

COSTLY LIVING and A CHEAP RELIGION

TEXT:

2 Samuel 7: 2-3:

2 That the king said unto Nathan the Prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.

King David was dwelling in a mansion of splendor, but the Lord's House was a frail, drifting, precarious tent. Great effort is placed on the comforts of this life and all the earthly enjoyments, but little true consecrated efforts are expended on that which is eternal, whether the Lord's House or our hearts – the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

The call — in this crucial hour of world apostasy and the mad rush to worldly pleasure and self-pleasing — is to Christ and His Church.



Put away all sham and make-believe religion, and go on into the deeper spiritual life which the Lord requires of us all. What we are now in possession of, spiritually, will not bear the eye of Divine scrutiny and will be cast upon the scrap heap of the Judgment trash pile. All our works shall be tried by fire, and that which will not abide the test of fire will be burned up, but we will be saved so as by fire, or by the skin of our teeth.

The call of this hour is for more emphasis, shifting from “church-anity” to Christianity. It is to be feared that the Church is not prepared for the tremendous demands of this Sodomite generation. If we meet the demands of clean and pure religion, we must abandon the cheap, second rate, sham cloak of Sunday professional piety, and make new and better connections with our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is it that has cheapened your religion?

What is it that has cheapened your religion? We have fallen so in love with the new gadgets and means of entertaining ourselves — clothes, homes, good times, electronics — and we pamper ourselves so much with costly living that we are in great danger of overlooking the Lord Jesus. The dazzling lights of earthly attractions and all their secondary glamour are causing many to lose sight of the Son of Righteousness — our only Hope — in this life and the life to come.

The Church and its Head — The Lord Jesus Christ — has the only solution for this

world's ailment as it reels like a drunken man into the gutter of eternal doom. The church cannot have cheap religion, and yet meet the needs of our youth who are being swept off their feet with every enticement the devil can hatch out. Let us not coast on to Heaven on past experiences, though they were wonderful. The same consecration and surrender we made to become sanctified unto the Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit and fire must be continued daily, or the fire will die out. The fire must be kept burning on the altar of our souls.

The youth want fire in our churches – not ashes, cinders, and clinkers. What are we providing for them? It took live coals from the Altar in Heaven touching the lips of Isaiah to change his whole life and ministry, and make it God honoring.

Beloved, God's methods and means of making us happy, holy, and helpful to the turning of the lost souls to Jesus have not changed. We cannot turn others to Jesus unless we are wholly turned to the Lord ourselves.

It is recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy that people were offering lame and blemished animals for the sacrifices of the altar, showing their cheap, half-hearted surrender to Almighty God.

Deuteronomy 15:21:

21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.

Malachi 1:8, 13-14:

8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of Hosts.

11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering: for My Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of Hosts.

12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The Table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible.

13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of Hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

14 But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of Hosts, and My Name is dreadful among the heathen.

Is your All on the Altar?

*You have longed for sweet peace, And
for faith to increase,
And have earnestly, fervently prayed:
But you cannot have rest,
Or be perfectly blest,
Until all on the Altar is laid.
Is your all on the Altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart, does the Spirit control?
You can only be blessed,
And have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and soul.*

There is a seducing influence of our flesh to cause us to give ourselves the best, but give God second place during the week and even on Sunday, the Lord's Day. I have heard many persons say they could not come to church on Sunday because they had to rest up so they could go to work on Monday. It sounds as if a job is worth more to them than Jesus. This is cheap religion which cannot move the world to the Lord Jesus, nor will not stand in the day of judgment.

If we are content with the common things for the Church and the expensive for ourselves, our religion is more sham than reality, and has worms in it – and you know what worms are a sign of?

The Prophet Haggai declares:

Haggai 1:4-5:

⁴ Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your sealed houses, and this house lie waste?

⁵ Now therefore thus saith the LORD of Hosts; Consider your ways.

Barnabas had a different kind of religion than Ananias and Sapphira. He gave his best to the Lord and got the best from the Lord, while Ananias and Sapphira gave their second best and lost everything. You can do only one thing with cheap religion, and that is get tired of it and think little of it. God doesn't think much of it either.

Simon, the sorcerer, thought old-time Holy Ghost religion could be bargained for with corruptible things such as silver and gold. He tried to buy the priceless

Holy Ghost, but found to his bitter dismay that money is not valuable enough, and houses and lands are not great enough worth. God does not ask for this stuff – He already owns it all.

Acts 8:18-20:

18 And when Simon [the sorcerer] saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Men and women are willing to pay the most for the best the world has to offer, but will withhold part of the price when it comes to get the Lord's best. God wants you — all of you — fully surrendered, not for one night nor for one week, but forever.



How many of us have stolen from the Lord His redeemed property, redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of Jesus? The Bible says:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Amen – or - Oh me! – Which is it?

Judas sold Jesus for a lousy 30 pieces of silver. When Jesus is not precious in our hearts, it's because we have not given our all to Him and because we do not value Him more than all the wealth of this world.

When your religion has nothing left of value to you, it is cheap and worthless. You do not value it, and the world does not want it. If you and I do not love Jesus with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all of our strength (note the ALL'S), then our religion is cheap. It is cheap, because there is something else we are preferring above and before Him. If your religion costs you nothing, it is worth nothing. If the self-ward side of your life is given the most attention, then the Godward side is neglected. When you give the utmost pains to obtain earth's best, most likely any old thing will do for your spiritual life.

If your religion costs you nothing, it is worth nothing.

It is suicide to play with earth's trifles, for our soul's eternal destiny is at stake. The best we can secure in this life cannot be taken with us to where we are going eternally, whether to Heaven or to Hell. We can only value our religion by the amount we invest into it. It cost Jesus everything to redeem us. Do you recall the song:

*I gave My life for thee,
My precious Blood I shed
That thou mightiest ransomed be,
and quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave My life for thee.
What hast' thou given to Me?*

"To give is to have — to keep is to lose." This was proven in the life of the rich farmer in Luke 12. He tore down his barns and built greater ones to store all his goods, but he lost everything. God called him a fool, and God took his life.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF YOUR RELIGION?

Matthew 16:26a: For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

It is certain we all cannot hang around here on earth always; we are eternity-bound souls.

Oh, dear judgment-bound souls, how is it with your soul? Jesus is your only hope for a better life, a happy life here on earth, and your only hope of Heaven forever. Be sure you stay on the right side of Him by doing Him right.

He will test us all by His Word, the Bible.

John 12:48: He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath One Who Judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

John 14:15: If ye love Me, keep My Commandments.

It is time we began digging into THIS WORD to see what the Lord our God requires of us, and become doers of the Word and not hearers only.

James 1:22: But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Oh Christian, do you know you are a sermon in shoe leather? How you treat Jesus before the world, tells what you really are. If you are ashamed of Him before the world, become shut-mouthed, and withdraw from witnessing that you belong to Christ, then you are living in the flesh. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. It shows your carnal nature is not crucified WITH CHRIST, but that the old, carnal man is reigning.

Romans 8:13: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the [Holy] Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

DOES THIS RING A BELL IN YOUR BELFRY?

- I'm sitting at the feet of Jesus, and the Lord is making room in my soul for the Word of God.
- The Lord is filling my soul with fresh, new courage. It is impossible for the devil to discourage me, Hallelujah!
- I'm glad old Enoch, Elijah, Daniel, and Paul came along and broke the ice for me so I can go straight through to Jesus to be my all in all, as well.

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