

Cut All Ropes

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Study by W.D. Frazee—July 25, 1959

Does Jesus satisfy? Well, if He doesn't it is because we have tried a mixture of Jesus and the world, and that can never satisfy. Never in all the world.

But that is exactly what the great enemy has been tempting men with for six thousand years. He has been tempting men with the idea that it is well to be religious and eat of the tree of life, but why not have some of the tree of knowledge of good and evil along with it? Why be so narrow when one can have all that the world offers and heaven too? And there are great religious movements in the world today that are dedicated to the idea of giving men what they want of the charms and pleasures and follies of this world, and at the same time offering them heaven in the next life. I fear somebody is getting short changed.

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also” John 15:17-20

That is not up to date, is it? That was written nineteen hundred years ago, and times have changed. The world has become civilized. This is a Christian nation. So today a person who follows Jesus doesn't need to be hated by the world. In fact, if he is there must be something wrong with him.

Is that correct? No, it isn't correct. These words are just as true as when Jesus spoke them. If the world hates you, you know it hated Jesus before it hated you. And it has never been sorry for it, and sent its apologies. The world crucified our Lord nineteen hundred years ago, and every day they are crucifying Him afresh as they trample under foot His law, resist His appeals, and go their own way, the way of folly and transgression. And every attempt to compromise, every attempt to call an armistice between the two sides of this war is based upon either an utter ignorance of the issues, or willful ignoring what one knows.

No, there can be no concord between Christ and Satan. There can be no middle ground between right and wrong. The world, having passed under the leadership of the great apostate, is committed to rebellion against the Lord of the universe. And if you and I choose to uplift the banner of Christ in our lives we make ourselves a target for the guns of the enemy.

If you were of the world, the world would love his own. But because you are not of the world, therefore the world hates you. “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord.”

No, we are not greater than our Lord. Sometimes some of us seem more skillful in avoiding persecution than He was. But nobody ever bought peace with the Devil except by compromise. Never. And nobody will today.

I read something very interesting a few days ago. I was looking for something else when I happened onto it. It has been running through my mind. It was written to Brother and Sister P. I don't know what their names were. Doubtless they are long since dead and buried. But I think a large number of their descendants must be around today. In fact, this sounds so up to date that to me it is one more mark of inspiration. It is a comment on this text we have just read. Listen:

“If the world hates you,' said Christ, 'ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.' You have entertained the opinion that the reason why the world is so much opposed to us as a people is that we are too unsocial, too plain in our dress, and too strict in regard to amusements, withdrawing ourselves from them too much in practice as well as in precept. You have thought that if we would be less exclusive and would mingle more with the world, their opinions and impressions of us would be greatly modified. But no greater mistake could affect the human mind” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 433.

I knew that there was danger along this line. But reading this passage alerted my mind more than it had been before. Especially when I came to the tremendous statement that this idea is one of the greatest mistakes that can affect the human mind; the idea that this movement is too exclusive, unsocial, plain in dress, and too strict in regard to amusements. And I suppose that if we were to do a little research of the 1890's when this was written we would be amazed at how much stricter the standards on all these matters were than some folks even know about today.

Be you can see from what I read that the way to true success in soul winning does not lie down that road. That is the point I want you to see.

Then the servant of the Lord quotes the words of Jesus:

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also” John 15:19-20.

I am so glad that God has thought enough of us to warn us of these things. And I trust that every heart here this morning can join in the song:

Fade, fade each earthly joy, Jesus is mine;
Break every tender tie, Jesus is mine.

You cannot have both. The best news I know is that if you really get Him you will be so glad that you don't have to have both. All you need to do to lose all taste of this world is to get far enough away from it and get close enough to Jesus. And the reason Jesus says that if you are going to have Him you must break with the world is because everything in this world spoils the taste of God.

“I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” 1 John 2:14-15.

Is this old fashioned? Yes. Is it up to date? Yes. It is as old as the controversy between truth and error. It will be true as long as sin exists. Only when sin and sinners are destroyed in the lake of fire will there be one unified program without one note to break the harmony. Then every creature in heaven and earth and all through the universe will unite in praise to God. But until then there is a war on.

