

FINDING GOD

by

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CHAPTER THREE

SIX “ONE THINGS”

“**One thing thou lackest**” (Mark 10:21).

I WANT TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION to six “**one things**.” The first is in Mark 10:21, “**One thing thou lackest**.” We very often hear people say, “Oh, well, he is a very good man”; or, “She is a very good person; *but* she lacks one thing”; or, “He lacks just one thing.” But if that one thing is salvation, why, he lacks everything. You might say all that a dead man lacks is life. That is all. All that a beggar lacks is money to make him rich. Only one thing! A sick man, who is lying right on the borders of the eternal world, only lacks his health to make him all right. That is one thing; but it is everything to a man who is sick. Money is everything to a man in want—a beggar; and if a man lacks salvation, he lacks everything; and it seems to me it would be well for us just to pause in life once in awhile and ask ourselves the question, “Do we lack that one thing?”

Now, that young man spoken of here came to Christ, and Christ beholding him, loved him. He was a noble young man. He tried to save himself by the law. He had the law and the prophets, but when Christ just touched his heart—for he had his heart set on his possessions—he found that he did not love God with all his heart; he did not love his neighbor as himself. He thought he did, but he didn’t know himself. He spoke very well of himself; he had a good opinion of himself.

There are a great many such people, and it is almost impossible to do them good. It is a good deal better for God to say, “**Well done!**” than for us. It is a good deal better for God to say we lack nothing, than it is for us to say we are not lacking.

I am told Whitefield once was a guest of a general high in position, and Whitefield’s courage failed him. He wanted to speak to him about his soul, but he didn’t have the courage. He was up late one evening and the next morning he was to leave early. The general was an old man; but he was one of those men that lacked that one thing. He lacked salvation and lacked Christ; and Whitefield, when he went upstairs to retire, just took his diamond ring and wrote upon the pane of glass, “**One thing thou lackest**.” And after Whitefield had gone some of the servants found that text of Scripture, and spoke to the general about it; and God used that to bring the old soldier to his knees and into the kingdom.

“One thing thou lackest.” Do you lack Christ? I was speaking in Manchester on a high platform, and right below me, in a seat close up to the platform, sat a man who strained his neck looking up at me all the time; and I looked right down on him and said, “My friend, won’t you take Christ?” Said he, “I have Him, thank God!” He did not lack Him. He had Him; and it is the privilege of everyone to have salvation, and to know you have it.

Now, when I was out to sea some time ago, we had been in a fog and storm and darkness for a day or two, and did not know just where we were; but the moment the clouds broke away a little and we could get a glimpse of the sun, we took an observation to find out where we were; and I think it would be well for sinners to take an observation and find out where they are. Have I a hope that will bear the light of eternity? Or am I lacking that one thing that will be worth more than all the world when God calls me to stand before Him? You know when a man comes to die, neither church order nor government will help him.

It may be very well to ease a man’s conscience; but when he comes to die, he wants a real, living, personal Christ. Salvation is the one thing to have. Do you have Him? “Oh, yes, I go to church every Sunday.” Well, that is not having Christ. You may go to church and lack Christ. “But I say my prayers.” Yes, a man can say his prayers too, and yet lack Christ. I suppose no one prayed more than Saul did in Jerusalem; at least he thought he prayed. The time he really prayed was when he got near to God and cried out: **“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”** That prayer came right out of his heart, and not out of the prayer book. He cried right out what he felt. There are a good many that are just going through the forms. They have the form, but they have no Christ. Now, let us be honest; and let us see if we lack that one thing. If we do, let us not rest until we have it. **“One thing thou lackest”**; and the young man turned away sorrowful.

The next thing I want to call your attention to is John 9. It is on assurance; because, after we have Christ, the next thing is to know it. I have spoken sometimes about assurance; but I wish I could every day, until the church of God would look into the subject.

Suppose I should meet you and should ask, “Are you a Christian?” You would say: “I hope so; I trust I am.” You don’t dare to say right out, “Yes, I am on the Lord’s side”; but you say it in such a stammering way that you don’t really believe it yourself.

