

Calvary Covers It All

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
Chapter 1	6
FAITH IN FLUX	
Chapter 2	10
THE GREAT COMMANDMENT	
Chapter 3	15
SOLVING THE IDENTITY CRISIS	
CONCLUSION	19

INTRODUCTION

So many people these days are constantly “evolving”—always seeking to improve their lives. Now, I am all for growth. Believers should grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But certain things need to be settled, and settled forever.

At Calvary, Christ paid for my sins—every last one of them—once and for all. That issue, the sin issue, is settled forever as it regards me. Now I can enjoy a life of response. He first loved me and came to die for me on the Cross. I respond to His love day by day.

This is really the life of living according to God’s Great Commandment to love the Lord with all my heart, all my mind, all my soul, and all my strength.

Read these thoughts carefully. Respond to them prayerfully. I think that if you can get this principle down in your heart, you will be changed forever.

Chapter One

FAITH IN FLUX

“Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).

This is a fearful thing to consider. People will depart from “the faith,” which speaks of a faith that is based upon doctrine. Many shall depart from faith that is based on categorical thinking with God and begin receiving doctrines of demons.

One of the reasons some Christians are so viciously attacked in the media is because they still believe in the Bible. I still believe the Bible. I still believe that man should live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). I still believe that all Scripture is inspired. The Bible itself carries many, many warnings to us. There are some sentences that tell us not to take away from the Bible and others that tell us

not to add to the Bible (see Deuteronomy 4:2; Deuteronomy 11:17; Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:17-18).

I still believe, as the apostle Paul did, that it will be as God has said it will be (Acts 27:25). I believe that every word of God is true (Ezekiel 12:25; John 14:28). Many, however, are departing from the faith that is based upon doctrine. Such people are entering into a humanistic faith, a religious faith, a secular faith, a denominational faith, and a self-centered faith that springs up in perilous times. Demons are seducing people across this country to depart from the faith that is based doctrine.

I have made up my mind about certain things. I have made up my mind that if I fail God, I will repent and get right and go on and use recovery. Still, I will not depart from the Word of God. I won't add to it. No one can make me do that. I will not take away from it. I will not privately interpret it (2 Peter 1:19-20). I will not change the Scriptures. To the best of my God-given ability through grace, I will cling to the Truth, because I believe that every word of God is pure.

If I add to the Word, I will be discovered be-

fore God. God will never be shown to be a liar.

Clear Convictions

I want to make this clear. I believe that anyone who lives in adultery and continues to live that way and will not repent, will not be seen in heaven. What about the doctrine of eternal security for the believer? The Bible says that no fornicators shall inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). I believe a Christian can fail, repent, forsake his sin, and recover. That is the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of a person who has received Christ. That's the way eternal security works. For my part, I want to keep the pulpit pure and help those who sit under it stay pure. So I just take that statement from the Word of God and put it right out there for you: "No fornicators shall inherit the Kingdom of God."

In perilous times, multitudes shall depart from the faith. Think about that. What will they do? Depart, perhaps ever so slowly. First, comes a departure from the faith. Then, it's departure from the Body and their pastor-teacher. Next, there's departure from their friends. It may take years, but sooner or later these people begin to operate as enemies of God in categorical faith. Ultimately, that is the result of self-centered liv-

ing in perilous times. Some people live so much like the world that if they went to heaven they would ask Jesus to send them back to earth. You laugh, but I really think it's true. Beyond revival, some believers almost need brain operations. They have strayed so, so far from thinking with God.

When momentum tests come to test our maturity after a time of spiritual blessings, some people are so quick to take the easy road instead standing on truth and living by every word of God. Years ago, Dr. Bob Jones Sr. would say, "Water that travels the path of least resistance has to go crooked." The real problem is that these people don't know they are sick and that they need to come to church and get healed.

Let me ask you a question: If you are sick and in real need of help, you go to the hospital, right? If it's a real emergency, you call the ambulance and get there even faster. People who are spiritually sick need to be in church. That's the place where there is healing and mercy and grace. It is in church where a supernatural God can minister His Holy Spirit to you and me, in song and in word. It can work the same way as when Jesus was on the earth.

Chapter Two

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

“And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31).

These are the great commandments, Jesus declared, quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. What is the greatest one? It is to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. The heart speaks of your frame of reference. The frame of reference represents the boundaries of what we let into our thoughts and lives.

My frame of reference doesn't include lounges and barrooms. My mind does not make reference to these things. My frame of reference shouldn't include hostility, resentment, bitterness, jealousy, envy, or passivity. My frame of reference is this: to love God with all of it. Whenever anything happens, I am not offended because my frame of reference, my heart, is to love God.

We are also to love God with our souls. The soul speaks here of our self-essence. It is our mentality, our emotions, our conscience, our self-consciousness, and our volition. Then, we love Him with our minds. Why did Jesus distinguish the mind? Because the mind refers to our capacity to think specifically through the faculties of our thought life.

Finally, we are to love God with all of our strength. Strength is our ability to serve God under pressure. This ability comes only through grace and the through the Spirit and the Word.

These are the great commandments, and to offend them in one point is to be guilty of breaking all the commandments of love (see James 2:10). If I gossip, I have broken the commandments. If I have been passive, I have broken the commandments. If I am negative, I have broken

the commandments. If I haven't been fervent, then I have broken the commandments—all of them. Why? I violated the greatest commandment.

To love God with all my heart and to love others as I love myself means that when I fail, I name my sin and forsake it. God forgives me and gives me grace and mercy, no matter how many times it happens. (God forbid that it happens too much.) This is how I treat others. I treat others the way God's love treats me. I treat others the way I want others to treat me. That is loving my neighbor as I love myself. I treat my neighbor exactly the way I want to be treated if I were in his shoes.

