

## A QUEST FOR SOULS

Comprising all the Sermons Preached and Prayers  
Offered in a Series of Gospel Meetings, Held  
In Fort Worth, Texas, June 11-24, 1917

by George W. Truett, D. D.  
Pastor First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Compiled and Edited by

J. B. Cranfill, LL. D.

\*\*\*

### THIRTEEN -

#### WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH JESUS?

NIGHT SERVICE, JUNE 18, 1917

#### WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH JESUS?

Text: "**What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?**" - Matthew 27:22.

#### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Again and again does the duty and the privilege need to be urged upon all of the great Master's friends that we shall give ourselves, one by one and from day to day, the best we can, to the right kind of religious visiting. 'Tis a glorious thing. 'Tis nobly constructive. 'Tis the right kind of thing in a meeting, when GOD's people not only make it a point to come to the public services, but make it a point to go away from the public services and as best they can speak to the people about CHRIST and His great salvation.

You recall that cordial and beautiful invitation that Moses gave to Hobab, his kinsman: "**Come thou with us, and we will do Thee good.**" That invitation ought to be given by Christians day by day: "**Come thou with US, and we will do Thee good.**"

They are all about us, those who need such personal appeal.

- They are our neighbors.
- Some of them are our own loved ones, living under our own roofs.
- They are our fellow-citizens.
- They are our friends.
- They are strangers within our gates.
- They are the poor and the rich, the high and the low.

Day in and out, the right kind of religious visiting, by which is meant the right kind of conversation concerning personal religion, ought to be had by CHRIST's friends. Do it, I pray you, my fellow Christians, to the last limit of your power. Speak the word in season to others, from day to day, who need to hear from your lips the right appeal concerning personal religion.

It is a deeply interesting study to glance at the faces of people assembled in an audience like this, from evening to evening. I have found myself searching the audience, as I do every audience, and my heart is moved by the diversity of faces, for what is quite so interesting as a human face?

It has been specially interesting to note that all ages are coming to the services;

- the older people, with their white hairs and their stooped shoulders,
- and the strong, middle-aged men and women, now grappling with the big battle of life,
- and the young men and women, beginning to know something of the seriousness of life,
- and then the happy boys and girls.

How blessed it has been to see the boys and girls in these several evening services, and still more blessed to mark how they listen!

I look about me and note in the audience this evening many boys and girls, and find my heart lifting up a prayer for every boy and every girl, and find my heart lifting up a prayer for every young man and woman. Oh, how I covet the young people for CHRIST as it is GOD's time for them to come, while they are young, for JESUS not only wishes to receive us into Heaven when we shall die and leave this world, but He wishes us also to live like we ought while we are in this world. He desires not only to save our souls, but He would save our lives here and now. And, therefore, how reasonable, how wise, that we should be inexpressibly concerned for the boys and girls, for the young men and women.

I would take a text this evening that I would have every boy carefully to hear, and every girl, and every young man, and every young woman, and the older men and women, because the text is a personal question, from which there is no getting away, an old question, a question asked by Pilate. This is that old question: "**What shall I do then with Jesus?**"

Pilate had to face that question, and he trifled with it, and he made shipwreck of himself because he trifled with that question. And everybody that trifles with that question shall make shipwreck of himself or herself for time and for eternity. "**What shall I do then with Jesus?**" That question is yours and mine, just the same as it was Pilate's, and we must answer that question, just as surely as he was called upon to answer it long ago. Now I am coming to ask these young people and these older people, to-night, and all of us, and each one of us, how shall we answer this question: "**What shall I do then with Jesus?**" How shall we answer it?

Sometimes the best way to answer a question is to ask other questions, and that is the way I am going to do to-night with this question. I am going to ask you some other questions, so that by asking these other questions we will be led up to see what we ought to do with this question we have to-night for our text: "**What shall I do then with Jesus?**"

And this is the first question I would ask: What can I do with JESUS? Do something with Him I

must. I cannot evade that question. I cannot avoid it. I cannot escape it. Do something with JESUS I must. Neutrality respecting that question is impossible.

*Now, what can I do with JESUS?*

- I can accept Him as my Saviour, or I can reject Him and turn away from Him, just as this man Pilate did.
- I can crown Him as my Saviour, or I can crucify Him morally in my heart.
- I can put Him away and have nothing to do with Him.

I must do one of those two things.

There are not three things to be done about JESUS, but one of two things.

- I shall either be His friend or His foe.
- I shall either accept Him as my Saviour or reject Him.
- I shall either follow after Him or turn away from Him.
- I shall either say "Yes" to Him, or "No" to Him.
- I shall either be for Him or against Him.

