

What Will You Do With Jesus? #3

Joe Slater

Simon Peter, what will you do with Jesus? Peter answers, "I'll deny Him!" Let's hasten to add that this was a momentary lapse in Peter's loyalty; he quickly repented and went on to be a dedicated disciple and powerful preacher. He did, however, deny Jesus three times in Matthew 26:69-75.

What does it mean to deny someone? In Peter's case, it meant to deny that he was one of Jesus' disciples, and even to deny that he knew Jesus at all! Realizing that the Lord was on trial for His life, Peter felt threatened by the accusation of the servant girl: "*You also were with Jesus of Galilee.*" Another girl repeated the assertion; then a group of men told Peter that his Galilean accent was a dead giveaway. At that point Peter called down curses and swore oaths as he desperately sought to convince them that he didn't even know who Jesus was.

The Lord isn't on trial before any human tribunal today, but we can still deny Him just as surely as Peter did. Once again, actions speak more loudly than words. Take, for example, the residents of the island of Crete where Titus was working. In his letter to Titus, Paul said this of the people of Crete: "*They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work*" (Titus 1:16).

Do we, like Peter, keep mum about our relationship to Christ when we're around hostile unbelievers? Or, like those on Crete, do we claim to know the Lord, but deny Him with behavior He detests? Remember that Jesus said, "*Whoever denies Me before men, him I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 10:33). What will you do with Jesus?

God Is Listening

"It came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has'" (Job 42:7 NASB).

When you read the book of Job you see that his three friends began well. They sat with Job for seven days and seven nights without speaking (Job 2:13). They must have been good comforters just by their presence. However, then they opened their mouths and spoke of things about God and His purpose that they didn't understand.

God said, "*You have not spoken of Me what is right.*" Have you ever considered that God is listening to what you say? I will admit that sometimes it seems that when I open my mouth, I disengage my brain. James tells us to be "*slow to speak*" (James 1:19c). We have a saying, "Think before you speak."

Jesus warns us, "*But I tell that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned*" (Matthew 12:36-37).

It isn't just angry words as James was dealing with, or careless thoughtless words, or words that hurt. It is also what we say about God like Job's friends. Misquoting God's words, or twisting His words like Satan, or presenting an untrue picture of God misrepresents God. God is listening to us even before the words come out of our mouths. "*Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O, Lord, You know it all*" (Psalm 139:4).

God not only hears us, but He knows our motive for saying it. Therefore, think carefully before speaking and let your words be seasoned with grace knowing that God is listening.

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)

PEOPLE LIKE TO BE ASKED

Some time ago I read a story in which former Speaker of the House Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill was told by his neighbor, Mrs. Elizabeth O'Brien, "Tom, I'm going to vote for you tomorrow even though you didn't ask me to."

This shocked Speaker O'Neill. He said, "I've lived across the street from you for eighteen years. I cut your grass in the summer, I shovel your walk in the winter, I haul out your ashes. I didn't think I had to ask for your vote."

"Tom," she replied, "let me tell you something. People like to be asked."

After that experience, Tip O'Neill started asking even his wife, Millie. Every election day as they left for the polls, he would say, "Honey, I'd like to ask for your vote." "Tom," she'd reply, "I'll give you every consideration."

That little story took me back over fifty years. C.E. McGaughey had come to town to preach in a Gospel Meeting where I was the local but inexperienced preacher. I showed him around the town and introduced him everywhere. There wasn't a person we met that he didn't invite to attend the services.

In our visits to various homes he would inquire, "Are you a Christian?" If the answer was "no," he would gently speak of how wonderful it is to be a Christian. He would talk about the blessing of receiving forgiveness of all sins, and the joy to be found in following Christ. Before we left the house, he would always ask, "Wouldn't you like to be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins?"

Before the week was over, there had been sixty-seven baptisms and countless homes had been changed for the better.

It makes me wonder. Maybe we are not doing enough asking these days

--John Gipson (Little Rock, AR) via *Old Paths*