

Until one day, Daddy Buckner, recognizing that it was now or never, called to her to come. At first she turned to flee and then he spoke again and so reassuringly she stopped. And this time, with a smile on his face, he said, "Come here, come here." The little girl approached him timidly and he put her upon his lap and put his arm about her and said, "You're so sweet and so beautiful, and I love you so much, and all the boys and girls here at school love you, you are our favorite friend."

That's exactly what Jesus does. That's what He's willing to do. To put His arm and His heart around the worst man or woman in the world and say, "I love you, won't you be my friend?" Again though, the question comes, why did Jesus go to Matthew? Well, I think He went to him because nobody could do for Matthew what Jesus could do. Matthew had problems only Jesus could solve.

He Can Do It for You

Blessed be God, if He could do it for Matthew—and He did—He can do it for you. He can take away the desire to drink. He can remove lust and lying from your heart and he can untangle the mess and set it straight.

Again let me ask the question: why did Jesus go to Matthew? He went because there was something Matthew could do for Him that no one else could do. That's right. Jesus needed

Matthew. "He's a sinner," the crowd said. "Yes," said Jesus, "but I need him to write the gospel of Matthew. I must have this man."

The wisest act in all of Matthew's life was to rise and follow Jesus. If you'll look down into the 10th verse you'll find something else that happened.

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house (and that is Matthew's house) behold many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples."

Matthew took Jesus home with him. You can take Him home with YOU today. You can take Him into your heart today, this very moment wherever you are. Think what it would mean to your home; think what it would mean to your family if you were to introduce Jesus to them. Think what it would mean to that teenage boy who is floundering on the verge of delinquency. Think what it would mean if his father would dedicate his life to Christ. Think what it would mean to your family, mother, for you to become a clean, godly, pure woman. Think what it would mean to your friends were your home to be changed from a place where wild parties are held into a place where the Bible is read and prayer meetings are held. What would it mean to you, if, today, you left the seat of custom as Matthew did, turned your back upon a life of materialism and sin and left **everything** and followed Jesus.

The Responsibility of Man

July 25

The question is often asked me, "What will happen to the people in Africa, or other parts of the earth who have never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who pass from this life into the presence of God? Will they be lost or is there some mercy of God that cares for them?" I'm going to discuss that with you today under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Read Romans 2:11-15 for the text.

When men speak of religion there must be a common meeting ground for their discussion, and so this message is based upon three principles which form a common meeting ground for your mind and mine. The first of these principles is simply stated. It is this:

A man is justly responsible for the right use of whatever light he is given.

Did you get that? I believe that God is just. I believe that He deals with men justly. I do not believe that He could deal with men in a more just fashion than in line with these words. In other words, the giving of light obligates one to walk in it. For as many as have sinned outside the law shall perish outside the law. And as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged according to the law.

Turn to Matthew 11:21-22, "Woe unto thee—" In other words, Jesus is saying, with the coming of more light, there came more responsibility to walk in that light. When these people refused to walk according to the light, they brought more condemnation upon themselves than there will be upon Tyre and Sidon.

Three Channels of Light

Now there are three great channels of light into every human heart. I should qualify that by saying there are three possible channels of light. Every man in the world of normal mental power has at least two of them. You and I in America, and in other favored parts of the world have all three great channels. What are they?

The first is the world of nature around us that tells of the living God. Every man, black, or yellow, red or white, living at the North Pole, or at the South Pole, or at the Equator of our planet, has the world of nature which day and night, the Psalmist said, "declares the Glory of God." Every man has it.

The second channel of light that every man in the world has is his own conscience which excuses him or accuses him.

As Paul puts it, it is that voice within us that tells us when we have done right or wrong, and every man has that voice within him which points out his misdeeds and accuses him of evil or praises him if he had wrought good.

The third great channel of light, of course, is the revealed Word of God. The Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us. The Son of God, and the Holy Bible which tells of Him on every page. And in this Book we see and hear the voice of God, and His finger tracing man's responsibility to Him.

