

Ten Shekels and a Shirt

By Paris Reidhead

(Transcript of Tape)

INTRODUCTION

And today I would like to speak to you about from the theme "Ten Shekels and a Shirt," as we find it here in Judges Chapter 17. I'll read the chapter and then I will read a portion also from the 18th to the 19th chapter so that the background might be clear in our minds. "And there was a man of mount Ephraim whose name was Micah." A little background if you please. There was a situation where the Amorites refused to allow the people of the tribe of Dan any access to Jerusalem and they crowded them up into mount Ephraim. It is a sad thing when the people of God allow the world to crowd them into an awkward position. So the people of Dan were unable to get to Jerusalem. Out of this comes the problems that we are about to see.

JUDGES 17:1-13 (KJV)

And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it." And his mother said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son." And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee." Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, "Whence comest thou?" And he said unto him, "I am a Levite of Bethlehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place." And Micah said unto him, "Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals." So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

JUDGES 18:1-6 (KJV)

In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, "Go, search the land:" who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, "Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?" And he said unto them, "Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest." And they said unto him, "Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous." And the priest said unto them, "Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go."

JUDGES 18:14-21 (KJV)

Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, "Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do." And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war. And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, "What do ye?" And they said unto him, "Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy month, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?" And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

THE LEVITE

Well there's the story. This isn't part of the actual history of the Judges, this is a gathering together of some accounts that enable us to see the social condition in that period when every man did as seemed right in his own eyes and there was no king in Israel. So we understand that Micah was unable to get to Jerusalem. He decided he would build a replica of the temple on his own property. He built what he thought would be an appropriate building and he made the instruments of the tabernacle, for these are part of the furnishings, the ephod included among them, but then he also gathered some of the things from the people around him; the teraphim, the images which God had forbidden.

But you see nevertheless there was a desire to get along as best he could. So he took a little bit of the world and a little bit of Israel, that which had been revealed by God, and he sort of mixed them up, until he had something that he thought might please the Lord. Then of course he was delighted beyond words when wandering young preacher came along from Bethlehem, Judah. He was a Levite, his mother was of the tribe of Judah. Though he himself was a Levite, God had given permission through Moses that the Levites might marry into other tribes and they might join themselves to other tribes.

This young man didn't like the living, provided for every Levite. He had wanderlust and an itching foot and so he started off to see if he couldn't do better for himself than was being done. He felt that being a Levite was good but there should be opportunities associated with it, and so he came to the house of Micah. There he waited and there he was invited in and asked to become the priest. And Micah made a deal with him, he said, "You'll be my priest, be my father and priest, then I'll give you ten shekels and a shirt." It says a suit but you understand that the people of the day wore what would be called a gelabia, a long sort of an outsized, a nightgown. And he gave him a suit of clothes or a change of apparel and his food and ten shekels a year.

This was a pretty good living for him so he decided that he would stay there and enter into the mixture of idolatry and so on that was in the house of Micah. But the people of Dan came along, they were suppose to have driven out the Amorites but the Amorites were too difficult, and they wanted to find someone that was a little easier to get out, to move. And they came to, Micah's house and the Levite told them to go ahead. Then you find that they discovered that there were people after the manner of Zidonians at Laish. They were peaceful and no one was there to protect them, and so they figure this would be very good place to take some land for themselves. When they came with the men that were sent to conquer this area they figured that since they found the land through the young Levite, it would be splendid to have his assistance.

And so they went into the house of Micah, took all the things that he had made (and it cost a good bit of money,) because at least two hundred shekels had been given for this one piece of furniture. And so they just took it all, made it theirs and took the Levite. Rather hard on Micah, but you'll notice the young Levite was able to adjust himself to this. It was amazing how flexible he was and how easily he could accommodate himself to such changes when there was a little rationalization along the way. He could began to see that it was far more important to serve a tribe than one man's family. And he could minister to so many more. Why he could see the wisdom of this and he could justify it. With no real strain of conscious he could make the adjustment, hold his hand over his mouth while they took the furniture out of the little chapel that Micah had built. He was a wise man nonetheless, rather than go along at the front, which put him in a place of danger or at the rear, which put him in a place of danger, he put himself right in the middle. So that it Micah has sent any of his servants to get him he was safe with soldiers on every side.

