

The Lord's Day Morning

April 14, 1946

"The Call of Christ"

Scripture Lesson – Luke 15:1-10

Text – Revelation 3:20

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Introduction

1. All other religions based on premise that man seeks God.
2. Christian religion is based on opposite premise, i.e. that God seeks man.
 - a. "Montefiore, a Jewish philanthropist, claiming with a proud assurance, that his own faith can parallel very much in Christianity, frankly concedes that there are certain places where it is left far behind, where Christ stands out, unchallengeably, as unique, and daringly original; and among such marked advances, he sets prominently this seeking of the lost that Jesus introduced, and Himself practiced, and has taught to others. That, he says honestly, is new. We can't match it. And the reason why this virtue, so familiar to us, yet so novel, has been practiced by good Christians down the centuries is simply that, in Christ, they know that God, in His infinite mercy, missed them when they were lost; and planned out a salvation for them costly beyond all human reckoning to Himself; and carried it through to the uttermost, until He found them. The foolish, ragged, heartsick, shamefaced boy, and the father's eager welcome that couldn't wait, but, seeing that abashed and hesitating figure, still a great way off, ran, and gathered him close to his heart, and blotted out the past, so far as even divine love can affect that, and made him sure he had been missed, and was still wanted, and that nobody could take his place. The sheep, wandered and lost, and those seeking eyes that wouldn't cease from searching, and those tired feet that still kept on and on, and the patient and indomitable heart that would not turn back, without the straying truant, would seek and seek, until it found, would not be satisfied till it was safely in the fold once more."
- From: Experience Worketh Hope – Gossip, page 155
3. This difference in premise makes or should make a great difference in our thinking regarding God and our relationship to Him.
4. What a glorious thing it is to realize we are so precious to God that He seeks us.
5. See some parables which illustrate this:
 - a. Prodigal son
 1. Father watching for son and goes to meet him
 2. Not at rest with him away
 - b. Lost sheep
 1. Had 99 but could not rest with one out of fold
 2. Goes out to seek until he finds
 - c. Came to seek the lost
 - d. We mean so much to God He cannot rest until each one of His is safely gathered in
 1. Empty place in heart of God until those who are His fill it

6. He keeps calling
 - a. Text: "Behold I stand at the door and knock."
 1. Stands waiting patiently
 2. Knocks and knocks
 - b. Sometimes we wish He would let alone, and quit disturbing us
 1. But He persists
 2. Everett King ringing bell in apartment in Chicago until we finally answered
7. Sometimes we do not hear
 - a. Rattle of dishes
 - b. Swish of broom or running of sweeper
 - c. Sound of typewriter in office
 - d. Whir of ticket tape
 - e. Clang of cash register
 - f. The hilarity of worldly pleasure
8. But He still knocks
 - a. Story of Christ standing at cottage in Wales knocking at the door
9. Finally He will go away
 - a. What a sad thing when this happens
 1. Most awful thing could happen
 - b. If He is not calling you today, then you should certainly be disturbed
 - c. If He is calling – knocking, will you answer now?
10. But you answer

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- I. My Heart is All Wrong
 1. Surely with my heart as it is He would not come in
 - a. I have a bad disposition
 - b. I do not think of Him often
 - c. My heart is black with sin
 2. But He will come in
 - a. Think of Upper Room
 1. He sanctified and made it holy
 - b. Story of what Tertullian said in reply to Celcus

"All struggled to touch Christ, for virtue kept passing out of Him, and He healed – whom? Not, one here and one there; the easier cures, the less desperate among them. No. But everyone, even the most impossible. That, indeed, has always been the proud boast of Christianity. Long ago Celcus, in huge amusement, flouted and jeered, and heaped derision on derision, believing he was thereby scoffing this daft superstition out of court. Every

other teacher, he observes, summons to him the clever and the worthy and the disciplined, but this crazy Christ calls to the beaten and the broken, and the whole rag-tag-and-bobtail of the down-at-the-heels, and the disreputable, and the failures. And the Church, far from wincing at the jest, openly exulted in it. Yes, said Tertullian, but He doesn't leave them beaten and broken and ragged and down-at-the-heels; but, out of such sorry material you would have thrown away, the most hopeless of the lot, can make, and does make, new men and women, clean and self-disciplined and Christlike."

