

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

Charlie DiPalma

LESSON #41 — OUR OBLIGATION TO THE LORD, PART 2

Our hope and prayer is that the Lord is blessing you as you continue to strive to do those things which please Him. We're at the end of the study of our second lesson on sin and the solution for sin. We've seen in this last part of our study, some reasons that we can know that Jesus is the Christian's best friend. And now we're talking about our obligation to the Lord, on the basis of all those things that the Father and His beloved Son have done for each of us, then we ought to do some things in return. We ought to express our love for God by our life of service and dedication and loyalty while we're here on this earth, looking forward to a better place prepared for us in eternity.

And we want to continue looking at several other passages of Scripture where God identifies some of our obligations to Him, on the basis of all that He's done for us. And this time we want to go to Mark's account of the gospel, in Mark chapter 5, verse 19. Mark the fifth chapter, verse 19. "However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.'" Now, we realize that in this context, the Lord was talking to a person whom He had removed demons from and that doesn't occur in the present era, where it is no longer possible for that to occur. But we're talking about, or we want to make application of, the Lord's thought that he expressed to this person. He said, "You go and tell your friends what the Lord has done for you." And that certainly applies to me, and it applies to you, today.

We ought to be willing, indeed, we ought to be enthusiastic and eager to tell our friends what great things the Lord has done for us. Giving us life and health, and a spirit that is made in His image and likeness. His guidance clearly presented to us in the Bible. His Son coming down from heaven, and living a difficult life, suffering and dying on our behalf, and being raised to rule in heaven, and to make intercession for us and be our mediator. We ought to be telling our friends, what great things the Lord has done for us. We ought to be evangelistic, fervent in spirit, wanting to spread that good news of salvation, to all that we can come in contact with, and who will listen to us. And notice he also said, and that the Lord has had compassion on you. Thanks be to God, that he's had compassion on each faithful Christian, and has made it possible for us to be forgiven of our past sins, our trespasses, our iniquities committed against God, and against our fellow man. So we ought to be filled with such joy and love for the Lord that we go tell our friends what He has done for us.

Just bring your mind back to the book of Acts, in chapter 5 and verse 42, where that New Testament Church, those Christians, love the Lord so that the Bible says that daily in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. That's what Jesus is talking about here. We need to be telling our friends about Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, our best friend.

Then another passage, along similar lines, this found in the book of Ephesians, the third chapter, verse 8. Ephesians 3, verse 8. "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Here, Paul talks about the gift that he had from God. That is, the gift, the privilege, the honor, of being able to tell others about Jesus. And God has given that same privilege and honor to each Christian today. Indeed, it is an obligation, it is something that we owe to the Lord on the basis of all that He has done for us. But it ought not to be just done out of obligation, but out of joy, and out of thankfulness, as you see radiating from this passage, from the pen of the apostle Paul. He was thankful that he could go and tell others about Jesus. And notice how he described the message of Jesus: the unsearchable riches of Christ. That is, they are so great, these riches, these blessings of being in Jesus, that you really can't measure them. They're so abundant, and so wonderful, that you can't measure them. And so we ought to have that attitude, too that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in spiritual places, in heavenly places, in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), that we go tell others about the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Now we recognize that because of what God says in the New Testament, that women are not authorized to preach the gospel. They're not authorized to teach the Word of God when men are present. But women can still teach, they can teach other women and they can teach children, and they can teach them the unsearchable riches of Christ. And we all can do that. And we all ought to be striving to do that. And to be more effective in our knowledge, and our ability to use that knowledge to tell others the unsearchable riches of Christ.

And then a good summary passage; this is a wonderful passage of Scripture, showing Paul's attitude towards the Lord and His love for the Lord; this found in the book of Philippians, also. In the third chapter, verses 7-14. Philippians 3, verses 7-14. Paul said, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and consider them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." What a wonderful passage of Scripture. And as we said, if anything can reinforce in our minds the points that we've studied in this lesson, we believe this passage can do it.

Few people have demonstrated love for Christ to the extent and in the way that the apostle Paul did. Let's go back and look at his attitude as expressed in these verses. In verse seven, he says, "What things were gain to me" — "they were profitable to me." Well, what is he talking about? When we read chapter 3, we see that Paul was talking about his accomplishments, his physical accomplishments, the things that he had accomplished in his life. He talked about he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Concerning zeal, he persecuted the

church. Concerning the law, the righteousness which is by the law, he was blameless. Concerning his Judaism, he was a Pharisee. Paul had great accomplishments. He had done great things in his life before his obedience to Christ. What's he saying? "Those things that were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ." "I was willing to recognize that those things were of relatively no value, compared to Christ." You might picture in your mind a scale, and on this one side of the scale, where his physical accomplishments in the past, and on the other side of the scale, is Christ. And you can picture that the Christ was far more valuable, that he was far more valuable than any of those things that Paul had done in the past. Did Paul love Jesus? Was he willing to give up those past accomplishments for the Lord? He certainly did. That's the kind of love that God wants us to have.

And in verse eight, you see a progression. He says, "Indeed, I count all things loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." Now Paul is going a step further. He's saying, "I even considered every other thing, not just those accomplishments that I had in the past. But every other thing I was counting as loss, considering it as loss, that I may have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Knowing Jesus was more important and more valuable to Paul than anything else in all the world. That's what God wants us to strive toward. That's the kind of attitude that he wants us to have.

