

MATTHEW 27:22

GREAT QUESTIONS OF LIFE: “WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS?”

“What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ”¹

Almost every message I have heard from this text was directed to lost people. That is certainly appropriate. However, in our study today, I want to consider how this question applies not only to the lost, but also to each of us who bear the Name of Christ. I will consider how the question applies to us who profess to represent the Master through providing oversight of the work of His churches. Then, I will explore what we who are called Christians should do with Him. Finally, the question Pilate posed to the mob howling for the head of the Master demands that I ask what the unsaved, “What will you do with the Son of God?”

The eternal question is: “What will you do with Jesus?” Just as His coming to earth divides time, so He is the dividing line between those who are alive and those who are dead. In Him is life; outside of Him is only death. Therefore, the question to those who are lost is essential if they will know God, enjoying the life that He offers. There is no hope of heaven outside of this One who is identified as the Son of God. Thus, to the lost, the question is posed, “What will you do with Jesus?”

For those who call themselves by His Name, they must know that even the rewards that are offered are dependent upon what we do with Him. As the Christian walks in Him and obeys what He commands, she moves steadily toward pleasing the True and Living God. Alternatively, when we walk according to our own desires, submitting to those base desires, we become indistinguishable from the world that is dying, even now rushing toward judgement. Each Christian, therefore, must answer the question, “What will you do with Jesus?”

Those who stand behind the sacred desk will either fulfil the calling they have received, or they will dishonour Him whom they call Lord. Either the preacher will faithfully declare the message that Christ Jesus has given in His Word, or the preacher will preach to satisfy the wicked desires of fallen people who seek only to affirm themselves in their fallen condition. Again, the question each preacher must answer is, “What will you do with Jesus?”

Pilate sat on his judgement seat. Jesus had been delivered to him for judgement. The Jewish leaders were enraged; Jesus was receiving honour from the people—honour that they felt was rightfully theirs. They concocted a charge of blasphemy, condemning Him to death. However, they were powerless to execute their rage. So, they drug Him before Pilate, the Roman governor, charging the Son of God with lèse majesté.

Pilate was shaken when he wife sent a message to him urging him to release Jesus. “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream” [MATTHEW 27:19]. Thus, much as politicians have done until this day, he tried to evade responsibility for his own decision. He devised a plan that he felt would permit him to avoid making a decision. It was the custom of the governor to release one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Pilate offered to release to them either of two prisoners—the most heinous criminal then in custody or Jesus of Nazareth. The mob demanded that Barabbas be released and they howled for the blood of Jesus. When Pilate attempted to reason with them, asking what crime He had committed that merited punishment, together they cried out, “Let Him be crucified!”

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Pilate was now faced with a dilemma—he could either do what was right, or he could do what was convenient. Either he could align himself with the Righteous One, or he could go along with the baying mob, “The governor again said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ And they said, ‘Barabbas’” [MATTHEW 27:21]. At this point, Pilate weakly attempted one final time to extricate himself from the morass into which he had sunk, “Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said, ‘Let him be crucified’” [MATTHEW 27:22]!

The corollary is given in the verses that follow. “When Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’ And all the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified” [MATTHEW 27:24-26].

Pilate’s rationalisation was that he was incapable of swaying the mob to act with integrity, so he was prepared to deliver Jesus for momentary and transient peace. The governor’s capitulation was attended by a scene so bizarre as to be almost unbelievable. The very people who professed to be living in anticipation of Messiah’s Advent now cried out for Messiah’s blood. To this day, momentary peace is still preferred over righteousness in society.

Pilate thought he could wash his hands of the sordid business, laying blame on the maddened mob incited by the religious leaders. However, whenever someone attempts to absolve herself of responsibility by claiming that someone else is to blame, she deceives herself. You are responsible for yourself; you make your choice and you must accept responsibility. When the lost refuse to follow the Christ, they must realise that He ceases to offer Himself as their Saviour and becomes at that moment their Judge. When the Christian seeks to gratify his own fallen desires rather than obey the will of the Master, he must recognise that he will shortly give an answer for his action. When the preacher preaches to please the howling mob rather than obey the Master, he must realise that he shall soon answer to the Son of God for his perfidy.