PRAGMATISM

What can we call this and how will it apply to our days generation. Would I be out of line in order if I were to talk to you for a little while about utilitarian religion and expedient Christianity? And a useful God? I would like to call attention to the fact that our day is a day which the ruling philosophy is pragmatism. You understand what I mean by pragmatism? Pragmatism means if it works it's true. If it succeeds it's good. And the test of all practices, all principles, all truth, so called all teaching, is do they work? Do they work? Now - according to pragmatism, the greatest failures of the ages have been some of the men God has honored most.

For instance, whereas Noah was a mighty good ship builder, his main occupation wasn't shipbuilding, it was preaching. He was a terrible failure as a preacher. His wife and three children and their wives were all he had. Seven converts in 120 years, you wouldn't call that particularly effective. Most mission boards would have asked the missionaries to withdraw long before this. I say as a ship builder he did quite well, but as a preacher he was a failure.

And then we come down across the years to another man by the name of Jeremiah. He was mighty effective preacher, but ineffective as far as results were concerned. If you were to measure statistically how successful Jeremiah was, he would probably get a large cipher. For we find that he lost out with the people, he lost out with royalty, even the ministerial association voted against him and wouldn't have anything to do with him. He had everything fail. The only one he seemed able to please was.... God, but otherwise he was a distinct failure.

And then we come to another well known person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was a failure according to all the standards. He never succeeded in organizing a church or denomination. He wasn't able to build a school. He didn't succeed in getting a mission board established. He never had a book printed. He never was able to get any of the various criteria or instruments that we find are so useful, I'm not being sarcastic at all, they are useful. And our Lord preached for three years, healed thousands of people, fed thousands of people, and yet when it was all over there were 120..., 500 to whom he could have revealed Himself after His resurrection. And the day that He was taken, one man said, "If all the others forsake you, I'm willing to die for you." He looked at this one and said "Peter you don't know your own heart. You're going to deny me three times before the cock crows this morning." So all men forsook Him and fled. By every standard of our generation or any generation, our Lord was a single failure.

The question comes then to this, what is the standard of success and by what are we going to judge our lives and our ministry? And the question that you are going to ask yourself, "Is God an end or is He a means?" Our generation is prepared to honor successful choices. As long as a person can get things done or get the job done then our generation is prepared to say well done.

And so we've got to ask ourselves at the very outset of our ministry, and our pilgrimage, and our walk, "Are we going to be Levites who serve God for ten shekels and a shirt?", serve men perhaps in the name of God, rather than God. For though he was a Levite and performed religious activities, he was looking for a place, which would give him recognition, a place which would give him acceptance, a place which would give him security, a place where he could shine in terms of those values which were important to him. His whole business was serving in religious activities, so it had to be a religious job. He was very happy when he found that Micah had an opening. But he had decided that he was worth ten shekels and a shirt, and he was prepared to sell himself to anyone that would give that much. If somebody came along and gave more, he would sell himself to them. But he put a value upon himself and he figured then his religious service and his activities were just a means to an end, and by the same token, God was a means to an end.

HUMANISM

Now in order to understand the implications of that in the twentieth century, we must go back 150 years, to a conflict that attacked Christianity. Just after the great revivals in America with Finney, the Spirit of God having been marvelously outpoured onto certain portions of our country, there came an open attack on our faith in Europe under the higher critics. Darwin had postulated his theory of evolution, certain philosophers had adapted it to their philosophies, and theologians had applied it to the Scripture. About 1850 you could mark the opening of a frontal attack upon the Word of God. Satan had always been insidiously attacking it. But now it was open season on the Book, open season on the Church, and Voltaire in France could declare that he would live to see the Bible become a relic, placed only in museums; that it would be utterly destroyed by the arguments that he was so forcefully presenting against it.

Well, what was the effect of this? The philosophy of the day became humanism. And you could define humanism this way, humanism is a philosophical statement that declares the end of all being is the happiness of man. The reason for existence is man's happiness. Now according to humanism, salvation is simply a matter of getting all the happiness you can out of life. If you're influenced by someone like Nietzsche who says that the only true satisfaction in life is power and that the power is its own justification, and that after all the world is a jungle. And it is therefore up to the man to be happy, to become powerful, and become powerful by any means he can use. For it is only in this position of ascendancy or as we saw in the worship of Molech that one can be happy. This would produce in due course a Hitler who would take the philosophy of Nietzsche as his working operating principle and guide and would say of his people that they were destined to rule the world. Therefore any means that they could to achieve this was then salvation.