I have learned this, that you cannot get men to work until they know the Saviour themselves. Now, this man says here: **“I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”** If God does open our eyes we know it. They tried to make him believe that Christ was nothing but a man. “But,” said he, “haven’t I been feeling my way through the world for twenty- five years, and don’t I know I can see now?” They could not beat that out of him. All the philosophy and science of the present day could not beat that out of him that whereas he was blind now he could see. All the scribes and Pharisees could not beat it out of him. He said, **“I know I see”**; and so it is the privilege of everyone to have Christ, and to know he has Him.

This idea that we have to go on through the world is a terrible uncertainty. We cannot tell whether we have to spend eternity in Heaven or Hell.

Some people say, "How are you going to be sure until you have the judgment? You have to wait until you are brought before the Judge." Thank God, we are not ever going to be brought into judgment. "Doesn't it say that everyone shall be brought into judgment?" they ask. Yes; but that is already passed. I have been brought into judgment about 1900 years ago at Calvary. If Christ was not Judge for me, whom was He Judge for? If He didn't settle the claims of sin, what did He go into judgment for? What does the cross mean, if it was not for judgment?

But they say: "Doesn't it say in Corinthians that every man must give an account of himself for the deeds done in the body?" Certainly everyone must give an account of his stewardship, but not for sin. That is already settled. Doesn't it say in the Scripture: "Know ye not that your sin shall not be mentioned against you?" We are going to sit upon the throne, at the right hand of God Himself. We are not going into judgment.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. If I didn't get eternal life years ago, when I was converted, what did I get? Then if we get it, ought we not to know it? It is a terrible delusion of Satan; and I believe hundreds of Christian people are being deceived by Satan now on this one point, that they have not the assurance of salvation, just because they are not willing to take God at His Word.

"But," a man said to me, "no one has come back; and we don't know what is in the future. It is all dark, and how can we be sure?"

Thank God! Christ came down from Heaven; and I would rather have Him, coming as He does right from the bosom of the Father, than anyone else. We can rely on what Christ says; and He says, "**Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**" Not that we are going to have it when we die, but right now.

And another thing, I don't believe we will have any peace or comfort or joy until this question of assurance is settled.

Some people say: "It is presumption for you to stand up and say you know you are saved." I say it is presumption for me to stand up and say I doubt it, when God has said it. Shall I doubt God's own Word? But you say, it is too good to be true. Then you must go and settle that thing with the Lord, not with me. I take it as I find it in the Word of God. Do you think He is going to leave His children down here in the dark world, to go through life with terrible uncertainties, not knowing whether we are going to glory or perdition? There is no knowledge like that of a man who knows he is saved, who can look up and see his "title clear to mansions in the skies."

It is said of Napoleon, that while he was reviewing his army one day, his horse became frightened at something; the emperor lost his rein and the horse went galloping away at full speed; the emperor's life was in danger. He could not get hold of the rein; a private in the ranks saw it, and sprang toward the horse; he was successful in getting hold of the horse's head at the peril of his own life. The emperor was very much pleased. Touching his hat, he said to him, "I make you captain of my guard." The soldier didn't take his gun and walk up there. He threw it away, stepped out of the ranks of the soldiers, and went up to where the bodyguard stood.

The captain of the bodyguard ordered him back into the ranks; but he said, "No, I won't go."

"Why not?"

"Because I am captain of the guard."

"You, captain of the guard?"

"Yes," replied the soldier.

"Who said it?"

And the man, pointing to the emperor, said, "He said it." That was enough; nothing more could be said. He took the emperor at his word. If God says anything, let us take Him at His Word. He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but hath everlasting life. Don't you believe it? Don't you believe you have everlasting life? It can be the privilege of every child of God to believe, and then know that he has it.

How is a man going to do all this, if he does not think he has the foundation ready, if he does not know he has eternal life? How is he going to add all these virtues and build up that monument, if he has not that assurance? Do you not see that is the privilege of every one of God's dear children to know that he has eternal life? Christ is ours, for time and eternity; He will never leave us. It seems to me that we want this doctrine preached and taught now, so that the Christians will be helped to talk to others. Make it personal.

