

Bible As An Educator 4 of 4

#0786

Study given by Brother Borrowdale

My name is Borrowdale. It's spelled just as the bankers spell it when you go to the bank to *borrow* money—Borrowdale. I had a friend, a pastor, who once told his new church the first time he stood up that he loved them, and he made this remark. He says, I'd better tell you that now because it may be easier to do that now than it will at any time later. I hope that doesn't prove to be the case, but we have a work to do and a task to do. That's why we're here as a church.

The church is not altogether a sort of hospital in which to nurse sick saints back to life, but it's an army of soldiers who are supposed to take the battle of the Lord into the enemy's territory and build up the church, and I trust that *that* is what we will do.

I told them on Wednesday night at the prayer meeting that I suppose everybody would much rather have had a handsome *young* minister, but you have *me*, as I told them then, a sort of a battered old retread that spent 35 years in the mission field, but there's usually a good lot of mileage in an old retread, you know, if it's well retreaded. And so if you'll tread on me lightly and, *well, retread me*, maybe we'll get something done between us.

Now, I see a number of young folk here—boys and girls. May I see the hands of all the boys and girls and young folks under 20. Oh, my, that's wonderful. That's good. Well, our church has a future.

I'm going to tell a story, first of all, for the young people. I wonder how many of you have ever heard the story of *Al Hafeed*. Probably nobody. Did you ever hear of *Al Hafeed*? Well, *Al Hafeed* was a Buddhist, and he lived in the southern part of central Asia many hundred years ago.

And the Buddhist priest used to come and talk to him often in the evenings. That's the only contact some of those people had with the outside world, and the Buddhist priest would tell him about his travels and about things in other parts of the world, and several times he told *Al Hafeed* about a diamond mine that someone had found in another part of the world and had become rich.

Many times, *Al Hafeed* asked him to repeat that story, and then one day, *Al Hafeed* sold his property—his farm—for less than it was worth and started out to find him a diamond mine. He was going to get rich.

And so, he traveled a great off. He searched the world over. He went through Syria, and then through Egypt, and through Arabia, and he crossed the Mediterranean, and the story says that he even got as far as Spain, but he never found a diamond mine.

And then, he was coming home discouraged and money his all gone and sick with his travels, and one day it seemed all so hopeless to him that he jumped overboard, and that was the end of **Al Hafeed**.

But it wasn't the end of the story of the diamond mine, because the man who bought his piece of land from him, working in his fields one day, came into the yard. It was a little late. The moon was shining. He had a lantern and he saw a little shine in one of the pebbles there in the yard.

He picked up a pebble almost the size of your fist. For that reason, he took it in and put it on the table. A little later, the same Buddhist priest that had told **Al Haheed** the story of the diamond mine, came to visit this man, and there they sat with their little mustard oil light burning, and he too saw the shine in that pebble.

And he said, What's that? The man said, That's one of the pebbles from the yard. There's thousands of them in the yard all over the place, and I brought it in because it had a little shine in it.

The Buddhist priest said, Let me see it, and he looked at it and took a knife and scraped it a little, got out a magnifying glass and had a good look at it, and he said, Do you know what you have here? He says, No. What is it? He said, It's a blue white diamond. Well, he said, the yard's full of them. And that was the way they found that famous diamond mine that was known as Golconda. Maybe some of you have heard of Golconda.

So it is, boys and girls, we send missionaries to the far corners of the earth, and so we should, seeking for jewels for the Lord, but it just may be that if we dig in our own backyard, we might find some right here, and I'm sure your home missionary leader, Brother **Etchel**, will remind you of the man that found the jewels in his own backyard.

I'm going to read for a scripture reading this morning from the 13th chapter of Matthew, just two verses. This is one of the very shortest parables that our Lord ever gave.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it”
Matthew 13:45-46.

Now, I must confess myself to a great liking for precious stones. I like diamonds and I like rubies and I like all those precious stones. In fact, I was a bit of a rock hound for a while, but of all the stones, I love bash pearls. They're so beautiful and so pure white and translucent.