Respond in Revival

How can a person honor this commandment? He can respond in revival by recognizing that Calvary settles every issue. I respond because God first loved me.

The angels fell and God did nothing about it; however, man fell and God sent His Son to die on the Cross. It is not that we love God but that God first loved us.

God first loved me! He did not send the Savior for the angels; He sent the angels for me.

While I was yet a sinner, Christ died for me. The greatest sin a Christian can commit is to stop responding to God's first love.

What does first love include? When we were enemies to God, God sent His Son. He commended His love toward us. His love is unending and everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3). We cannot afford to get overly occupied with details of life. Keep on responding to God who is loving us in the midst of our troubles.

Insulting Silence

One of the worst things that people can do to one another is to exercise insulting silence. Have you ever tried to minister to someone, and his only response is silence? You know the person is going through something. You love. You are patient. You don't react. Still, all you get is silence.

A man in a church in upstate New York divorced his wife. There was no adultery. No immorality at all. He simply said that he could no longer stand the woman's insulting silence. She would not respond to him. He sent flowers and cards. He tried everything he could think of to reach her. All she would do was display an insulting silence toward him.

So many do this with God. They murmur instead of responding. They react rather than respond. They talk about their troubles instead of responding to God.

Oh, we have a great, great privilege. It does not matter if you have failed. That is not an issue. I don't care if you are the worst sinner in the building. You have an opportunity to be a great saint if you will just respond to God's love toward you.

God loves you. That's the message. Calvary settled all of the issues related to you sin. He loved you when you were lost. He loved you when you were His enemy. He loves you right where you are, right now.

Chapter Three

SOLVING THE IDENTITY CRISIS

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14:1).

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).

God loves you and the greatest privilege we have is to respond to that love. It does not matter how you feel; respond to His love. The greatest Christian in all the world is the Christian who will respond to God’s great love toward him. The greatest transgression I can commit is to leave God and go out into the world. It is to go out and sin in my mind and sin with my emotions. It is a great transgression to get wor-

ried and fearful and fretful. Why is this a great transgression? It is simply that I am refusing to respond to God's love.

God commended His love toward us while we were yet sinners. Christ died for me because of that love. It is so clear from the Bible that God's mind for us is to abide in His love. We are to follow after love. It is not that we love God but that He loved us. I am not to worry about my love toward God, but I am simply to respond to God loving me. I am to guard my heart and keep myself in the love of God.

Oh, the Spirit of God has manifested His power in our pulpit. The presence of God is here week after week. The spiritually sensitive person sees this and recognizes this. That's the person who is tuned in to God instead of being tuned in to self. He is tuned in to faith instead of being tuned in to sight. He is tuned in to grace, instead of being tuned in to law, he is tuned in to hope instead of being tuned in to hopelessness.

I was thinking recently of how beautiful it is that the power of God loves weakness. Deity loves the sinner. Perfection loves the imperfect. God loves the sinner. The Faithful One loves the faithless one.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead” (2 Corinthians 5:14).

When you respond to God’s love, that love will motivate you. You just need to keep yourself in the love of God and stop trying to love God and stop trying to help God. Just respond to God’s love, then God’s love stirs you up. The love of God constrains you.

The Bible says that if one died, then we are all dead. We don’t live to ourselves anymore; we live unto God.

Go to the Cross

At Calvary, Jesus settled the issue of love. At the Cross, all my identity crises are solved. If you have an identity problem, you don’t need a psychiatrist. You need the love of God. You need the love that was settled at the Cross. In this issue, you don’t need the social worker. You may need him in other areas, but in this situation you need to see that Calvary settles the matter. Respond to the love of God.

Settle the issue of yourself at Calvary. Settle the sin issue at Calvary. Settle your relationship issues at Calvary. Settle all your problems and troubles at Calvary.

Jesus Christ was crucified, and we were crucified with Him at Calvary. He bore all of our sins at Calvary. When I take up Calvary, I take up a new identification. I take up His new creation. I take up a new love, a new eternal forgiveness. A new mercy follows me and that mercy rejoices against all judgment.

Calvary settles the issue. I take up all the positives of heaven, all the positives of unconditional love, all the positives of God's mercy, all the positives of God's fellowship, and all the positives of God's provision.

When I take up my cross, then God daily loads me with benefits (Luke 9:23). I just have to keep responding to His love. When I fail, I name my sin and I forsake it. I don't quit and give up. I don't worry about my failure. I respond and love builds me up. Love edifies me. Love purifies me through faith. Love gives me courage and strength and acceptance with God. His love gives me an experience of communion through the Word. Love will just bless us.

Just believe God. Respond and fellowship with Him. Don't react with insulting silence. Keep on responding to love. Honor the great commandment because Calvary settled the issue.

CONCLUSION

A man should tell his wife every day that he loves her. It's just a nice thing to do. With his words, he builds an appreciation in her. She becomes a better woman because of it. She has more confidence because of it. She trusts his love because he tells her so. It's nice to do and it's a simple thing.

It's nice to tell God you love Him, too. You are responding to His love toward you, and He enjoys hearing you say it.

One of the great theologians of our day was dying, and several people were gathered at his bed. Someone asked if he had anything to say. "Yes," he responded. "God loves you." That is the message that heals. That's the message that straightens out our problems. That's the message that settles the problem of human personality.

Let's go to Calvary. At the Cross, we settle our identity. At the Cross, we take up the new

creation.

Remember this truth and respond to the Finished Work life of Christ. Enjoy the presence of God who is now your life.