



Do We Need Jesus Today?

Our blessed Lord Jesus is our Saviour. He reveals Himself to us by His example, His teaching, and finally by His death on the cross on which he died for the sins of the world. His deeds reveal his love for us, that He would "bear our sins upon the tree" that we might not have to bear them when we stand before the judgment seat of God the Father. His mercy and goodness are infinite.

One day as our Lord was teaching in the synagogue on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, a man with an evil spirit cried out to Him saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

The question asked by this man with an evil spirit in the synagogue in old Capernaum is a pertinent one for all time. The questions comes ringing down through the ages to us in our day; and people today, may well ask the same question: What have we to do with Him? "What have WE to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" Many people in our own day are saying to Him still, "Leave us alone. Leave us alone in our indifference. Leave us alone in our petty jealousies, and in our petty hatreds. Leave us alone in our sin, in our selfishness, in our rejection of God's Word and of God's ways. We're getting along well enough. Leave us alone! What have WE to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

This question was asked of Jesus in Capernaum almost 2000 years ago, and today many people are questioning still: Does Jesus really matter? Does He? Is He necessary in our modern living? Can't we get along without Him? What have we to do with a Galilean carpenter who is a total stranger to our modern civilization? His world and ours are centuries apart; and ours is an enlightened age; a scientific age. We are becoming more and more self-sufficient, we think. And as time rolls on, and the universe expands and our worldly knowledge grows, and our wealth increases, and as our concern with the

world around us presses on our minds (inflation, business conditions), the Man of Galilee seems to get further and further away from the things that make up modern living, and he seems to many people, apparently, to become really irrelevant. The writer, Thomas Carlyle, in the last century sums it up for us: The story is told that one day Thomas Carlyle was standing looking at a picture of our Lord hanging on the cross, and as he stood gazing up at the picture, he is reported to have said, "It's all very well, old fellow, but you have had your day." You have had your day. And as we look around us in the world today and see the indifference toward God and toward His moral commands and the attitude of many people toward our Saviour and toward eternal truths, it makes one shudder at times, and we well may ask with Thomas Carlyle, "Has He had His day?" He seems so far away!

Has Jesus had His day? Do we modern people need Jesus? We do Indeed! We need Him with all of our being! With all of our souls! He, and He alone, He only, is our hope of joy and life. He only is the means of our peace with God. He only is our assurance that we are the children of God. He is our hope of immortality in God, He is our assurance that the faithful shall stand before the throne of God in glory -- justified, saved, redeemed, redeemed from sin, redeemed by His blood shed on the cross. We need Jesus, indeed we do. And we have Him, we believe through our faith in Him, and we bless God for Him.

In our modern world today, we live in the midst of thousands of distractions, and we need Jesus, for one thing, to simplify our lives and to provide a foundation for our thinking. Life is becoming so complicated for so many --with the radio and newspapers banging on our consciousness, and all kinds of philosophies from the materialism of Karl Marx to the idealism of Mary Baker Eddy, of the Christian Scientists, with the TV and telephones and the atom bomb and supersonic airplanes, inflation, threats of war, world unrest, and people bickering over little things. Our souls cry out for a resting place amid the turmoil of this worldly existence. We need some place where our souls may rest secure. We need a solid foundation on which to build our lives -- on which to build character, human dignity, personal integrity, honor, morality. We need an anchor to hold us firmly to THE ETERNAL. And something which Christianity proclaims is the God-Man who walked the earth showing us God. It is the God-Man who was crucified, showing us the Love of God that could die for us, and showing us at the same time the hideousness of Sin that crucifies the Lord of Glory. Our lives today are becoming so complicated. Our minds are bombarded with all kinds of knowledge -- scientific knowledge, historical knowledge, philosophical knowledge, moral depravity and so on and on; and we need something to anchor all of this knowledge to. We need something to show us the significance of it all, something to make sense of it all, something on which we can solidly place our feet amid the times and tides of human destiny. We of the Christian faith have such an anchor and such a foundation: it is Jesus, the Lamb of God. St. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." This is simple enough: "I determined not to know ANY THING ...save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." This is so SIMPLE, so simple that the modern sophisticated man is tempted to scoff at it, it is so elemental. It is elemental, but at the same time it is basic and it is true. Faith in Jesus simplified things, it organized things -- it organizes our lives; if we have enough Faith enough Faith to make any difference. When a man can say, "One is my Master, even Christ Jesus," and makes it the business of his life to do His will, life for him becomes so much simpler and happier and more satisfying. And when the storms of life come, he is not distracted or overwhelmed. He is founded on a rock, and he walks in perfect peace and happy safety,

hand in hand with His blessed Saviour. Jesus is our joy and our life. He fills our lives full, if we will let him.