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” 1 John 2:16.

Tell me, if you were to take out of the moving picture theater the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life how much would you have left? Not enough to keep Hollywood in business. If you were to take out of the TV programs all the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life, how much would you have left? Not enough to make it worth while to pay to put up these TV stations. The thing that makes sin pay off is that it is attractive to the natural heart.

Somebody says, But Brother Frazee, you will never make friends and influence people talking that way. Oh, no. You will scare people away. You must somehow help people to see how to get at least a certain amount of pleasure and entertainment and amusement of this world and at the same time be religious.

I say that there are enough men talking that Gospel that you don't need me to do it. But the blessed Jesus is longing for somebody to echo the cry from His heart, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Yes, the cross of self-denial.

All that is the lust of the flesh and the eye and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world passes away, but he that does the will of God abides forever. The things of this world are temporal, transitory, fleeting.

Years ago, before anybody ever got the idea of these rockets and jets, they had something that many people thought was wonderful. It was the balloon. You

could get at least a little way up in the air and look out over everything. It must have been wonderful to those first space travelers. They are still used in some places for certain purposes.

Were you ever up in a balloon? I have never been. But there is something I know about a balloon. I know that if you want to start toward heaven you have to cut the ropes that tie the balloon to earth. And if you really go you don't just cut half of them or three quarters of them. The balloon may wobble and sway back and forth as rope after rope is cut, but it never starts toward heaven until the last one is cut.

Do you really want to go to heaven? Do you really want to have fellowship with Christ here and hereafter? Then why hang on to the sin of this world? Why not get going? What do you say? All that is in the world is not of the Father. These things are weights that hold us down to keep us back from that trip that will fill our hearts with joy and thrill our hearts with wonder.

Somebody says, "You take what little pleasure I get out of life."

Probably. So you can get some real pleasures that really satisfy.

Elder MacGuire, a dear friend who has traveled around the world a number of times in the service of the Lord, was telling us of an experience on an ocean liner one day. The ship was several days out to sea. He had gotten acquainted with various ones on the ship.

A friend saw him standing on the deck and invited him to come in and take a drink at the bar. Brother MacGuire smiled at him and said, "No thank you. I don't drink."

"You don't?" the friend replied.

As they were talking the friend pulled out a cigar and offered one to Elder MacGuire. Elder MacGuire smiled and said, "No thank you. I don't smoke."

The friend said, "You don't drink and you don't smoke. What pleasures do you get out of life anyway?"

Elder MacGuire told us that man didn't know he got more pleasure out of a drink of pure water than that man did out of a drink of whiskey. And the man didn't realize that Elder MacGuire got more pleasure out of a clean mouth than he got out of that stinking cigar.

Any man who has tried God's way to the full after he has tried the silly indulgent things of this world knows that the exchange we make is not a sacrifice. The very reason God wants us to give up some of these things is because they get in the way of greater joy.

In Acts 4 the disciples were in a time of emergency because the world hated them for being so close to God. Many were thrown out of their homes. The results was that many who had property sold it and laid it at the apostle's feet (Acts 4:35).

In that group of sweet, loving Christians who were sacrificing their all for Jesus and one another there was a man and his wife whose names have been handed down to us. Ananias and Sapphira. What was the matter with them? Let's look:

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet” Acts 5:1-2.

As they lied about it to Peter and the Holy Ghost, they met instant death at the hands of God. What did they do? They kept back part of the price. God wasn't pleased with that.

The balloon wobbled. Some of the ropes were cut, but not all of them.

When I was a boy it used to cost a nickel to ride on the bus. Not very many buses you can ride on for a nickel anymore. Then they began to add pennies. You would have to put in a nickel and a penny, and then a nickel and two pennies.

Suppose I get on one of those buses. I have some money, but I hate to spend it all. All I have is a nickel and two pennies. That is the bus fare. I think I wish I didn't have to spend all that. I am only going a few blocks anyway, so I put in a nickel, and think I have done wonderful. I have paid over half the regular fare. I will save those two pennies.

