

"WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?"

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5:47).

This verse comes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount, a message given primarily to saved men. The record of the sermon begins thus: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set his disciples came unto him; And he opened his mouth and taught them saying." To His disciples, saved men, changed by God's grace, men of whom He could say, "Ye are the salt of the earth" and "Ye are the light of the world," Christ addressed the question: "What do ye more than others?"

This question is important in many respects. It is important because of Who asked it. It is important because of the occasion on which it was asked. It is important because of those who heard it asked. It is important because people want to know the answer to it. It is important because by it Christians are measured by more: "What do ye more than others?"

Christ had just selected twelve men to share with Him the burden of responsibility and labor, and it was quite important that they should be thoroughly instructed in the first principles of the kingdom which He announced. It was equally necessary that the larger body of His disciples should understand those fundamental principles. That is to say, Christ wanted His disciples then and now to understand the fundamental principles of the Kingdom of God. He also wanted to let the mixed multitude about Him then and the mixed world now know what He expected of His subjects.

It is clear from these words, and from their context, that Christ expected His followers to be vastly different from those about them. He expected that their relationship with Him would produce a quality of life and spirit superior to that of unbelievers.

A Christian is a Christ-in person. The Bible clearly reveals this truth. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17). "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17). Christ dwells in the Christian in this life. Paul said: "Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). A Christian will be a Christ-in person in the life hereafter. Paul wrote, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Christ is more than man. In His birth He was more than man. Listen to the message of the angel: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). In His boyhood He was more than man and challenged human authority, even the authority of His mother, that would make Him less than God's Son. When His mother chided Him, saying: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," (Luke 2:48), He replied: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). In temptation Christ was more than man. He met every assault of the devil and conquered him in every temptation. In life He was more than man and ministered to the bodies and souls of men. His words had an authority that surpassed man's words. His living proved that He was more than man.

In trial Christ was more than man. Pilate and his wife and many others recognized this fact. Pilate's wife said to her husband, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." Pilate said: "I find no fault in him." On the cross Christ was more than man. A Roman centurion watched

Him as He died and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." A robber who was dying for his crime saw in Him more than man and said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." In death and in the resurrection He was more than man. He was the dying Saviour and the living Lord.

In glory He is more than man. Heaven's door was left ajar for John on the Isle of Patmos and he saw Christ in glory. He recognized Him as the Son of man but more than man. He recognized Him as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Christ in man makes him more than man. When He indwells a man He directs and empowers beyond natural strength. Therefore, he ought to do more than an unsaved man.

Who asked this question, "What do ye more than others?" It was Christ Who had a right to ask it. Sometimes we take to ourselves the right to decide what we shall do as Christians. This is a wrong and an injurious attitude that cheats and curses our lives.

Of whom was this question asked? It was asked of His disciples, whom He was teaching. He was concerned primarily with His disciples, both then and now. Our Lord asked this question of His disciples, but He asked it in the presence of the multitudes that were there. It was a good opportunity to let the mixed crowd hear what He asked of His disciples, and to know what He expected of them. Christ always deals openly with the world. He has always let His disciples know that the world is looking at Him and through His disciples. We do not live to ourselves as Christians. We live in the midst of the world's mixed multitude.

This question tells what Christ wants to know about His disciples: "What do ye more than others?" Christ is talking to His disciples, whom He has saved, and who are professing Christians. Christian men are different after regeneration from what they were before. The difference is not primarily to their praise, but definitely to the praise of God and of the power of God. By their profession they put Christ on trial by their lives. Christ made a difference between this mixed crowd of hearers and His own disciples. He showed that He expected more of His disciples than of others who had nothing but the natural birth and who lived natural lives.

Christ's question to His disciples reminded them that they were more than other men. It revealed to them that He expected them to do more than other men. For all of living Christ measures His disciples by the word "more" of our text.

In a boiler-room the engineer cannot look into the boiler to see how much water it contains, but there is a glass tube called a gauge, and as the water stands in this gauge, so does it stand in the boiler. The engineer has only to look at the gauge to know how the water stands.

In every man's life there is a spiritual gauge by which the attitude of his heart may be registered. That gauge is how he thinks and what he does. Do you ask, How do I know that I love God? I want to love Him and I try to love Him, but how am I to know that I do love Him?

Look at the gauge. What you love and how you love will tell whether or not you love God. A Good test of your love for God is your attitude toward your enemies. It does not take the grace of God to do easy things. Testimony to the grace of God is best given in hard things, in the more of Christian character and conduct. It does not take the grace of God to make a man love the lovable. It is quite easy to love those who love you, but surely you can do more than this. Christ rightfully expects you to do so.

Christ teaches His followers that they are not to hate, but to love. No matter what others do to us, they may wrong us, mistreat us, and lie about us, but that is no reason why we should hate them. We must love them and pray for them. There are but two courses of action open to Christians in their dealings with their enemies. One is to get even by retaliation; the other is to get even by love. The former is Satan's way and the latter is Christ's way. Christ's way will make for peace and joy in your soul and life, but Satan's way will plant in your soul the root of bitterness.

