

## DO YOU ENJOY LIVING WITH YOURSELF?

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11.

There is one person with whom you must keep company as long as you live. You are irrevocably bound to that person. You cannot get away from him or her if you would. That person, obviously, is yourself. Since you can never get away from yourself, isn't it only common sense to learn to live with yourself and enjoy it? But, do you enjoy living with yourself? This is, perhaps, one of the most penetrating questions that you will be asked. What a great thing it is to be able to answer it in the affirmative! How wonderful it would be, through all the years from infancy to old age, to live with yourself and enjoy it!

How does one learn to live with himself and enjoy it? There is one way that is absolutely sure. To learn to live with yourself and enjoy it, one needs to turn to the Bible, which is the infallible guide to dynamic living, and read of that great Teacher Who is so righteous, wise, and skillful that all who will follow Him and put His principles into practice can learn to live with themselves and enjoy it. Christ Jesus said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." What things? Simply the things that are taught in God's Word. Christ says, in effect. "I have spoken these things unto you for no other reason than that you would have My joy in your hearts and that your joy would be full, or that you would be able to live with yourself and enjoy it."

Some things are necessary if you are to enjoy living with yourself. Among them are the following: --

### I. The Reception of Christ's Peace.

Throughout His earthly ministry Christ manifested a calmness and peace of mind which were independent of circumstances and undisturbed by outward things. Just before He left the apostles who had been associated closely with Him for more than three years, Christ said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

What is peace? Peace is a condition. The fundamental thought in the word is that of harmony with the will of God. Some consider peace to be other things. For example, the lazy man thinks peace consists in having nothing to do. The busy man thinks peace consists in having plenty to do. The needy man thinks peace lies in a good income, whereas the rich man thinks that peace lies in having much more than one can use. But, the truth of the matter is that no soul can be at peace at the roots of his being until he is reconciled to God. Prior to that there is a deep inward conflict going on -- the soul is agitated, the mind is ill at ease, and the heart aches for something that money cannot buy.

Christ's peace is not peace from the outward pains that beset life. It is not the peace of an easy life. It is a spiritual peace -- peace in the deep region of the spirit. This peace of spirit comes from oneness with God. Christ's peace is that of an inward security, which is untouched by the mere favors of men or the honors of the world. It is a peace based on a conscious fellowship with God, of doing His will, of a trust in Him that whatever life may bring, God rules and overrules to the highest interests of His children.

It is a peace that is independent of the most disturbing circumstances. The world may be filled with strife, and yet the Christian can be serene and happy at heart. Why? Because his peace is not dependent upon the condition of the world, but by his dependence on God and the right relationship of his heart to Him. As the needle in the

compass never stands still until it points to the North Pole, so the heart of man never finds rest and peace until they are found in Christ. Peace is superior to outward circumstances. Peace with God is the most valuable blessing one can enjoy. Christ's gift of peace is the most precious legacy of all, an inheritance which the world can neither give nor take away. What Christ gives and what the world gives differ profoundly, both in the manner of giving and in the things given. Christ does not give what the world gives, nor as the world gives. Christ gives us this peace by bringing us to God, by reconciling us to God, and by bringing us into harmony with the Holy Spirit.

## II. The Organization of Yourself.

Many people are unhappy and ineffective simply because they are inwardly disorganized. They do not know how to think harmonious thoughts. They are filled with all manner of conflicts. A great many people are this way. They make remarks like these: "I can't get along with my husband," says one. "I can't get along with my wife," says another. "My children are a problem to me: I don't know how to handle them," says still others. Or, "I'm not doing very well in my job. My associates treat me unfairly." And still others remark, "I'm all mixed up. I'm haunted by fear. I'm plagued by anxiety. I don't see why some people get all the breaks: I never get any. I don't see why that fellow should get ahead. What has he got that I don't have?" "I just don't have it." These are some of the depressing complaints from people who do not have any peace, any quietness, any goal, any objective, or any driving purpose. They are torn asunder. They do not possess any centrality of control. These are the people who do not enjoy living with themselves.

