

The Palace He Bids Us Enter

by J. Wilbur Chapman

J. Wilbur Chapman's sermon emphasizes the necessity of conversion and the simplicity of faith in entering the Christian life.

Scripture: Matthew 18:3

Topics: "Salvation By Faith", "Born Again"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman preaches on the necessity of being born again to enter the Christian life, emphasizing Jesus' words that conversion is essential for salvation. He highlights the importance of turning away from sin and fully surrendering to Christ, comparing conversion to a change of ownership from Satan to Christ. Chapman explains that morality alone cannot save us, as true conversion involves acknowledging our sinfulness, believing in Jesus for salvation, and submitting entirely to Him, with experiences varying among individuals. He stresses that salvation is through faith in Christ alone, with the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin and leading us to accept Jesus as our Savior.

Transcript

The only way to enter this world is to be born into it, and the only way to enter this Palace of a Christian's life is to be born into it. Unto Nicodemus, the Master said, "ye must be born again," and we too must pass through the door by which he entered. To the disciples who stood around about him he said "except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." These are the words of Jesus himself. There can be no authority beyond his.

What hope is there for the moralist, when Jesus Himself has said: "Except ye be converted." What ground is there for the idea that God is so merciful that after a time all may be saved, when His only begotten Son has said: "Ye shall not enter the kingdom except ye be converted."

He makes the subject all the more important when he says:

"Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire."

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

Indeed, this question is so important, that it should be settled before anything else.

What Is Conversion?

When a piece of land is sold it is said to have been converted from one owner to another. What then is conversion for us but the change of owners. From being Satan's, we become Christ's. Our affections, our desires, our longings go out to Him. The only difference between the two being that we submit to the spirit and accept the offers of mercy from God. The word in its simplest interpretation means: "Being turned about." The traveler going in one direction, finds that he has made a mistake in the way, so he turns squarely about; in a sense he has been converted. The old soldier gave a good definition of his conversion, when he said that with him, it was "right about face."

For this reason morality will not save us. I remember once meeting a blind man, who was a neighbor. He had the faculty of going to every part of the town without a guide, he carried a little cane in his hand, with which he would touch the trees and the fences as he passed. It was just the time that I knew he was supposed to be going to his dinner, so I stopped him, asking him where he was going: "To my home," he replied. But I said to him: "You are going in the wrong direction." He suffered me to take him by the hand and turn him about, and then walking in just the same manner, but with his face turned in the new way, I saw him as he entered his house.

The trouble with our friends who are moralists is, that they are very circumspect in their actions, gentle in their manners, kind in their disposition, but they are going in the wrong direction! Their faces are turned away from God.

Perhaps they need not change their manner of living very much if they are converted, but the whole tendency of their living will be changed.

To be converted is to know:

1st. That you are a sinner, and that without Christ you are lost.

2nd. To believe that the Lord Jesus Christ can save you.

3d. To submit yourselves entirely to Him.

Yet it is not to be forgotten, that while the power is the same, and the work is all of God, that no two persons need expect to have the same experience. We do not expect this in other things, why should we in the matter of our salvation? One person is of an impulsive, affectionate disposition, and he gives his heart to God with a great demonstration of affection. Another person is of a calm, considerate disposition. He comes very quietly into the kingdom.

Some men are saved from great sin Conversion for them is a change as great as from darkness to light. Others are just the opposite, and for years they have stood so near the kingdom that all they needed was just a simple confession of Christ as a Saviour. Peter followed the Master with greatest demonstration. John and James were just the opposite -- all three were disciples.

Saul was converted in the midst of the glare of the light of heaven; Nicodemus came in the night time, and quietly made up his mind to yield to the Master -- both were saved.

The blind men were healed in different ways. One had his eyes touched by the great physician; another had clay and spittle put upon them; another was simply told to see. One saw clearly, another at the first

beheld men as trees walking. Would it not have been the greatest folly for them to have doubted their sight, simply because their experiences were not identical? One thing they could say together, that whereas they were blind, now they could see, and that was the all-important matter.

