

Seeking What Jesus Seeks

Joe Slater

Like most first-century tax collectors, Zacchaeus had been a selfish cheater. No wonder the people grumbled when Jesus went home with him! Would a truly righteous man hang out with such a scoundrel? But Jesus' influence triggered a radical change in this man everyone loved to hate. He pledged to give half his goods to the poor, and to restore fourfold everything he had wrongfully taken (Luke 19:8). What a powerful example of Jesus' purpose! *"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

Jesus values every soul, seeking any who stray. *"If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?"* (Matthew 18:12). Our Good Shepherd sought us when we were lost. As His disciples, we ought to follow His example, cherishing each and every person so much that we seek their salvation.

Another parable illustrated the same point: *"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and seek carefully until she finds it?"* (Luke 15:8). Just as she would go to considerable trouble to locate the lost coin, Jesus went to tremendous trouble to save us. Paul appreciated this and imitated his Lord, *"not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved"* (1 Corinthians 10:33).

The world floods us with desirable things to seek. Some are sinful, but even "good" things can distract us from whole-hearted service to the Lord. Let His purpose be ours! Let us seek the things He seeks!

Christ Coronated

"So that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11 NASB).

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 19:16).

These days people prefer to think of Jesus as their older brother. While that is true according to Hebrews chapter two, He is more. Jesus declares in Matthew 28:18 that God has given to Him all authority in heaven and earth. Jesus has total authority in the spiritual realm and the physical realm.

Our problem is that we may know that fact intellectually, but do we understand the ramifications it has in our lives? Paul clearly understood Jesus' authority. Because of Christ's sacrifice for him, Paul surrendered unconditionally to Christ Jesus. Paul's life now was Christ's life (Galatians 2:20 and Philippians 1:21).

We must accept Christ Jesus' full authority over us. *"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts"* (1 Peter 3:15a). Christ must be the directing and ruling authority over each one of us. We need to get up off the throne and let Jesus take His rightful place.

Jesus will not force His way in. *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock"* (Revelation 3:20a). This was said to the church in Laodicea, not unbelievers. Jesus has a two-fold right to set on the throne of our hearts. He is our Creator and He is our Redeemer.

Have you crowned Jesus King?

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, Co)

"And That's The Way It Is"

I grew up watching the CBS Evening News. We knew not to trust what Walter Cronkite said. We noticed, even back then, intentional warping of the facts. For example, my dad noticed that they cut his uncle's house out of the film footage when they ran a story about Four States, West Virginia. A successful miner did not fit their storyline, so they cut his house out and showed only the houses owned by drunks. But we liked to hear Cronkite talk. Maybe I should not say it, but the truth is, the way that man lit his pipe at the end of every program was almost a work of art.

While we applauded Cronkite's abilities, we did not feel obligated to tune in every evening. If the lawn needed to be mowed, or there was a ball game to attend, we would miss his broadcasts. He was a good talker, but not that good. We could miss his show without much regret.

I thought of that recently. Someone praised my morning sermon, but did not bother to come in the evening. My morning sermon was good, but not that good. This does not really surprise me. I do not claim to be as good at talking as Walter Cronkite (nor am I much good at lighting a pipe). So obviously, those who come to hear someone talk, or who come because they like acapella singing, will feel no obligation to come back again on Sunday night. That makes sense if, and only if, the purpose of our assembling is to sing and to hear a professional speaker.

If on the other hand, the purpose of our assembling is to honor a Lord to whom we are infinitely indebted ...

I will leave it to you to finish that sentence.

It hurts me deeply when someone praises my sermons but willfully misses our assemblies. It does not hurt me because I think their praise insincere. It hurts me because I feel certain that they have missed the whole point. It is not about me; it is about the Lord. If you are out there doing something that honors him more than being in our assembly would honor him, then by all means do it. But when someone praises a sermon, and then stays home to watch a ballgame, the sermon is being treated as the main show, and the Savior is being treated as a sidelight.

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)