

May 9, 1961

SUMMARY OF SERMON

HOW MUCH DOES GOD'S WORK MEAN TO YOU --
Do You Continually Have Your Mind On It?

Our minds comprehend only to a degree how much this world is in need of God's Truth. Neither are we as appreciative of it as we ought to be. Christ said, "the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). The CHICAGO'S AMERICAN, March 22, 1961 set forth in an article summing up the sick state of a nation which has departed from the way of TRUTH which would have made it free, "Last year Americans spent millions of dollars to tranquilize themselves. Only antibiotics outsold no-worry pills, according to a survey by the American Druggist magazine...the safest tranquilizer to swallow can cause jaundice, liver damage, blood diseases, sensitivity to light, upset intestinal tract, diarrhea, palsy, convulsions, depression, fatigue, drowsiness." Just a sampling of the terrible things Israelites are suffering from because they are not living by the TRUTH with which you and I are blessed to know and live by.

God would have us be in health, prosper and live abundantly (III Jn. 2; Jn. 10:10). But man has chosen the way which leads to death and evil (Deut. 30:15). God commands us to CHOOSE LIFE and GOOD but all have disobeyed Him in this (Deut. 30:16; Ps. 14:1; Rom. 3:10, 23). Throughout your Bible the two opposites -- GOOD WORKS verses EVIL WORKS -- are contrasted. Too bad mankind has always chosen to perform evil works. But notice, it is a matter of WORKS regardless -- good or bad! So long as we live, our activities or works are going to be either good or bad -- you can't escape this fact!

Mankind has always chosen the way of least resistance, the way of sensual pleasures, the way of self gratification -- irrespective of what it brought on or how it affected others. Christ came to such a world -- a world that loved darkness -- the way of death and evil -- because its DEEDS -- its WORKS -- were evil. God's timetable calls for a 6,000-year period in which mankind is to experience what the RESULTS of its ways are -- DEATH AND EVIL!

So long as man has anything existing about him in which he can place his trust and confidence, he will. Instead of trusting in and relying on God, mankind trusts in materialism, science, medicine and its devices. The world will come to the place where most of these things are destroyed, leaving mankind little in which he can trust. Then God will send Christ back to this earth to save mankind from total destruction and force him to go the way of LIFE AND PEACE -- 6,000 years of history will lie behind mankind to show him no other way of government, society, or religion will work, they will have all been tried, tested and found wanting by then. After mankind is living the way of life, peace and good, he will then come to understand -- by experience -- why it is that God would have had us go the right way all the time. Men just won't learn the easy way by believing all that God says and doing it without question -- not trying to figure out whether or not God is right before doing a particular thing.

BUT, in spite of the fact that all men have gone the way of death and evil, God has, nevertheless, had a few faithful through whom He has preserved the Truth. He has made them willing by opening their minds to see the futility of the way of the flesh. Since the Truth endures forever (II Jn. 2), God's servants have always spoken the same thing.

John the Baptist came, preparing the way for the first coming of Christ. This WORK of which you and I are a part, has been raised up to prepare the way for Christ's second coming. How thrilled and thankful we ought to be in knowing that this very WORK OF GOD was spoken about thousands of years ago and has been raised by the ETERNAL GOD and that He has placed at the HEAD of this Work, Jesus Christ. What did John preach?

John preached that men ought to repent and of the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God (Mat. 3:1-2). We preach that men everywhere ought to repent -- turn from their sins of transgressing God's Commandments -- and prepare to enter the Kingdom of God which shall be set up on this earth at Christ's second coming.

He preached from the Old Testament Scriptures -- so do we today (Mat. 3:1). Christ said a wise scribe instructed in the Kingdom of God will preach from the Old and New Testaments (Mat. 13:52) -- now that the New Testament has been written, we use it in addition to the Old.

What we need to realize is that John only fulfilled prophecies relating to preparing the way of the Lord, making his paths straight in part -- in a typical sense. The Work which is prophesied to prepare the way of the Lord for His second coming is to fulfill these prophecies in an antitypical sense. Notice John quoted Isaiah 40:3 but by comparing the surrounding verses, you will see that this is referring more specifically to a fulfillment at the SECOND coming of Christ, not the first. Warfare of Jerusalem is not yet accomplished -- Jerusalem is still under the "times of the Gentiles" (Isa. 40:1-2; Zech. 14:1-4; Lk. 21:24; Rom. 11:25-26). All flesh together has not seen the glory of the Lord revealed (Isa. 40:5); neither did Christ come with a strong hand nor bring His reward at His first coming (Isa. 40:10). We need to understand the principle of duality running throughout the Bible.