You know, I think the Lord likes jewels, too. When I read about the New Jerusalem, I find that the Lord's description of it is just like an oriental bride, all decked out with her beautiful heirloom jewelry, foundation stones of jasper and pearl and sapphires and topaz, and the 12 gates—each gate is what? One great pearl. And I love pearls because God uses them as a symbol of purity.

God loves beauty. God made the rainbow. He made the northern lights and the stars and the sun and the moon. I don't know if any of you have been south of the equator, but if you have and you've been down there and seen the southern cross and looked at it through a telescope—beautiful blue, yellow—golden yellow—and red—ruby red—and blue white stars in the shape of a cross—it looks like a jeweler's piece hung up there in the sky—beautiful.

And God made the flowers. Did it ever occur to you that He might have made them all a drab gray or not a very pretty brown or even all green, but He didn't do that. I notice that He scattered His colors and lavished them with the most prodigal hand. God loves beauty.

Have you ever stood in the middle of an apple orchard when it was in blossom and just thought how beautiful it looked, or a prune orchard, even, in the springtime. I call these jewels of the field. You notice, the Bible says:

“...That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” Matthew 6:29.

And then, the butterflies—how beautiful they are. God could have made them all a violent sort of purple, for instance, couldn't He—I wouldn't have liked that—but He didn't. He varied their colors and they are so beautiful.

And then, the little hummingbirds—you stand inside a window, and the little hummingbird hovers outside and looks at you and the sun flashes back and forth on him, and he's just a little jewel there in the air.

And then, sometimes when you're by the river, you know, the light comes through the treetops and catches a little kingfisher, and those colors come on and go off and sparkle, you know—jewels of the air. God made them, too, to match the loveliness of the jewels of the field that He made.

But above everything else, God loves the beauty of holiness, and so do we. There's nothing that we admire more than a life that shines because of its goodness and its Christ-like kindness.

When I was over in India up in the northern part, we have a tribe—a class of people that are known as **Sindhis** because they live in Sindh—not in sin, in Sindh—and the Sindhi women wear in their nose a jewel. It has a little pearl on one side and a little pearl on the other side, and a red, red—blood red—burmese ruby in the middle.

I've often thought, as I've watched those Hindu women, that there they have the story of salvation hung right on the end of the nose, so to speak, and they can't see it. They don't even know about it. Because there's the purity, you know—the pearl that represents purity, as man was at the beginning—and there in the middle is that interval of red—red sin—but there, on the other side again, is the restored—the pearl-white beauty of innocence. And I've looked at them, and said, Oh, I wish that you could see as far, at least, as the end of your nose, when we talk to you.

God loves beauty. Now, this little parable here:

“...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”
Isaiah 1:18.

Yes. There are two applications for this little parable. One that we are familiar with—the common one—is that the Gospel and Jesus Christ constitute the pearl of great price, and man has to sell all that he has—give up everything—in order to purchase it, and that’s a true application.

But there’s another, and I like this one. This is given us by the Spirit of Prophecy. The second application is that man was a pearl of great price, and the Son of God gave all that He had to buy him back—sought him and bought him, paying all that He had. You know, in the sight of God, man is of an inestimable worth. Think of it. God, the Father, thought that you and I and all men or any man was worth the life of the Son of God.

When I think of what has happened in our world in recent years, at the indignities that have been heaped upon men, the atrocities that have been perpetrated upon their poor bodies. You think of Germany—Bocenal, Dachau—and the things that the Japanese did to us in the concentration camps. In the sight of God, man is a pearl of great price, of inestimable worth, lost in the field at shore, but to be sought and to be bought at any price.

When I think of the things that have been done to man and the indignities that have been heaped on him in our generation—this so sophisticated, so advanced generation—it seems to me that it’s almost blasphemy for us to despise or disparage any man, whatever his color, whatever his condition. Filthy, yes, degraded, yes, but nevertheless, in the sight of God, though lost in the field and buried in filth, still a pearl of great price. Bought with a price—you know 1 Corinthians, the 6th chapter, and the 20th verse:

“For ye are bought with a price...” 1 Corinthians 6:20.