It is well to ask how this work is all brought about. The ground and foundation of it is the finished work of Christ; His perfect sacrifice, His complete atonement. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That is the only way. Yet the statement, "Except ye be converted," would seem to indicate that there was some person or influence outside of and beyond ourselves. And this is true. It is the Holy Spirit of God. It is His work to arouse us, to convict us of sin, to make us feel our lost condition and our need of Christ, when we are thus awakened, He presents Christ to us, then it is for us to open the door of the heart, to submit our wills to Him, to forsake all and follow Him; in other words it is to say "I will." The word of God is very plain about the matter, that all we need to do is simply to believe.

"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."

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

"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." John 3:16-18.

In the light of these words, how can we longer doubt? I have known of those who were saved without great conviction of sin, so that one need not be discouraged, if he is without this. In the 3rd of John, we read that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and there is no evidence that he was a great sinner; his life had been very circumspect; he was one of the Rulers of the Jews; but there was a great need in his heart; it was not guilt of conscience, but the great void in his heart that led him to the Master. If you have either, come to Him, for He can take away every stain of sin, and He can also fill to overflowing every longing heart.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John v:24.

There is not a word about feeling, nor about getting better, nor understanding the way, but just simply "believing."

May we know just when we were converted? I am very sure that some people have had this experience, but I am just as sure that there are others who have not; this is not discouraging, for I should be very sure that I had been born, even if I did not know my birthday. I know a man who can tell you the day, the hour, almost the second, that he was converted. I was sitting by his side, one Friday evening, at 9:15 o'clock, in a certain part of the Lecture room of the church. He lifted his eyes to heaven as he said: "I will," and all was settled. But my own experience was entirely different. I do not know the time when I was converted. I remember when I joined the church, but I had been a Christian long before. One of the greatest preachers in these modern times was kneeling at the bedside of his dying father; he had been wayward; his father almost with his last breath said: "My son, I want you to accept Christ, and promise to meet me in heaven." And the boy as he knelt said: "Father, God helping me, I will," and he was converted there. But on the other hand, one of the best women I know had an experience exactly the opposite.

It is not necessary that you should know the moment that you were saved, but you may be saved this moment if you will but say "I will," to the entreaties of the spirit of God.

May I Know If I Have Been Converted

There is nothing of which we may be more assured. The key verse of the first epistle of John is found in the fifth chapter, it is the 13th verse:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

We are not to judge by our feelings for they may change as often as the waves of the sea.

We are not always to judge by the fact that a great change has come over us.

We are not to be sure because our experience has been the same as that of another.

We may be sure only by resting on the Word of God.

Read Romans 10:9:

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Have you confessed Him? If not then do it now, and you may be sure of your salvation.

Read John 20:31:

"These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

Do you believe? If not then begin now, and you may carry this promise to the very throne of God, and claim from Him your salvation.

My strongest reason for believing that I am saved, is not that I feel happy; nor that my life may be better than in the days gone by, but rather, that He has said it. If, therefore, I doubt my salvation, I am doubting Him.

We Must Become As Little Children.

Like them in weakness. But for that very fact, God will place round about His everlasting arms, and we have nothing to do with the "holding out." He will keep us just as the earthly parents keep their little ones.

Like them in willingness to be taught. It is not strange that I cannot understand before I am saved, for the things of God are spiritually discerned, and it is not strange that I am able to understand so little now that I am a child of God, for I am only a little child; I need only to be patient; the time will come when I may put away "childish things."

Like them in trustfulness. The little child does not understand very much that is going on about him; he needs only to trust, as he does. And that is all that is necessary in the Christian life. Just trust, day by day.

There are two passages of scripture which make it apparent to me that the Christian life is a growth. The first is the entrance. "Verily I say unto you except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The second is the close of the journey. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

All the way between the two is the Christian life.

If therefore; you will but take His hand, trust absolutely in Him, and cease entirely to rest upon self, you may this day step across the threshold into life.

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