

WHAT CHRIST EXPECTS OF US

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6.

"What shall I do, Lord?" Acts 22:10.

This is the cry of a man who has come at last prepared to give Jesus Christ an opportunity in his life. He had tried other things, but has failed. Now, he was prepared to come to terms with the Saviour. It was truly the greatest moment of his life.

I. To Bring To Him What We Have.

You may think that there is little or nothing that you can bring. But you are wrong about that. You have a heart with which you can love Him, and a life with which you can serve Him. What can you bring to Christ?

1. Your Personality -- All that you are.

(1) Your body -- the physical.

"Present your bodies." "Glorify God in your body." No consecration is complete that does not include all the physical powers.

(2) Your mind -- the intellectual.

Are you willing to let Christ regulate your thoughts? "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

(3) Your heart -- the emotional.

Christ claims control of all your loves and hates, likes and dislikes. Christ does not claim first place in your affections for any other reason than that of your highest good.

(4) Your will -- the volitional.

The central citadel of your being is your will. When your will yields, everything yields. Consecration, therefore, involves the surrender of your every desire, decision and choice to the loving and wise will of God. What a tremendous thing is the human will, with which God has endowed us! You can say "Yes" or "No" to God. You can take the power of choice and reach the heights of glorious achievement or sink to the depths of ignominious shame. God's will is not something to be dreaded, nor accepted reluctantly. Our attitude should be that of glad acceptance and hearty cooperation with His will which is always good, perfect, and best.

2. Your Possessions -- All that you have.

(1) Self.

Christ wants your body, soul, and spirit. No substitute will satisfy Him. Lay yourself on His altar and say:

"I'll go where you want me to go,
dear Lord,
Over mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what you want me to say,
dear Lord,
I'll be what you want me to be."

(2) Talents.

He gives talents to all. He does not give talents for us to use for ourselves. Rather, they are to be developed, invested and used for Him in His service. You

have talents. The world is trying to claim them. Lay them at the feet of Jesus and He will take them and multiply them even as He did the small boy's lunch, and with it fed the multitude.

(3) Time.

So often you wish you had more time, yet you have all the time there is. Our trouble is that we often misuse it in selfish pursuits that do not count. Time is short, precious, easily misspent, can never be recalled, has to be accounted for, and should be wisely and rightly used.

(4) Money.

All you have belongs to Him. You are simply a steward. He does not expect you to cease having possessions, but He does claim the right to control your use of them. Some day He will call you to account for your stewardship. Instead of saying, "How much of my money will I give to the Lord?" you should ask, "How much of the Lord's money will I keep for myself?"

(5) Influence.

Influence baffles definition. It is the atmosphere we carry about with us. It is something that belongs to us and to no one else, and it distinguishes us from all others. Influence is a silent something that goes out from every life like heat from a fire, or fragrance from a flower, and gives shape and color to other lives.

Each one exerts some influence upon others. No human being can fail to increase or to diminish the sum total of human happiness. You are either a blot or a blessing, but you cannot be a blank. Simply to be in this world is to exert an influence.

Your influence involves others. You cannot touch another life without leaving your mark upon it. You cannot live right without somebody being helped, and the world being made better by it. As a pebble thrown in the water causes bubbles to rise and rings of waves to wash the shores of the lake, so a good deed causes bubbles of cheer to rise and rings of joy to surround the globe.

Your influence is permanent in its character. When it is once exerted, it cannot be destroyed or undone. Robert Burns, the great Scottish poet, on his dying bed, expressed the wish that he could recall some of the foolish things he had written, but it was too late. It is better to leave the wrong undone than to regret the doing of it. Every day we are wielding an influence which will live long after we are gone. Whether for good or evil, it will survive the stroke of death, outlive the pulverizing process of the grave, and be found working when time hushes and eternity dawns. Knowing that influence never dies, we must be careful how we live. As one, whose life had been poorly spent, was approaching death he remarked, "My influence, Oh that my influence could be gathered up and buried with me." It could not be done. He had put in motion an agency which he was powerless to arrest. Let us be careful what influence we exert, and see to it that it is for Christ.

3. Your Plans -- All that you hope to be.

There are many claimants for your life. Self wants it; the world wants it; Satan wants it. Thank God, Christ wants it. When your plans are surrendered to Him, He will not blight them, but He will bless them. Christ has claimed many lives and made them gloriously worthwhile. He alone can make the best out of your life, and cause it to realize its highest possibilities. Bring Him the years that lie in front of you. They may be few or many, but if you give them to Him, they will be the happiest, most fruitful and most worthwhile years of your life.

II. To Give To Him Our Best.

1. Why should we give our best to Christ?

(1) He wants it.

Nothing less than that will satisfy Him. It is not some of our interests, time, money and influence that He wants, but our very selves. He wants us to trust Him, follow Him, obey Him, and work for Him. He wants us to discover His will and to do His will.

(2) He is entitled to it.

He made us, He has kept us, He has cared for us, and He has redeemed us. Therefore, He is entitled to our very best.

(3) Gratitude demands it.

He has given us so much and done so much for us. He has given us a wonderful world and a wonderful age in which to live. He has given us the Scriptures, the church, and the assurance of a home in heaven.