And such a price it was. 1 Peter 1:18 and 19:

“...not...with corruptible things, as silver and gold...But with the precious blood of Christ” 1 Peter 1:18-19.

All heaven was poured out for us in that one gift.

“...he hath poured out his soul unto death...” Isaiah 53:12.

And that was the death of the cross—hung as a criminal. And do you realize that He would have done that for any man? He would have done that for you, if there would have been no one but you. He would have done it for me, if there would have been no one but me. He would have done it for Hitler. I’m sure I wouldn’t. I feel quite confident that I couldn’t have brought myself to do what Christ did for a man like that,

but we're all pearls of great price and Christ would have come and laid down His life for the worst man that ever lived.

When we contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us, once again, I say it seems to me almost like blasphemy for us to despise or disparage any poor man.

I read in Hebrews, the second chapter, and the seventh verse. It says that:

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels..." Hebrews 2:7.

This is speaking of man—the Son of Man.

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels..." Hebrews 2:7.

Well now, I would think that that would be honor enough for any man, wouldn't you, to be made just a little lower than God's angels. But do you know that that is not what the old Hebrew Bible actually says. That is quoted from what is known as the Septuagint—that Greek translation of the Bible—the Old Testament—that was made by the 70 Jewish elders in Alexandria a generation or so before Christ was born, and when they read what it said in the old Hebrew Bible, they felt that they didn't dare to translate it that way into the new one because in the old Hebrew manuscript the word is Elohim, which means God.—Thou hadst made him a little lower than God. No, they wouldn't write it in, so they wrote, A little lower than the angels.

Made in His image, it says in the first chapters of the Bible—made in His image. And then the Son of God became man and dwelt among us. Oh, you must remember that it is a glorified man that stands before God now. God is no Indian-giver. He didn't give Christ to us and then take Him away again after 33 years, but we're told—read *Steps to Christ*—that He gave Him to us for all eternity, and that Jesus Christ stands in heaven God, but still in the form of a glorified man, and forever He will be one with the race that He has redeemed.

Stephen, when he was being stoned, looked up into the heavens, and he said:

"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of the [majesty on high]" Acts 7:56.

God wants us for companions. We were made in His image because God in His foreknowledge saw that someday His Son would walk this earth as a man, and someday redeemed man would walk the courts of glory with God Himself, in a special sense, God's companion:

"...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth..." Revelation 14:4.

Men, companions for God we were intended to be, and someday that will be true. God wants us to be His companions beginning now, and that friendship is to last forever and forever.

John 17—when Jesus was making His last prayer to His Father, He said:

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am...” John 17:24.

And then, the text that we quote so often, we love so much as Adventists, in the 14th chapter of John:

“...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” John 14:2-3.

Yes, God considers us goodly pearls. Degraded as we may be, lost in sin as we may be, still He considers us of sufficient worth to die Himself to buy us back.

Pearls—you know, isn't it the strangest thing that God should liken you and me—liken us men, who are after all but miserable sinners—that He should liken us to pearls—pearl, that symbol of purity—we as we are, stained with sin. God has wonderful faith in us, doesn't He? Oh, if we only had equal trust in Him.

A pearl—after all, what is a pearl? Where does it come from? How is it made? Well, you know, out in the ocean just a few fathoms deep, there's a rather ugly-looking shellfish that grows. We call it the oyster. Some people eat them. I don't know how they can.

Well, anyway, there's that ugly little shellfish lies down there in the water, and it opens its valves to feed and the water comes through and it catches little small bits of animal life and plant life and feeds on them.

And then, a foreign body gets in—a piece of sand or gravel or something on the bottom of the ocean bed—and it doesn't go out again and it stays there and it rubs and irritates and hurts, and by and by, there's a big, ugly red scar right there in the oyster's body. It hurts.