Somebody else turns around and says, "Well no, the end of being is happiness, but happiness doesn't come from authority over people, happiness comes from sensual experience." So you would have the type of existentialism that characterizes France today, that's given rise to beatnicism in America and to the gross sensuality of our country. Since man is essentially a glandular animal who's highest moments of ecstasy come from the exercise of his glands, salvation is simply to find the most desirable way to gratify this part of a person. And so this became the effect of humanism, that the end of all being is the happiness of man. John Dewey, then an American philosopher influencing education, was able to persuade the educators that there were no absolute standards. Children shouldn't be brought to any particular standard, that the end of education was simply to allow the child to express himself and expand on what he is and find his happiness in being what he wants to be. So we had cultural lawlessness, when every man could do as seemed right in his own eyes and we had no God to rule over us. The Bible had been discounted and disallowed and disproved. God had been dethroned, He didn't exist, He had no personal relationship to individuals. Jesus Christ was either a myth or just a man, so they taught, and therefore the whole end of being was happiness. The individual would establish the standards of his happiness and interpret it.

LIBERAL, FUNDAMENTAL or...NEITHER?

Now religion then had to exist because there were so many people that made their living at it, so they had to find some way to justify their existence. So back about the time, in 1850, the church divided into two groups. The one group was the liberals, who accepted the philosophy of the humanism and tried to find some relevance by saying something like this to their generation, "Ha, ha, we don't know there's a heaven. We don't know there's a hell. But we do know this, that you've got to live for 70 years! We know there's a great deal of benefit from poetry, from high thoughts and noble aspirations. Therefore it's important for you to come to church on Sunday, so that we can read some poetry, that we can give you some little adages and axioms and rules to live by. We can't say anything about what's going to happen when you die, but we'll tell you this, if you'll come every week and pay and help and stay with us, we'll put springs on your wagon and your trip will be more comfortable. We can't guarantee anything about what's going to happen when you die, but we say that if you come along with us, we'll make you happier while you're alive." And so this became the essence of liberalism. It has simply nothing more than to try and put a little sugar in the bitter coffee of their journey and sweeten it up for a time. This is all that it could say.

Well now the philosophy of the atmosphere is humanism; the chief end of being is the happiness of man. There's another group of people that have taken humbridge with the liberals, this group are my people, the fundamentalists. They say, "We believe in the inspiration of the Bible! We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ! We believe in hell! We believe in heaven! We believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ!" But remember the atmosphere is that of humanism. And humanism says the chief end of being is the happiness of man. Humanism is like a miasma out of a pit, it just permeates everyplace. Humanism is like an infection, an epidemic, it just goes everywhere.

So it wasn't long until we had this, that the fundamentalists knew each other because they said "We believe these things!" They were men for the most part that had met God. But you see it wasn't long until having said "These are the things that establish us as fundamentalists!", the second generation said "This is how we become a fundamentalist! Believe in the inspiration of the Bible! Believe in the deity of Christ! Believe in His death, burial, and resurrection! And thereby become a fundamentalist." And so it wasn't long until it got to our generation, where the whole plan of salvation was to give intellectual assent to a few statements of doctrine. And a person was considered a Christian because he could say "Ah hah" at four or five places that he was asked. If he knew where to say "Ah hah", someone would pat him on the back, shake his hand, smile broadly, and say "Brother, you're saved!" So it had gotten down to the place where salvation was nothing more than an assent to a scheme or a formula, and the end of this was that salvation was the happiness of man because humanism had penetrated. If you were to analyze fundamentalism in contrast to liberalism of a hundred years ago as it developed, for I am not pinpointing it in time, it would be like this:

The liberal says the end of religion is to make man happy while he's alive, and the fundamentalist says the end of religion is to make man happy when he dies.

