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The Mission Of Jesus Christ To This World

By the late: C. D. Cole

The theme of my message is "The Mission of Jesus Christ to this World." And I am quoting two texts: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15); "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

This is the season of the year when the birth of Christ is being celebrated in many parts of the world—and it is being celebrated in many ways. Some are seeking to put Christ in Christmas by honoring Him with white gifts to the poor and needy. Our women throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, through the Lottie Moon offering, are sending the news of salvation through Christ to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

While it is true that nobody knows the date of the birth of Christ, all who know Him as Lord and Saviour are happy to know that He came. And we never tire of the story of the nativity; the beautiful story of Jesus lying in a manger charms children and grown-ups alike.

The mission of the Son of Man to this earth is without parallel. Nobody else ever came on such a mission as He did. God sent John the Baptist to bear witness of Him, and when Jesus was about to enter upon His saving mission, John pointed to Him and exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

God sent prophets and preachers to warn and condemn, but He sent His Son to save. God has sent angels to this earth on various missions,

but no angel ever came to save sinners from their sins. Angels have been mighty in judgment and destruction. Two angels dragged Lot out of burning Sodom, but they provided no salvation from a burning hell. An angel slew the Syrian army of 185,000 men in a single night. Angels will gather God's elect from one end of the earth to the other in the end of the age. Angels will reap the harvest of the earth when it is ripe for judgment. But no angel ever came to save the lost from their sins.

Armies have gone forth on missions of destruction, but no army has ever saved a sinner from his sins. Men have been sent on missions of mercy, but no such mercy as the Son of Man brought down from heaven. Jesus Christ does not invite to a mercy-seat, for He Himself is the one and only Mercy-Seat—the only propitiation for the sins of the world. He does not point to any Saviour for He Himself is the Saviour—the only Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Notice His title: Son of Man. Jesus spoke of Himself by this title more often than by any other. This must be because of His relation to the human race. He is related to all races of men. He is not Canadian, American, Englishman, or Frenchman, or German—He is the Son of Man. On the human side, He had the blood of Tamar, the adulteress, Ruth, the pagan Moabitess, and Bathsheba, the woman of illicit love affair with King David. He is the Son of Man. He represents no particular race or color or social class.

He came. This implies His eternity. He was in heaven before He came to earth. He was in the beginning with God and He was God. He was before the beginning that He might be in the beginning. He was the Ancient of Days before He became an infant of a span. He was the Creator before He became a baby. He held the whole world in His hands before He was held in the arms of a woman. Paul says in I Timothy 3:16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Yes, He came. He did not send someone to tell of His love; He came to demonstrate the love of God. He loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood. He did not write to encourage us and wish us God-speed in taking care of ourselves; He came to take care of our eternal interests. By His one offering He hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified or set apart by faith in Him. He did not telephone to congratulate us on our accomplishments; He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He came to save sinners; not to help them save themselves. Christ did not write the gospel; He is the gospel. He preached the gospel and also provided the gospel He preached. He Who was rich for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be rich.

He came to seek and to save the lost. Here is a twofold work; seeking and saving. When we think of salvation as a work done in us—salvation as an inward experience—He seeks before He saves. He found us in order to save us. But when we think of salvation as a work done for us—salvation historically—this was done at Calvary. He did this before He sought and found us. All the work that had to be done for us to make us right with God—to keep us from perishing in our sins—was done when He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He did something for us before He did something in us. He redeemed us objectively before He redeemed us subjectively. He paid our sin-debt before we were ever born into the world. He redeemed us by His blood before He redeemed us by His power—the power of the Holy Spirit. He dealt with our guilt before He dealt with our sinful nature.

Salvation is in a person, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who called Himself the Son of Man. He settled with Divine justice—He satisfied the holiness and justice of God for sinners. If Jesus Christ did not do all that needed to be done to make sinners right with God, then the sinner might as well trust another sinner as to trust Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ is not the Saviour, then there is no Saviour. Nobody else has ever claimed to save sinners. Nobody else has ever died to save sinners. No-

body else has ever claimed to die and rise again to save sinners. Jesus Christ did not come to tell sinners how to save themselves; He came to save sinners without money and without price. Salvation is not at a bargain price; it is free because Jesus paid it all.