WHAT SHALL THE PREACHER DO WITH JESUS? Let me speak supportively of preachers. Preachers minister under intense pressure to conform to the expectations of parishioners. Church members often are uncomfortable with a vigorous presentation of the Word. They have multiple reasons for their discomfort. Sometimes their discomfort is presented as noble and high-minded. They want to see the church grow; therefore, they don’t want to offend visitors by being too pointed in the presentation of the Word. Consequently, they are irate when the preacher speaks too plainly or when he appears too aggressive in presenting the call to faith.

At other times, the motivation for the discomfort of some church members is less noble. Parishioners become so enmeshed in the cares of this dying world that they will not tolerate any threat to their comfortable existence. They seek affirmation that they are in no danger; they want to be commended as valuable adjuncts to the ministry of the Master in this dying world. They want all this at no cost, with no rejection from the denizens of the world, with no censure by the wicked. They want to live as the world lives and yet be recognised as righteous.

Shall the preacher jettison Jesus, sacrificing Him to the demands of the howling crowd that occupies the church in this day while seeking affirmation and comfort? Shall the preacher refuse to present the words of the Master that boldly thunder, striking terror in the heart of the wicked who hear Him as He speaks through the Word? Shall the preacher endeavour to soften the harsh censure of sin demanded by the Master? Or shall the preacher declare the truth of God, though it offends the delicate constitution of the modern worshipper?

Each time the preacher stands, he is presented with a choice—will he be true to the appointment he received from the Master? Or will he pander to the earth dwellers that parade as followers of the lamb? I need to speak of the call to service before the Master. I fear it is not well understood in this day. When the church needs a minister, how shall they go about the task of finding someone to occupy the pulpit? Where shall the congregation look first?

Before answering that question, it is important to state that each assembly is responsible to be constantly praying that God will raise up His man from within the assembly. The people should be constantly looking for that one whom the Master will appoint, prayerfully surveying those who are part of the Body so that as God works in the lives of His chosen warriors it will be apparent to the people what He is doing. And the elders are responsible to seek out those whom the Master is raising up, being prepared to set these apart to service within the congregation.

This is modelled biblically. For instance, when Paul opens his letter to Titus, he writes, “The reason I left you in Crete was to set in order the remaining matters and to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who cannot be charged with dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God’s work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain. Instead he must be hospitable, devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it” [TITUS 1:5-9 NET BIBLE].

This charge that was delivered to Titus is similar to the command issued to Timothy to be diligent in equipping those who will teach. Paul wrote, “Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” [2 TIMOTHY 2:1, 2].

Since I have spoken of the qualifications for appointment to eldership when I read the passage from the Letter to Titus, permit me to emphasise this truth by directing you to supplement what was written there with that which is presented to Timothy. “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil” [1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7].

Underscore this truth: *the biblical qualifications for pastoral oversight deal exclusively with character and calling*. This is not how we find elders in the modern church. Here, connections and credentials are paramount. Consequently, when a contemporary congregation requires an elder, they appeal to a denominational serpent to send them a list of approved names. Approval for inclusion on the list comes from the hindquarters; these individuals are hand-picked to be compliant with denominational directives. Docility and pliability are vital to this approval. The individuals named on the list are graduates of approved schools, disciplined in denominational doctrine and they bear the imprimatur of important bishops elected by the power-brokers insuring that they possess the desired qualities of conformity and compliance. Thus, we accept the best thoughts of fallen man as superior to the revealed will of God! Rather than character and calling, we are offered connections and credentials.

