

Where Are You in Your Commitment to the Lord?

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But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” (Genesis 3:9-11)

As we journey back to the Garden of Eden, we witness rebellion on the part of Adam and Eve. Even though they sinned, we still detect the voice of grace, the act of mercy, and the searching love of God in His question to Adam. When Adam and Eve sinned, God came straight down to seek out the lost souls. As He walked through the garden in the cool of the day, we could have heard Him calling “Adam! Adam! Where are you?” Yes, it was the voice of grace, the voice of mercy, and the voice of love. God sought Adam, but Adam ought to have sought God, for he was the transgressor. He had fallen, and he ought to have gone up and down Eden crying, “My God! My God! Where are you?”¹

God left heaven to seek for the rebels who had fallen—not to hurl Adam and Eve from the face of the earth, but rather to provide them an escape from their sin. God finds Adam hiding from his Creator among the bushes of the Garden. God’s grace toward Adam and Eve is just a foretaste of what is to come. God is a God of grace, a God of mercy, and a God of love to all men and women. We capture the ultimate of God’s love as John, one of the Twelve chosen by Jesus to announce the kingdom of God, records a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,^f that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

¹I am indebted to Dwight L. Moody for this message. I have rewritten this sermon for my use as well as for my readers. Since this sermon is so full of meaning, I have chosen to share with you many of the great insights put forth by Moody.

^fOr *his only begotten Son*

Adam's Reaction

Adam's reaction to sin is the same reaction of men and women today. The moment we are out of communion with God, we want to hide from Him. When God originally placed Adam and Eve in the Garden, they were in communion with their Creator. Moses writes that God talked with Adam. But now that he has fallen, Adam has no desire to see his Creator. He has lost communion with his God, he cannot bear to see Him, and he runs to hide from God. But to his hiding place his Maker follows him. "Where are you, Adam? Where are you?"

Several thousand years (possibly 6,000) have passed away since the creation of the heavens and the earth, and yet this text in Genesis 3:9 has come rolling down the ages. **This text still echoes within the hearts of most men and women. Almost all of us have heard this verse cited at some point in our lifetime.** This verse has resonated through the ages, especially the question that God asked Adam: "**Where are you?**" Sometimes, as we witness the midnight hour stealing over us, we, too, may question our own relationship to God with the following questions: "Where am I?" "Who am I?" "Where am I going?"

It is well for us to pause and to ask ourselves the same question that God asked Adam and Eve. **Where do we stand in our relationship to God?** We must come to grips with our spiritual status. Have we asked ourselves the question that God asked Adam? If not, why not? Whether we are old men with our hair turning gray, whether we are old women with our eyes growing dim, **whether we are young boys or young girls in the prime of our lives, we will soon be in another world.** We will leave one room and enter into another. Since this is so, then we must reevaluate our lives by confronting the question head-on: "Where are we?"

The Swiftness of our Journey

Moses assesses the plight of humanity when he writes: "The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away" (Psalms 90:10). Again, he pens words about the brevity of life in poetic fashion : "**You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered**" (Psalms 90:5-6). "Where are we" in our relationship with God? Do we delight in God's Law? Do we rejoice in God's grace and love? How often do we read the Word of God? **How often do we meet with God's people on Sunday mornings when they gather to encourage one another and to praise God for all His wonderful blessings?** Sunday gatherings are one way for His people to reflect upon the wonder of redemption. Are we seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness?

Why do we do what we do concerning spiritual things? We should not ask, "Where am I in the sight of my neighbors or in the sight of my friends?" Neither should we ask, "Where am I in the sight of the community in which I live," though we are concerned about how our works demonstrate our Christian testimony. **The big subject matter is not: "Where am I in the sight of others?" But rather, "Where am I in the sight of God?"** "Where are we" in the

scheme of redemption? Where am I in my relationship to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit? It matters very little where we are in the sight of others. It does matter as to what God thinks of us. If God were to ask us the same question that He asked Adam, how would we respond?

It is extremely important for us to know where we stand in God's view. Are we in communion with our Creator? Are we out of close association with the One who offers eternal life to us who put our faith in His Son? If we are out of spiritual union with Him, then there is no real peace, no real joy, and no real happiness. No, we cannot be out of relationship with our Creator and, at the same time, truly know what peace is, what joy is, what happiness is, or what true comfort is. We are foreigners to God's blessings when we are not in unity with Him.

