

THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

And Other Evangelistic Sermons

by

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SERMON SIXTEEN

JESUS ONLY

“And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only” (Matthew 17:8).

Jesus only! That is the cry of eternity, the hope of the ages, the theme of the Bible, the bridge over hell, the gate into heaven. Jesus only is God's way, God's will, God's work for a lost world. The world has tried everything else. Would to God it would try Jesus.

The world has tried education. Our penitentiaries, our divorce courts, our rogues' galleries are full of college graduates. Jesus only offers the knowledge of the truth which sets men free.

The world has tried legislation. There are so many laws that the best of us at times advertently or inadvertently transgress them. These laws have merely added to the confusion of our age. They have been broken so often that they are mockeries. Jesus only with His law of grace can bind the human heart with the silken chains of gratitude and love to the chariot of God's will.

The world has tried reformation. Projects, plans, programs, sanitation, segregation, schemes, undertakings ad infinitum, ad libitum, ad nauseam have crossed and recrossed each other.

The world has spent billions of dollars, exerted mountain-moving energies, only to find that the soul of man is beyond the correction of any extraneous impressions. Jesus only is the Revealer of human sins, the Regenerator of human souls, the Ideal of human service. Jesus only is our message, our hope, our plea, our anchor.

Jesus Is a Rock In a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm.

Consider Jesus as the Saviour of your souls. You need this salvation. You must have that Saviour. Without Him all else is vain. With Him all things are part of a pattern of life that makes living worthwhile, the past bearable, the present joyous, the future bright.

What have you without Christ? Your job? How long will you have it? What does it give you beside bread and butter, clothes, rent, money to pay your bills? If illness should come to you, of what help would your job be?

If your loved one should become sick unto death, and the doctor should say, “Only God can help,” of what value would your job be? When the death angel comes to require your soul, will your job help you? Will you pile your receipts and checks about your pillow and defy the angel of the Lord to make his way through them?

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

What earthly possessions can compensate for the loss of eternal life? What mundane acquisitions can satisfy for the loss of the heavenly crown? What temporary advantages can pay for eternal banishment from the presence of God? What fleeting pleasures in this life can assuage the endless torments of a soul in hell?

What have you without Christ? Your loved ones? How long will you have them? Will you go first, or will they? Will the circle be unbroken? Will you meet beyond the open maw of the grave, beyond the chilling waters of stormy Jordan? Will the ties that bind you here on earth delay the germs of disease and of death? Will the strong arms of your passionate regard be strong enough to hold back the black-robed angel of death? Will your loved ones always be as gentle, as clean, as loyal, as pure, as affectionate as they are now? How many homes have been broken, hopes shattered, hearts crushed by the inroads of Satan into the edens that we have built for ourselves here upon the earth!

What have you without Christ? Your friends? They too will grow old and gray and weary. They too will be called to hear and to heed the last summons. Either you will precede them or they will precede you into the realms of eternity. Time and death will sever the dearest, the closest, the holiest ties on earth.

- Jesus only is your eternal possession.
- Jesus only can give you immortality.
- Jesus only can forgive your sins.
- Jesus only can admit you into the bliss of divine fellowship.
- Jesus only can make you a child of the King.
- Jesus only can write your name in the Book of Life.
- Jesus only can cement your family circle with glory, salvation, safety.
- Jesus only can guarantee the reunion of friends in that bright home to come.
- Jesus only is the Saviour of your souls.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Consider Jesus only as your Source of stability. What hopes, what fears, what doubts, what questionings, what uncertainties possess us! In Christ we have a steadying influence.

We know that His will is best for us. In the doing of it we find peace, rest, joy. We can come to His feet with our burdens. He will understand. Our prayers will find a ready response from His tender heart. Out of the turmoil and travail of our lives, out of the disturbances, the doubts, the discouragements, the disappointments that beset us on every hand, Jesus rises like the Rock of Gibraltar, the same yesterday, today, forever. He is the same in tenderness, in understanding, in sympathy, in loving, healing, life-giving, life-sustaining grace and power. The entire world is in a state of confusion. Dreams, hopes, institutions, eternal certainties which seemed to be basic, fundamental, foundational have crashed about us.