One thing I know; I cannot speak for others, but I can speak for myself. I cannot read other minds and other hearts. I cannot read the Bible and lay hold for others; but I can read for myself, and take God at His Word. The great trouble is that people take everything in general, and do not take it to themselves.

Suppose a man should say to me: "Moody, there was a man in Europe who died last week and left five million dollars to a certain individual."

"Well," I say, "I don't doubt that; it is rather a common thing to happen"; and I don't think anything more about it.

But suppose he says, "But he left the money to you." Then I pay attention. I say, "To me!"

"Yes; he left it to you." I become suddenly interested, and want to know all about it. So we are apt to think Christ died for sinners; He died for everybody, and for no one in particular. But when the truth comes to me that eternal life is mine, and all the glories of Heaven are mine, I begin to be interested. I say, "Where is the chapter and verse where it says I can be saved?" If I put myself in among sinners, and take the place of a sinner, then it is that salvation is mine, and I am sure of it for time and eternity.

In Luke 1:41, we read of Mary's choice. After we have been saved, the next thing is to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him, as Mary did. That is God's college. You may go through Andover, and Princeton, and Yale, and Harvard, or any and all of the colleges; but if you don't go to God's college, God will not use you for His cause. He sends His teachers all out from there. We must learn at the feet of Jesus, from His lips. A man who prayed at Jesus' feet did not have his prayers answered in the way he expected them to be. He wanted to stay there; he prayed to be allowed to sit at Jesus' feet forever. "**No,**" said Christ, "**go and tell what great things the Lord hath done for you.**"

The first news that came to the disciples that Christ had risen came from the two Marys. They came and fell at the feet of the Saviour, and He said to them: "**Go, publish what thou hast seen; go, tell the tidings.**" He said to Mary, "**She hath the one thing needful**"; and that was to sit at the fountain and drink of the wisdom of the Saviour. The disciples were called disciples because they were to learn of Him. The young converts who are not willing to study Christ and learn of Jesus are not fit for His service. They must go to God's college, and learn of Him. Martha was like many who are willing to work for God, to do something for Him, but are not willing to pause and hear the voice of Jesus. Hundreds of good people are willing to do all they can; but they are not willing to stop and hear the voice of the Lord and receive instruction from Him.

He says: "**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**" Mary took her place of receiving, and was content to put the Lord in His place of giving something. She chose the good part. I think if I had Christ in my house I would not feel like doing anything—like letting the supper go, and sitting at His feet to ask Him questions and listen to answers. It is better, if we are going to work for God, to be alone with Him a great deal.

There are two lives that Christians lead; one before the world, wherein we manifest God; and there is a life that we must live alone with God, sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ. The longer I live and the older I grow, the more convinced I am that there are times when we must sit quietly at the feet of Jesus and only let God speak to our souls. Learn that lesson. It will save you many a painful hour. Just keep quietly alone, and learn of Jesus.

You know it is when a man is alone with his wife that he tells her the precious secrets of his soul. It is not when the family is around, or when there is company there. So when we want to get the secrets of Heaven, we want to be alone with Jesus, and listen, that He may come and whisper to our souls. The richest hours I have ever had with God have not been in great assemblies, but when sitting alone at the feet of Jesus. But, in these days of steam and telegraph, we cannot get time to listen to Christ's whisper in our ears. We are so busy, we do not choose that one thing needful. If we did, we would not talk so much but we would listen; and when we did speak, it would be only when we had something to say. We would hear words that came from the Master; and they would burn down deep into our souls, and bring forth fruit.

In Matthew 23:8 you read the words, "**One is your Master.**" To learn who is your Master and serve Him only! We are willing to serve our friends, to serve the church, to serve the public, and to please everyone, but forget the Lord. We should just have one Master, and live to please Him alone; and He should be the Lord of glory. He is a good Master.

