

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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JESUS ONLY

On the Mount of Transfiguration when Peter saw the Lord Jesus standing with Moses and Elijah, he suggested that a tabernacle be built for each, probably hoping that the scene would become a permanent one. By so doing he foolishly placed Moses and Elijah in the same exalted company as the Lord Jesus. These two men were probably venerated by Peter, and rightly so, for Moses had been Israel's great mediator and law giver, and Elijah was the principal and best-known prophet. But when Peter tried to give them a place of importance alongside of the Lord Jesus, they disappeared from view and he saw no man save JESUS ONLY. The recording of this event in the Word of God provides a lesson that teaches every man that no matter how great or important a thing may be by itself, there is nothing that is important when placed with or alongside the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we are taught the all-sufficiency of the Lord of glory.

Has the reader ever come to that place in his Christian experience where all else disappeared from the scene and he saw no man or no thing save JESUS ONLY? I do not speak of an actual vision such as Peter saw. I speak of a truth, an actual realization of the mind and heart, an experience which is the need of all who seek to know the Christ revealed in the Word of God.

Blessed indeed is the believer whom God has led into the experience and reality of seeing no man or no thing save JESUS ONLY. Few there are who have entered into this great truth. The overwhelming majority of those who profess faith in Christ have no conception of Christ alone. They cannot think of Him except in connection with something else or someone else. They justify their attitudes by arguments concerning the importance of these things or the veneration in which they are held. However, in spite of all such arguments, these people need to learn that nothing is of any importance when man tries to essentially link it up with Christ. They need to be brought

in truth to that place that God brought Peter, James, and John in reality, where all else vanishes from sight and they see no man save JESUS ONLY.

On every hand we find those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and who avow their love for Him but who have no conception of anyone being related to Christ apart from being related to a church of some kind. In fact, to them, to be related to a church is to be related to Christ, and not to be related to a church is not to be related to Him. They accept a man's relationship to a church, just any church, as conclusive evidence of his connection with Christ, never even considering that he may have joined the church for business reasons. They reject any man's avowal of faith in Christ if he does not have his name on some church roll. The simple, honest confession, "I am a believer in and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ," is always met with the question, "What denomination?" If one tries to tell them of a relationship with Jesus Christ that has no connection whatsoever with any church, they regard him as an ignorant heathen who has never been told how men receive Christ.

These deluded people believe that one is joined to Christ when he joins a church. They make the church to be the mediator between man and Christ. To them, to quit the church is to give up Christ and to return to the church is to return to Christ.

All such ideas are delusions created in the mind of men by Satan so that Jesus Christ will never have the preeminence in their lives. He will never be the all-sufficient One, but must always be associated with something else in His person and work. Satan would make men think that God has placed something between the sinner and the Savior - an institution or organization that must also be accepted in order to receive Christ.

Upon the basis of the truth that is set forth in the Word of God, I do not hesitate to emphatically declare that the believer in and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ can bear the closest possible relationship to Him, he can enjoy the fullest possible fellowship with Him, he can feast upon His word and witness to His truth wholly apart from ever passing through the doors of anything called a church, chapel, or mission. Furthermore, he can maintain a true and acceptable worship of God apart from the services of any church. God did not say that He was to be worshipped "in Spirit and in truth and in a church." He still seeks for those who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth, and He will never reject such worship even if the worshipper is doing it

wholly apart from the institutions that call themselves churches.

There are those who insist that a church is positively essential if one is to make spiritual growth and progress. This is the judgment of those who recognize nothing as growth unless it be in the service of the church and nothing as spiritual unless it be in connection with some denomination. "Can one maintain a life, worship, and service that is acceptable to God apart from a church?" is the question often asked.

In answer to this, let us look at the facts. All will readily admit that CHRIST is essential to spiritual growth and progress, also to a life, worship and service that is acceptable to God. If a church is also essential to these things then it must be given a place of essentiality alongside the Lord Jesus. This would force us to admit that without a church, He is insufficient, thus ending once and for all the truth of the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ.

Those who see something which they call a "church" as being essential to a God-honoring life, service, and worship have never stopped to consider just what a "church" is. I can get a dozen men, more or less, to join with me and quickly set up an organization that has just as much right to call itself a "church" as anything that convenes on this earth. I and those who join with me have just as much right to found a church as Wesley, Luther, or Campbell had. Furthermore, we can call our church by some grandiose title such as *Church of God*, *Church of Christ*, *True Church* or *Bible Church*, but it is nothing more than an organization that men brought into existence. And what is true of the whole church must also be true of the individuals that make it up. If no man is essential to the believer's life, worship, and service, then they do not become essential if they join together and call themselves a church.

I reject in its entirety this mystical deification of "church" as being something greater than the sum of their individual components. At their very best organizations called "churches" are nothing more than groups of men. Therefore, when anyone insists that acceptable life, service, and worship before God is dependent upon being identified with some group of men traveling under the name of a church, I repudiate his claim. Those who hold such ideas are destitute of any true vision of the person and work of the all-sufficient Christ. And this lack of true vision must be attributed to the fact that they have not come to that place in their knowledge and experience where no man or no thing is seen save JESUS ONLY. They have no

conception of Christ apart from the churches of men. They have no vision of Christ apart from the churches of men. They have no vision of Christ apart from rituals, sacraments, and ordinances. They need to come to that place where nothing is any longer of importance when placed alongside of Christ. All things need to be eclipsed by the radiance of Christ preeminent.

Has the reader ever considered that most people when coming to Christ bring with themselves a collection of things which they are determined to attach to His holy person and work? A course of action is determined upon in advance of receiving Him; therefore, there can be no honest asking of the question, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" They have determined in advance what they are going to do. "I will receive Christ, then I will be baptized, become a member of the church, and observe the communion according to the rules of my denomination," is usually their predetermined course. Then they will declare that Christ gave them these things to be done. But the truth is that they came dragging these things along when they came to Him. And, worst of all, these things have become so important that without them Christ would not be complete. Thus their attitude bars them from ever realizing and confessing the great truth declared by Paul, "And ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:10).

As one who has given His life to the proclamation and presentation of Jesus Christ as the sinners' Savior and the believers' Lord, I have found again and again that the assertion of many that they trust in Christ is a false claim. Their real confidence is in the things that they have given a place of importance in connection with Him, such as their church, their baptism, and that ceremony they call "the Lord's supper." When a faith in Christ and a relationship to God is presented that is entirely separated from churches and ordinances, they show at once that they feel the great foundation stones upon which their faith rests are being removed. "You are taking away everything," they exclaim in fright. In answer I ask, "Have I taken Christ from you?" And often the look upon their faces declares that in their mind there is no relationship to Christ apart from these things. If these things were removed they feel they would be without hope. To them, Christ alone is not sufficient. They reject the position of any man who finds his completeness in Christ. The true follower of Jesus Christ must learn that neither the approval or disapproval of men has any meaning in the sight of God.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5) is a scriptural admonition that few seem willing to act

upon. May I urge that this be done by the reader of these lines? Is your faith in Jesus Christ a simple and implicit belief in the record God has given of His Son? "**He that has the Son has life**" (1 John 5:12), is the monosyllabic testimony of Scripture. Do you have Him, Or do you have only some things that are supposed to be related to Him? If in some way you should be stripped of all the externalities of religion, would you then have complete confidence that you are related to God through Jesus Christ? Could you truthfully say, "I have that which perfectly satisfies my heart - I have Christ?"

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