What Is Our Response to God's Question?

As we reflect upon this question of God to Adam, we cannot help but wonder what we are thinking. Are we thinking about our neighbors, or are we reflecting upon our own reaction to God's question? Don't forget that this question was the first question put to Adam after his fall, and it was a very small audience that God had—Adam and his wife. God was the seeker, not Adam and Eve. They hid themselves. **We cannot hide ourselves from God. We may think that our lives are not visible to God, but we should always remember that God knows everything about us.** The psalmist describes God's omniscience in penetrating words:

O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. (Psalm 139:1-4)

God knows everyone of us!

He knows our lives; he knows our inmost thoughts. He knows our lives better than we know ourselves. His eyes have been bent upon us from our earliest childhood. God knows where we are! Again, the psalmist says:

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. (139:11-12)

In order to assist each of us in our relationship to God, perhaps, it would be helpful for each of us to determine where we stand before God. **Do we stand as professed Christians? Do we stand before God as backsliders? Do we stand before God as aliens?** In which category are we?

The Professed Christian

As professing Christians, how do we respond to God's question to Adam? "Where are you?" should ring loud and clear within our minds. We, too, should ask ourselves: "Where are we?" What is our relationship to Christ's church? Do our friends know us to be on the Lord's side? Are we mature in Jesus or are we still babes? **How long have we been Christians?** Have we been disciples of Jesus for twenty years, thirty years, or forty years? **Do we have a spiritual history? Are we the same in our understanding that we were in our rebirth?** In our Christian growth, we need to come to grips with this question, "Where are we now?" Are we still babes in Christ? Are we making progress towards heaven? Can we give reasons for the hope that is within us?

Are we really and truly committed Christians? Are we willing to take our stand for Christ? Is Christ first or last in our everyday decisions? Just where does God fit in our daily lives? Are we ashamed to stand up for Jesus? Are we willing to defend His Death, His Burial, and His Resurrection? Are we afraid to die? Suppose someone should ask you the following question: "If you should be cut down by the hand of death today, have you *good reason* to believe you would be saved?" Are we willing to stand up before men and women and say that we have good reasons to believe we have passed from death unto life? Or would we be reluctant? **As we run our minds back over the past years, are we horrified at the lukewarmness in our daily lives?** Would it be consistent for us to say, "Yes, we are zealous Christians and on fire for the Lord?" Do our lives correspond with our profession? Where are we in our relationship with God?

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

"I am a Christian," says one. Yes, but actions speak louder than words. **Do our neighbors know that we are Christians? Do our co-workers know that we are Christians? Do our family members know that we are Christians? Does everyone know us to be on the Lord's side?** Are we silent Christians? Are we afraid to let others know that we believe in the biblical account of creation, not evolution? Let every professed Christian ask: "Where am I in the sight of God?" "Is my heart loyal to the King of heaven?" "Is my life here as it should be in the community in which I live?" "Am I a light in this dark world?" Am I fully steadfast and unswerving in my devotion and attachment to the cause of Christ? **Can we respond positively to what Christ says in His Sermon on the Mount?** Pay attention to Jesus as He describes the ethical behavior that is to characterize His disciples:

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

We, as disciples of Christ, are to be living epistles. Are we living epistles? Are we open letters for others to read? Do individuals see Christ in us? Paul reminds the Corinthians about their status in the world:

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ² **You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody.** ³ You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:1-3)

How do people view us? Do they see Christ in us? Do they see us as living epistles? Are we standing up for Jesus? Are we known and read by all men and women? Are we standing up for Christ in this dark and sinful world? If we are for God, then we should come out of the world and be counted. Do we relish the thought of remembering the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus on Sunday mornings? **Do we reflect upon His Burial, His Death, and His Resurrection during the week? Are these issues just on our hearts one hour a week? Do we have an intense yearning to hear and to reflect upon the written Revelation of God? Are we trying to serve God and the world at the same time?** Remember that Jesus says, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24). Where do we stand? Do we make excuses for not serving God? Are we devoted to God? How do we really and truly feel about the Sunday gathering of God’s saints? Had we rather sleep on Sunday mornings than to meet with the Christian community to encourage one another and to offer up corporate praise to the One who has rescued us from the present evil world? **This Sunday gathering is a gathering of the brotherhood of God’s family. The church is not an ecclesiastic entity; it is the body of Christ, that is to say, the company of the Redeemed.**

