

THE LORD'S NEED

"And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them." Matthew 21:3.

The Bible is full of God's glory. It reveals His omniscience and declares His omnipotence. But it also presents His need.

The Bible is full of God's sovereign will and power to do according to His divine will and purpose, but likewise full of God's sovereign will to limit His power to man's participation and make man His copartner in divine doing. Our text is a striking example with an important message.

Christ's life on earth was fast moving to a close. Ere long the cross was going to claim Him. The hour was near when He would make public presentation of His Kingship. He was preparing for His entrance into Jerusalem as King.

As Christ and His disciples approached Jerusalem, they came upon a little village named Bethpage. There Christ demonstrated His omniscience by commanding two of His disciples to "Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them." The providing of these animals was not man's plan, but the outworking of all things according to Christ's foreknowledge.

To these disciples, whom He thus commanded, Christ gave a message for the owner of the beasts. Tell him that "The Lord hath need of them."

This statement invites and merits our study. Its word "need" is interesting. Its meaning points in two directions--need from lack and need for use. In the direction of lack our text means "The Lord needs them because He lacks them." In the direction of use our text means "The Lord needs them because He can use them."

Examples of the use of the word elsewhere in the New Testament are illustrative of its meaning:

"What further need have we of witnesses?" said the high priest when Christ declared His deity (Matthew 26:65).

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25).

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23). Heaven has no lack of light. It has no use for sun or moon and no need of them.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:8). Your Father knoweth what things you lack and can use, before you ask Him. This is Christ's declaration to His disciples when He instructed them how to pray.

"Ye sent once and again unto my necessity," said Paul, when writing to the Philippians (4:16), using the word of our text. You sent what I lacked and could use.

In Philippians 4:19 Paul wrote, "My God shall supply all your needs." He will give what you lack and can use.

These and other examples illustrate the meaning of the word of our text as pointing to need from lack and need for use.

"The Lord hath need of them"--He lacks them and can use them. Tell the owner this, "and straightway he will send them."

Having received the Lord's instructions, the disciples immediately went to do as they had been commanded. We could wish that all Christians were as prompt in their obedience to Christ as these early disciples were. At first His command may have seemed strange and unreasonable, but they obeyed Him without a question or a protest. Luke's record informs us that the owner of the animals did ask the disciples why they were taking them away, and they answered him as they had been instructed by the Saviour, "The Lord hath need of them." Of course, the owner never had any occasion to regret the loan of his animals to the Lord.

This statement, "The Lord hath need of them," presents a striking truth, namely, a need of a seemingly small something--an ass and her unused colt. But not a small something was it in Christ's sight.

Christ's need is contrary to the world's thought about it. The world thinks that He needs great things, horses and chariots, not small things, like an ass and her colt. The world thinks that Christ needs the showy trappings of royalty, the equipment and regalia of worldly kings. But not so with Him who sent His disciples to bring those little animals, one of which had never been used.

It was also a need from a seemingly small source--that of an unknown disciple. But he was not unknown to Christ. As the Good Shepherd He knows all of His sheep. Hidden from human eyes but not hidden to Him was the man who had the animals which Christ needed. The sources of supply to which Christ looks are often contrary to the world's conception. The world thinks that Christ must look to the well-known of men, prominent people--professionally, socially, financially or religiously prominent. The world thinks that Christ must look to the men and women who are known for their possessions and prominent because of them. But this is far from being Christ's thought.

This verse presents a need for a seemingly small service--a procession of a pauper King and His poor followers. But not small was the occasion in His sight. Rather it was a scriptural service--"that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet."

To Christ nothing scriptural was small. To Him scriptural procession was not small but great--to announce the world's real King. To Him contention for the scriptural is not quibbling but commendable.

Here again there is conflict with the world's conception. The world wants peace by compromise, not peace by scripture, procession of show, not procession of scripture. The world praises a rich man's showy procession and laughs at a pauper's scriptural procession. But not so the Lord. He prepares for royal procession by sending for an ass and her unriden colt that scripture may be exalted and fulfilled. The greatest King this world ever saw rode not in a royal chariot but on a colt.

"The Lord hath need of them" is a sentence with a striking message. His need is still the same--the need of small things from hidden sources for scriptural reasons and purposes. Today as then Christ sends His messengers to those who are unknown to men but known to Him, to those who are hidden from other eyes but seen by His.

Today as then Christ calls for unused talents and unseen possessions, unseen by men but seen by Him. Today as then Christ wants the things He can call for and men must supply. Today as then Christ's command of need must be sufficient answer to unknown disciples who question His call for their possessions. Today as then scripture must be sufficient reason for surrender of our possessions to His call.

What is that unused possession of yours for which Christ calls and concerning which He says, "The Lord hath need of them"? Is it so small and yet so hard to surrender? Do you question the service for which it is needed and wait for a big occasion to use your possession? Is there a scriptural service in the church that needs your help and the surrender of your possession?

Has the text of this hour a message for you? Does it tell you that "The Lord hath need" of your gifts however small, of your possessions however meager, of your talents however insignificant, and of your services however humble? Can He have from you what He needs and can use? Does this verse tell you that His need is your need, that what He needs to have you need to give? Will you give Him what He calls for? Will you give it now?