger brother was no doubt often drunken with distilled damnation made from barley, rye, or potatoes, the elder brother is always intoxicated with that deadly poison made from the grossly exaggerated estimation of his own personal perfection. However, you will notice that the scene closes with the younger brother inside, and the elder brother outside. Whatever else we may find in this truly human story, at least this much is clear – it is better to be a repentant sinner and be saved, than to be a self-righteous Pharisee and be lost.

However, before we leave this part of the truth, I must show you that even a Pharisee can be saved. Come with me to Philippians 3:5-10. Listen to a testimony of one who described himself as being an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and Pharisee of the Pharisees. “*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless .... But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ ...*” Then notice verse 9, “*and be found in Him (that is, in Christ) ... not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but ... the righteousness which is from God by faith.*” Here is the whole truth of Christ our Righteousness pressed into a few short verses. This is the Gospel truth, that Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. All our sins, even the ones we don’t think we have, are put to His account and paid in full by His death on the Cross. For it is written, “*The soul that sins, it shall die*” (Ezekiel 4:18, 20). Not only were all our sins put to His account, but all His righteousness has been put to our account. As *Dr. VALPY* said,

Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die –  
Another’s life, Another’s death, I stake my whole eternity.

Before we leave the air, I must hurry and tell you that not only is His righteousness put to our account;

but we may draw on that account here and now. The Gospel we preach is a Gospel of imparted righteousness, as well as imputed righteousness. We stand complete in Him the moment we believe. But the perfection of His character is worked out in the daily round of personal experience. We may draw on His patience in the hour of trial. His purity in the time of temptation, His courage in the time of fear – His power in the time of weakness. *Christ in you, the hope of glory*, is the ground of our assurance. In Him we shall be saved, and in Him safe.

Jesus, Thy Blood and righteousness, my beauty are, my glorious dress;

'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great Day; for who aught to my charge shall lay?

Fully absolved through these I am from sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

When from the dust of death I rise to claim my mansion in the skies,

Even then shall this be all my plea, Jesus hath lived and died for me.

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JESUS – EMMANUEL – GOD WITH US

Matthew 1:23 – *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”*

*GOD WITH US* was the message of the prophet Isaiah to the faithless King Ahaz. *GOD WITH US* is the message of Matthew, the evangelist. *GOD WITH US* is the message that rings around the world at this Christmas Season. *GOD WITH US* is the message we would send out on this Wonderful Word broadcast today. It is a message of tremendous possibilities. It is God’s message of comfort. He is with us. It is a message of hope. His name is still *EMMANUEL*. There are two great words in Scripture that apparently are at their best in their original tongue. Perhaps God knew the barrier that different languages had created, and decided when bringing forth the Holy Scriptures to leave two words without translation. Two words that would serve as a common meeting ground for all people whatever their native speech might be. Words that sound the same whether you speak in Norwegian or Russian, English or Italian, Hebrew or Zulu. Not only do these two words sound alike in any language, but they mean the same, though they were spoken by a thousand different tongues. One of these words is “Emmanuel;” and you have probably guessed the other one – it is, of course, “Hallelujah.”

God with us, or, Emmanuel – Hallelujah!! This divine title presents a very inspiring subject that will most certainly overflow the time limit of this broadcast. However, we will endeavour to leave with you a few thought that will prove of lasting benefit. The first thing that I see in this word is, identification. The word “*with*” covers the idea of becoming one with – to so completely identify oneself with another as to take on their nature, their substance, their life. As we read in Hebrews 2:16, *“For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.”* Notice, now, verse 17, *“Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”* Read it again in Philippians 2:6-8, *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”*

That God should become one of us, and one with us, is definitely implied by His name, *EMMANUEL*. It is spoken of in Scripture as a mystery. As we read in 1 Timothy 3:16, *“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory.”* This doctrine of the Incarnation has been under attack by Satan and all his agents since the first Christmas morning; but there lives in the world today a great multitude of many different languages and dialects, who can all speak in the purest of Greek, *“Emmanuel, God with us.”* They have discovered by personal experience that Jesus became the Son of Man that they might become the sons of God. He became one with us that we might become one with Him. One of those grand old hymns of Charles Wesley puts it in words like these:

Celebrate Emmanuel’s name, the Prince of Life and Peace; ‘God with us,’ our lips proclaim, our faithful hearts confess; God is in our flesh revealed, and earth and heaven in Jesus join, Mortal with immortal filled, and human with divine. Fulness of the Deity in our Emmanuel dwells, Dwells in all His saints, and me, when God His Son reveals; Father, manifest thy Son, and, conscious of the incarnate Word, In our inmost souls make known the presence of the LORD.