Well, then, what happens? Well, the oyster secretes a solution that is called nacre, and it covers that foreign body layer by layer with that translucent white substance which begins to harden, and layer and layer and layer is covered over that, and by and by, it hardens, and when we take that oyster up and open it, that which began with a foreign body and a hurting red wound—why, we find there that lovely lustrous jewel that we call a pearl—a beautiful jewel—but remember, it began as an ugly red wound.

And so it is with us. Sin is a foreign body. God never intended it to enter, but it came in, and it irritates and it hurts, and we can't get rid of it by ourselves, and we become sore and stained and sin-diseased, and then what happens?

Why, God begins to cover us with layer upon layer of His own righteousness—that robe of righteousness which is His and which is spoken of as a beautiful white garment—layer upon layer upon layer covers us, until at last He makes of us lovely jewels to shine to the glory of God. So what began as an ugly red wound ends up as a beautiful lustrous pure jewel.

I'm reading Zechariah, the 9th chapter, the 16th and 17th verses. God says:

“...they shall be as the stones of a crown...” Zechariah 9:16.

God's crown jewels. Then it goes on and it says:

“For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty...” Zechariah 9:17.

What is it makes us God's jewels? It's that covering of His beauty of holiness that makes us shine.

Now, I want to read Malachi 3:17, and you're all familiar with this text:

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels...” Malachi 3:17.

Now, this is how the Lord makes up His jewels. Well now, did you know that pearls get sick. They do. There was a lady once. She had a lovely and a very expensive string of matched pearls—beautiful thing—worth thousands and thousands of dollars. She was rather old and she tossed it into a drawer one day and forgot about it, and she didn't wear it for several years.

And then, one day, she opened the drawer and she took it out and held it up, and oh, my, her beautiful lustrous pearls were all dark and gray. They had no shine or luster to them. They looked like they were ruined. What shall I do?

She took them to the jeweler. She said to the jeweler, What can I do with these pearls? Is there any way to bring them back? What can you do for them? He said, I can't do a thing for them. But, she said, is there any way they can be brought back? Yes, he said, there is one way. He said, do you have in your family anyone who is young and healthy? She said, Yes, I have a niece 19 years old, just the picture of health, a beautiful girl.

He said, Fine. You take this string of pearls home and you just clasp them around her neck and drop them down into her bosom and you tell her to wear them for three or four months and then bring them back.

So, she did that, and after three or four months, her niece came to visit her and unclasped the string of pearls and took them out, and there they were just as shiny and lustrous as they'd ever been.

There's only one thing known, as far as I know that will bring pearls back to their original luster, and that's to be worn right close to the body of someone that's

young and vibrant with life, and it seems as though the warmth from the heart brings them back.

Well, you know, we in the church are something like that. We are pearls—God’s goodly pearls—but sometimes we lose our luster, and it’s often because we are dropped in a drawer and forgotten—neglect. Our neighbors, perhaps, forget us. The church, perhaps, forgets us, and our friends perhaps forget us.

And as I travel around here at home in the United States I find in every town that I go, there are many, many of these crown jewels of God’s, these pearls that He made up for jewels, that have been neglected, that have dropped aside and that have remained in some place or drawer or forgotten place for years, and oh, if we could only bring them back. They’re goodly pearls still, but they’re sick and how sick. The luster is gone. They need to be cherished.

Now, there is a word that I love. I suppose a good many of us are married. You remember when we were married—we men, anyway—we promised to love, honor and—what’s that nice little word? Now, what does that word mean? That means just ordinary care, doesn’t it—or does it? No, it means a little extra care, it means that little extra touch, you know, to *cherish* a thing—to act as though you really loved it better than anything else around—take especially good care of it.

And so, these pearls need to be cherished, and so God gathers us in His hands to cherish us and wears us Himself next to His heart, carries us in His bosom and brings us back to life.

There’s a text in Isaiah, 40th chapter and 11th verse—you’re familiar with it:

“...he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them...”
Isaiah 40:11.

Where?

“...carry them in his bosom...” Isaiah 40:11.

And warmth from the great heart of infinite love revives and restores. That is the way Jesus does. Is it the way we do?