There is a corollary to the manner in which we seek out pastoral leadership. We no longer believe that God appoints to divine service; rather we believe that the churches, or even the denominations, hire preachers. Let me say very plainly that whoever appoints to service has the authority to demand what shall be preached. If the church hires a preacher, the church has the right to demand that the one hired say what they pay him to say. If, however, God appoints to divine service, then we who preach had better say what He demands that we say.

Jesus warned of the former sort when He taught the people in Judea so long ago. “He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep” [JOHN 10:12, 13]. The safety of the sheep is not paramount in the estimate of the hired hand; his position is all-important to him. He is unconcerned for the danger the sheep will face. What matters to him is his paycheck.

Perhaps these words of the Master remind you of something that the LORD God said to Ezekiel. “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them” [EZEKIEL 34:2-6].

However, if God appoints to divine service, then the one who carries that appointment is obligated to say what he is appointed to say. Jeremiah received such a command from the LORD. The LORD commanded Jeremiah, saying, “Go, buy a potter’s earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you” [JEREMIAH 19:1, 2]. Did you catch the fact that Jeremiah was to proclaim the words that he was given? He was not to speculate or give his interpretation; he was to speak the Word of the LORD.

It has always been the mark of the prophet that he speaks the Word which God gives. “The LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,

‘Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.’”

[JEREMIAH 1:9]

Over the years of my service, I have delighted myself in the Prophecy of Isaiah. I apply to the spokesman of God the Word that the LORD God spoke through the Prophet when He said:

“I, I am he who comforts you;
 who are you that you are afraid of man who dies,
 of the son of man who is made like grass,
 and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker,
 who stretched out the heavens
 and laid the foundations of the earth,
 and you fear continually all the day

because of the wrath of the oppressor,
 when he sets himself to destroy?
 And where is the wrath of the oppressor?
 He who is bowed down shall speedily be released;
 he shall not die and go down to the pit,
 neither shall his bread be lacking.
 I am the LORD your God,
 who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
 the LORD of hosts is his name.
 And I have put my words in your mouth
 and covered you in the shadow of my hand,
 establishing the heavens
 and laying the foundations of the earth,
 and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’”

[ISAIAH 51:12-16]

What shall the preacher do with Jesus? If he will honour Him as Lord, he will study His Word, discern His will and declare all that He commands so that the people may know the mind of God. Through Moses, God had promised the people, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” [DEUTERONOMY 18:18]. Though the prophecy pointed forward to the Master Himself, the knowledge conveyed to all is that the prophet must always endeavour to fill his mouth with the Word of God, speaking all that he is commanded. Preaching is more than merely disseminating information; preaching is speaking so that the voice of God is heard through the message as it is delivered. This requires a servant who proves faithful to the task.

Let me speak a further word with you before moving forward in our study of the Word. It is a relatively easy task for a preacher to write a sermon. The craft of sermon construction is a discipline that can be taught; many people have mastered the craft despite lacking a divine call. Even the heathen can write a sermon. However, to prepare a message from God—a message that addresses the heart and convicts the wayward soul—requires the messenger to know God and that he invest time in the presence of God to ensure he faithfully declares the Word of God.

Whenever the preacher stands behind the sacred desk, he must determine what he will do with Jesus. Will the preacher honour Him through declaring His Word without favour or without turning aside to soften the impact of that Word as it is delivered? Or will the preacher avert the indignation of those who listen by refusing to speak the Word of the Lord? The answer will determine whether the flock is nourished on the rich fodder of the Word or whether they are stunted in their growth, always hungering for food and spiritual refreshment.

WHAT SHALL THE CHRISTIAN DO WITH JESUS? It is a tragic observation that much of what is referred to as “worship” in this day is a performance. Christians gather at a service to watch a “worship team” perform. The team plays a song with a driving beat before drifting into a repetitious chorus sung in a dreamy manner. Eyes closed, hands raised and swaying gently—we let ourselves drift away into a gentle oblivion. After an extended period of getting people into the mood, a speaker will endeavour to motivate the crowd. Quoting pious phrases and making a deft feint toward the Scriptures, we are assured that we are worshipping—surely it feels like what we imagine worship to be! It is all very soothing; but something is lacking.