But again! The end of all of the religion it was proclaimed was the happiness of man. And where as the liberal says, "By social change and political order we're going to do away with slums, we're going to do away with alcoholism and dope addiction and poverty. And we're going to make HEAVEN ON EARTH! AND MAKE YOU HAPPY WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE! We don't know anything about after that, but we want to be happy while you're alive!" They went ahead to try and do it only to be brought to a terrifying shock at the first World War and utterly staggered by the second World War, because they seemed to be getting no where fast.

And then the fundamentalists, along the line, are now tuning in on this same wavelength of humanism. Until we find it something like this:

"Accept Jesus so you can go to heaven! You don't want to go to that old, filthy, nasty, burning hell when there is a beautiful heaven up there! Now come to Jesus so you can go to heaven!"

And the appeal could be as much to selfishness as a couple of men sitting in a coffee shop deciding they are going to rob a bank to get something for nothing! There's a way that you can give an invitation to sinners, that just sounds for all the world like a plot to take up a filling station proprietor's Saturday night earnings without working for them.

Humanism is, I believe, the most deadly and disastrous of all the philosophical stenches that's crept up through the grating over the pit of Hell. It has penetrated so much of our religion. AND IT IS UTTER AND TOTAL CONTRAST WITH CHRISTIANITY! Unfortunately it's seldom seen. And here we find Micah, wants to have a little chapel, and he wants to have a priest, and he wants to have prayer, and he wants to have devotion, because "I KNOW THE LORD WILL DO ME GOOD!" AND THIS IS SELFISHNESS!!! AND THIS IS SIN!!! And the Levite comes along and falls right in with it! Because he wants a place! He wants ten shekels and a shirt and his food! And so in order that he can have what he wants, and Micah can have what he wants, THEY SELL OUT GOD! For ten shekels and a shirt. AND THIS IS THE BETRAYAL OF THE AGES!!! And it is the betrayal in which we live. And I don't see HOW GOD CAN REVIVE IT! Until we come back to Christianity, as in DIRECT AND TOTAL CONTRAST WITH THE STENCHFUL HUMANISM that's perpetrated in our generation in the name of Christ.

I'm afraid that it's become so subtle that it goes everywhere. What is it? In essence it's this! That this philosophical postulate that the end of all being is the happiness of man, has been sort of covered over with evangelical terms and Biblical doctrine until God reigns in heaven for the happiness of man, Jesus Christ was incarnate for the happiness of man, all the angels exist for the happiness of man..., Everything is for the happiness of man! AND I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THIS IS UNCHRISTIAN!!! Isn't man happy? Didn't God intend to make man happy? Yes. But as a by-product and not a prime-product!

REVERANCE FOR LIFE

On Albert Schweitzer, good man highly admired by the fuzzy thinkers of our day, lived for years in Congo, East Africa. He was a brilliant man, a philosopher, doctor, musician, and composer. But he should never be called a Christian. He doesn't see Christ as having any relevancy to his philosophy or life. He is a humanist.

A favorite sport of the Belgian government officials who were expert marksman was crocodiles shooting from the deck of a streamer on the Congo River. They kept tally by means of a knotted string around their gun barrel, counting the number of crocodiles killed. Schweitzer was rightfully appalled by their revolting sport. He deemed it a colossal waste of life. From these experiences Schweitzer gleaned the essence of his philosophy, summed by these words__ reverence for life. Crocodile life...human life...and other kinds of life. Dr. Schweitzer was so convinced of reverence of life that he didn't like to sterilize his surgery. He had the dirtiest surgery in Africa. Bacteria are life and must not be destroyed.

George Kline, a veteran missionary with the South Africa General Mission, lived about 60 miles from Dr. Schweitzer station. George was an accomplished organist and organ repairer. He was asked by Dr. Schweitzer to come to his station to check out his malfunctioning organ, donated by a friend in Germany. George went over to see the good doctor.

"George, do you think you can fix my organ?"

"I'll try." he responded. George took the back off the organ and to his amazement discovered a huge nest of cockroaches. With characteristic, American enthusiasm and zeal George started trampling all over the cockroaches not to let a one of them get away. And the good doctor came out, his hair standing straighter than it had for a long time, and because of his anger he said "YOU STOP THAT RIGHT NOW!" George said, "Why? Their ruining your organ." He said, "That's alright, they were just being true to their nature," he said, "You can't kill those." So one of the boys came in and said, "It's alright Mr. Kline." And he reached down very tenderly, picked them up, and put them in a little bag, and crimped the top, and he took the roaches out into the jungle and let them loose.

