

J. M. May 27, 73 A.M.

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

John 6:68

Looking at this Scripture today points to a time in the far past but it is just as real as what happened this morning. But as we look back in the matter of time, no man can relive a month, a week, a day, or one hour of the day, one second of a minute. Days when they go are forever gone. Years, when they go, they go into the tomb of time and there they stay.

Jesus preached to the great multitude. When he had preached the people murmured. They strove among themselves and they said his teachings were too hard to live by. Jesus had taught them that unless we eat this flesh, drink his blood, we cannot have eternal life. Which just simply meant that unless we appropriate by faith his death upon the cross, where his flesh was broken and his blood was shed, we cannot have eternal life. But they said who can eat his flesh and who can drink his blood. They said that teaching is hard to live by.

The Scripture says and so the (flattering crowds) left Jesus, and went back and walked no more with him. Only his 12 Disciples were left and Jesus said, will ye also go away. And Simon Peter answering for the group said, Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life.

At this time, disappointment, defeat, despair were spreading. The hot-headed politicians left Jesus. The folks who followed him simply to get bread and meat from him left him. The good-hearted but yet narrow-minded people who could not grasp his teachings nor agree with his teachings left him. Jesus found himself alone with 12 men.

This was a very trying time for these 12 men. The temptation was go with the crowd - be with them. They were the witnesses of Christ without any popularity. The people heard Jesus say that he must die. The disciples heard him say that. And that destroyed all of their personal ambitions.

And Jesus said, will ye also go away?

Lord, to whom shall we go - thou hast the words of eternal life. Lord, you have this imperishable truth. There is nobody to whom we can go but to thee. Now Peter knew about the Pharisees and their worship. He knew about the theology of the Sadducees. He knew about the mythology of the Greeks. He knew about the materialism of the Romans. He knew about the mystic speculations of many people. He knew something that was important and he knew that none of these things could satisfy his soul. He stuck to Jesus.

At the place where two crossroads crossed, Peter took the road to the right. Do you know how to take the right road. Maybe some of you have come to this place and the (Devil) has pointed you - and he has sought to get you to go away from Jesus.

I First, these people got bored with religion. Are you bored with religion. I wish that somehow I might help you to understand that these people went back to the world and to turmoil. We remember that there are different phases in history and sometimes it (moves mighty slow) on the surface - and when God seems to take 100 years to take one step or one day - then all of a sudden it opens up.

We are living in (a day) in which people want everything instantly done. The world is in turmoil. Many pulpits are proclaiming apostasy. Not all of them - but some. Civilization is all mixed up and the spiritual mercury is falling

mighty low. The Bible is now being challenged by human reason. Men under the guides of scholarship are substituting "for thus saith the Lord" - "thus saith the mind of man". We live in a world today in which there is what Dr. Lee one time called jelly-fish theology, and see-saw religion, India rubber convictions, summer-salt philosophy.) He said no one could understand.

I wish today that I could disturb your easy-going manner about Jesus Christ. That you would have greater interest and love for him. And that you would want to live for him. In this Hell-bound world in which we live, we rarely pause to think truly about our faith in Jesus Christ. Because there are so many shifting views from week to week. There is the decline in attendance of young adults in their 20's - they declined 9 points between 1958-1966. The attitude toward religion is that we must use religion as political power and change the structure of society.

People are saying what we need is something that is relevant and Jesus Christ knew that this was not something new.

Did Jesus make a mistake by losing these followers. The real core of the thing sent - like a man who goes off to college today and studies some history or some literature. He says this is not so relevant to my day in this exciting world and so he drops it and I want to go where the action is. And a few years later he discovers that these dry bones of history and literature had something to do with his opportunities in life.

Today all some people want is some excitement, like L. S. D. and people give up on Christ because they do not find that kind of excitement in him. Therefore, we find a decline and diminishing interest and it appears that it is going out. How serious is this - the church men are watching the charts, the trends, the statistics.

Reinhold Neibuhr wrote an article once about people getting bored with religion. When we look at our own country we can discover that religious affiliation was 16% of the population in 1850. It was 49% of the population in 1940. And in recent years it was boasted to 63%.

But the age in which we live, men have turned to this world. They want something exciting because this is an exciting time in history. Secular things and temptational things, technical things, new gadgets.

Some people today would say who needs miracles from Heaven when we can work all of these miracles ourselves.

Who wants to listen to a sermon on Sunday when we can see and hear a baseball game in techni-color. The church is pretty tame along such happenings. We come to church - we do the same old things - we say our prayers - we read our Bibles.

And of course, we are so geared to nervous excitement that there is not much left in the church.

