

# THROUGH NIGHT TO MORNING

by

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SERMON NINE -

## THE WORLD'S ONLY NEED

**"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"** (I Corinthians 2:2).

THOUGH Paul's first vision was of the glorified CHRIST, he did not glory in the glorified.

In the light of the glorified, he came back to the crucified for his glorying. So that in his letter to the Galatians he can say, **"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

I am aware that this text is sometimes explained in the light of local limitations, that at Corinth Paul is determined not to know anything **"save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,"** though he might know other things elsewhere. But will you bear with me as we consider this subject - **"Christ, and Him crucified,"** the world's only need, in all ages and all countries.

Leonardo da Vinci took a friend to criticize his masterpiece of the "Last Supper," and the remark of the friend was: "The most striking thing in the picture is the cup." The artist took his brush and wiped out the cup, as he said, "Nothing in my painting shall attract more attention than the face of my Master."

Such was Paul's thought and theology.

My subject, therefore, is **"Christ, and Him crucified,"** the world's only need for salvation, for propagation, for civilization, for glorification.

### I. **"Christ, and Him crucified," THE WORLD'S ONLY NEED FOR SALVATION**

We need, first of all, to define the word, if we can. It is too deep, too broad, and too high for accurate definition, but we may touch the fringes of it, and receive blessing in the touch. What is meant by **"Christ, and Him crucified?"**

CHRIST said **"I am... the Truth,"** and it is the nature of truth to defend itself. It bears a sword - **"the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,"** and its mission is to use the sword. But **"Christ, and Him crucified"** means incarnate truth forgetting to defend itself, as it gives itself in sacrificial service.

CHRIST is Light, and it is the nature of light to display itself; but **"Christ, and Him crucified"**

means light refusing to display itself, while it gives itself for those in darkness - light willing to be obscured that others may have sight and light.

CHRIST is Life, and it is the nature of life to protect itself; and when that goes too far, it is cowardice; but "**Christ, and Him crucified**" means life forgetting to protect itself, as with sacrificial spirit it gives itself for the dead in trespasses and sins.

CHRIST is Power, and it is the nature of power to exert itself; but "**Christ, and Him crucified**" means power restraining itself, holding itself back, refusing to exert itself, in order that it may give itself for the weak and the helpless.

CHRIST is Holiness, and it is the nature of holiness to cultivate itself; but "**Christ, and Him crucified**" means holiness not caring to cultivate itself while it gives itself in sacrificial spirit.

CHRIST is Wisdom, and it is the nature of wisdom to admire itself; but "**Christ, and Him crucified**" means wisdom forgetting to admire itself while it gives itself for the foolish and the ignorant.

CHRIST is Love, and it is the nature of love to enjoy itself; but "**Christ, and Him crucified**" means love refusing to enjoy, love assuming burdens, love willing to bear pain, love giving itself in sacrificial spirit for the unlovely and the ugly.

Sum all this up, and we have a partial definition of the meaning of "**Christ, and Him crucified**" - sacrificial truth, sacrificial light, sacrificial life, sacrificial power, sacrificial holiness, sacrificial wisdom, sacrificial love - all incarnate in Christ; "**Christ, and Him crucified**," Heaven's best for earth's worst. "**And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.**"

Truth, as it defends itself, may not be attractive. The sword-point is not apt to attract. Light, as it displays itself, is not apt to be attractive. Life, as it protects itself, and Holiness as it cultivates itself, are not so attractive. Power, as it exerts itself, may be attractive or not. Wisdom, as it admires itself, and Love, as it enjoys itself, are not most attractive.

It is the sacrificial spirit that makes truth, light, life, power, wisdom, holiness, and love attractive. "**I, if I be lifted up... will draw . . . This He said, signifying what death He should die.**" Not the CHRIST of truth and light, not the CHRIST to be admired, not the CHRIST of power, not the CHRIST of love that merely enjoys itself in self-complacency, but the CHRIST who gives Himself, is the CHRIST that attracts.

"**Christ, and Him crucified**," is the world's only need for salvation. Did you ever feel the sense of sin's guilt, and have the consciousness that in "**Christ, and Him crucified**" there is forgiveness, there is justification? Forgiveness and justification will attract the guilty.

## II. "**Christ, and Him crucified**," THE WORLD'S ONLY NEED FOR PROPAGATION

"**Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.**" Philip, coming to CHRIST, said, "There are some Greeks who

would like to see Thee." Did the Lord JESUS reply, "Bring them along; I will be glad for your Greek friends to see Me?"