The something that is missing is the presence of the Lord. We have bought into the faux idea that we can manipulate people into the presence of God. However, God's presence is not to be equated with an ecstatic feeling. Step back and think of those who were actually in the presence of the True and Living God. What reaction was commonly witnessed? Our first father, Adam, after he had sinned fled from the presence of the LORD God. God called out to the man, "Where are you?" What did the man answer? "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid" [GENESIS 3:10]. Adam was afraid to see the LORD and he hid himself.

Later, we are told that the LORD appeared to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old. "When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.' Then Abram fell on his face" [GENESIS 17:1-3]. The LORD appeared, and Abram fell on his face.

After Moses and Aaron had met with the LORD, they came out to bless the people. The account is given in Leviticus. "The glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" [LEVITICUS 9:23, 24]. In awe and wonder, the people fell on their faces before the glory of the LORD that appeared to them. Without instruction or preparation, they fell before Him, overwhelmed with awe!

When Manoah prayed, asking the LORD to send again the messenger that had spoken with his wife, God answered. The Angel of the LORD appeared—a theophany, the pre-incarnate Son of God—and what did Manoah and his wife do? "They fell on their faces to the ground" [JUDGES 13:20]. Why did they fall on their faces? Manoah said, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God" [JUDGES 13:22]. Fear of His holiness caused them to fall before Him.

Throughout the pages of the Old Covenant, whenever God revealed Himself the natural reaction of those who witnessed His presence fell on their faces—they were afraid. The same is true in the New Testament. Recall the account of Jesus' transfiguration. "After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.' When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Rise, and have no fear.' And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only" [MATTHEW 17:1-8].

Or think of John's reaction when his worship was transformed by the presence of the Master one Lord's Day morning. The aged saint writes, "I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades'" [REVELATION 1:12-18].

Whenever Jesus appeared in unveiled glory, the reaction of all who witnessed Him fell before Him as though they were dead. Of the Master, the Apostle has written, “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” [PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11].

In Heaven, we witness the redeemed of God as they worship, falling on their faces before the throne of God. “Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

‘Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.’”

[REVELATION 4:9-11]

When in Glory the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God, receives the title deed to all creation, all the angels of God and all the redeemed of God fall on their faces before Him in awe. “Between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

‘Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.’”

[REVELATION 5:6-10]

I ask those who claim to worship the Lord: When did you last fall on your face in awe? When did you last find your strength turn to water because you knew were in the presence of the True and Living God? The mere fact that we can drift off into a dreamy reverie while repeating a monotonous sentence indicates that we have never known the presence of the Lord Christ. Those who worship Him are overwhelmed with wonder and marvel at His majestic glory.

Job, when the LORD God revealed Himself to the grieving man, spoke these words:

“Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
I have spoken once, and I will not answer;
twice, but I will proceed no further.”

[JOB 40:4, 5]

How humble he was, unlike many of us who claim to be the saints of God in this day. After God challenged him, the suffering saint responded,

“I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.”

[JOB 42:5, 6]

The call of the Word is for the people of God to seek the Lord, to know His will and to obey what He commands. The call of God is for the people of God to cease pretending to worship, to cease substituting emotion for knowledge and to worship in spirit and in truth. Rather than seeking a feeling, rather than pursuing affirmation of our own fallen proclivities, it is time for each of us who profess to know Him to seek His will. I recommend that we prepare ourselves to worship, not by mindlessly repeating choruses, but by reading the Word to discern the will of the Lord. “Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God... At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them” [EPHESIANS 5:1, 2, 8-14]. What shall the Christian do with Jesus? Discover His will and do His will. What shall the Christian do with Jesus? Live to the praise of His glory and serve Him with the heart.

The Master says to each one who would be His disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” [JOHN 14:15]. Much later, the Apostle of Love will encourage those who follow the Master, “By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” [1 JOHN 2:3-6].