The Bible tells us that salvation has to be free for several reasons:

1. So that nobody will be able to boast. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9). There will be no boasters in glory; for there all credit for salvation will be ascribed to Jesus Christ.

2. Because the sinner has nothing to pay. Every sinner is morally bankrupt before God. The only coin God will accept for salvation is righteousness, and no man has any righteousness of his own—his so-called self-righteousness is no better than filthy rags.

3. Salvation has to be free because Jesus Christ provided all the righteousness any sinner needs. Jesus Christ is our righteousness.

4. A fourth reason why salvation is by grace is that God wants sinners to obey and serve Him out of love and gratitude. He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Dr. James McGinley, famous preacher from Scotland, who became pastor of the Baptist Temple in Brooklyn some years ago, gives us an imaginary story to illustrate and emphasize the truth of salvation by grace. It was the imaginary story of the king of England adopting a son. He supposes that the king decides to adopt a son into the royal family. His purpose in doing such a thing was to magnify his grace and mercy and undeserved love. He makes a journey throughout his kingdom in search of the most degraded and unworthy man to be found. He does not look for a worthy person, for his purpose is to magnify his grace and undeserved love. He finally finds the man who will suit his purpose. He comes across an old dirty, ragged, penniless tramp. He says to the old tramp: "I want to adopt a son into my royal family and have decided to make you my son and heir of all my goods." The tramp replies: "And what is it going to cost me?" The king laughs and says, "How can you, a penniless beggar, pay for the privilege of being my son?" "It will cost you nothing; I am doing this to show my gracious love and mercy." "I am not doing this for what you can do for me, but solely as a demonstration of my love for the unworthy." The tramp felt pretty good when he reached the king's palace and sat in the overstuffed chairs, and says to himself, "Brother, this is the life." But the tramp balked at the demands made upon him to live like a king's son. He objected to the daily bath; he preferred to remain dirty. He rebelled when the servant took

his old clothes and burnt them. When the servant handed him a tuxedo, he said: "Them ain't my clothes; I want my clothes; there was a lot of sentiment attached to my clothes." The servant curtly replied: "That is why we burnt them—we wanted to get rid of the sentiments." "You will have to wear the kind of clothes befitting a king's son."

When dinner was announced, the tramp, along with others, sat down at the table in the king's palace. He was bewildered when he saw several pieces of silverware on either side of his plate. He asked, "What are these things for?" The servant replied, "Those are the culinary implements with which we consume our daily repast in the dining hall of the king's palace." The tramp had been used to eating with his fingers and did not want to learn how to use the silverware at the king's table.

What do we get from this imaginary story?

1. That becoming a child of God is without cost. In the sight of God, we are all filthy tramps and there is nothing we can do or pay for the privilege of being a child of the King.

2. That in the King's household, we must live like the King's son. We must dress and eat and live and walk and talk like a child of the King.

3. That God can do for the sinner what the king could not do for the tramp. The king could adopt the tramp, but he could not give him the nature of a king. But in seeking and saving a sinner, Jesus Christ not only adopts him into the family of God; He also gives him a new birth with the divine nature. In saving sinners, Christ makes us both priests and kings unto God, both by adoption and by regeneration. Adoption puts one into the family of God, and regeneration gives us the nature of a member of the family.

When Louis XVI of France was executed by the enraged French, he left a small son, Louis Charles, who was imprisoned along with the rest of the royal family. While in prison, he was tempted to commit certain sins. But to all attempts which were made to get him to say and do vulgar things he would say, "I can't have those thoughts; I can't do those things; I can't say those things; I was born to be a king."

And so let us—the heirs of God—live above the sordid and vulgar things of this wicked world.

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