This idea of God identifying Himself with us can be carried into every detail of human experience, and let me say just here that there is not only a *doctrine* of *EMMANUEL*, but there is also an *experience*. Not only did God come to earth in human form, and taste in all points our peculiar temptations and trials; but He will also come to us and share with us every circumstance that we may be called to pass through. Here are a few lines that were a great blessing to me in years gone by, when affliction tried my faith:

When the way was dark, and the shadows spread as far as the eye could see,  
I stretched my hand to a human Christ, and He walked through the dark with me.  
Out of the dark at last we came, our feet on the dawn-warmed sod,  
And I knew by the light in His wondrous eyes, I had walked with the Son of God.

The closing chapters of this first book in the Bible tell the story of Joseph – a younger son in a large and prosperous family – a great favourite of his father, but hated by his older brothers. As a lad of 17, he was called a dreamer, for it was while he was young, and his heart was tender, that he came to know the God of his fathers in a personal way. I would like to take a moment here and suggest that there can be nothing that will better prepare a young man or a young woman for the place in life that God has planned, than a personal experience with the LORD of heaven and earth. Indeed, unless we do get acquainted with Him, we will never know the reason for our being here, and will miss entirely the help, the strength, the guidance, and the comfort found in the word “Emmanuel”. But now this young man, Joseph – his brothers conspired against him and sold him as a slave to a caravan of Ishmaelites, who took him down to Egypt and sold him to the captain of Pharaoh’s guard. This would seem to be the end of all his dreams and effectively cancel any ambitions that he may have had, regarding his future life. It would indeed be the end were it not for this: “*And the LORD was with Joseph.*” This simple yet profound statement of a settled fact changes the whole picture. It is just the difference between certain defeat and certain victory. As for his immediate and local circumstances, he was a slave of an Egyptian military leader, without hope now of ever bettering his position, but “*the LORD was with Joseph.*” That’s enough. No weapon that is formed against him shall prosper. No power in earth or hell can hinder him. No circumstance, no matter how impossible it may seem, will ever interfere with the working out of God’s great plan for his life.

Let us stop here for a few moments and consider what this great truth can mean to our lives. How many of us are sighing and crying because circumstances are against our plans and ambitions. We think that, in our situation, it would be impossible ever to amount to anything. Listen, while I tell you what this word *Emmanuel* can and will mean to you and to me. It means “*God with us*” – He is on our side – He’s ready to take our part. As the inspired Apostle Paul declares, “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*” Has anyone ever been defeated, who put his case into the hands of Him who built the universe? What storm can wreck the boat that carries as its Royal Passenger the One whom even the winds and sea obey? My listener, let me assure you, it is still true this morning, that “*all things work together for good for them that love the LORD.*” (Romans 8:28). That is the only condition; for it is written in John 14:23, “*If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.*” Then again, we have those immortal words in Psalm 91, “*He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*”

Let us go back now for another visit with Joseph. The LORD has prospered him and his master has committed all his property to him to care for. He is exposed to all the allurements and temptations of an oriental mansion. Living in a land where immorality and licentiousness of every sort abounded, will he stand the test? He has come through adversity in triumph, but what will prosperity do to him? Thanks be to God, there is still *Emmanuel*. Read the story in Genesis 39, and learn how God can keep a young man clean in the very midst of moral confusion. Here is another effect of this personal experience of “*God with us.*” He not only protects, defends, and prospers; but He will also keep us clean. These are days when every vile and suggestive means is being employed to break down all moral barriers and destroy the virtue and chastity of the youth of our land. We need God with us in these day. When unblushing lewdness walks up and down our streets. We need God with us when unbridled passions are pictured on the screen and on the news rack. We need God with us when self-indulgent philosophy is taking the place of self-discipline and self-control.

We must hurry on. The next scene is Joseph in prison, falsely accused by the wife of Potiphar. He is persecuted for righteousness’ sake. But once again we find these words, “*But the LORD was with Joseph.*” He has lost his position, but not his integrity. He now has a bad reputation, but a good conscience. He has been given the cold walls of a prison for the comfortable mansion of the Egyptian, but he can still say, “*Emmanuel*”. He has been true to his convictions and as a result has lost his job; but he still has God. The story ends the only way it could end – with Joseph exalted to be ruler over all the land of Egypt. Did you ever read this in the Bible? – “*If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him*” (2 Timothy 2:12); and again, “*To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with the Father in His throne*” (Revelation 3:21).

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JESUS – THE GIFT OF GOD

John 3:16 – *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

On this lovely Christmas morning, when so many of you are admiring your gifts, talking about your gifts, and thinking about your gifts, it seems most appropriate that we should take time out to consider the greatest of all possible gifts – *JESUS, THE GIFT OF GOD*. This short verse (John 3:16), that is called “the Gospel in a nut shell,” will serve as a starting point from which we will launch out into this great Gospel truth. I’m not just sure how far we will be able to go in the limited time we have with you, but if you will just draw your chair up to the radio, and give careful attention, we will certainly have a wonderful trip, while it lasts. Let us take a few moments to consider the “giving-ness” of God.