2. How can we give our best to Christ?

(1) In faithfulness to Him.

Faithfulness is exceedingly beautiful. It elicits our admiration wherever we find it. The measure of any man's worth is his faithfulness to duty. "You can depend on Him" is one of the finest recommendations. "Be faithful" should be the slogan of every Christian in these momentous and eventful days.

a. Faithfulness to Christ in our hearts.

Christ is author of our beings, healer of diseases, comforter of sorrows, and guide of lives. He walks with us, talks with us, enlightens us, ennobles us, sustains us, guides us, empower us. He strengthens our courage, brightens our hopes, illumines our faith, warms our hearts. He is adequate and available for our every need, whether need be that of Saviour, example, teacher, or what not. Gladly testify that He supplies grace needed for every experience of life, been true in all exigencies of life, and never failed me once. He has not failed; He does not fail today; He will not fail tomorrow. He is the same in His work yesterday, grace today, and glory tomorrow. His living presence is the real inspiration to holy living, to heroic endeavor, and to high achievement. He is exceedingly anxious for all believers to give Him His rightful place in their hearts and lives.

In His gracious characterization of believers He says, "I have called you friends." Now, what do you call being faithful to a friend? It is to have such a real love for Him that we shall seek his company and delight in it. Let it be so with Christ. Seek His face and read His word daily. Moreover, faithfulness to a friend implies that you would be jealous of his good name. You would never hesitate to speak up for him in his absence. You would correct any one who spoke ill of him. In like manner, let us speak well of our Lord. Let us give the peerless Christ not place nor prominence but preeminence in our lives and service. Let us place Him above self, family, business, friends, and everything else as He wills that we should do. Let us adore Him, enthrone Him, and crown Him Lord. Let us place Him first in our living, giving, working, and hoping. Let us commend Him in every way we can and especially by being as much like Him as God's grace enables us to be.

b. Faithfulness to Christ in the church.

Christ closely identifies Himself with His people. He says that kindness to them is kindness to Him; same of neglect; and of persecution. Perhaps you may have thought, as many have mistakenly thought, that being faithful to Christ is

one thing and faithfulness to the church is another. But Christ does not think so. He identifies Himself with His people. We cannot be faithful to Christ in the highest way if we are indifferent to His people. Cultivate an intense loyalty to the church and let nothing alienate your affection.

Church is a necessary institution, best teacher of righteousness we have, friend of childhood, inspirer of youth, strengthener of middle life, and comforter of old age. It urges understanding, unselfishness, and usefulness. It is a place to go for Christian fellowship, Biblical instruction, spiritual inspiration, and real service.

During the Battle of Waterloo, Wellington placed a certain captain with a big force by a certain bridge, a little distance from the battle-field, and told him to stay there, as he would be needed by the end of the battle. This captain and his men saw fighting going on and longed to be in the conflict. At last he could resist the temptation no longer, so took his troops and joined in the fight, and the battle was won; but the French retreated along the very road where this captain and his men should have been. Wellington found out that this captain had disobeyed him and reproved him before the whole army as one who had been unfaithful to his charge. Wonder if our Great Captain can always depend on us? His eyes are set on faithfulness, so let us do whatever He commands.

Let me take you to a packed football stadium in Southern California. The University of Southern California is about to play its most important game of the season. It's a few years back, and on the team is an All-American by the name of Ed Smith. Only a few days ago the mother of this star player passed away. She had followed her son's football career with interest and affectionate delight. She was to have occupied a box at this afternoon's game. Until game time it was not known by the crowd whether Ed would play or not. When the team trotted on the field, there he was.

Just a few moments before the opening whistle Ed walked over to the box where his mother would have sat. It was draped in black and on her seat there rested a large picture of her. The big player, helmet doffed, stood before it a moment and then, as he turned to leave, he said, "Mother, I'm playing this game for you." With that, he was off to add another brilliant performance to his record.

Let that scene fade quickly away and another take its place. Not before a flag-draped photograph do we stand today, you and I; but before a blood-stained cross where hangs the Lord of glory, our sin-bearing Saviour. He's waiting to hear the good word from our lips. Shall we not say, "Lord, I'm taking this game of life, which somehow is more than a game, and -- I'm playing it for you."

Some years ago, two boats were passing each other on the Mississippi, when an old Negro said to a white passenger as he pointed to the other boat, "Look, yonder's the captain!" When asked for an explanation, he said, "Years ago, we were goin' along like this and I fell overboard and the captain rescued me. And since then, I just loves to point him out!" Some years ago, I was overboard but the Captain of our salvation leaped overboard from glory to rescue me. And I just love to point Him out.

For the glorious privilege of doing our best for Christ, let us thank Him with the gratitude of our hearts, with the praises of our lips, and by the obedience of our lives. As we go our separate ways rejoicing in Christ Jesus, let Him smile through our faces, speak with our tongues, work with our hands, walk with our feet, and love with our hearts. Let Him seek sinners through us, inspire believers with us and comfort saints through us until the day break and the shadows flee away. Sincerely say:

"Naught that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver;
My heart, my life, my hope, my all,
Are His, and His forever."