

Making Christ Lord of All

CAPTURED BY CHRIST

Col 3:11

"I want to know him in the power of resurrection, and to share his sufferings and even his death, in the hope of attaining resurrection from the dead. Not that I have secured it yet, or already reached perfection, but I am pressing on to see if I can capture it, because I HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY JESUS CHRIST" (Phil. 3:10-12, Goodspeed).

INTRODUCTION: One of the great theological questions which has been made a test of faith by some is the matter of sinless perfection in this life by an individual Christian believer. I do not choose to deal with this issue, mostly because I believe it is the wrong question. The proper question to ask is not "Am I sinless or perfect now?", or "Can I achieve sinless perfection in this life?", but, as Goodspeed translated this remarkable phrase from the Apostle Paul, "Have I been Captured by Jesus Christ?" or "Is He Lord of all, and all in all, in my life?"

I. The First ~~thing~~ we should ask about this matter is, "What Does It Mean to Be Captured by Christ?"

A. It means to be made a subject or bondslave of his. This is, of course, a voluntary captivity. He does not force us to subject ourselves to him. His call is, "Whosoever WILL may come." He INVITED his disciples and apostles to come and follow him, but he did not FORCE them.

B. It means to be a Prisoner of Jesus Christ. A true Prisoner of War is totally dependent on his captor for everything: housing, food, clothing, health care, everything.

Anyone who is been Captured by Christ as Lord is likewise totally dependent on Him for everything. He said, "Without me you can do nothing."

II. How Does Christ Capture the Christian? *the total allegiance of*

A. By the influence of his sacrificial love.

The Miniature Bible, or "The Gospel in a Nutshell" -- John 3:16.

The method of Christ is through "The Will to Love," not "The Will to Power."

He builds his church not by overwhelming firepower of atomic explosives, but by dying for our sins and saying, "Behold, how I love you."

He builds his church, moreover, not by fashioning a corporation with organizational men manipulating people with the latest Madison Avenue methods.

He builds his church by spreading his healing hands of forgiveness upon us that we may become a healthy body through whom the same healing hands may still be spread upon our world.

B. By the attraction of his magnetic personality.

Today in the Middle East are millions of moslems who are willing to die for their faith. You have seen those fanatical faces boldly proclaiming on TV (and I believe they really mean it), "I am ready to die for Islam."

Are you ready to die if necessary for Jesus Christ?

C. By the challenge of his call to sanctification.

The true Christian will cleanse from his or her life all known evil which our Savior has condemned, and we will strive for families like he has promised to bless; we will not encourage our little girls to start dating too early or support in our society immature marriages destined directly toward divorce. We will not encourage feminine fathers, masculine mothers, absentee parents, undisciplined children, or juvenile delinquency.

We need to teach in the church and the home the importance of spiritually solid foundations for marriage, where believers are not yoked unequally together with unbelievers and where husband and wife and parents and children are caught up in a Christian dream bigger than themselves, because it is "holy unto the Lord."

Moreover, we need this same holiness in our society as well as in our families.

We need to abolish the last vestiges of discrimination in our country and in our churches, not because of a clause in the Constitution, nor because of the communist challenge, nor because we need the votes of the watching world.

We need to conquer discrimination and prejudice because it is a sin against almighty God and a rejection of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son.

I know we have a pluralistic society in this nation, but it should not be without national morality. It can and should be a fortress of integrity and righteousness where we make unwelcome and unacceptable those things that are morally defiling and abominable. After all, that's the way it's going to be in heaven, and I am all for making this earthly society as near like heaven as we possibly can, rather than allowing it to slide farther downhill where evil and corruption are accepted without blinking an eye.

D. By his call to go forth and represent him in this world.

We are to be ambassadors or witnesses for Jesus Christ. Many Christians, and perhaps some of you, say, "How can I be a witness of the Resurrection, when I never saw the Risen Savior?"

Of course it is impossible for us today to be eye-witnesses of the Resurrection as Matthew, Peter, James, and John were.

But what about Paul?

May we be witnesses as Paul was?

In I Cor. 15:1-9, Paul records the accepted list of Resurrection appearances, as he had received them. Then he adds: "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he (Christ) appeared also to me."

Dr. James T. Cleland, former Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, points out that Paul does not hesitate to equate the appearance of Jesus the Christ to him on the road to Damascus with the appearances to the other disciples in the forty days following the first Easter.

Yet several years must have elapsed, because Paul was not a follower of Jesus during his earthly ministry, and Paul continued to persecute the Christians long after the ascension of Jesus.

E. Get rid of our prejudices and artificial distinctions

- (For Paul, the Resurrection does not depend solely on the testimony of the early disciples, but on the living, working presence of the Spirit of Jesus in the believer, as he Paul had experienced in his own conversion.
So, too, can we all experience and witness to the same Risen Savior.)
- (E. By his invitation to be with him forever in our eternal home.

This paradise is not exactly what some have pictured as a place of relaxation where we will be forever stretched out on flowery beds of ease; it is in fact more like a workshop where we will find creative and satisfying work for God where "his servants shall SERVE HIM" (Rev. 22:3).)

CONCLUSION:

To be captured by Christ is one of the greatest ideals of the Christian. It means that by losing our freedom and wilfulness we gain his gracious blessing and guidance in our life. It is only by being in bondage to him that we realize our liberty to reach our true potential as children of God. The way to deal with this engagement is not good military strategy, but it is the best thing in the world you can do for your soul, your family, and your country. The best instruction is, "Dont fight it, but surrender quickly to Jesus Christ."

Paradeza Bap. (R. 5-3-87 D 4HS2 "CAPTURED")
Mo. H.S. B.C. 3-20-88 (w/ "Christ Is All")