I want to tell you a story now. There was once when Jesus was here on earth that some of these hypocritical church leaders of His day brought to Him a poor woman who was sin-sick. She had been caught in the very act of committing sin, and these self-righteous hypocrites—they brought her to Jesus and they were going to make an exhibition and an example of her and catch Jesus at the same time.

I suppose, actually, they saw in this poor woman just something that was rather nasty, and so they accused her of her sin, and it was true—too true—that’s what *they* saw. But let us thank God that:

“...the LORD seeth not as man seeth...” 1 Samuel 16:7.

The Lord looked at that woman, and He saw something the others didn't see. He saw a goodly pearl. He saw a jewel for His crown.

Well, there she stood, a poor sinner, terribly embarrassed. But what did the Lord do? Did He shake His finger at her and lay down the law to her and tell her she'd been a bad girl and now she had to be a good one and so on and so forth?

Well, you know, I like to think about that a little as we pass that point. She was a sinner, it is true, but was she alone in her sin? These men knew about it, evidently, didn't they? It almost seems to me that they may have known where to look.

Once upon a time over there in India, I had some trouble with the school—boy and girl trouble—and I was trying to get at the bottom of it and get the truth out from some of my Indian workers, and I couldn't get much out of them.

And finally, I said to one Indian man—I said, Now, Brother James, you tell me honestly what you think. I'm tired of this shilly-shallying. What do you think about it? Well, he looked at me—and you know, they never like to get one another into trouble—and he looked at me, and he said, Sir, he said, you know, you can't clap with one hand. And you can't, can you?

Now, this girl hadn't been clapping with one hand, I'm sure, and so the Lord looked at her and He looked at these fellas who had brought her, and instead of saying a thing in the world, He just stooped over and began to write in the sand, and do you know what He was writing? Well, the eldest one of those Pharisees—he showed his rank, I suppose—I'm the eldest and with my seniority I'll go up and see what He's writing.

And he went up and looked over the Lord's shoulder, and as he looked his face got first red and then it got white and he pulled his cloak up over his head and shrank a little and walked away. And then the Lord very graciously wiped out with His hand what He'd been writing there in the sand. The Lord had been writing some of *his* misdeeds.

And so, the next one came up and had a look, and the Lord did the same thing for him, and he took a look and *his* face got red, and *he* went away. And by and by, one by one, they *all* went away.

And when all had gone, the Lord looked at her, and His pure eyes looked deep into her soul. You know, this business of looking at one another—these men went out one by one, and they did well to go out because, after all, they lived in glass houses, didn't they.

You know, the old proverb—what does it say—people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones, and I'd like to add to that, that's what they *shouldn't* do—they shouldn't throw stones—and I'd like to add to that what they *should* do—they should pull down the shades. Somebody is going to see what they're doing.

And so, the Lord looked up into the eyes of this poor young woman. You know, His eyes were different to the other men's eyes. Your eyes and mine have become a

little sophisticated. You know, when we are born and grow up, little children have the loveliest eyes, don't they. Sometimes I look at a little baby, three or four months old, you know, and the little thing looks up to you with that wide-eyed innocent stare, and it begins to make you feel ashamed of yourself for some reason, doesn't it—absolutely innocent.

But after we grow a bit older, you know, we learn to drop a veil in front of our eyes and kind of hide things a bit, and our eyes aren't windows any longer. They're just walls.

But the Lord had never committed any sin. His eyes never lost that look the children's eyes have, and so He looked up with His pure eyes into the eyes of this poor woman, and He saw something entirely different. He saw a heart—you read *Desire of Ages*—He saw a heart, it says, that was capable of the deepest and truest affection, of the utmost loyalty and love.

And I suppose the Lord had a sense of humor, like the rest of us, don't you, and I imagine there was possibly just a little quirk at the corner of His lips as He looked up at that poor girl, and He said, Where are your accusers?

You see, she could read what was written on the sand and in the dust there, too. She was right up close, and she knew what had been written, and so I imagine when the Lord looked up and said, Well, where are your accusers, she knew very well what He meant. And she got a little courage and she said, None, Lord. There's no one here to say a word.