But for that person whose life is pervaded with the spirit of Christ, the Lord becomes the organizing, cohesive influence, and the personality becomes compact; and strong and well-directed. The Lord puts people together on the inside. He is the only one who can really do it. He can put a person back inside himself. Do you have an honest feeling of respect for yourself? Why shouldn't you have respect for yourself? Who made you? The greatest artist in the world put you together in the first place. Even though life has broken you apart, so that you are at odds and ends, God can put you together again. He can put you back inside yourself.

Would you rather be yourself than anybody else? If a person can say, "I'd rather be myself than anybody else," and hold to that all his life, he will possess a sense of identity, of individuality, and an humble certainty that he is a personality made by Almighty God, and it will be a pleasure for him to live with himself, to work with himself, and to utilize his abilities for God and others.

Take a good look at yourself and ask yourself if you are organized inwardly. If you are not, then read and study the Bible, and fill your mind with its admonitions. Christ spoke these things to us in order that we might be organized inwardly.

The joy of Christ within us is a challenging thought. Yet, this is His clearly expressed purpose -- "that your joy might be full." Christ wants His followers to be the possessors and the exhibitors of joy. Some have the notion that Christianity and joy are incompatible, that where the one is present the other is absent. A religion which wears grave-clothes begs to be buried, and the sooner the better. Christ came to bring and impart joy.

Christ's joy did not consist of material possessions. He did not have a house of His own in which to live, or a couch on which to lay His head. When some approached Him with the thought of becoming His disciples, He cautioned them to count the cost, saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20). From our Lord we learn that joy does not

lie in the acquisition of possessions. From our Lord we learn that joy does not consist of human approbation. There were times when some people said of Him, "He doeth all things well." There were times when they shouted, "Hosannah!" But the same people who praised Him also cried, "Crucify Him! He is not fit to live."

Christ's joy consisted of a proper relationship with the Heavenly Father, which was one of love and fellowship and which was never broken. He said: "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Christ knew the joy of perfect obedience to the Father's will. There can never be any true joy in your life until you have learned to say, "Thy will, O God, be done." You can never have joy as long as you are out of harmony with the will and the way of God.

### III. The Gift of Yourself In Service.

If you want to enjoy living with yourself, then you must give yourself in service. One of the most common forms of human misery is being imprisoned within your own personality. A human being was never meant to exist in a prison of any kind. Pitiable indeed have been some of the prisoners whom I have visited in jails and penitentiaries. Oh, the tragedy of what prison life does to some! But, I want to tell you that far more destructive to human nature than what these prisons have done to their occupants are what the prisons that other people have created for themselves by living entirely for themselves — for what they can get, and for their own comfort. You don't acquire comfort that way. You may know physical ease, but there is no comfort for your soul. The greatest moments of human experience are those when the self is forgotten completely in service to humanity. It is then that joy inexpressible comes to you. Christ wants us to have joy, real joy. He wants our joy to be full. He wants this joy to overflow our souls. But this can never be unless we give ourselves in service to Him and for others.

Life has been given to us to share with others, and not to hoard to and for ourselves. You can never enjoy living with yourself in selfishness. You will only be miserable — filled with self-pity. You can only be happy with yourself by giving yourself away in Christian service. If you are not enjoying the experience of living with yourself, then find something that you can do for someone; not anything that will increase your income, or your prestige, but something that will bring you ineffable joy. You may say, "Well, that is quite simple. I have heard that many times before." I have heard it, too. But, it isn't so much what we hear as what we do that counts. Any true Christian can enjoy living with himself by doing some simple and unselfish things.

There are Christians who do not realize how much they are losing by the selfishness which they permit to lurk in their hearts. If, instead of thinking so much about themselves, their rights, their wants, etc., they would only forget themselves and live for Christ and others, they would find themselves in an entirely different world. They would get their frustrations, disappointments, and unkind feelings toward others out of their minds and hearts, and would live radiant and joyous lives in Christian service.