Now here was a man that believed his philosophy, reverence for life. UTTERLY COMMITTED TO IT! UTTERLY CONSISTENT! Even when it came to the matter of cockroach or a microbe. Do you see? This is humanism, this is consistency.

NOW I ASK YOU WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS? WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVANGELISM? WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF A CHRISTIAN?

If you'll ask me why I went to Africa, I'll tell you I went primarily to improve on the justice of God. I didn't think it was right for anybody to go to Hell without a chance to be saved. So I went to give poor sinners a chance to go to heaven. Now I haven't put it in so many words, but if you'll analyze what I just told you do you know what it is? Humanism. That I was simply using the provisions of Jesus Christ as a means to improve upon human conditions of suffering and misery. And when I went to Africa, I discovered that they weren't poor, ignorant, little heathen running around in the woods looking for someone to tell them how to go to heaven. That they were MONSTERS OF INIQUITY!!! THEY WERE LIVING IN UTTER AND TOTAL DEFIANCE OF FAR MORE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THEN I EVER DREAMED THEY HAD!

They deserved Hell! Because they utterly refused to walk in the light of their conscience, and light of the law written upon their heart, and the testimony of nature, and the truth they knew! And when I found that out I assure you I was so angry with God that on one occasion in prayer I told Him it was a mighty little thing He'd done, sending me out there to reach these people that were waiting to be told how to go to heaven. When I got there I found out they knew about heaven, and didn't want to go there, and that they loved their sin and wanted to stay in it.

I went out there motivated by humanism. I'd seen pictures of lepers, I'd seen pictures of ulcers, I'd seen pictures of native funerals, and I didn't want my fellow human beings to suffer in Hell eternally after such a miserable existence on earth. But it was there in Africa that God began to tear THROUGH THE OVERLAY OF THIS HUMANISM! And it was that day in my bedroom with the door locked that I wrestled with God. For here was I, coming to grips with the fact that the people I thought were ignorant and wanted to know how to go to heaven and were saying "Someone come teach us", actually didn't want to take time to talk with me or anybody else. They had no interest in the Bible and no interest in Christ, and they loved their sin and wanted to continue in it. And I was to that place at that time where I felt the whole thing was a sham and a mockery, and I had been sold a bill of goods! And I wanted to come home.

There alone in my bedroom AS I FACED GOD HONESTLY WITH WHAT MY HEART FELT, it seemed to me I heard Him say, "Yes, will not the Judge of all the earth do right? The Heathen are lost. And they're going to go to Hell, not because they haven't heard the gospel. They're going to go to Hell because they are sinners, WHO LOVE THEIR SIN! And because they deserve Hell. BUT, I didn't send you out there for them. I didn't send you out there for their sakes." And I heard as clearly as I've ever heard, though it wasn't with physical voice but it was the echo of truth of the ages finding its way into an open heart. I heard God say to my heart that day something like this, "I didn't send you to Africa for the sake of the heathen, I sent you to Africa for My sake. They deserved Hell! But I LOVE THEM!!! AND I ENDURED THE AGONIES OF HELL FOR THEM!!! I DIDN'T SEND YOU OUT THERE FOR THEM!!! I SENT YOU OUT THERE FOR ME! DO I NOT DESERVE THE REWARD OF MY SUFFERING? DON'T I DESERVE THOSE FOR WHOM I DIED?"

I was there not for the sake of the heathen. I was there for the Savior who endured the agonies of Hell for me. But He deserved the heathen. Because He died for them. My eyes were opened. I was no longer working for Micah and ten shekels and a shirt. But I was serving a living God.

Do you see? Let me epitomize, let me summarize. Christianity says, "The end of all being is the glory of God." Humanism says, "The end of all being is the happiness of man."