If we are for God, we should come out and be on God’s side. If we are for the world, let us be in the world. Seeking to serve God and the world at the same time is the curse of Christianity at the present time. It retards the progress of Christianity more than any other thing. Again, Jesus says, “Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38). Hopefully, we do **not** think that a simple one time profession of faith will be sufficient for the rest of our lives. How do we respond to God’s probing question to Adam? Child of God, “Where are you?” If God should appear to us today in our leisurely walk and ask us this piercing question, what would be our answer? Could we say, “Lord, I am serving You with my whole heart and strength. I am using my gifts and working toward the advancement of your kingdom upon earth.” **Have we responded to God’s call to become ministers of reconciliation?** Will we answer, as Moses did, “Here I am” (Exodus 3:4).

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), American evangelist and publisher, told the story of one of his visits to England. He said,

When I was in England in 1867, there was a merchant who came over from Dublin, and was talking with a businessman in London; and as I happened to look in, he introduced me to the man from Dublin. Alluding to me, the latter said to the former, “**Is this young man all O O?**” Said the London man, “What do you mean by O O?” Replied the Dublin man, “*Is he **Out-and-Out for Christ?***” I tell you it burned down into my soul. It means a good deal to be O O for Christ; but that is what all Christians ought to be, and their influence would be felt on the world very soon, if men who are on the Lord’s side would come out and take their stand, and lift up their voices in season and out of season. **As I have said, there are a great many in the church who make one profession**, and that is about all you hear of them; and when they come to die you have to go and hunt up some musty old church records to know whether they were Christians or not.²

Are we “out-and-out for Christ?” We cannot help but reflect upon the prophet Daniel. Do we suppose that all the men and women in Babylon knew whom Daniel served? Yes, they knew! God still needs men and women with courage to stand up for Christ. **The Christian community needs dedicated men and women who are willing to advance the cause of Christ.** Where do we stand? There is one thing that God hates, and that is lukewarmness. We witness, almost daily, the dead, cold formalism of many saints within the Church of Jesus. Do we take time to be holy? Are we on fire for the things of God? **Are we satisfied with just going through some rituals on Sunday morning? Do we think that worship is just centered on the Sunday morning assembly?** Are we satisfied with just one hour a week to reflect upon God? Worship for the believer is twenty-four hours each day, not just one hour on Sunday morning. Worship is not like a faucet, cut on and off at will.

What is Christianity? Is Christianity simply performing some ceremonies on Sunday morning in a prescribed manner the crux of Christianity? Today, many religious journals are filled with various and numerous “isms.” Many Christians are so busy heresy hunting that they have lost their first love. **If we were to put all of the “isms” together, we would discover that these “isms” destroy the sensitivity for soul winning.** There are so many Christians just sleeping and slumbering while souls all around them are perishing. Are we half-asleep as professed Christians? Some believers are beginning to rub their eyes and to get them half-opened, but, as a whole, many saints are still asleep.

Moody, once more, related a very moving picture of the church today as he tells the sad story of a child and her father:

There was a little story going the round of the American press that made a great impression upon me as a father. A father took his little child out into the field one Sabbath, and, it being a hot day, he lay down under a beautiful shady tree. The little child ran about gathering wild flowers and little blades of grass, and coming to her father and saying, “Pretty! Pretty!” At last the father fell asleep, and while he was sleeping the little child wandered away. When he awoke, his first thought was, “Where is my child?” He looked all around, but he could not see him. He shouted at the top of his voice, but all he heard was the echo of his own voice. Running to a little hill, he looked around and shouted again. No response! Then going to a precipice at some distance, he looked down, and there upon the rocks and briars, he saw the mangled form of his loved child. He rushed to the spot, took up

²See Dwight L. Moody, “Where Art Thou?”, on *The Sage Digital Library* [CD-ROM], volumes 1-4 (Albany, Or: Sage Software, 1997, 1-800-297-4307).

the lifeless corpse and hugged it to his bosom, and accused himself of being the murderer of his child. **While he was sleeping his child had wandered over the precipice. I thought as I heard that, what a picture of the church of God!**³

As fathers and mothers, do our children observe in us the kind of habits or devotion to the things of God that would generate commitment on the part of our children? How many fathers and mothers are sleeping now while their children wander over the terrible precipice right into the bottomless pit of destruction? Fathers and mothers, where is your child? Is your child pressing on toward eternal separation from God? Mothers, where is your son or daughter? Fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, what are you doing to encourage your children to follow Jesus? **Do your children detect in you a commitment to Christ?** Do your children think that pleasure is more important than meeting with the Christian community on Sundays? Have you lived so godly and so Christ-like that you can say to your children, “Follow me even as I follow Christ”?