A small boy asked his Sunday School Teacher about Heaven. And when she had tried to explain it to him, he went home and told his mother about it. He said to his mother, I don't want to go to Heaven. When she questioned him, as to why he said that he didn't want to go, he said, that it didn't have an escalator). He'd rather go to a department store - and that's it. The exciting things are all outside of us. Now what chance has Heaven against a push by pre-occupied pressure groups.

It is pretty much the same old story. Housewives, you business men, and working people - you students. You are struggling for existence. And are you

getting bored with religion. For the same reasons that you are getting bored with a lot of other things. From fatigue.

People say they get (impatient) - why doesn't the church get on the move. Why doesn't it (back) this movement or that movement. They say this is an age of demanded action. We want social justice and we want it now. We want all the racess together and we want it now. We asked for practical answers and we want practical questions. And they say you only give us God and (God is too slow). His way of changing life from within is too slow for us. So you are going to drop out.

You are searching for (something easy), you want some (easy solution) until you get bored. And you flock out somewhere else. So people attracted to Christ followed him up to a certain point. They listened to him up to a certain point.

You are bored with your religion with following Christ but that doesn't satisfy the hunger in your heart. I don't think the animals go around and bother about it. I don't think the elephants wonder why they are elephants. Walt Whitman said, he didn't think contented cows went around whinning about their sins. But here are men who are gifted and living in internal torment about themselves. Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I headed? What is the meaning of life?

Some of you are like the definition of a Unitarian somebody gave - he said that (a Unitarian who can't quite take it and can't quite leave it alone). And that covers a wide area of population today. We'd like to get away from God if we could. We try hard enough but we can never quite make it.

You remember the (psalmist) said, you take the wings of the morning and fly to some mountain. He is there. Make your bed in Hell - he is there. Whether

can we flee from his presence and from him who is everywhere.

The multitudes that had thronged Jesus were now abandoning him. He was not in keeping with their expectations of a worldly glory and power. And now they were turning away and going back from him after having been bored with religion.

II. (NATURE) CANNOT GIVE REST TO THE HUMAN HEART

The tragedy when we think of some people who say let us go to nature. Now I love nature. And I love the wonders of nature - nobody loves flowers, the stars, and wonders of nature more than I do. I enjoy beautiful flowers - I think most people do. This vast universe is a vast place of mountains, rivers, and lakes - it seems to have (God's signature) on every page as the poet said. I took a day to search for God. And found him not, but as I trod, by rocky ledge through woods untamed. Just where one scarlet lily flamed, I saw his footprint in the sod.

There suddenly all unaware, far off in the deep shadows stare, the solitary hermit thrush, sang through the holy twilight hush I heard his voice upon the air.

And ^{given} every as I marveled how - God gives us Heaven and now, in a stir of wind that hardly shook, the poplar leaves beside the brook, his hand was light upon my brow.

At last with evening as I turned, homeward and thought what I had learned, and all that there was still to probe, I caught the glory of his robe, where the last fires of sunset burned.

Now I agree that that poem might be pantheistic in it's purpose but I do agree that there is some truth in God's footprints -- in the flowers, in the lakes, in the ocean. There are wonders in this world but Jesus did not say turn to nature. He said come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give ye rest.

But it is tragic that man has turned away from Jesus and has fashioned himself idols, made of wood and stone, and bowed before them. Calling these pitiful objects his Gods.

Throughout the world men bow before idols made of wood and stone - they pray to creeping, crawling things, and objects of worship which can only stir their feelings but cannot meet their needs. Only when they know the Gospel do they know the way. To whom shall we go, with the burden of sin. Shall we turn to nature.

III. SHALL WE TURN TO SENSUAL PLEASURE

Shall we go to the pleasures of this world. Shall we look to these to take care of our fears, our aspirations, our hopes.

Eat, drink, yes, and make merry for tomorrow we die. Multitudes strive to draw their hope in the cup of pleasure and riot. Thus many turn away from Jesus and from the congregation of the righteous to make a diet on the husk and the sawdust of this world. Satan gets many people to follow him. Shall we turn from Christ to worldliness.

If we want to cheat ourselves - yes. If we want to ruin our lives - yes.

If we want to be a Jesse James on the highway of life - yes. But if we want eternal life we shall notwith worldliness discover it. Because every time you let your bucket down in the well, it will come up empty.

IV. SHALL WE TURN TO MATERIALISM

These people turned from Jesus, and went back to materialism instead of Jesus. I would say God forbid. Jesus dealt with the spiritual and not with the material.

Sir Oliver Lodge put monkey and man, like horse and bear, bore and snake had a common father. Materialists say there is no future in store - when a man dies he is dead - dead for sure. Dead as the nails in his coffin. There is no divine Christ - no Heaven, no spiritual life, no spiritual reality whatever. And that what we call being born again - the religious experience is just sentimental thinking.