And then, the Lord looked down with his pure eyes right into her soul, and He spoke these lovely words. I think these are some of the loveliest words in the whole Bible. What did He say?

“...Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” John 8:12.

Oh, yes. John 3:17—I wonder how many know what John 3:17 says. Only one? How many know what it says in John 3:16? Yes, but now listen. There's just as much Gospel in the 17th verse as there is in the 16th verse:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

That's true, but:

“For God sent *not* his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” John 3:17.

Oh, there's as much Gospel in the 17th as there is in the 16th verse.

And so this poor girl—warmth from the great heart of God began to restore her and bring her back. John 1:4:

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” John 1:4.

That word light—the word that it’s translated from—doesn’t mean the light you receive. It means the light that shines out. It means luster. It’s translated in many cases luster.

“In him was life; and the life was the [luster] of men” John 1:4.

It makes men shine. It makes them shine like jewels. It turns them into pearls and crown jewels for the Lord’s crown.

So, she was carried next to that great heart of infinite love, for God is love, and she was healed and restored and made whole, from that moment.

Now, we have every reason to believe that this Mary was called Mary of Bethany, and the same Mary who was sometimes called Mary of Magdalla—it’s supposed that she had property, too, in Magdalla, and so was called Mary of Magdalla or Mary the Magdalene. It was this Mary out of whom seven devils were cast.

The Lord fought seven pitched battles for her soul and covered her seven times with that layer of his own beauty of righteousness that makes us shine, and He won the battle—carried her next to His heart until she was thoroughly healed and made a crown jewel, fit for the Lord’s crown. And so, she loved Him. How could she help it?

And you know, I like to think about that utterly feminine, and so let me say altogether lovely thing she did. She took all the money she had and she went down to this eastern bazaar, and what was on her mind? Well, she was a young lady, perfume was on her mind. She went down to the bazaar and she’d made up her mind she’d spend every cent she had and get the finest bottle of perfume she could find in the bazaar and take it and anoint the Lord with it somewhere, somehow.

Now, I know those old eastern merchants and how they do, and I can just picture the scene—you know, a little hole-in-the-wall shop, and she would go down, kind of hesitant, and begin to walk in, and the old merchant would size her up and probably say to himself, M-hm, one of those. Probably not too much money. I’ll get her out something strong and cheap, and he would take out a cheap bottle of perfume from his little store, and he’d say, What do you want? And she’d say, I want to buy some perfume. And he’d reach in and get this cheap, strong stuff, you know—I don’t know what the name of it was—maybe it would be called, My Sin.

Meanwhile, he would tell her, Oh, here, this is just what you want. It’ll bring the men around you like bees around a honey pot. Oh, no, she said. Nothing like that. That’s not at all what I want. I want something exquisite, something fine and delicate and costly.

And he would think again, well, I misjudged this one. She must have more money than I thought, and he would get out something else from his store, and, Yes, that's good, but haven't you got something better.

Ooh, better—must have a lot of money, and he'd get something else. And that would go on for some time the way these merchants haggle, you know, and finally, when she had boosted the thing up and nothing satisfied her—even the most exquisite thing that he had in his ordinary store—he would look her over again and say, Well, maybe she has more.

And he'd go back in his store, you know, and underneath the cloth that he keeps back there and keeps his precious things so they won't be robbed, he'd bring out a little alabaster figurine, you know, carved, full of pure nard, and came back, and he would say, Well now, I have something here but it's *exceedingly* costly. In fact, it's something that we make only for kings. We keep it here for the royal families, and let me—and he just takes the cover off the figurine, you know, the top part, and one little whiff of that nard would fill the place.

And just as soon as she smelled that, Yes, yes. But now, it's costly. It costs a fortune. And finally, she paid him all the money she had, after haggling a little bit, and take that lovely little alabaster box of nard home.

And so, she went to the place where the feast was being held. She walked in. There was the Lord lying, you know, as they did at those feasts, with his head in by the table and his feet out here, and she kind of hesitantly comes up among the people and gets really close and begins to pour this nard on the Lord's feet.