And one born in Hell, the deification of man. AND THE OTHER WAS BORN IN HEAVEN, THE GLORIFICATION OF GOD! And one is Levite serving Micah, and the other is a heart that's unworthy serving the living God, because it's the highest honor in the universe.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

What about you? Why did you repent? I'd like to see some people repent on Biblical terms again. George Whitefield knew it. He stood on Boston Commons speaking to twenty thousand people and he said, "Listen sinners, you're monsters, MONSTERS OF INIQUITY! You deserve Hell! And the worst of your crimes is in that criminals though you've been, you haven't had the good grace to see it!" He said, If you will not weep for your SINS and your crimes against a Holy God, George Whitefield will weep for you!" That man would put his head back and he would sob like a baby. Why? Because they were in danger of Hell? No! But because they were MONSTERS OF INIQUITY, who didn't even see their sin or care about their crimes. You see the difference? You see the difference? The difference is, here's somebody trembling because he is going to be hurt in Hell. AND HE HAS NO SENSE OF THE ENORMITY OF HIS GUILT!!! AND NO SENSE OF THE ENORMITY OF HIS CRIME!!! AND NO SENSE OF HIS INSULT AGAINST DEITY!!!

He's only trembling because his skin is about to be singed. He's afraid and I submit to you that whereas fear is good office work in preparing us for grace, it's no place to stop. And the Holy Ghost doesn't stop there. That's the reason why people cannot savingly receive Christ until they've repented. And persons can repent that persons has been convicted. And conviction is the work of the Holy Ghost that helps a sinner to see...THAT HE IS A CRIMINAL BEFORE GOD AND DESERVES ALL GOD'S WRATH. AND IF GOD WERE TO SEND HIM TO THE LOWEST CORNER OF A DEVIL'S HELL FOREVER AND TEN ETERNITIES, THAT HE DESERVED IT ALL! And a hundred fold more. Because HE'S SEEN HIS CRIMES!

THE PREACHERS

There was a difference in the time of John Wesley in the 18th century England. Wesley was a preacher of righteousness who exalted the holiness of God in his two to three hour open air sermons. He dwelt on the law and God, the justice of God and the wisdom of His requirements. He would depict to sinners the enormity of their crimes and their open rebellion and treason and anarchy. The power of God would so descend on the congregation that people were smitten to the ground, utterly unconscious. They had had a revelation of the holiness of God and had seen the enormity of their sins. The Spirit of God had penetrated their minds and hearts.

This phenomena also happened in America in the 18th century at Yale University during the time of John Wesley Redfield.

Outdoor evangelistic meetings were held in the amphitheater at Yale University. Policeman controlling the crowds were cautioned to delineate between the common drunk, whose alcohol breath betrayed him (and he was locked up for drunken behavior). Those who had been smitten by God were diagnosed as having "Redfield's disease." They were removed to a quiet place until they returned to consciousness. Lives were transformed men if had been drunkards, they stopped drinking; cruel persons changed; immoral people and gave up immorality. Thieves repented and returned what had been stolen. Men and women had seen the holiness of God and the enormity of their sin. The Spirit of God had driven them down into unconsciousness because of the weight of their guilt. Somehow in the overspreading of the power of God, sinners repented of their sin and came savingly to Christ.

THE DIFFERENCE!

But there was a difference! It wasn't trying to convince a GOOD MAN that he was in trouble with a BAD GOD! But that it was to convince BAD MEN that they had deserved the wrath and anger of a GOOD GOD! And the consequences were repentance, that lead to faith, and lead to the life. Dear friends, there's only one reason, one reason for a sinner to repent and that's because Jesus Christ deserves the worship and adoration and the love and the obedience of his heart. Not because he'll go to heaven. If the only reason you repented, dear friend, was to keep out of Hell all you are is JUST A LEVITE SERVING FOR TEN SHEKELS AND A SHIRT! THAT'S ALL! You're trying to serve God because He'll do you good! But a repentant heart is a heart that has seen something of the enormity of the crime of playing God and denying the just and righteous God the worship and obedience that He deserves! Why should a sinner repent? BECAUSE GOD DESERVES THE OBEDIENCE AND LOVE THAT HE'S REFUSED TO GIVE HIM! Not so that he'll go to heaven. If the only reason he repents is so that he'll go to heaven, it's nothing but trying to make a deal or a bargain with God.