Now, I must do one of those two things.

That brings us to the second question I would ask:

*Who is to decide the question for me - "What shall I do then with Jesus?"*

Who is to decide that question for me? There is but one somebody in all the world to decide that question for me. Who is that somebody? Certainly not my foes, if I have any, are to decide that question for me and I trust that I have none. Certainly not my friends and I trust I have friends- but however many, or however few, or however true they may be, no friend that I have in this world can decide that question for me, but I myself must decide it. Nor will I be forced to decide it.

I will not be coerced to decide it. I will not be compelled by force to decide this question. JESUS comes and stands before us and asks: "What will you do with me? Do something with me you must. What is it going to be?"

- Nobody will compel me.
- Nobody will coerce me.
- Nobody will drive me.
- Nobody will force me.

I myself must face that question, and I must answer it.

Now there comes in the highest dignity of human life, and there comes in the greatest danger to human life. The highest dignity of human life is that a human being can say "Yes" or say "No" to GOD.

A little human being, fashioned by the great Maker, can say "Yes" or say "No" to GOD, and will say one of those two things when GOD makes His call. That is the highest dignity allowed a human being and at the same time that is the greatest danger that ever comes to a human life. No danger can compare with that. I can take this awful power of choice that GOD has given me and the highest prerogative of human life is the prerogative of choice - I can take that and I can ruin myself with it. I can ruin my life; I can ruin my soul; I can ruin all pertaining to me, by flinging choice down into the ditch and making the wrong use of choice. Certainly, GOD is never at fault that a soul makes the wrong choice. GOD is never at fault that a soul misses the upward way.

Listen to GOD as He talks about it. He takes a great oath by himself, saying: "**As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live;**" "**Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, oh, house of Israel?**"

Certainly JESUS is never at fault that a soul misses the upward way. Look at JESUS yonder, weeping over the city of Jerusalem, and as He weeps, He utters that plaintive cry: "**Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not I Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.**"

JESUS is never at fault that a soul misses the upward way. If I shall miss the heavenly way, if this boy shall, or that girl, or that young man or woman, or the middle-aged man or woman, or the oldest man or woman here to-night; if any of us shall miss that upward way, which I pray GOD to forbid - yet if any of us shall miss the upward way, the fault will not be GOD's fault, but it will be our fault.

And now that brings me to another question:

*What does it matter what I do with JESUS? Does it matter at all?*

I have already said: Do something with Him I must. Do something with Him I will. I will be for Him or against Him. As certainly as I live and breathe, do something with JESUS I must, I must. Now, what does it matter what I do with Him? Does it matter at all? And if it matters, how does it matter? Wherein does it matter what I do with JESUS? I am coming to say that it matters vitally in three great respects. Let us see what they are.

First of all, it matters vitally to you personally, in your own life, what you do with JESUS.

- JESUS comes offering to forgive your sins, if you will surely trust Him.
- JESUS comes offering to give you a new heart, if you will trust Him as your Saviour.
- JESUS comes offering to change you with a change that must be within you, if you would meet GOD in peace.

JESUS does all that. If you come and give yourself up to JESUS as your Saviour, then in His own way, He will change you and forgive your sins, and put His power within you, and give you His great salvation. Surely, that is a matter of unspeakable concern to you. What you do with JESUS determines whether you shall be saved.

If you do the right thing with JESUS, you will be saved. If you do the wrong thing with JESUS, you will miss the upward way and be forever lost. Surely, that is a matter of supreme moment for you, what you shall do with JESUS for your own self.

But that is not all.

What you do with JESUS vitally matters about your relations to everybody else. What you do with JESUS vitally affects the life you are to live and the influence you are to wield down here in this world. JESUS came, as I said a moment ago, not only to save our souls and to bring us home to Heaven when this life down here is done, but JESUS wants to save our lives, wants to save our influence, wants to save us, and have us on the right side here in this world - here and now.

And what you do with JESUS not only matters for yourself, but it matters in your influence over everybody else.

If I should ask these young people to-night this question: "Do you desire to be useful? Do you wish to live the life most useful?" your answer would be given without a moment's hesitation, and with uplifted hand you would say: "Sir, I desire to live the useful life, to live the most useful life that it is possible for me to live while I live in this world." Well, the most useful life is utterly impossible if you do not do the right thing with JESUS. If you do not take JESUS to be your Saviour and Master, the most useful life is utterly impossible.

JESUS comes wanting to save our life, our influence, have us on the right side, so that our powers may not be misplaced, and be misused, and be wasted. JESUS wants to save us in the life that we live here and now, in its relations towards other people.