I want to recommend Him to you. If He is not your Master, then the Devil is. Everyone has a master, who is either Satan or Christ. You may not acknowledge it; you may not know it; but either the Lord of glory or else the Prince of the powers of darkness is the one you serve. Satan is a hard and cruel master. If you make mistakes under him, he will have no mercy for you. When you get into trouble, if you are in his service, you will have to suffer indeed; but with the Lord of glory for your Master, if you make mistakes or fall into error, all you have to do is to go and confess to Him; and He will forgive you quickly and smile upon you, restoring to you the joy of salvation, if you have lost it. Oh, that we might learn the sweet lesson that “**One is our Master,**” and that One is Christ in Heaven!

Those men who are trying to serve the public, what do they gain? I pity those men in Washington, who are trying to serve the public. We send them there, and then turn and abuse them. Public men get nothing but abuse, after all. It is a hard thing to serve the public; but it is a glorious thing to serve Christ. I would a thousand times rather have Him for my Master than the cruel, heartless, wretched world. To know that we have only one Master—one to please and one to glorify—is a most blessed thing. He is not a hard Master. He knows we are liable to make mistakes; and He is ready and willing to forgive.

Since Christ is such a glorious Master should we not be willing to sacrifice ourselves to Him and give up all and follow Him, and turn our backs upon this fleeting world and live for Him? When our country was in danger, men laid down their lives and gave up everything for their country. The moment Abraham Lincoln called for 600,000 men, you could hear the tramp of their feet in every direction, and the song went up from all quarters: “We are coming, Father Abraham, 600,000 strong.” All Mr. Lincoln had to do was to call; and the men came pouring in.

Christ is calling for laborers. There are nations perishing for the want of the Gospel tidings. We are a long time getting them to the world. America has men enough and money enough to do it all, to send the Gospel around this globe. It is high time that this Gospel was proclaimed in every town and village and hamlet throughout the whole world. It would be very easy, if God’s disciples would work together for it.

Since we have such a glorious Master, who has passed through Heaven and is sitting on the right hand of God, calling for laborers, shall we withhold our lives and affection? Shall we not go into the vineyard and work for Him? It is a glorious thing to have such a Master, a high, exalted privilege to be a co-worker with God. Let us remember our Chieftain has gone on before. He bears even now at the throne of God those scars He received here for our sakes; He suffered and endured the cross, despising the shame, for the glory that was before Him. Shall we excuse ourselves from work? Shall we say: “Do not send me, Lord; send someone else”? Oh, just to go into the heat of the battle! There has never been a time in your life, or mine, when we could work for our Lord and see such immediate fruits and results. It seems to me that all we have to do is to sow with one hand and reap with the other. The harvest seems to be white; the fields are waiting for the sickle; the voice of our Master is calling us. Shall we hear that call in vain? Are there not thousands who shall say, “Lord, use me!” Mothers can be used; young men can be used among their companions; elderly men can be used in their declining days. Shall we not all go to work for Him, while yet there is time?

There is “**one thing**” that Paul speaks of: “**One thing I do.**” I like to see those Christians who have a definite work, and are doing it. I like to see them work, in view of the heat and the burden of the day, and never weaken. A great many, having received a new spirit, are asking what they shall do. They are quickened into new life; they are all full of soul, full of life, and the fire burns in their souls; and they want to publish the tidings of salvation. The cry is, “**What shall I do?**” Let me say to you, find one thing and do it well. Do not think anything you do for the Lord is a little work. What seems to you a little work may be the mightiest thing that has ever been done.

You are a teacher in the Sunday school, for example, and have a class of little boys; you do not know what these boys may become. There may be a Luther, there may be a Whitefield, there may be a John Bunyan there. You may lead these little boys to Christ; and they may go out and move the world like Luther. No one ever thought that monk would become so mighty in God’s hand. He shook the whole world; the Spirit of the living God came upon him. The dark clouds that settled upon his nation were lifted and beaten back. He drove them back. It is a great thing to turn our souls to Christ. Find one thing to do for the Saviour, and do it well.