The supposedly unshakable verities on which philosophers, economists, statesmen, diplomats, rulers, educators, even religious leaders have erected their scheme of things have been thwarted and twisted out of every semblance and shape of sanity. We are living in an Alice-in-Wonderland phantasmagoria. A fantastic nightmare has possessed the earth. Fear and trembling have assailed the souls of men.

Through it all, over it all, beyond it all, above it all is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Prince of Peace, who is quietly, slowly, certainly, eternally working out the destinies of men, of nations, of an entire universe, to conform to His holy, perfect will.

Anchor your souls in the haven of rest. When you build your life on the Rock of Ages and center your activities in the will, the work, the way, aye, the Word of Christ Jesus, the world stops whirling about; fears vanish; doubts disappear; discouragements evaporate; disappointments become His appointments; life takes on new meaning. We know from whence we have come, whither we are going, what we shall find when we get there. Even the needs of the way are amply supplied. The puzzle of life is solved when we come to know at the feet of Jesus that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose, and when we abide by this command: **“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you . . . Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”**

In my seminary days, the matchless Dr. Claggett Skinner of Virginia addressed us in chapel one day. He told a story.

One Monday, after an unusually trying Lord's Day, this great preacher saddled his horse and turned his back on the town for a quiet, God-communing ride in the woods. He chose a path at random, dropped the reins on the horse's neck and rode on. Minute after minute the animal picked its way through the thickets. The preacher was lost in a brown study. Suddenly the horse stopped. The preacher looked up. The horse had brought him into a cleared space. At one end of it was an old, weather-beaten, tumbledown shack with a small cleared garden space beside it. In front of the house on a rickety, backless chair sat an aged Negro woman smoking a corn-cob pipe.

The preacher got off the horse, dropped the reins over its head and walked over toward the woman. She did not look up until the shadow of his body fell on her.

She lifted her head, squinted her rheumy old eyes, looked down again and continued to smoke her pipe. Dr. Skinner bent over her.

“Mammy, are you here all alone?” he asked.

She made no reply but smoked placidly. Again the preacher bowed to look into her lined face.

“Mammy,” he said, “speaking more loudly, “are you here alone?”

Once more the old Negress lifted her head. This time she took the corncob pipe from her mouth. Deliberately she moistened her lips. “Jes’ me and Jesus,” she said softly. Then, after a moment she repeated, “Jes’ me and Jesus, massa. Jes’ me and Jesus.”

Dr. Skinner said that the empty glade became peopled with the hosts of heaven as the almost whispered syllables of that black child of God fell on his ears. God was there, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The angels were there, messengers of God and grace, attending to the wants of that aged saint. That is right.

- “Just me and Jesus” abundantly satisfies.
- “Just me and Jesus” against the world!
- “Just me and Jesus” against sorrow, suffering, sickness!
- “Just me and Jesus” against sin and Satan!
- “Just me and Jesus” against death and the grave!
- “Just me and Jesus” for all eternity, here and hereafter!
- “Just me and Jesus!”

Finally, consider Jesus as the Surety for your supplies. We all have a life to live, a death to die, and an eternity to enjoy. Jesus is the Surety behind the promises of God. In Him they are all yea and amen. He is the channel through which flow the abundant blessings and bounties of God. He is the rich store of all the manifold benedictions which God has for those who come to Him through Christ.