With an abruptness that at first is surprising, He said, "**The hour is come when the Son of man should be glorified. . . . Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.**" "Philip, if your Greek friends see Me now, they will not see JESUS; they will see the Son of man and the Son of GOD, the God-Man, the perfection of humanity and Deity; but the only way to see JESUS is to behold Him in the process of dying. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; and herein, Philip, is the process of propagation."

It is by the process of dying that the wheat multiplies, and it is by the process of CHRIST's dying that CHRIST multiplies. You are Christians, not by the life of JESUS, but by the death of JESUS: "**Christ, and Him crucified**" - the dying grain of wheat, with a view to the harvest; and just as that principle is incarnate in the Christian life, missionary enterprise results in converts.

Just look at it for a moment. Truth with the sword - does that make many converts? It gratifies some Christians to see the preacher in the arena. We like to see a conflict, and it may be needed for the defence of the truth; "**Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**"

It may be needed for the strengthening of faith; but truth on the altar makes more converts than truth in the arena. Truth ablaze for GOD, with sacrificial spirit, will multiply converts, while the flourishing sword may simply confuse and antagonise.

Then, light displaying itself - does that attract and multiply converts? What is light?

Geologists tell us that during the carboniferous era there were great forests - forests taking in the light from the sun into leaf and limb, trunk and root; and then there came revolutions by which these forests were buried under the ground, and by processes of heat and pressure the coal-beds were formed.

We dig out the coal, and put it through a process of combustion. That liberates the light which was conserved from the sun, and locked up in the black coal, during the centuries.

How does CHRIST become the Light? Through the sermon on the Mount? Nay, verily. Through the parables and the miracles? No; they are but reflections of the Light. It is by the process of combustion on the altar. Out from the altar fires of Calvary there comes the Light that was conserved from Heaven, and the Spirit turns to Christians and says, "**I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.**"

It is by the process of combustion that the Christian becomes light. "**I am the Light of the world.**" "**Ye are the light of the world,**" said JESUS.

I remember in my early ministry preaching a sermon from that text on "Christians as Reflectors of Light," and it is possible to make some nice points. The reflectors must be at the right angle, and the dust must be kept off, and so forth; but it was a cold sermon; reflection is a cold process.

You cannot raise a crop by moonlight; you must have the rays directly from the sun. It does not say that Christians are reflectors of light, but "**Ye are the light**," the light that is made by the process of combustion while upon the altar of GOD.

As CHRIST became Light through death, we become light by the sacrificial spirit.

The great mission of Satan is unveiled by Paul, when he says, "**Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**." The Mission of Satan is to give light; he displays light; and if by giving light - scientific light, philosophic light, theological light, any sort of light - he can satisfy men without the light of "**Christ, and Him crucified**," he has accomplished his purpose.

Light made by the process of sacrifice is the need of the world for the propagation of the Gospel.

So also with life. It is life sacrificed that multiplies converts. The missionary who safely guards his health and his income, his home, his family, and his luxuries, will not make many converts. The missionary who simply tries to live in the best way possible will not multiply converts. It is the missionary on the altar, the missionary ablaze, the missionary with Calvary in his heart, that multiplies converts. Life that merely protects itself has no power of propagation.

As that is true of light and life, so it is with holiness. It is well to cultivate holiness, and I presume Holiness Conventions are good in their way. They enable us to study the principles of holiness, and they make us a trifle more holy as we feed upon the truths that reveal Biblical holiness, but I do not remember ever having heard of a Holiness Convention where there were many converts.

The mere cultivation of holiness, somehow, does not propagate.

Holiness on the altar, holiness ready to be consumed, holiness active for GOD, is the power that propagates. Be ye perfect, be ye holy, as GOD is holy. Be it, but be careful not to say it. Let your wife find it out, and as soon as she finds it out she will gossip it all over the town. Everybody will soon know about it.

The sun does not ring a bell and say, "I am shining!" It just shines. And it is holiness that is ablaze, forgetful of itself in its own cultivation, that propagates the Gospel and multiplies converts.

Power can compel without convincing; can drive without persuading. But it is power on the altar, power being consumed for the sake of the weak - in other words, it is "**Christ, and Him crucified**."

If the twelve legions of angels had come, they could have destroyed His enemies, but there would have been no propagation, no multiplication. It was holding back the twelve legions of angels - the grain of wheat dying - which brought the harvest.

So, certainly, with wisdom and love. Love refusing to enjoy, love giving itself out, thus becoming so attractive that it almost mesmerizes. The most repulsive scene of this world was witnessed just outside the gate - three men hanging on a cross apiece; and One in the centre, with

the marred face, the clotted blood, and the broken heart.

