

Getting Acquainted With Christ.

by J.R. Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of developing a personal friendship with Christ for a fulfilling Christian life.

Scripture: Psalm 139:7-10, Matthew 28:20, John 14:17, John 15:15, Romans 8:10, Galatians 1:16, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 13:5, 1 John 4:15

Topics: "Friendship with God", "Personal Relationship with Christ"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of developing a personal friendship with Christ, noting that many young Christians may trust Him as their Savior without truly knowing Him as a friend. He recounts a poignant experience with a young woman who, despite her devout life, realized for the first time the personal relationship she could have with Christ. Miller explains that recognizing Christ's presence and companionship can transform a believer's life, bringing comfort, joy, and a deeper understanding of faith. He encourages Christians to seek this intimate relationship, which can lighten burdens and enrich their spiritual journey. Ultimately, he asserts that having Christ as a close friend is essential to the Christian experience.

Transcript

Many young Christians do not get to know Christ as a personal friend for a good while after they have begun trusting him as their Savior. This is natural; for we cannot see Christ, nor hear his voice, and it is only through experience that we can get acquainted with him as a friend. Yet it may help some young Christians to think a little of this subject.

Late one night I was sent for to visit a young woman who was in the last stages of consumption. She belonged to a household of orphaned children. From her infancy she had faithfully maintained the habit of daily prayer. She had read her Bible, attended church services, and had lived a good life -- quiet, thoughtful, beautiful, without blame. There is no doubt that she had been a Christian for years.

Yet when I sat at her bedside that night, and began to speak with her, I saw that she had no conscious personal friendship with Christ. I spoke to her, as gently as I could, of God's wonderful love for her. I told her that God was her Father, and that he had been caring for her with infinite tenderness all her years. I then spoke to her of Jesus Christ, of his dying for her, and then of his being alive. I dwelt especially upon the fact that he had been . . .

her companion,
her guide,
her protector,
her personal friend
-- all through her life.

When I had spoken thus for a little while, she looked up into my face and said, with an expression I cannot soon forget, "And I never knew him!" It was a moment of revelation to her. For the first time in all her life, she was becoming conscious of the personal relation of Christ to her. She now became aware, as by the sudden lifting of a veil, of One standing by her side, One who had been with her all her life, who had been blessing her in countless gentle ways, who had ministered to her from the riches of his love and grace -- but whom, until this moment, she had never recognized.

From that time until she was lifted away into the heavenly life, she lived in sweet, conscious enjoyment of Christ's presence, companionship, and love. All that was needed was to make her aware of the presence and companionship of the Friend in whom she had been trusting. She had long been receiving the blessings of divine grace -- but now for the first time she had a glimpse of him from whom the blessings had come.

No doubt there are many young Christians who are living just as this young woman had lived -- receiving into their heart the comforts of Christ's grace -- without fully enjoying the blessings of personal friendship with him. They know Christ as a historical personage, being familiar with the facts of his story as told in the Gospels. They trust him as their Savior. They accept the mercy which comes through his sacrifice, having in their heart the peace of forgiveness. They rest on his promises, and draw grace from his fullness. But they do not know the living, personal Christ. Not only is he to them unseen; he is also unrecognized.

No one can estimate the measure of comfort and blessedness which one misses, who remains thus unaware of the presence and companionship of the living Christ. He misses all that personal friendship with Christ means, and no words can describe the richness and power of this friendship.

Indeed, many Christians seem never to get any farther than the cross in their knowledge of Christ. They believe that he loved them and gave himself for them. They believe that their hope of salvation comes from his sacrificial atonement. They believe the historical fact of the resurrection, when Christ conquered death. They speak of him as now in Heaven making intercession for them. They get a measure of comfort for the future, for themselves and for their loved ones who die in Christian faith -- from the fact of Christ's victory over death. But they miss the meaning of his promise, "Surely, I am with you all the days."

Really, however, we are saved, not alone by the death of Christ for us -- but by Christ himself with us and in us. It is into fellowship with the living Redeemer that faith brings us. It is believing in a person who saves us. Christ and we become friends. We walk together. He shares all our toil, care, burden-bearing, struggle, weakness, and sorrow -- imparting to us his grace, strength, help, and all the inspirations of his love. "Henceforth I call you friends," is his own word.

We may go still farther; for not only is Christ with us, he is also in us. One of the striking words of Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians is, "It pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me." There is a difference between

revealing the Son to a man as a friend standing beside him, and revealing the Son in a man, dwelling in his own heart, possessing, absorbing, and inspiring his very life.

F.B. Meyer in one of his sermons quotes this verse of Paul's, and then says that many Christians fail to get this revelation of Jesus Christ in them, and that many do not for years after conversion come to this experience. He gives this illustration: A boy left his home and was gone a great while, nothing ever being heard from him. His widowed mother, in her struggles with sorrow and poverty, never ceased to pray for her boy; but years and years passed and he came not again. One day there was a knock at the door; and, when the woman answered it, a young man stood there. She did not know him. He asked if he could get lodging in her house. She said she had a room that she could give him. Then he asked if he could have boarding with her. To this also she replied affirmatively. He remained with her for several weeks, coming and going. One day, at the table, some turn of his hand showed to the mother a mark which at once revealed her own boy to her. "O Tom!" she exclaimed, with loving eagerness. "It's my own boy." God revealed her son to her, in her home.

So it is that Christ lives in the heart of many believers for years and years, inspiring in them good and beautiful things, blessing their life, granting them favors and mercies -- yet all the time unrecognized by them. Then at length there comes to them an experience of revealing. It may be in time of sorrow, or in the shadows of a sick-room; or it may be in a sweet human friendship, or in a sermon, or in a verse of Scripture. In some way at least, God reveals his Son to them; and in the midst of the love that flows around them, they see the face of the Beloved, from whom for so long they have been receiving blessings -- but whom until this moment they have not known.

It is the privilege of every Christian to have Christ, not only as a friend, walking by his side in close and daily companionship -- but also living in his heart, with all the warmth and inspiration of divine love and grace. We miss infinite comfort and joy, by not recognizing this unseen Friend. There would seem to be no reason why anyone should fail to recognize him. The promise is plain and sure that every one who believes, has not only the constant companionship of Christ -- but also Christ living in him.

Young Christians will find a wondrous new blessing in getting personally acquainted with Christ, and in taking him as their intimate, confidential Friend. It will change all life for them, to have the assurance and the consciousness of this blessed friendship. It will make all burdens lighter, and all tasks easier, and sorrow less bitter. It will put a new meaning into all duty. It will fill the heart full of joy. Yet that is what it is to be a Christian -- having Christ for our Friend. No other friend should be so near and so real to us as Jesus Christ.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/getting-acquainted-with-christ/>

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