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To Whom Shall We Go?

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"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

There is one thing certain about every one of us: we are not self-sufficient—we need help from somewhere. Life is a tempestuous sea and no man can make his way to the haven of rest under his own steam. Life is a pilgrimage and no man can make his way to the City Beautiful in his own strength. We are all travelers toward eternity and no man knows the way, by his own wisdom, to the shores of eternal bliss. We are all on a gallop to the grave and no one will be able to pull himself out of it and find a place in the eternal mansions.

In the days of youth, we may feel strong for any task, but this strength will be sapped by disease or infirmities of age. In our ignorance we may feel morally strong enough to overcome evil, but let the wind of temptation blow and everyone succumbs to evil. Christ taught us to pray that we might not be led into temptation, for He knew how weak we are. Paul tells us to restore the fallen brother in the spirit of meekness, remembering that we, too, might be tempted. And it is also written, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

Our text is Peter's question, and it ought to be the question of every man. Every man ought to make it personal and ask, "To whom shall I go?" I have a text that answers this question—but let us first consider the question. The text suggests:

1. That everyone of us needs help. We live in two realms: the physical and the moral. In the physical realm we need food, clothing, and other comforts. We need to pray for our daily bread, for we cannot get it of ourselves. But I want us to think of our needs as moral beings—as beings responsible to God—the God with whom we have to do—the God who sits on a throne—the God to whom we must give account.

(1) Who am I? I am a person who must exist forever somewhere and in some condition. I am not through with existence when I die, for there is to be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. Who am I? I am a sinner before God. There is an emphasis put upon this fact in the Bible. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12). "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). "For all have sinned, and come short of the

glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7,8).

(2) What are my needs as a sinner?

(a) I am cursed by God's law and need someone to redeem me from that curse.

(b) I am a moral bankrupt and need someone to pay my sin-debt.

(c) I am unrighteous by my own disobedience and need the obedience of someone placed to my account.

(d) I am exposed to the wrath of God and need someone to bear that wrath. The Bible has much to say about the wrath of God. Hell is the place where the wrath of God is to be poured out upon the lost. One of the most popular shows to hit Broadway is a burlesque on Hell. Four Hollywood stars play the parts and make a visit to Hell and have an interview with the devil. One woman is made to express surprise because she feels no pain in Hell. The devil is made to say, "The world cannot get on without me; but it never gives me credit for that." The play was written many years ago by George Bernard Shaw, Britain's infamous infidel, and is called, "Man and the Superman."

But those who are so unfortunate as to go to Hell will find it far different to what Shaw has pictured it. Our Lord called it everlasting punishment and pictured it as a lake of fire—a place where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.

(e) Who am I? I am a person with a ruined nature. I have a heart that loves what God hates, and a mind that hates God and is not subject to His law.

2. Another implication of our text is that help is to be found in a person. "To whom shall we go?" Salvation is in a person. The Saviour is a person, not a place or a thing. Whoever saves me must meet all the needs I have spoken about.

(1) He must redeem me from the curse of the law. Jesus Christ meets this need. "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" (Galatians 3:13).

(2) He must pay my sin-debt. Jesus Christ paid it all. He settled with Divine justice on behalf of the sinner. God forgives us the sin-debt for the sake of Jesus.

(3) Whoever saves me must have His obedience placed to my account so that I may become righteous before God. Jesus Christ became obedient unto death even the death of

the cross. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).

(4) Whoever saves me from the wrath of God must bear that wrath. This is what Jesus Christ did. He bare our sins in His own body. The wrath of God fell upon Him. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. He suffered Hell that Hell-deserving sinners might enjoy Heaven. He swapped with us. He took our place under law that we might have a place under grace.

(5) Whoever takes me to Heaven must cure my ruined nature. As a believer with a twofold nature; the flesh and the spirit, I am in a wretched condition, struggling against sin but never free of it. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but never yet filled. This aspect of salvation is still future. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). While in a wretched state, I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And when I cry out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I can thank God through Jesus Christ that I will be delivered from the evil that is in me. I am humbled, but not in despair, for Jesus Christ will make me what I want to be. And one day I shall awake in His likeness and be satisfied.