I stand there and the bus driver says, Two more pennies please. I say, But I have already given you more than half of it. You wouldn't take the last cent I have, would you? How far does this bus go anyway? Suppose I only ride half the way. Can't I go half the way for five cents?

What is the matter? I am trying to do what Ananias did, keep back part of the price. Can I do it and ride? No. But millions are trying it.

Do you have any pennies in your pocket that belong in that little box where the money goes to ride on the bus. Do you have something that belongs to a full surrender to Jesus that is in the secret closet of your heart.

The Lord's messenger said to this brother and sister P. that I was reading about:

“Brother and Sister P, while you have been making a profession of Christianity you have been keeping back part of the price” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 434.

I am so glad that it is our privilege to make the full surrender.

I come to the greatest reason why it is utterly impossible to get Christ and the world together, and the greatest reason you and I will want to go all the way with Jesus. The world crucified our Lord. And when the world sticks out its hand to us in professed friendship, offering fellowship, there is blood on that hand. It is the blood of Jesus, the Son of God.

Suppose Caiaphas should come down the street and offer to take you into his home and make a pal of you. Would you like to have him as your best friend? Suppose Judas would offer to go into a partnership with you. Would you like to get into that kind of program? What about the others who were guilty of the blood of Jesus? Is that the kind you want for close friends?

Nay world, I turn away,
Though thou seemest fair and good;
That friendly outstretched hand of thine
Is stained with Jesus' blood.

This morning the cross of Christ stands, and will forever stand as the barrier between the true Christian and the world.

Don't misunderstand me. We love the people of this world. Jesus loves them. We will do anything in the world for them. We would die for them. But in dying for them, Jesus gave Himself up to be murdered by them, not to be entertained by them. And there is quite a difference.

How does the world look to you? A lost sheep to be saved? Or does it look like a lot of fun you can get on the way to heaven? It all depends on whether you are converted or not.

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” John 15:17-19.

Some of the people who have been saying Amen to everything I have said so far, listen very carefully. Let us be sure that the thing that draws the world's opposition is what we do that is like Jesus, and not what we do that is made up of our own selfish peculiarities.

Christ said in the sermon on the mount, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness.” There are people who are persecuted for the sake of their selfish peculiarities. But that kind of persecution will never bring any blessings. I repeat, let us be sure that the thing we suffer for in living apart from the world is what Jesus said and not our own personal ideas.

While the Gospel of Jesus often awakens opposition from a sin loving world, is that not a reason we should present it in the most attractive and winsome way? God forbid that we should take the Lord Jesus Christ over whom so many in this

world stumble because of His high standards and close requirements, and add to it a bungling manner of presentation that makes still more reject it. The fact that so few will recognize the Pearl of great price calls for the most expert salesmanship on our part. That is a challenge to us this morning.

We who have known the joy of Jesus should not be content to say, Well, I found it, and if other people don't have sense enough to take it, too bad. Oh, let us study how with a tact born of divine love to present to men in the most attractive way the treasures of divine truth. And if we will humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tender-hearted and pitiful, there will be a hundred conversions to the truth where there is not only one.

That is far different than lowering the standard to get numbers. That is far different from fraternizing with the world in order to secure popularity. Oh, let us lift the standard, but do it in love. Let us hold to the truth, but do it in love. Let us present to men the law of God without one change of jot or tittle, but let's do it in a loving, winsome way.

He who gave this truth gave His life with it that men might know His love. And if you and I will share that life of service, and that sacrifice, we too will win everyone who can be won as He did.

Our loving Savior, we thank Thee this morning that the treasures and pleasures of this world fade into nothing when viewed in the light of the cross of Calvary. As we see the love of our Lord in giving Himself for us we want to make Him happy by letting Him have all there is of us. As we see the hate of a sinful world that nailed Him to the cross and laughed at His agony we want no part of it. We pray that this morning Thou will spoil sin for us. Take from our hearts the last vestige to the response of the temptations of sin, and put within our souls a love for Thee that will lead us to lift the standard, and go out to seek lost men and point them to the place of true pleasure. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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