Now every man in the world of normal mental power has at least two of these channels of light—the world of nature and the voice of conscience. If these are all that he possess, it is reasonable and right that God hold a man responsible for these two—but not more than these two. There is nothing unfair about that.

The first principle is that a man is justly responsible for the right use of whatever light he is given. Turn to John 3:19 where he, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, wrote:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

God's Agents

The second great principle is this: An accredited agent, rejected, is the same as rejecting the principal party. In other words, suppose I were the Ambassador of the United States and

sent to a foreign country, officially representing my country and suppose I should receive a public and official insult. That would be the same as an insult to the United States of America.

In connection with this read Matthew 10:40: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."

Thus Christ says, "I send you disciples and preachers. I send you to represent me, you are my ambassadors. I accredit you for a certain purpose, not to tell others what you think, but to give my gospel to a lost world. Thus whoever receives you receives ME."

Now read Luke 10:14. You see here in this passage, spoken by Jesus as He sent out the 70, exactly this second principle which stated is: "If you hear me, you hear God, and if you reject ME, you reject God."

Thus, the caliber of the preacher, or the soul winner does not enter into the matter at all. The preacher who comes to you, or the man who comes seeking to win you to Christ, may be ignorant or intelligent, he may be rich or poor, but if he is sent of God and if he delivers God's message, that accredits him as God's agent.

To turn him down is to turn GOD down.

In 1st Thessalonians, the 4th Chapter and the 8th verse you read:

"He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God." Now, I contend, there is nothing unfair about that either.

Now, the third principle for the basis of our discussion today is this as found in the text: The rejection of Christ is a sin that must be answered for.

No Cloak for Sins

"If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not sin, but now they have no cloak for their sins." NO CLOAK for their sins. (John 15:22)

That isn't difficult for us to understand at all. Here is the Son of God speaking and he's saying that men now have light which obligates them to walk in it. The light of nature, conscience and the revealed word of God. They have an agent that is accredited by the Holy Spirit of God, of whom God Himself spoke audibly saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him."

Thirdly, therefore, it is neither unreasonable nor unfair if it is His will that they must answer TO GOD if they reject this light and reject His agent. In the 3rd chapter of John and the

16th verse you read these startling words:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Here is divine condemnation, it's pronounced upon every man who has the gospel offered to him and rejects it. Not because you are by nature sinful, though that is true enough—not because you have broken God's law, though that is true also, but because Christ has come to you and has said, "FOLLOW ME," and YOU have said, "NO." On this basis, the scripture says, "He is condemned already."

It's a serious matter to be condemned already.

Now, in view of this what should you do?

In Hebrews 1:1-2 you find God trying His best to speak reasonably to everyone of us: "God who at sundry times and divers manners spake at time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things by whom also He made the world.

Now skip to verses 1, 2, and 3 of the 2nd chapter:

"Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For Him shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."

I want to speak to you sitting there listening to me this very moment. Measure the sin of disregarding and rejecting Christ. Measure the light that you had; a mother and father who taught you well, and the Word of God at your fingertips. A Bible available at the corner drug store or 10¢ store—a church—many churches nearby. The light of nature all about you, the voice of conscience within you—all of these accredited agents coming to you again and again through all the years. Now view the authority of the Lord Jesus in your life. He who created you and gave you life and breath. Recognize how little of your life, time and talents you have given to Him. Realize that without Him you have no cloak, and today this moment—wherever you are—you may—you must use the light that you have and reject Him no longer. Trust Him as your personal Saviour.



A dramatic scene from "This My Son."

"This My Son" is the title of the Radio and Television Commission's first dramatic film prepared for use on television. It has been termed by professionals in the field of religious movie-making, "the outstanding religious film of the past three years."

Shooting of the 30-minute movie, based on the parable of the prodigal son, has

been completed by Family Films, Inc., in Hollywood, Calif.

Following its release date in September, "This My Son" will have simultaneous premier showings in Southern Baptist churches throughout the Convention.

Watch your daily newspapers and your state Baptist papers for further announcement of this event.