But Paul said, "Not only did I consider those things of relatively no value, but I actually suffered the loss of all of those things, and count them as rubbish, as garbage, in comparison to Jesus Christ." It reminds us of what Jesus said, in Mark 8, verse 36, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?" To Paul, all the things of the world didn't even begin to compare in value to Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And then in verse 9, he expressed his desire to be found in Christ. We know that he was in Christ because he had been baptized into Christ. And his goal was to continue in Jesus, in His will, in the living of the kind of life that he lived. And Paul wanted to be found righteous, declared innocent, through the faith, that is, through the gospel and his obedience to the gospel, and his living in accordance with the will of God, and His beloved Son.

And then in verse 10, he said, "I want to know Him." Now, he's not just talking about the facts concerning Jesus. Yes, we must know those facts. And we must believe those facts. But Paul was talking about much more. He's talking about a close relationship with Jesus. That is, through prayer, and through study, and living of the words of Christ, the New Testament of Christ, He wanted to know Jesus in that personal way, close relationship with Jesus through His Word, and through the privilege of prayer. Not only that, Paul wanted to know the power of Jesus' resurrection, which we've studied about. Now you think about the disciples of Christ, after the death of Jesus, their great Savior, the one that they were looking forward to, to deliver them from this world. He was dead. He was in the grave. And they were discouraged. They had lost hope. But something changed their life. They were different. They were energetic, enthusiastic, going everywhere, telling people about Jesus. What changed them? The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to be victorious over death. And so it did with Paul. And so it should with us. We know for a certainty that He was raised from the dead. And He has promised we will be to. So Paul wanted to know the power of that resurrection in his life, the power of knowing we serve a risen King, a risen leader, one who is living eternally in heaven for us.

But Paul also said he wanted to know the fellowship of Jesus's sufferings. And there's where true love is shown. What does fellowship mean? It means joint participation in. It means sharing things in common. What is Paul asking here? That he might jointly participate in the sufferings of Christ. That He might share in common those sufferings that Jesus endured for us. Now, that's true love. And that's the kind of love that God wants us to have. Be willing to suffer with Him, because we know that we're then being identified with Him in the closest of ways. That just as He was persecuted for being righteous, we shall be persecuted for being righteous, keeping in mind that if we suffer with Him, we will also reign with Him in eternity.

But Paul didn't stop there. He didn't stop at saying, "I want to have fellowship in the sufferings of Christ." He said, "Being conformed to His death." Paul wanted to die the same way that Jesus did. He wanted to die, the cruel death of the cross. Now what would motivate a man to do that? Only one thing: a tremendous love for the Lord, and a desire to be His, and to be like Him in every way, including His death. That's the kind of love that God wants us to strive to have in our hearts for Him.

And then verse 11, Paul talks about, he wanted to do these things so that he could attain to the resurrection from the dead. He was looking forward to the time when he would be raised from the dead, victorious over the grave, victorious over death, victorious over sin, and to be united with Christ, ultimately, eternally, in heaven.

And then in verse 12, he said, "I haven't attained that resurrection. And I haven't been perfected," that is, "I'm not complete. I'm not totally spiritually mature. I haven't reached all the goals that I've set for my life." But what does he do? He said, "I press on." And that is what we need to do. We need to press on. And we need to have those high goals. Make those high goals, the same goals that Jesus has for us, as expressed to us in His Word, so that our goals are the same as Jesus' goals. And we're pressing towards those goals, like a runner, reaching for the finish line, using all of his or her energy and strength, and denying themselves and going through that pain and enduring to the end, pressing towards the goal. That's what God wants us to do. We'll only do that if we love Him and His beloved Son with all that we have.

And then verse 13, he said, "Brethren, I don't count myself to have apprehended, I haven't reached those goals. But here's one thing I do," Paul said. "I forget those things which are behind," those things in the past, those good accomplishments that he may have had, even as a Christian. He said, "I want to put those out of my mind, because I could possibly dwell on those and become arrogant and self righteous, and one who forgets about God and all God has done." And he's also, we believe, talking about those bad things that have happened in his past, in our past, those sins that we've committed, those things that we've done contrary to the will of God, we need to forget those. But, we can only forget them if we have them covered by the blood of Jesus, if we're Christians, if we've repented of those sins, and confess them to the Lord. So we need to forget that which is behind. Because if we dwell in guilt, we're going to be dragged down, and not be actively involved in Lord's work. And that's why we should forget those things that are behind. And we need to reach forward, as Paul said, he was reaching forward, he was pressing for the goal of the upward call of life of service to God, in His Son, Jesus Christ. The crown of eternal life, that Jesus promised to all those who will be faithful unto death (Revelation 2, verse 10).

So Paul has told us in this passage, things that you and I ought to do in showing our love for the Lord. And this passage ought to fill our hearts and minds also, because it will help us, it will motivate us, it will stimulate us to show our love for the Lord, in all that we think, all that we say, and all that we do. Let's all press on to the goal for the prize of the upward call of God, in His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

That particular passage is the last one that we will study on this subject of our obligation to the Lord, things that we ought to do, flowing out of a heart that is filled with love for the Lord, because of all His love that he's shown to us, in giving us everything that we need that pertains to life and godliness.