“**This one thing I do,**” said Paul. If he had folded his arms and said: “Oh, dear, the Christians are so cold we cannot do anything; if the church was wide awake we might.”

Never you mind whether the church is wide awake or not; you keep wide awake yourself. If you wait for the church, you will never do anything. I made up my mind ten years ago that I would go on as if there were not another man in the world except me to do the work. I knew I had to give an account of my stewardship. I suppose they say of me: “Oh, he is a radical; he is a fanatic; he has only one idea.” Well, it is a glorious idea. I would rather have that said of me than to be a man of ten thousand ideas and do nothing with them.

A man who has one idea, and that idea Christ, that is the man for me; that is the man we want now. A man who has one idea, one desire, one thought, and that idea, that thought, that desire, Christ and Him crucified—that is what this groaning, perishing world wants now. It can get on without our rhetoric; it can get on without our fine speeches, without our eloquence. They do not want those; they want Christ and Him crucified. Let that old man find his work, and go about it; let that young lady find her work, and do it. Don’t go and get discouraged when you get to work because you don’t find everything as prosperous as you expected. You cannot tell what will prosper. What you think is prosperity may turn out to be the worst thing you could have done, and the thing you have least hope of may turn out to be your greatest success.

A woman, who was seventy-five years old, had a Sunday school two miles away among the mountains. One Sunday there came a terrible rain storm; and she thought at first she would not go that day, but then she thought, “What if someone should go and not find me there?”

Then she put on her raincoat and overshoes and took her umbrella, and away she went through the storm two miles away to the Sunday school in the mountains. When she got there she found one solitary young man, and taught him the best she knew how all the afternoon. She never saw him again, and I don’t know but the woman thought her Sunday had been a failure.

That week the young man enlisted in the army; and in a year or two later the teacher got a letter from the soldier, thanking her for going through the storm that Sunday. This young man thought that stormy day he would just go and see if the elderly woman was in earnest; and if she cared enough about their souls to go through the rain. He found she came and taught him as carefully as if she were teaching the whole school, and God made that the occasion of winning that young man to Christ. When he lay dying in a hospital, he sent the message to the teacher that he would meet her in Heaven. Was it not a glorious thing that she did not get discouraged because she had but one school and scholar? Be willing to work with one.

Bear in mind the words, **“This one thing I do.”** I live for souls and for eternity; I want to win some soul to Christ. If you want this and work for it, eternity alone can tell the result. May God give us a passion for souls.

When Joshua was 110 years old, the old warrior lay dying, and he called the elders in Israel around him; as they gathered around his bedside, he gave them some words as his dying testimony. There stand the elders in Israel, and he was the last one of the great leaders alive. Moses was gone; Aaron was gone; he was the only man left who was at Mount Sinai when the law was given from on high. They stood around his bedside, and heard his dying testimony. How it shone out!

“Behold this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in your hearts and in your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things that the Lord your God spoke concerning you.”

Is not that a high tribute? Had not God kept His Word to them? The old warrior is going to rest, and this is his dying testimony: **“Not one thing has failed. All things have been fulfilled.”** That is what the man has said who has tried God. Infidels will not try God, and of course they do not have such a peaceful end as the man who has taken God at His Word.

Let us look over the six **“one things.”** **“One thing thou lackest.”** Do you lack Christ? Oh, take Him now! **“One thing I know.”** Do you know you have Christ? If you do not, do not lay down this book without knowing it; talk with some Christian man; or woman who knows he has salvation. Make up your mind you will not delay in making sure you can look up and read your **“title clear to mansions in the sky.”** I would rather do that than have a title to all America. I would rather have some poor soul, whom I have won to Christ from this dark world, come and weep over my grave when I am gone, than to have a monument of pure gold reaching from earth to the skies. The next one thing is the **“one thing that is needful.”** **“One is your Master”**; **“one thing I do”**; **“not one thing has failed.”** It is the privilege of everyone to have all these **“one things”** and to know that you have them.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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