- Are your children walking in wisdom?
- Are your children on the way to glory?
- Are your children in the arms of Jesus?
- Are your children's names written in the Lamb's book of life?
- Are you to blame for your children's lack of interest in the Lord?
- Have you been a good example for your children?

How would we, as fathers and mothers, answer these questions? In our prayers, are we concerned about God waking up every mother, every grandmother, every father, every grandfather, every aunt, every uncle, every brother, and every sister to God consciousness and to the value of the soul? How great are our souls? How do we regard the souls of our children? How great are the souls of others? Jesus points out, “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). May God help us parents to always feel the worth of the souls of our children and our grandchildren. **How do we really and truly feel about our children's spiritual maturity? Our children should become a blessing to the church and to the world.** **Moody** (1837-1899) recounts the sad and heartbreaking story of a friend whose daughter lay dying:

Not long ago the only daughter of a wealthy friend of mine sickened and died. The father and mother stood by her dying bed. He had spent all his time in accumulating wealth for her; she had been introduced into gay and fashionable society; but **she had been taught nothing of Christ**. As she came to the brink of the river of death, she said, “Won't you help me; **it is very dark, and the stream is bitter cold.**” They wrung their hands in grief, but could do nothing for her; and the poor girl died in darkness and despair. What was their wealth to them? **And yet, you mothers and fathers**

³See Dwight L. Moody, “Where Art Thou?”

are doing the same thing in London today, by ignoring the work God has given you to do. I beseech you, then, each one of you, begin to labor now for the souls of your children!⁴

Is this ignorance also true of us in our relationships to our children and grandchildren? Are we more concerned about wealth and pleasure than we are about the salvation of our children and others? Jesus lays bare and naked the first principles of priorities in the lives of people who wish to serve Him: “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). What have we done and what are we doing with our own lives for the advancement of God’s kingdom? What have we done to promote Christianity?

Story of Young Boy: “My Life Is Lost”

A story was told of a young man, some time ago, who lay dying and his mother thought he was a Christian. One day, passing his room, she heard him say, “Lost! Lost! Lost!” The mother ran into the room and cried, “My boy, is it possible you have lost your hope in Christ, now that you are dying?” **“No, mother, it is not that; I have a hope beyond the grave, but I have lost my life. I have lived twenty-four years, and done nothing for the Son of God, and now I am dying.”** My life has been spent for myself; I have lived for this world, and now, while I am dying, I have given myself to Christ; but my life is lost.”

From the time of our birth from above, have we done anything for the Son of God? Could it be said of us that if some accident or disease cut our life down that our life would be described as a failure, that is to say, a failure as far as leading anyone else to Christ is concerned. What kind of legacy are we fathers and mothers leaving our children? Fathers and mothers, men and women, boys and girls, are we working for the Son of God? **Are we trying to win some soul to Christ? Have we tried to get some friend or companion to have his or her name written in the Lamb’s book of life?** Or would we just say, “Lost, lost!” Is it true that many years have passed since we became children of God, and yet we have never had the privilege of leading one soul to Christ? **Are we leading our children to Christ by our examples? Do they see Christ in us? Do they see a love for spiritual things in us? What do they see?**

If we have never experienced the joy of leading even one soul into the kingdom of God, then, begin at once. There is no greater privilege on earth. Daniel (605 BC), a prophet of God, describes the brightness of those who lead others to God: “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). Do we shine like the brightness of the heavens in our deeds for the kingdom? There has never been a time when work for Christ is more needed than at present. **The church of our Lord Jesus must wake up to the urgency of its responsibility in advancing His kingdom upon earth.** All Christians must come together as one individual to beat back those dark waves of death that roll through our streets—lives without God. My prayer

⁴See Dwight L. Moody, “Where Art Thou?”

is that God will wake up the Church! **We should all trim our lamps for others to see and go forth to convert sinners for God's glory.** We should work toward the unity of His community of believers in order to help others to believe that Jesus is the Messiah promised by the prophets.