The time Dr. Lee was traveling from Memphis to Harrisonburg - he got on a beautiful train in St. Louis. And after awhile there came a man and sat down beside him. And he was not dressed as the preacher was. But he said he was one of these men who went and got into his collar forward. And we rode along he said and finally the man said, I am a priest. Well, you are not - and then he asked the preacher what he was. The preacher said, I am a priest. Well, the man said, you are not dressed like a priest. Well, he says, no clothes do not make a preacher. Benedict Arnold had on a uniform when he betrayed his country. Then I said, Dr. Lee said, I may (king) too. He said he looked at him as though he thought he was one of those dictators from Europe. He said, where do you get that stuff. The preacher said, I picked up a little New Testament and I turned over to the first

Chapter of Revelation, put my finger on the verse that says unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made kings and priests unto God and his Father for ever and ever. And held it up to him. I want you to note now what he said. The priest said, oh, I see, you are a Baptist preacher. And I guess that you are one of these cover to cover preachers.

The preacher said if you mean believing the Bible, the inspired, enerrant word of God without any taint or mixture or error - inspired, personal application, regenerative in power - I am a cover to cover preacher.

Then the priest said well, you look intelligent. And the preacher said that he put the emphasis on look. I couldn't say the same for him - I said, "Thank you". There that was about the only thank you that I said though. He said you look intelligent but (do you believe) that thing in the Bible about God putting Adam to sleep, cutting a whole in him and taking a rib out, and making a woman.

The preacher said, of course I believe it. And I believe something else - Sir James Simpson put chlorophorm in the world - with all of its benefits in relieving pain because he read about it in the book of Genesis. He was working with sick people. And when he would try to perform an operation on them - they would shreak as they would on torture racks as they were pulled apart limb by limb. He rushed out of the operating room where the sick people were one day and said I can't stand it. I can't stand it. That night he read Gen. 2 - how God put Adam into a deep sleep, performed an operation, sewed the hole up and made woman. Yes, I believe that.

Then he crossed swords about this thing of evolution. He said we had it up and down. I asked him a question that I have been trying to get an answer too for over 35 years. And during that time, I have not gotten a telegram, a telephone message, a letter, a card - or any face to face answer from a college professor

or anyone else. And I have been asking the question. On the basis of evolution tell me why it is that everything born in this world has it's own clothes on except a human body. I said answer that on your theory of evolution.

A little old chick hops out of its shell and says good morning. And then goes off saying chick, chick, chick. A little kitten has its soft clothes, a little pig has its new shiny bristles. A little old pup has its nice beautiful hair. The cub of the bear has its fur. Everything that is born has its own clothes except a human baby.

I say, now on your theory of evolution, tell me why it is.

The priest stuttered around and got mad. He never could answer it and no body ever can answer it on the theory of evolution. But it can be answered from God's word and why is it. God made Adam and Eve in his own image. This book tells us in Psalm 104 that God clothed himself in (garments of light.) He clothed Adam and Eve in garments of light. And when they sinned, they lost their garments and they were naked and ashamed. God had to clothe them and since that time, every human baby that is born has to be clothed.

The preacher said to him - yes, I am a king. I do not dress like one, I do not live in a palace, I do not have a group of servants but I am a king, I am a priest.

Now that is one Bible doctrine that everybody ought to get - that everybody is a priest unto God. That I do not have to have anybody go to God for me. I can go for myself.

When the priest got off in Pittsburgh, the preacher said he was rather sorry for Pittsburgh, because the priest was angry. Because the preacher's parting

words were - you are a funny man. And the priest says funny how. Do you know what you have done right here on this train. You have gagged on a rib and turn right around and swallowed a live monkey, head, hair, tail and all. And you call that scholarship.

Now that is materialism with its evolution. And I wonder shall we turn to that instead of to Jesus Christ, There is no way that materialism can explain this fact. When did it start.

Shall we turn to materialism and evolution - I think that those who turn to this are very much like the little girl who I heard about one time. Her little baby brother was born and when he was about two or three days old, they put him in her arms and said - honey, how do you like your little brother. She said, I like him alright except his head is loose.

Now I feel about like this with those who get bored with religion - there is just one thing that seems wrong - their heads are loose.

V. SHALL WE GO TO SCIENCE

If we turn away from Jesus to infidelity and to science - I wonder if anybody would be foolish enough to say that we ought to turn away from Jesus to unbelief. I grant you that there are sometimes difficulties - for some minds to believe. You say that it is hard to accept the Genesis story about God making the world, making man, and making woman. But it is much harder to accept the fable that the world made God, isn't it. Which do you find it more difficult to believe. In the beginning, God created. In the beginning heaven and earth created themselves. And then man created God.

Now shall we turn to that darkness. Everything is born of nothing and that God did not have a thing to do with this.