And of course, it filled the whole house and everybody immediately looked, and then she was embarrassed and tried to hide herself, and I imagine she made herself as small as possible and began to cry. She was found out.

And then, her long, lovely hair would fall over the Savior's feet, and absent-mindedly almost, she'd begin to wipe them with her hair, and then that old Simon, the head of the feast, you know, he said to himself—the story tells it—and he said to himself, H-m, well, He can't be a prophet or He'd know what kind of a woman that was.

I wonder how he knew—I wonder how he knew. Do you remember what I said just now—you can't clap with one hand? We have reason to believe he may have been the man who had seduced this poor girl in the first place.

Oh, you know, it's so easy to think we're all right ourselves and somebody else who does some little thing is terribly, terribly bad. Did you ever notice how easy it is to find a way out for one's self and how hard it is to find an out for somebody else?

Well, that was this Mary, as far as we know, and I want to tell you something. This Mary, over whom the Lord fought seven times and won, this Mary, whom the Lord healed and turned her from a sinner into a crown jewel, this Mary who bought the ointment, this was the Mary who was last at the cross, and this is the Mary who was first at the tomb.

It was this Mary who saw the Savior in the garden, it was this Mary who had the vision of angels, not the apostles. Oh, she stayed last at the tomb, as she'd been last at the cross, and there she stood and she cried because her Lord had been taken away, and she saw a man and thought it was the gardener, and he said, Well, what are you crying about? Oh, she said, they've taken my Lord away and I don't know where they put Him. She had something in mind.

Out in the little town of Bethany, there was an empty tomb. She remembered that once the Lord had stood by that tomb and had called to her brother, Lazarus, Come forth. He had told her, I am the resurrection and the life, and that tomb was empty, and in her mind was the thought that she would take all that was left of the Lord who had done so much for her—take his poor broken body and see that it was put in an honored place in her own family tomb. And then, of course, the Lord spoke to her, and she knew who He was.

It was this Mary who ran and proclaimed the risen Lord to the apostles. Well, it's no wonder the Lord said:

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels...” Malachi 3:17.

Warmth from the great heart of infinite love had healed her. She had been carried by the heart of God and made whole, and so it is with all of us. God carries us next to that heart of infinite love, which is the love, all loves excelling—the love of God for us.

Now, in Romans, the 3rd chapter, the 23rd verse—that happened long ago. There's nothing happening today:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”
Romans 3:23.

In one way or another, we all need Jesus. Every heart has its load. I don't know what yours is. You don't know what mine is, but I do know that every heart has its load. I know that:

“The heart [of man] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...” Jeremiah 17:9.

And that's your heart and my heart, but the Lord can take us and make us into something lovely, something fit for His crown, and so He says—you know the text very well—Matthew 11:28:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” Matthew 11:28.

Perhaps, we may have lost something of our Christian luster—that shining—that brightness that shines forth from a Christian life. It's not gone forever. The great heart of infinite love never condemns. Oh, love that will not let me go.

The friend may let you go, the relative may let you go, the church, even, may let you go, but God will never let go—never. Come unto Me, He says, and He will gather us in His arms and carry us in His bosom, and oh, our hearts will begin to be warmed from the great heart of God, and be warmed back to life and to luster, to shining forth the beauty of holiness of a good Christian life.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto me and rest,
Lay down, oh, weary one, lay down,
Thy head upon my breast.

My message this morning is this. Each one of us, with our own burden and our own load—let us lay *our* heads on the breast of Jesus and let Him warm us back to spiritual life. And there may be friends, there may be relatives, whom we may have neglected or for some reason have lost their luster. Let us begin to gather them up, let us, not like **Al Hafeed** but like the man who bought his farm, begin to look in our own backyard for the jewels that may be there.

There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, blessed Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee,
Near to the heart of God.

When God makes up His jewels, in that glad day, it is my prayer that you and I and Mary and all the other trophies of Christ's wonderful saving power, may be there together.

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