An old man was saved when he was just eighty years old. Not many people live to be that old. Perhaps very few of us in this company will live to be eighty. Three score and ten is man's allotted life. But this old man that I am thinking of lived to be eighty, and at eighty he was gloriously converted to CHRIST.

Like a little child, he said "Yes" to JESUS when JESUS called him, and then he lived four years more. He lived to be eighty-four years old, and you might ask him when he was eighty-four years old how old he was, and he would tell you that he was "four years old."

His great-grandchildren would sometimes get around him, and they would say: "Grandpa, how old are you?" And the dear old man, with his voice trembling, would say: "My children, grandpa is four years old." And they would laugh and nudge one another, and would say: "Why, grandpa, you are eighty-four."

"No," he would say, "I am four years old."

And they would laugh again and say: "Why, grandpa, you are eighty-four."

And then he would stop and explain to them, every time: "No. my children, grandpa lived eighty years without GOD. Grandpa lived eighty years without being the friend of JESUS. Grandpa

lived eighty years going the wrong road, putting his life on the wrong side, on the side of sin and Satan, and he has lived just four years on the right side, just four years on JESUS' side, and, therefore, grandpa insists that he is just four years old."

Now, there was deep truth in what he said.

He was making the point that I am making tonight - that JESUS wants to save our lives, and our lives are not saved to the highest if they are against JESUS, if they refuse JESUS, if they reject JESUS, if they turn away and fail to follow JESUS.

But more is yet to be said.

*What does it matter what we do with JESUS?* It matters something else, very important.

- I have said it matters for our own salvation what we do with JESUS.
- And then I have said it matters for the life that we live in this world what we do with JESUS.

Now I make bold to say this other word: Where we are going to spend eternity is dependent upon what we do with JESUS.

Now, isn't that a momentous matter?' Where shall I spend eternity?

Eternity, oh, thou great eternity! Where shall I spend eternity? I will spend eternity according to what I do with CHRIST, and according to what I do with CHRIST here in this world, before I go into eternity at all. Now, isn't that a stupendous matter? And isn't that a matter to take hold of the hearts of these young people, and these middle-aged, older people? Where shall I spend eternity? I will spend eternity according to what I do with CHRIST here in the world, here in time, here in the flesh, here on this earth.

If you have ever been to the Jerry McCauley Mission, yonder in New York City, you will recall that as you entered it, your attention was arrested by a striking motto, there in plain view before you, and this is the question of that motto: "If I should die to-night, where would I go?"

Every man and woman that comes in sees the placard there on the wall: "If I should die to-night, where would I go?" I ask this audience, this Monday night, to ask themselves, one by one: "If I should die to-night, where would I go?"

You would go into eternity according to your relations here to CHRIST. CHRIST said to some people who caviled at His teaching when He was here: "**Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come.**"

CHRIST distinctly teaches us that our relation in eternity will be determined by our relation here in time to CHRIST.

How serious, how momentous, how tremendous, is that thought! If I am to spend eternity in blessedness and peace, then that matter will be determined here in time by what I do with CHRIST. And if here in time, I reject CHRIST, forget CHRIST, leave Him alone, do not come to

Him, do not say "Yes" to Him, do not surrender to Him, and die in that state of mind and heart, where He goes I cannot come.

It is the clear and unspeakably solemn pronouncement of the Scriptures, whenever the question of destiny is touched upon in the Scriptures. "**As the tree falls, so shall it lie.**" "**He that is unjust,**" says the Bible, "**let him be unjust still.**" "**He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.**" "**He that is righteous, let him be righteous still.**" "**He that is holy, let him be holy still.**" What I do with CHRIST here in time, on earth, this side of the grave, will determine where shall be my eternity.

I have asked you three questions, and I have just one more to ask. I have asked you three questions, trying to help you answer this question of our text: "**What shall I do then with JESUS?**"

First, what can you do with Jesus? You can accept Him or reject Him. You can say "Yes" to Him or "No" to Him.

Second, what does it matter what you do with JESUS? It matters vitally for yourself. It matters vitally for the life you are to live in this world. And it determines where you will spend your eternity in the world after this. Who is to answer this question for us? We have looked at that question also. Nobody in the world can answer that question for us, but each one for himself, for herself, must answer it.

Now, I am coming to ask one more question in the discussion of this pungent question.

Here it is: When should I decide this question? "**What shall I do with Jesus?**" Your question and my question, the inescapable question, the inexorable question - when should this question, "**What shall I do with Jesus?**" be decided?

- Shall it be decided yesterday? It cannot be now. Yesterday is gone, and shall never come back again.