According to our Lord, one of the ways in which we are to distinguish a Christian from an unsaved person is by his love for others. He said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). It was by their love for their fellow Christians that the early followers of Christ made their most profound impression upon the world in their day. In awe and wonder men exclaimed: "How these Christians love one another!" But they also loved those who were not Christians. There was no chasm that separated people in that day that Christianity did not bridge, and the same is true in our day.

Those early disciples not only loved one another, but they also loved their enemies. That is something that an unsaved person does not do, and he does not even desire to do so. Real Christians do love their enemies.

A brilliant and gifted young man, named Stephen, became a follower of Christ. He proclaimed his faith with irresistible power. Unable to answer him with words, his foes dragged him outside of Jerusalem and stoned him to death. He met that terrible ordeal in the spirit of his Master. As the mob stoned him he prayed: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," thereby proving that he was a genuine Christian.

Christianity triumphed in the first century because the Christians out-thought, out-lived and out-died the pagans. Tertullian, one of the great church fathers, said that he and most of those who had come out of paganism in his day were won to Christ by observing how Christians lived and died.

One of the great needs of professing Christians today is to quit living like pagans. It is a sad fact that the world does not read the Bible to see Christ in it. The world reads the Christian to see Christ in him. The world does not see Christ in us when we are no more than men who have experienced the natural birth. Christians are measured by more: "What do ye more than others."

Natural men choose what they want to obey of God's Word. Christians do more than this.

Men choose worldly wisdom instead of God's will. Which do you choose? Men choose common sense instead of God's way -- which do you choose?

Natural men love self and put it first. Christians put Christ first. Natural men shun sacrifice of position, popularity and pleasure -- do you? Men do things for the praise of others -- do you? Natural men are influenced by their families and friends, but Christians are directed by God and His Word. Natural men give to the things which they want to support and in the amounts which they wish. Christians do more than this. Natural men live in the way which they prefer --do you? If you do, men do not see Christ in you. Christians do not live on a natural level. They live better and do more than others.

Our Lord would have every Christian to excel both in the graces which He bestows and in the service which He permits. He does not want us to be guilty of the sin of being commonplace. Each of us should be uncommonly holy, efficient and intelligent in the things of God. In order that His purpose might be accomplished in and through us, God has given us His Word to inform us, the Lord Jesus Christ to transform us, and the Holy Spirit to inspire and empower us.

There are different realms in which Christians ought to show real superiority:

I. We should know more than others.

It is life eternal to know the triune God. Unless we know Him well, we shall not live well for Him, nor speak well of Him and for Him. Unless we know Him correctly, we shall not represent Him properly. We shall teach things about Him which are not true. We shall misrepresent Him to those whom we address. God's Word reveals His person, tells us of His wrath, manifests His grace, and unfolds His glorious attributes. The better that we know Christ, the more able we shall be to do more than others in telling about Him.

To know Him as we should, we must study God's ways, God's works, God's will, and God's Word. We should know what God will do under certain circumstances, what He expects from those with whom He deals, and the results of disobedience. We must know more than others.

II. We should care more than others.

We must devote our attention, thoughts, affections and talents to this blessed business of knowing God and making Him known to others. We must care more than others, if we ever expect to do more than others. There should be an earnest longing in the soul of every Christian to touch hearts and lives for God. There should be a deep desire to see the gospel transform lives, and to see Christ exalted in the hearts and lives of believers.

One mother became famous because in the blizzard of a dark and bitter night she nestled her precious little baby to her breast inside her garments, and froze to death in the snow while saving the life of her treasure. She cared more, so she did more than others.

III. We should think more than others.

Let us always consider the end of the way. Absalom failed to do so. He never would have pursued the course that he did had he thought that it would end in an oak tree. David would not have pursued his path had he known of the curse that Nathan was going to pronounce. Our Lord warned us against building the tower without first thinking through the matter of finance.

IV. We should be more than others.

It is imperative that we shall grow in grace, as we touch the lives of others, if we would win them to Christ. We must be kind and patient. If we would be more, we must pray more. Frequently we must be found alone with the Lord. To be alone with Him is to receive the benediction of heaven in our souls, so that when we speak, the Holy Spirit will speak with us, and the double witness will receive the blessing of God.

V. We should do more than others.

Let us seek grace from God to do more than others, for our blessed Lord desires it. If we do so, we shall rejoice throughout eternity that we did. Souls will be blessed by our doing more. Let us equip ourselves to the fullest extent possible, and then dedicate ourselves to the task of doing more than others for our blessed Lord.

We, Christians, must be different and do more than others if we are to convince the unsaved of the validity of our faith. When Christians and non-Christians are indistinguishable, unbelievers do not see any particular reason for their becoming Christians. The unsaved do not pay much attention to our professions, but they do watch our lives, and they interpret what they hear in terms of what they see. Let us be sure that we let God have His will with us, and let His Word have its way in us and through us. "What do ye more than others."