Everything around us declares the fact that our God delights to give – not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but generously, extravagantly, without measure, and without restraint. He gives the rain and sunshine to the just and to the unjust; the ungodly and profane receive the blessings and benefits of the material universe equally, along with the God-fearing and devout. Many a farmer in this good land of ours has his granary filled with grain and stacks of feed near the barn, his cattle are fat, and his fowl are flourishing; and yet he has carried on the entire year’s operations in open and profane defiance of God and His government.

Then, if we turn back the pages of history, and examine the story of the race, we find an unbroken succession of wickedness on the part of man; and an equally continuous demonstration of the goodness of God. If we were to take a cross section of humanity at the time of the first Christmas morning, we would not find a thing to indicate that mankind in any way could ever merit anything but the severest of God’s judgments. The Roman world was soaked with bloody conquests, utterly corrupt as to morals and completely idolatrous as to religion. The Jewish world with the exception of a very few, was carrying on a very splendid show of ceremonial worship and sanctimonious fasting; while all the while under their veneration of religion, they were filled with every form of corruption.

If you or I were running things we would, no doubt, consider the time ripe to visit the world with plagues to completely blot out the human race. God gave them life, and they misused it; He gave them His Word, and they contradicted it; He gave them His Law, which they broke; He gave them His prophets, whom they killed; He gave them His holy Sabbaths, which they desecrated; He gave them the land, which they defiled; and He gave them food, which they offered to gods of wood and stone. This God, I say, who had suffered mankind’s impudence, ingratitude, and open rebellion for four millenniums, is now prepared to crown all His previous gifts and blessings with the most precious gift of all – even His only Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.”* Our text, again – *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Let us then examine the Gift which God has so graciously given. Many of the gifts that have been given this season serve only the purpose of expressing an affection – a sentiment, or a kindly thought. But the gift itself has very little practical use. But here is a Gift that not only carries a message filled with the love of the Infinite One, but the Gift itself has a practical value, the worth of which has never yet been fully known.

Let us consider then some very precious and practical things which are wrapped up in this little Babe of Bethlehem. Turn with me to John 1:4, and we find these words, *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* The same idea is expressed in 1 John 1:11, *“and this is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”* Here is a statement of fact that settles all arguments and solves a great many mysteries that have to do with life.

I read just recently an article by a very learned scientist, in which he declared that science as yet cannot explain how life came to this planet. Thank God, we don’t have to wait until the scientist can explain it – it is written, *“In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.”* I believe this statement is fundamental. I believe that Life was first given back there, in the Garden of Eden.

Our father Adam lived by the breath of God the Son. The Bible teaches that this life was forfeited by sin; but, restored by sacrifice. The Bible teaches that all life is from God, and this life is in His Son. I wonder if you've ever thought of life as a gift. Even our physical life is a gift – first from God, and then through our parents. I wonder how we are using that gift; and most of all, what do we think of the Giver.

However, the life that our text speaks of is not physical – it's spiritual. It's not measured by time – it's eternal. But it's still a gift. We could never have earned the right to come into this world in the first place; so how could we ever earn the right to life that knows no death? We can't buy a moment of time, no matter how wealthy we may be. How then could we ever hope to purchase a life that will outlast the universe?

But now, just think of receiving this life as a gift. I must remind you, however, that this life is only resident in Jesus. And so it is written, "*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*" (1 John 5:12); and "*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*" (John 3:36).

Not only is Life found in Jesus alone; but also, all other things that go with Life, to make it worthwhile, are found in Him. Jesus said, "*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10). It is the "*more abundant*" life that we are concerned about – not just to exist, but to live and really enjoy it.

Some time ago, in an eastern university, a class of Freshmen was asked to prepare a paper on life. One thoroughly cynical young man simply wrote, "Life is a bad joke that isn't even funny." What a pity for any young person to face life with such a morbid perspective. What a sad thing that he had not heard the message of the angels, "*Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people*" (Luke 2:10). That's what makes the Christmas season one of joy, though I very much fear that much of the "joy" in our land is manufactured and artificial.

Some have made the mistake of thinking that joy is found in things. Still more unfortunate are those who think it is found in bottles. Joy of course, is a gift of God and is included in the Gift of His Son. The inspired Apostle Paul declares that "*the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*" (Romans 14:17). That is the reason that when Phillip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, there was "*great joy in that city*" (Acts 8:8). That is why, after Phillip had baptized the Ethiopian, he "*went on his way rejoicing*" (Acts 8:39). That is why Peter said, "*Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*" (1 Peter 1:8).

Time has nearly gone for us again, but before we leave the air, let me ask you "What have you done with your gifts? Have you left them all carefully wrapped, just as they came to you? Do you plan on putting them all away in some secret closet, never to mention them to anyone, and certainly not to the one who gave them to you? You are a most unusual sort of person if you treat your gifts in this fashion; and if you are, I can be quite safe in telling you that you need not expect to get many presents next year. What would you think of a person to whom you had given the most priceless gift you could have given, and that person would not accept it, in fact seemed to be ashamed not only of the gift, but also the giver? But before you answer this question, let me ask another – What have you done with *Jesus*, the Gift of God?"

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