- Shall it be decided to-morrow? We do not know anything about to-morrow. We have no promise of to-morrow. The Bible distinctly prohibits our building on to-morrow. "**Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.**"

When, then, should this question be decided? There is only one time. The Bible tells us that time. "**To-day is the day of salvation.**" "**Now is the accepted time.**" "**Today, if ye hear His voice, harden not your heart.**"

The time wherein this question of what I am to do with JESUS is to be settled, the time for its right settlement is to-day, is here and now, because that is GOD's time. When we know what is GOD's time, we should address ourselves to it without any delay.

Why should we settle this question of what we are to do with JESUS to-day - to-day and now?

I have already said because it is GOD's time.

Whenever we know GOD's time, we should adjust ourselves to it, obediently and promptly. This is GOD's time. He knows the best. He tells us: "**It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.**" He tells us: "**Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.**" This is GOD's time, and, therefore, my concern grows deeper every hour that the young people all over the land may come to JESUS while yet they are young.

Oh, as surely as we live, wisdom has fled from our churches, if we do not sound out, as we sound out no other note in the world, that the time in which people are to be saved is in life's morning, and not in life's evening, and not in life's middle time. The time is in life's morning. "**Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.**"

Why? He tells us: "**While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.**" The time for us to come to CHRIST, oh, my young people, happy boys and girls, happy, hopeful young men and women, the time for us to come is in life's morning, because that it is the habit-forming time in life.

Our habits shall be crystallized soon. I have seen many people when they were converted to CHRIST and confessed Him publicly before the people, and yet just a few have I ever seen who came to CHRIST when the white hair was about their temples - just a few. I spoke a little while ago to some 1200 Christian men, a few over 1200 by actual count - just Christian men - a special message I was asked to give for Christian men-and I asked that group of a little over 1200 Christian men: "How many of you came to CHRIST after you were forty-five years of age?" How many do you suppose stood up? Only three after they were forty-five. "How many of you came after you were forty?" Thirteen. "How many of you came after you were thirty years of age?" Less than fifty. "How many of you came to CHRIST before you were twenty-one?" And over 1100 stood to their feet, saying: "We came to CHRIST before we were twenty-one."

Oh, it is GOD's counsel for us to gather into His fold the happy young people in the morning of life! It is GOD's time. It is the habit-forming time. They are forming their habits quickly now. Life is plastic now. Life is renascent now, responsive now, malleable now. After awhile it will be set in its ways.

The adage comes in just there which says: "*As the twig is bent the tree is inclined.*" You can go and bend down the little bushes and swing them this way and that, but in after years you may go back, and there are the strong, stalwart trees, which will bend neither this way nor that. They are set at last, fixed at last, by the fearful power of habit and growth. That is the parable and picture of human life. Oh, ye parents! Oh, ye teachers! GOD's time is for us to win the young people to Him while yet they are young.

The story goes that a certain king once ordered one of his subjects to make him a chain, and the blacksmith went and made the chain a certain length, according to the order of the king. And when the blacksmith brought the chain to him, the king ordered him to go back and make the chain twice as long, and the blacksmith obeyed him and brought back the chain twice as long. Once again the king bade the workman to take the chain and make it still twice as long. And the blacksmith obeyed him, and brought the chain to the king, and the king said to an other subject, or other subjects: "Take this man and wrap him in this chain, and bind him and destroy him."

Now, that is the parable and picture of habit. Satan does his best to keep these boys and girls, and young men and women, from coming to CHRIST in life's early morning. He is forging that chain of habit longer and heavier, tighter and stronger, every day, and the years pass on, and habit tightens, and its coils grow closer about the people, until at last they seem set and fixed in their ways, and little is the probability, far out in life, that they will ever come to CHRIST at all. GOD's time is while they are young.

I have already said it is the useful time - and we want to be useful.

One little life we have down here-forty years or fifty years, or more or less. Why live it at all, if we are not going to live it in the right way? We will be cumberers of the ground; we will not only hurt ourselves, but we will hurt everybody else, if we live this life in the wrong way. One little life to live! Oh, the glory of living it in the most useful fashion, which cannot be unless we are honestly for JESUS CHRIST.

There is yet another word to be urged upon you: You should come to JESUS now, and rightly settle this question of what you will do with JESUS now, because now is the safe time

Now might be the only time.

I think I had better stress that for a moment, and stress it even for the young people who sit in this audience, looking up into my face, and listening so attentively, along with the older people. The matter of coming to CHRIST should be settled now because now is the safe time, and now might be the only time.