I would go across a continent to keep from seeing it. The tragedy of the crucifixion is awfully repulsive, but underneath the tragedy there is a fascination, there is a beauty, there is an attraction, that holds me against all counter-attractions.

I was on a battle-field some time ago, and I confess that the description of that battle almost curdled my blood. It was such terrible carnage; I will not harrow your feelings by repeating it. And yet in the midst of that scene of carnage is a monument reaching up towards the clouds. Did they build that to carnage? No, they built it to the deeper meaning; they built it to the sacrificial spirit that was manifested in that battle. You may walk the streets of London, and you will find, with scarcely an exception, that the monuments you see were built not to external repulsions, but to the deeper meaning of the Cross, self-sacrifice for the good of others.

### **III. "Christ, and Him crucified" is THE WORLD'S ONLY NEED FOR CIVILIZATION**

Civilization is made up of truth, light, life, holiness - spell it "**righteousness**" if you will - power, wisdom and love. You will find civilization in pagan lands with a large measure of truth defending itself, light displaying itself, life protecting itself, power exerting itself, holiness cultivating itself, wisdom admiring itself, and love enjoying itself; but only in Christian civilization do you find the high type manifested by the spirit of "**Christ, and Him crucified.**"

If everybody in England and her Colonies would receive "**Christ, and Him crucified,**" with all which that means, you would settle every public problem that perplexes statesmen to-day.

You would settle the divorce problem in a week, because if every husband loved his wife well enough to die for her, and every wife loved her husband well enough to die for him, the divorce lawyer would have to retire from business.

You would settle the war problem in less than a week. If everybody loved everybody else well enough to die for them, they would not kill them.

"**Christ, and Him crucified**" would settle the Capital and Labour problem in ten minutes. If every employer loved every employee well enough to die for him, and every employee loved every employer well enough to die for him, we should never have another strike.

If everybody accepted and loved "**Christ, and Him crucified,**" it would settle the drink problem. If everybody loved everybody else well enough to die for them, they would not kill them with drink.

"**Christ, and Him crucified**" would settle every problem that perplexes the public mind.

"**Christ, and Him crucified**" is the solution of politics, economics, statesmanship, and religion.

- Let our universities crown Him, and learning will have the right relation to everything else in Heaven and earth.

- Let our business men crown Him, and commerce will have the right relation to everything else.

- Let the home crown Him, and it will be a vestibule of Heaven.

#### IV. Finally, "**Christ, and Him crucified**" is THE WORLD'S ONLY NEED FOR GLORIFICATION

There is a civilization beyond anything we have attained. We have a description of it in the book of Revelation.

A Redeemed Municipality coming down out of Heaven, "**prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**" No tears, no heart-break, no sin, no cemeteries. It is a city with streets, and order, and law, and life and glory. We call it Heaven, and you will agree with me that it is the climax of civilization.

Now, let us go through the gates ajar; listen a moment, and look while we listen. John says, "**I beheld... in the midst of the throne... a Lamb as it had been slain.**" Then he goes on to say, "**I heard the voice of many angels . . . saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.**"

That makes Heaven - the enthronement of CHRIST and Him crucified; the enthronement of truth, light, power, holiness, wisdom and love in the person of CHRIST - all sacrificial - and that is the opposite to hell.

The living CHRIST with the marks of the cross enthroned makes Heaven.

In Heaven as He rules and reigns, all the redeemed and the angels give Him His due. "**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain**"; and the Standard of Worth in Heaven is "**Christ, and Him crucified.**" If John should meet Paul on the streets of glory, and say, "Paul, how much do you think Peter is worth?" Paul would not think of gold, for they pave the streets with it there; he would think, "How much is Peter like the slain Lamb, like CHRIST and Him crucified?" The standard of character in glory, in this perfect civilization, is "**Christ, and Him crucified.**"

Sacrificial truth, light, life, power, holiness, wisdom, and love, still incarnate, ruling in the glory. Shall we wait for it? I am glad that we are going to Heaven, but I am more glad that Heaven can come to us, and just as "**Christ, and Him crucified,**" is preached and received, we have the building up of Heaven's civilization on earth.

Not only the imparting of GOD's salvation, and the method of propagation, and the civilization that is here, but the glorification of civilization itself is "**Christ, and Him crucified,**" enthroned, mastering the minds, hearts, pleasures, and businesses of men, while we wait for the coming of the King in glory, when the reserves shall be called out for the final charge and victory.

While we wait for the day-dawn, let us seek to establish Heaven's civilization in our own hearts, in our churches, in our land, in our world, and Heaven will have come to us before we go to Heaven.

~ end of chapter 9 ~