We need Jesus to make us inwardly sufficient for life, for meeting life, for living fully. We need Him to impart to us His moral and spiritual power, regenerating power, by which our natures are changed, and this gives us the strength to do God's will, to fulfill his purpose, and to be the kind of people we were created to be -- that is, to be more like Jesus Himself.

And how the world needs such power today! It is obvious that while the world has been making tremendous advances in many spheres of life, it is going backwards morally and spiritually. Though men can now control fantastic material forces, they are still unable to control themselves. Observe the spread of homosexuality and drug addiction. And many people today are finding that for all their education and for all their so-called culture, for all of their advantages, for all of their wealth and power, they still lack the moral and spiritual resources even for being happy and for building a happy home. They still lack the spiritual power to break off some unworthy, soul-destroying habit, or to achieve victory over some besetting sin, or even to control a wagging tongue. Materially, we are sound and prosperous, but inwardly there are many who are inadequate, who do not have Jesus in their hearts, and their lives are going to pieces in their hands. And try as they will, they cannot save themselves. Men cannot lift themselves by their own boot straps.

We all stand in this world of sin where we all must cry, "God help us." And we do, and He does. And it is here again that our blessed Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth comes in. For His coming into human history means that God can and has and does help us. He is our Good Shepherd. He said, "I am the good shepherd."

In Jesus Christ is love, amazing and divine; there is forgiveness, large and free; there is moral and spiritual power freely offered to all who will ask for it. In Jesus Christ, God is in action. All the divine resources are focused and concentrated in Him, and made available to us. This is not imagination. For Christian experience in every age, and in this present day, witnesses to the fact that, when a man honestly and wholeheartedly surrenders his life to Christ, and receives his forgiveness, and follows Him day by day - - that man discovers that he is in touch with great spiritual resources, with the very power of God Himself -- sufficient to sweep his life clean, to change his nature, to rescue him from vile habits and evil courses, and to make him a new man, with a new joy and new purpose in life, the builder of a Christian home, a Christian community, a Christian world. So long as men are morally weak and spiritually impotent, and unable to save themselves (and this is the nature of fallen man); so long as that old problem of what the theologians call sin and the men in the street call "selfishness," ignorance, weakness remains unresolved, Jesus of Nazareth will never be out-of-date; He never will. An honest facing of the facts of our inner lives is sufficient to convince us that we have not yet outgrown Jesus Christ; and we never will. We need Him desperately. We have to have Him. He is our all in all.

And so today the church continues to proclaim the gospel that can change men. It is offered to all as the hope of mankind, our hope of eternity, of peace of God dwelling within us. Its cleansing and renewing power is available. We do not have to wait until we feel "good enough" to receive it. It is enough if we feel that we need it and want it -- want it badly enough to get down on our knees and say:

Jesus of Nazareth have mercy on me;

Dwell in my mind that I may know thee.
Dwell in my heart that I may love thee.
Dwell in my will that I may trust Thee and obey Thee.

It is only when we offer our minds, our hearts, our wills -- our whole being - to Him that we really begin to know Jesus; and when we give ourselves to Him, we know Him, not only as the carpenter of Galilee in the first century, but now, today as our Saviour, Redeemer, and friend, Now --as the Power of God unto salvation in this world, NOW!

In days of old, when Jesus walked the earth, the evil spirit in the man in old Capernaum cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" What do we have to do with Jesus? What does He mean to us? to me? to you? We know full well. The hymn writer says it for us:

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
And drives away our fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

Dear Name, the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place,
My never-failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Guardian, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

This is what we have to do with him. God grant that he may be these things to all of us.