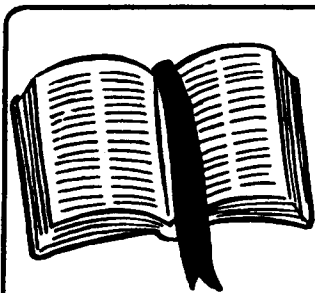
3. We have the answer to our question in the words of Jesus Christ. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." If you believe what I have already said, then it should be easy to have faith in Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ is the Redeemer from the curse of the law; if His obedience makes the sinner righteous; if He paid the sin-debt; if He is the One who delivers from all the ruin sin has wrought, then He must be the object of our hope and trust. If He is the Saviour, we must come to Him. Long ago He stood and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." Long ago He said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Long ago he said to unbelievers, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." And He is still saying all these things. "Come to Jesus—and let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him."

Do you ask, "Just how do I come to Jesus Christ?" You come by taking Him at His word and trusting Him. It is not a physical coming. It is what you do in your heart and mind. You take the place of a sinner and trust Him as your Saviour and Lord. Do you doubt His word? Then, you make Him a liar. He says, "Him that

cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," or as some translations make it read, "I will not drive away." No sinner was ever turned away by Jesus Christ.

Coming to Jesus Christ is the same as having faith in Him as Saviour. Let me give you a very simple illustration of what faith is. An ice cream company that freezes cream on sticks had what they called free sticks on which was written that the holder was entitled to another stick of ice cream. The holder of such a stick could go to any ice cream parlor that handled this company's cream and exchange the stick for another helping free. In some way a cigar box of these free sticks got into the waste basket at the company's plant and, in turn, reached the garbage can on the outside and finally found its way into the city dump. A group of children playing around the dump found this box of free sticks and hurried to the nearest drug stores and ice cream parlors for the free ice cream promised on the sticks. They acted on the company's word—the company said the holder of this free stick will get a free helping of cream by handing in this stick. If they had stopped to reason or argue that because the sticks were found on the city dump, the company would not honor them, they would not have had the free cream. They took the company at its word and presented the sticks and got their cream.

Jesus Christ says, "Him that cometh to me I will save." Did He tell the truth? Will He honor His word? Is He as trustworthy as an ice cream company?



DAILY BIBLE READING

Strengthens Christian Faith
Increases Christian Grace
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THE NEED OF WRITTEN GOSPELS

Human memory is not sufficient for the propagation of the true gospel. Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be their teacher and bring to their remembrance what He had said. And so the gospels do not give us what men, of themselves, remembered, but what the Holy Spirit brought to their remembrance.

Bible translators have discovered that the oral gospel cannot be propagated from memory. People who hear the gospel and do not have it written in their own language will soon preach a distortion of the truth. The Ixil Indians of Guatemala have had an oral tradition of the gospel for 400 years, and today it is but a travesty of the simplest gospel facts. According to their oral gospel, God is an old man unable to govern His world and has turned it over to His strong Son to keep order. They have a story of Jesus being captured by some Jews who tied Him up in a corner and sat down to celebrate with a pot of chicken stew. When Jesus blessed the chicken it jumped in the pot, splashing the stew into the eyes of the Jews. And while they were wiping their eyes, Jesus escaped. Another story current among these Indians is that the twelve apostles hung Jesus on the cross.

The Wycliffe Bible Translators are diligent in their work of translating God's Word for Bibleless tribes. There are some two thousand languages spoken in the world today that are still without a single verse of Scripture. About eleven hundred and twenty-seven languages have the Scriptures in whole or in part, and only two hundred and fifteen have the whole Bible.

"Go ye into all the world and preach," said Christ. Necessarily all cannot go, but all can share in the work.

"I cannot go myself, but I can send some one in my stead," said a minister prevented from going to China because of physical disabilities. And he did.

You may not be able to support a missionary by yourself, but your gift added to the gifts of others is what is needed, and when you give you are not giving to a cause.

... Now you are doing YOUR part in the missionary work of the world. You are sending help where you cannot go.

Have you had your full share in Missions?

The son of a permissive father and the son of a strict father both got into trouble at school and when the two fathers met they discussed the punishments they'd administered. The first father reported giving his son a mild, explanatory lecture. The second father reported giving his son a not-so-mild lecture and a good spanking.

"I'd never spank my son," explained the permissive father. "That's no way to raise a child."

"That's the difference between us, I guess," replied the sterner parent. "You want to raise a child. I want to raise a man."