May I tell you about preaching to my own young people a special sermon some time ago, one morning, to the Sunday school? The doors were shut, so that the Sunday school would not be disturbed, and I preached a sermon of some twenty-five minutes to the younger people there, and when I had finished I asked who was ready then and there to decide for CHRIST? When I asked that, I said: "I want all such to come and take my hand, those of you who are ready now to say 'Yes' to JESUS, who will trust Him, that from this morning He may be your Saviour."

And numbers and numbers of the young people came, and along with that group came one of our girls, some twelve or thirteen years of age, a serious and beautiful child. Soon the service was concluded, and the day went by, and the week went by, and I stood in my pulpit the following Sunday morning, and when I had concluded the sermon at the regular eleven o'clock service, a man came from the outer door through my study, and touched me, and said: "Before you go to your luncheon, you are wanted to go to Nellie's home. They are going to take her to the hospital. She is desperately ill, and she wants to see you before she goes to the hospital."

"Certainly," I said, "I will go with you right now." I went with him speedily to the home where Nellie lived, and there she was waiting to see me before they carried her in the ambulance to the hospital for the serious surgical operation.

When I sat down beside her I said: "What do you want to say to me, Nellie?" She drew her handkerchief over her face, as if to conceal the soft tears that bedewed her cheeks, and I waited so that she could take her time and say what she wanted to say to me in her own way. "What

have you got to say to me, my child? " I said again. And then she said: "I don't know that I will come back from the hospital. I am very sick."

I said: "Well, Nellie, What if you should not come back?"

And she said: "That is just what I want to talk with you about. If I do not come back-and something tells me that perhaps I won't - if I do not come back, I want you to know that it is all right, and I want you to tell my Sunday school class of girls, if I do not come back, that I was not afraid. I want you to tell them that on last Sunday, when you preached to the girls and boys, I decided for CHRIST, and I am following Him; I am trusting Him. I said 'Yes' to Him last Sunday, and meant it, and if I do not come back, I want you to tell the girls in my class that I went away and was not afraid, because I had decided for CHRIST."

I said: "I hope you will come back all right, Nellie, but I am glad to hear you say all that, my child, and we will be praying for you. I will pray for you now, and then I will be thinking of you this afternoon and to-night." The day wore away and the night came on, and I preached in the evening and went back to my home, and at midnight word came from the hospital, saying: "Nellie desires to see you very much." I said: "Certainly; I will be there very soon," and very soon I was there.

Things had all gone to the bad with her, and her pulse galloped like some runaway horse. I sat beside her, and said: "What have you to say now, Nellie?"

And she said: "I cannot go back home, and I cannot get back to the Sunday school and to church any more, and I want to ask you again to tell the girls in my class that I was not afraid, that I was ready, because when you preached a week ago, saying: 'Now is the accepted time to decide for CHRIST,' I said: 'It shall be my time.'"

Wasn't it a glorious thing that I could tell the people that a little girl of a dozen years, when she heard JESUS saying: "Now is my time for you to come to me, now is the best time, now is the safe time, now might be the only time," a little timid girl said: "It shall be my time. I will surrender to JESUS, and trust Him now and forever to be my Saviour?"

I am coming in a moment to the close of the sermon, but I have a question to ask you, before you leave the tent to-night. What have you done with JESUS? What will you do with Him? Do you say: "I am ready tonight to trust CHRIST; I am ready to-night to do the right thing with CHRIST; I am ready to-night to answer that question properly, **'What shall I do then with Jesus?'** I will take Him for my Saviour; I will be for Him from this hour, and no longer will I be against Him?" Then come and tell us of that great decision, as now we sing.

### THE CLOSING PRAYER.

And now as we go, we pray Thee, our Father, to put Thy gracious favor upon these who publicly confess their acceptance of CHRIST as their personal Saviour, and let them go to live for CHRIST like the Christian life ought always and everywhere to be lived. And, O, put Thy spirit profoundly upon those who desired thus to come but have held back. Show them how great a matter this is, how eternally and urgently important a matter this is, of doing the right thing with

CHRIST, and for Him. And may these young people - how we covet them every one for CHRIST, from the morning of their lives - may they all and each from this night forward faithfully trust CHRIST, and follow Him in all His appointed ways for His friends. And all through this city, deepen Thou, we beseech Thee, the interest in all our hearts to be and to do in thy sight according to the counsel of Thy holy will. How we bless Thee for thy goodness and mercy to us! Let such goodness cause us daily to be more zealous for our Lord.

And now as the people go, may the blessing of the triune GOD be granted you, all and each, to abide with you forever. Amen.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

\*\*\*