Now remember God is behind all things, - everything. There is somebody behind the suit of clothes that you have on today - there is a designer or tailor. Behind the watch that you have on your arm or carry in your pocket, there was a watchmaker - somebody behind it. Behind this building today, there was an architect who designed this. Beyond that, there were men who worked and labored on this and hauled bricks in a cart with the use of a mule from this railroad over here to this lot. And built this building. Behind all of this.

Bob Inglesoll was lecturing all over the country on the mistakes of Moses. People were paying \$5.00 a seat to hear him. Someone said they wouldn't give much money to hear Inglesoll lecture but they would give \$500 if they could hear Moses on the mistakes of Inglesoll.

One night he was giving this lecture and he was talking about man who invented the gas jet. That he did more for humanity than Jesus Christ, the light of the world. And he had just been defeated in the race for governorship in Illinois. Because of the movement by the Sunday School folks of Illinois - they kept him out of the governor's chair. In his speech that night he said, tell me, what good has Christ ever done. Tell me. No body spoke. Tell me - speak if you know. Presently a little grandmother stood up in the back and said - Mr. Inglesoll, - yes Madam, I can tell you one thing he did. He kept you from being governor of Illinois.

To whom shall we go. Shall we go to infidelity and science. Now I rejoice in the achievements of science. Because it strengthens our faith really, in the miracles of Jesus. You do not explain a miracle - you accept a miracle.

I really have no trouble in believing I can go to my house, or I can go to a music shop and put on a tape and start it by a button. And I can listen to a dead man sing who has been dead for 20 or more years. Many famous stars have been long forgotten.

Science has done many wonderful things. We remember that Elisha put a hand full of meal into a bit of pottage and sweetened it. The young students in the school who went into the country to get some cucumbers. They did not know cucumbers from gords. Now you talk about a country boy being green in the city, the greenest thing you ever saw in the city was a city boy in the country. They got those gords and chopped them up and made them some pottage. When they put it in their mouths - their mouths began to draw and they said, there is death in the pot. There is death in the pot. Elisha got a hand full of meal and put it in and sweetened the pottage. Now I really do not have any trouble believing that. When even today there are men who talk about old castles out coal tar and coke and getting a substance out of it 500 times sweeter than honey. So if you want to call your wife ~~something sweet~~ ^{and pink} - you call her coke. Do not call her honey or sugar - or coal tar and you will really have something 500 times sweeter than sugar.

The wonders of science are something but that is far from God almighty who can take my sins away from me when I put my trust in Jesus Christ and his shed blood.

Now materialism does not have the answer and science does not have the answer. When you think about some broken-hearted mother who has lost her baby - what do you say. To whom shall we go.

VI. WE MUST GO TO CHRIST

To whom shall we go - now this is the word for you today. If I should go on talking another 1/2 hour. But the question is to whom shall we go with all the questions, that we have to ask, and all the answers which we need. Whom shall we go to with the problems of the family. Of the employer? The problems of wealth, the problems of poverty. Jesus has a final word to say about all of these things. Someday we shall need to take things to ascertain what he really said about it. There are hearts that are broken, there are souls that are crushed. And there are cries that need an answer.

Some people have made their journey to a fresh mound yonder in the cemetery. Where sleep the newly dead. To whom shall we go. But to him that stood by an empty tomb in the olden days. I do not speak of the hereafter when I say that we have to go to somebody but I speak of the here and now in this life - when I say that we human beings have to go to someone.

Man's soul must go somewhere out of itself to live - for bread that satisfied. Christ is the only fountain of living water. The only bread of life. And he is the one that can offer to us what we need this hour.

Chesterton, a layman, once told about some men who set off from the coast of England. They went to discover a new island. They were bored and weary with old England - they wanted to get away to a new country. After a long hard voyage - they landed on the shores of what they thought was a new and exciting country. As they pulled up their ors and boats - and ran up their flag on the beach. They began to explore and look around. Something in the landscape looked familiar. And upon investigation - they discovered they were on the same coast of England from which they had set out.

Trying to escape England, they ran into it. Trying to get away from home, they came home.

So those who scorn Christianity - those who say and seek after a new and a better faith, those who struggle today and think there is something else out yonder and get bored with church and religion - they must come back again to whom shall we go. The only satisfactory answer is in Jesus Christ.

Death stands across the path way of every man - we may brush it aside, but without Christ we are like children crying in the night. We are alone and what can cleanse our soul. To whom shall we go.

When the stars in the sky go down, and the darkness comes on. To whom shall we go when the winds and the storms beat upon us. And the breakers and the waves thunder upon us. When there is loneliness in old age - when there is pain and sickness. And the hour of death - to whom, in the day of accounting, when our souls will face the judgement. When we are judged according to truth, according to our guilt, according to our work, according to our performance, according to the secrets of our hearts. Not according to religions or professions. There is only one to whom we can go - and that is Jesus.