WHAT SHALL THE UNSAVED DO WITH JESUS? I have spoken pointedly concerning preachers. I am not angry at preachers; I am a herald of the Gospel of Christ the Lord. I received appointment to this service and for over forty years I have faithfully endeavoured to fulfil the appointment I received to declare the Word of God. I have spoken pointedly of the responsibility we Christians have to follow the Master. I do not speak in choler when I call the redeemed to walk according to the Word. It is love for the Master that compels me to speak as plainly as I do. However, I have not spoken to you who are outside of the precincts of grace. What will you do with Jesus?

I must speak carefully about this condition of being lost, of being unsaved, of being under condemnation before God. Many religious people are lost. Many people depend upon the fact that they once participated in a rite, whether by choice or involuntarily is immaterial; yet, these people are lost. There are many nice people, many kind and gentle people, many people who excel church members in consideration and kindness, even in acting honourably and with virtue. Nevertheless, many of these good people will be forever lost. Personal conduct confers no merit before God. Whether one participates in rite and ritual confers no standing before God.

If you are a lost person, you may feel insulted by such pointed statements; you may argue that you are as good as anybody else, but the reality is unchanged—you are unsaved still. At issue is not my assessment of you; what is vital is God's assessment of who you are. The Lord God is quite clear about mankind and our relationship to Him. Everyone has heard **JOHN 3:16**. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Knowing what that verse says and acting on the information presented are two different things. The passage continues by stating, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God" [**JOHN 3:16-21**].

After the Good News of the sixteenth verse, we are given the application. The application stings; it strips away our carefully constructed façade. Believing Christ leads to transformation. If you are still living as you did before you say you believed there has been no transformation. We do not transform ourselves in order to be saved; but because we are saved, we will be transformed. The saints of another era were wont to say, "Faith alone saves; but the faith that saves is never alone." If you continue to walk in darkness, it is because you hate the light and enjoy the darkness. If you are true, you will come into the light.

Let me make some practical application for your benefit. Those who love God love His people. They want to be with others who share their faith and who love the Saviour. Because the Spirit of God lives within the child of God, the child of God wants to be with people of like mind who share the same parentage. We do not join a church in order to be saved; but because we are saved we want to unite with a congregation of God's people. We want to do those things that please the One who saved us. We want to identify with Him, and we rejoice in the opportunity to follow His command by receiving baptism. We want to spend time with Him, and we do so through reading His Word and spending time in prayer.

The Apostle of Love takes time to explain this to those who read the missives he penned. He writes, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother" [**1 JOHN 3:4-10**].

The one who is born from above no longer enjoys living a sinful life; she endeavours to be righteous and to be godly. The one who is twice-born seeks out the people of God and is delighted to be with them. Given opportunity to spend time with God's people learning of Him and discovering what pleases Him, the saint will seize the moment and rejoice in the opportunity. This time spent together with God's people is not just a matter of duty—it is a joyful experience where the child of God is able to build others, to comfort them and encourage them.

This brings me again to the question that must be asked of each one who is lost: “What will you do with Jesus?” He is the Son of God. He was born of a virgin, and He lived a perfect life. He offered His life as a sacrifice because of your sin so that you could be delivered from judgement and from death. He was buried—wrapped in grave clothes and placed in a tomb that was sealed with the Imperial seal. He conquered death, bursting asunder the chains of death and rising from the dead. This Risen Saviour was seen by many, demonstrating that He was actually, truly alive. He ascended into Heaven where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He is coming again to receive to Himself those who look for His return. Now, He offers life—the forgiveness of sin, freedom from condemnation and freedom from guilt. This life is promised to all who believe Him and to anyone who receives Him as Master of life.

The promise is given in powerful words that transforms lives. “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’” **[ROMANS 10:9-13]**.

My prayer for you is that when you are challenged by the question, “What will you do with Jesus?” you will answer, “I will believe Him.” Follow Him. Receive this life. Do it now. Amen.