WHY SHOULD A SINNER GIVE UP ALL HIS SINS? WHY SHOULD HE BE CHALLENGED TO DO IT? WHY SHOULD HE MAKE RESTITUTION WHEN HE'S COMING TO CHRIST? BECAUSE GOD DESERVES THE OBEDIENCE THAT HE DEMANDS!!!

I have talked with people that have no assurance that sins are forgiven. They want to feel safe, before they're willing to commit themselves to Christ. But I believe that the only ones whom God actually witnesses by His Spirit and are born of Him, are the people, whether they say it or not, that come to Jesus Christ and say something like this, "Lord Jesus, I'm going to obey you, and love you, and serve you, and do what you want me to do, as long as I live even if I go to Hell at the end of the road, simply because YOU ARE WORTHY TO BE LOVED, AND OBEYED, AND SERVED, and I'm not trying to make a deal with you!" Do you see the difference? Do you see the difference? Between a Levite serving for ten shekels and a shirt or a Micah building a chapel because God will do you good AND someone that repents for the glory of God.

Why should a person come to the cross? Why should a person embrace death with Christ? Why should a person be willing to go, in identification, down to the cross and into the tomb and up again? I'll tell you why! BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY WAY THAT GOD CAN GET GLORY OUT OF A HUMAN BEING!!! If you say it's because he'll get joy or peace or blessing or success or fame then it's nothing but a Levite serving for ten shekels and a shirt. THERE IS ONLY ONE REASON FOR YOU TO GO TO THE CROSS DEAR YOUNG PERSON. And that's because until you come to the place of union with Christ in death you are defrauding the Son of God of the glory that He could get out of your life. For no flesh shall glory in His sight. And until you've understood the sanctifying work of God by the Holy Ghost taking you into union with Christ in death and burial and resurrection, you have to serve in what you have and all you have which is under the sentence of death: human personality, and human nature, and human strength, and human energy. And God will get no glory out of that!

So the reason for you to go to the cross isn't that you're going to get victory, you will get victory. It isn't that you're going to have joy, you will have joy. But the reason for you to embrace the cross and press through until you know that you can testify with Paul "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20), it isn't what you're going to get out of it, but what He'll get out of it, for the glory of God. By the same token: Why aren't you pressed through to know the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Why aren't you pressed through to know the fullness of Christ? I'll tell you why? BECAUSE THE ONLY POSSIBLE WAY THAT JESUS CHRIST WILL GET GLORY OUT OF A LIFE THAT HE'S REDEEMED WITH HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD IS WHEN HE CAN FILL THAT LIFE WITH HIS PRESENCE AND LIVE THROUGH HIS OWN LIFE.

The genius of our faith wasn't that we were going to go through the motions like a Levite that was hired to served God. No, No! The genius of our faith was that we'd come to a place where we knew we could do nothing, and all we could do would be to present the vessel and say Lord Jesus "You'll have to fill it. And everything that's done will have to be done by You and for You." But, oh, I know so many people that are trying to know the fullness of God, so that they can use God.

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

A young preacher came to me down in Huntington, West Virginia. He said, "Brother Reidhead I've got a great church. I've got a wonderful Sunday School program, got a radio ministry, growing, but I feel a personal need and a personal lack, I need to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, I need to be filled with the Spirit. And someone told me God had done something for you, and I wonder if you could help me?" I looked at the fellow, and you know what he looked like? ME. Just looked like me. I just saw in him everything that was in me. You thought I was going to say me before. No, listen dear heart, if you've ever seen yourself you'll know you're never going to be anything else than you were. For in me and my flesh there's no good thing (Rom 7:18). He looked like me.

He was like a fellow driving up in a big Cadillac, you know, to someone standing at the filling station, saying "Fill'r up Bub, with the highest octane you got!" Well that's the way it looked, he wanted power for his program. God is not going to be a means to anyone's end. I said, "I'm awfully sorry, I don't think that I can help you." He said, "Why?" I said, "I don't think you're

ready." I said, "Well suppose you consider yourself coming up with a Cadillac, you're talked about your program, you've talked about your radio, you've talked about your Sunday School and church. It's very good. You've done wonderfully well without the power of the Holy Spirit."

That's what the Chinese Christian said, you know, when he got back to China.