Jesus is the Surety for our pardon, for our forgiveness. The Book is explicit on that point. **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, cries Paul, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses . . . In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace . . . Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”**

Can words be more definite, more simple, more direct? Can promises be more universal, more unconditional? Can offers be more inclusive, more inviting, more inspiring? Surely this Jesus only is the Surety for the forgiveness of our sins, for the blotting out of our transgressions, for the taking away of our iniquities. Surely with such bountifully blessed syllables falling from the very heart of God, none need fear a welcome, a relief, a release through the efforts, energies and achievements of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus only is the Surety for our peace, for our fellowship with God. **“But as many as received him, says John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”**

Paul continues the story: **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father . . . Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”**

- It is only in the Lord Jesus Christ that we can enjoy constant communion with God.
- It is only in the Lord Jesus Christ that the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God.
- It is only in the Lord Jesus Christ that God speaks to us words of comfort, of counsel, of conquest.

Jesus only, as He clasps us to the heart of God, is our bulwark, strong, unassailable, unchangeable, against the onslaughts, the trials, the tribulations that are the common lot of every one of us. The difficulties of life, the pressure of circumstances, the burdens of the world drive us to the feet of Him who understands, who knows, who loves. It is there that we find peace and rest for our souls. The sunshine of His smile, the sweetness of His words, the safeness of His prevailing presence greet us with unwearying, unfailing tenderness.

Jesus only is the Surety for our power. This is the meaning of Paul’s **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”**

This promise is universal, effective, available. It is only in Jesus that we have its fruition and accomplishment. Jesus only bestows upon us not only the pardon of our sins but the fullness of the power of the regenerating spirit, so that we may be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. It is the Spirit, the free gift of God’s love through Christ, who bestows upon us all the blessings that flow from God’s grace. Wisdom, courage, inspiration, enthusiasm, Scriptural understanding, power to pray, to preach, to bear witness, to build up the kingdom, to win souls—all are contained in the abundance of the Holy Spirit. He cannot be bought. He cannot be constrained. He cannot be earned. Like salvation, He must be received as the free gift of God’s grace.

Jesus only is the Surety for our promotion, for our coronation. Jesus only is the password to the mansions of glory, the title deed to the home in the skies. Jesus himself said, **“I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die . . . Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Eternity speaks in these words. Heaven itself grows still as their sound rings out to the souls of men. These words are definite, unchangeable, eternal. When God has accomplished His purpose in us here upon this earth, when we have done our last bit of work for Christ, there is waiting for us a heavenly reward that is reserved for all those who love Christ and wait for His appearing.

No wonder that vacillating, oscillating, hesitating, denying Peter, having recognized Jesus only, could cry to the ages, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

The same driving force that stabilized and assured Peter’s faith is ours for the taking through Jesus only.

For nineteen hundred years this Gospel of Jesus only has been preached to the children of men of all climes, continents, conditions, circumstances. Multiplied multitudes have found in Jesus only the Saviour of their souls, the Stabilizer of their lives, the Surety of their supplies.

God offers Him to you this hour. Will you have Him? The decision is yours. Your past, your present, your future, your body, your mind, your soul, your spirit, your life, your death, your eternity depend on what you do with this Jesus only. He brings you the gold of Ophir, the wealth of the Indies. He offers you the blood of cleansing, the water of salvation, the bread of life.

Today, by yielding yourself to Jesus only, by accepting His offer, by surrendering to His will, you may become a child of the King, a prince of the blood, an heir of eternity. With outstretched hands and pleading voice Jesus invites and urges you to come to Him now.

Will you say with the poet—

I’ll go to Jesus tho’ my sin
Like mountains round me close;
I know His courts I’ll enter in
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I’ll lie before His throne
And there my guilt confess;
I’ll tell Him I’m a wretch undone
Without His sov’ reign grace.

I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die.

But you will not perish. Jesus only stands ready, willing, eager, anxious, yearning, gracious, abundantly able to save you, to cleanse you, to free you, to use you, to take you to Himself forever in glory when He has accomplished His purpose in you here upon earth.

Come to Jesus. Come to Jesus now.

~ end of sermon 16 ~

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