From: Experience Worketh Hope – page 28

II. But I Am a Sinner

1. I must change first before I could let Him in
 - a. But you cannot change
 - b. He must change you
2. Look at Zacchaeus
 - a. His going in shocked the whole community; gone to be guest of a sinner
 - b. He invited Himself
 - c. He changed the whole life of the man
3. Story of how Ruskin painted beautiful picture on ink blotched handkerchief

From: Christ at Every Turn – Wettstone, page 139

There is a story of a young woman, a relative of John Ruskin, who had been given by her friend, a very beautiful silk handkerchief. By accident, she over-turned the inkwell on it and soiled a good part of it. She wept until her heart literally ached at the thought of the gift ruined by her own carelessness. About that time, Ruskin came in and saw her in distress. He smilingly took the handkerchief from her. Artist that he was as well as poet, he went then with delicate brushes he painted a beautiful picture and returned the handkerchief to his friend. "Oh," she said, "that is not my handkerchief." "Yes, it is yours." "Mine?" "Yes, I simply took the ugly blot and transformed it into a picture."

III. But I Am No Church Worker

1. I know nothing about the work of the church and what could I do for Christ?
 - a. Cannot sing
 - b. Cannot teach Sunday School class
 - c. I cannot pray or speak in public
2. What would He want me to do?
 - a. I do not know?
 - b. But He will find something if you will only let Him in
 1. "What Christ Can Do With Littles"

Our Little Multiplied by God – G. Campbell Morgan tells of an incident at the close of a Sunday service. A woman came to him and said, "Oh, I would give anything to be in this work actively and actually. I would give anything to have some living part of the work which is going on here next week in winning men and women to Christ, but I do not know what to do." "My sister," said Mr. Morgan, "are you prepared to give the Master the five loaves and two fishes you

possess?” She replied, “I do not know what I have five loaves and two fishes.” He asked, “Have you anything that you have used in any way, specially?” “No,” she answered. “I do not think I have.” “Well,” said he, “can you sing?” Her reply was, “Yes, I sing at home, and I have sung before now in entertainments.” “Well, now,” said Mr. Morgan, “Let us put our hand on that. Will you give the Lord your voice for the next ten days?” She said she would. “I shall never forget that Sunday evening,” remarked Mr. Morgan. “I asked her to sing and she did so. She sang the Gospel message with the voice that she had, feeling that it was a poor, worthless thing. That night there came out of the inquiry room one man. He told me afterward that it was the Gospel that this woman sang that reached his heart. From that day to this – and that is now eleven or twelve years ago – he has been one of the mightiest workers for God in city and country I have ever known. How was it done? A woman gave the Master what she had. The great question for us disciples is not what great things we can present to Christ, but how quickly and how willingly we can give to him the thing that we have. There is not a man or woman without a talent in this world.”

- c. Some things you might be able to do
 - 1. Help serve church dinners
 - 2. drive car for others to visit sick
 - 3. Shake hands with visitors at church

IV. But I Do Not Know How to Let Him In

- 1. Do you hear Him calling?
 - a. Then go to the door
 - 1. Hinges may have become rusty
 - 2. Key corroded
 - 3. Lock not work smoothly
 - b. Whisper, “Lord, I am opening.”
 - 1. He will wait
- 2. Just let Him in as you are
 - a. He can change and transform and make your life beautiful
 - b. Drummond telling students of power of Christ to transform life

From: The Strong Name – Stewart, page 65

Henry Drummond, at one of his great student meetings in Edinburgh, read a letter he had received from a man who had made utter shipwreck of life, a letter full of hopelessness and bitterness, a terrible revelation of a sunk and ruined soul. It was anonymous, signed with one word, “Thanatos” – death. And Drummond (as he afterwards confessed) felt then that if ever a man was irretrievably lost it was the writer of that letter. But there was another night, a year or two later, when Drummond was facing a student gathering again. He reminded them of the story he had told of the man who was amoral, social, and spiritual wreck; and then went on. “Gentlemen, I have in my pocket tonight a letter from ‘Thanatos,’ which he sent me this week, and he says he is at last a changed man – a new creature in Christ Jesus.” Yes, the voice of Jesus is a resurrection trumpet, and the gift of God is life.

Conclusion

1. Christ is knocking
 - a. He wants in
2. Open and you can be sure He will come in
 - a. He will change and transform your life