"What impressed you most about America?"

He said, "The great things Americans can accomplish without God." And he (the young preacher) accomplished a great deal, admittedly without God. Now he wanted something of power to accomplish his ends even further.

I said, "No..., no, you're sitting behind the wheel and you're saying to God give me power so I can go, You won't work, You've got to slide over."

But I knew that rascal, because I knew me. I said, "No, it will never do, you've got to get in the back seat." And I could see him leaning over and grabbing the wheel.

"No," I said, "it will never do in the back seat."

I said, "Before God will do anything for you, you know what you've got to do?"

So he said, "What?"

I said, "You've got to get out of the car, take the keys around, open up the trunk lid, hand the keys to the Lord Jesus, get inside the trunk, slam the lid down, whisper through the keyhole, 'Lord look, fill'r up with anything you want and you drive, it's up to you from now on.'"

That's why so many people you know do not enter into the fullness of Christ. Because they want to become a Levite with ten shekels and a shirt. They've been serving Micah, but they think if they had the power of the Holy Ghost they could serve the tribe of Dan.

It will never work. Never work. There's only one reason for God needing you and that's to bring you to the place where, in repentance, you've been pardoned for His glory. And in victory you've been brought to the place of death that He might reign. And in the fullness, Jesus Christ is able to live and walk in you.

Your attitude is the attitude of the Lord Himself, who said, "I can do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28). I can't speak of myself. I don't make plans for myself. My only reason for being is for the glory of God in Jesus Christ. If I were to say to you, "Come to be saved so you can go to heaven, come to the cross so that you can have joy and victory, come for the fullness of the Spirit so that you can be satisfied." I would be falling into the trap of humanism.

I'm going to say to you dear friend if you're out here without Christ, you come to Jesus Christ and serve Him as long as you live whether you go to Hell at the end of the way BECAUSE HE IS WORTHY!

I say to you Christian friend you come to the cross and join Him in union, in death, and enter into all the meaning of death to self in order that He can have glory. I say to you dear Christian if you do not know the fullness of the Holy Ghost, come and present your body a living sacrifice, and let Him fill you so that He can have the purpose for His coming fulfilled in you and get glory through your life. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO GET OUT OF GOD, IT'S WHAT'S HE GOING TO GET OUT OF YOU.

Let's be done, once and for all, with utilitarian Christianity that makes God a means, instead of the glorious END that He is. Let's resign, let's tell Micah we're through. We're no longer going to be his priests serving for ten shekels and a shirt. Let's tell the tribe of Dan we're through. And let's come and cast ourselves at the feet of the nail pierced Son of God and tell Him that we're going to obey Him, and love Him, and serve Him, as long as we live BECAUSE HE IS WORTHY!

THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN

Two young Moravians heard of an island in the West Indies where an atheist British owner had 2000 to 3000 slaves. And the owner had said, "No preacher, no clergyman, will ever stay on this island. If he's ship wrecked we'll keep him in a separate house until he has to leave, but he's never going to talk to any of us about God, I'm through with all that nonsense." Three thousand slaves from the jungles of Africa brought to an island in the Atlantic and there to live and die without hearing of Christ.

In the late 1700's a British planter owned an entire island in the West Indies off the coast of South America. Several thousand black slaves toiled in the sugar cane fields under the burning sun. The atheist planter vowed that no missionary would ever set foot on the island to talk about God. 3000 slaves were doomed to live and die without hearing of Christ.

Two young Germans in their 20's from the Moravians sect heard about their plight. They sold themselves to the British planter for the standard price for a male slave used the money they received for their sale to purchase passage to the West Indies. The miserly atheist planter would not even transport them.

The Moravian community from Herrnhut came to see the two lads off, who would never return again, having freely sold themselves into a lifetime of slavery. As a member of the slave community they would witness as Christians to the love of God.

Family members were emotional, weeping. Was their extreme sacrifice wise? Was it necessary? As the ship slipped away with the tide and the gap widened. The housings had been cast off and were curled up on the pier. The young men saw the widening gap. They linked arms, raised their hands and shouted across the spreading gap "May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering."

This became the call of Moravian missions. And this is our only reason for being...that the Lamb that was slain may receive the reward of His suffering! Amen.

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