The world had strayed far from God's Truth when John the Baptist was raised up to start making it known before Christ's first coming. When he made the Truth known, the religious leaders were shown how wrong they were -- they weren't willing to repent (Mat. 3:6-8). His message showed the difference between GOOD and EVIL WORKS -- that the world was following evil works. He told them to repent or they would perish (Mat. 3:10-12). John clearly showed that every person has works -- it is just a matter of what kind they are, good or bad.

Since the time of Christ, all TRUTH has perished (Jer. 7:28) -- with the exception of that which has been preserved in God's Church. Christ promised that the basic TRUTHS which constitute KEYS to right understanding would be preserved to this very day (Mat. 16:18-19). At which time facilities would be made available -- Ambassador College and a number of qualified ministers -- for greatly magnifying these TRUTHS and expanding on them to an understanding of much of the Bible. Christ was looking forward to the time when this WORK would be raised up in which He would restore the TRUTH and disseminate it to a wicked world, showing it how evil its works are and that the people ought to repent -- most won't until Christ is here to deal with them personally. The Gospel is going out primarily as a WITNESS (Mat. 24:14).

We are not a part of this work because we have been better than others but because God has called us to PERFORM A WORK -- the work of recapturing true values, restoring the Truth lost down through the centuries, sending out the GOOD NEWS of the soon-coming government of God, warning a wicked world of where its ways are leading it. One of the primary purposes for which Christ built His Church was to preserve the KEYS of the Kingdom of God to this time when they would be magnified and property used by His servants to carry out this end-time commission and to lay before us a clear understanding of what we must do to qualify for entrance into the Kingdom of God and assist Christ in restoring all things.

Christ clearly revealed that spiritual Truths are revealed by God and not by the OPINIONS of men (Mat. 16:13-17). These Truths don't come from man -- Christ was continually opposed by the religious leaders who tried every way to suppress the Truth (Mat. 16:12) -- and have been preserved only in the Church which Jesus Christ built -- this Church through which this end-time commission is being carried out!

These TRUTHS and many of the things which must be done in carrying out the Work of God just don't appear logical or right to the natural, carnal mind (verses 21-22) -- we are to put down carnal reasonings and opinions and learn to think like God (Mat. 16:23; II Cor. 10:3-5). To do this, one must continually deny himself of that which comes naturally -- expressing opinions, ideas, his way of wanting things done, the way of carnal reasonings and vanity (Mat. 16:24). Our responsibility is to follow Christ as He leads this work in spite of the way we may personally feel about how we think it ought to be done -- put out carnality and get behind this work with all of our might, praying for it and supporting it every way we can (same verse).

If this places us in precarious circumstances or endangers our lives in any way, we are, nevertheless, to remain faithful to the end (Mat. 16:25). Persecutions are eventually coming -- let us reconcile our selves to the fact, asking God to train us so we will remain faithful in spite of the circumstances.

The Kingdom of God must mean more to you than any physical or material thing -- your heart must be set on entering God's family and want material blessings and wealth ONLY as it will better help you serve God. Otherwise, they are of no value -- they can only make you stumble, turn from and quit relying on God (Mat. 16:26; I Tim. 6:10, 17-19).

The three hardest things for human beings to do is: One, deny self; two, be willing to give up their life and three, to think more of God's Kingdom than this whole world about us. In knowing this, Christ has to reveal how much more we ought to desire the Kingdom of God and His glory and righteousness.

To show the Apostles -- and us -- why they (couldn't afford not to deny self, not to be willing to give up lives if necessary and put the Kingdom of God above the entire world, He gave them, in vision, a foresight of the INDESCRIBABLE GLORY which

is to be given to those who enter the Kingdom of God (Mat. 17:1-9). This should be uppermost in our mind at all times -- lest we let something come between God and us, preventing us from realizing these blessings!

Christ endured all things because He had looked forward to the great joy which would be experienced when glorified as God (Heb. 12:2). Nothing was greater than the glory experienced with the Father before He came to this earth to be our Savior (Jn. 17:5). His example is one we ought to keep before us at all times (Heb. 12:1-4). Let us look to one phase of His life in which was endured the very things set before the disciples, outlined above.

After denying Himself food and drink for forty days -- at such a point terrific hunger had set in -- He had to further deny food when being tempted of the devil (Mat. 4:1-3). To do such a thing would have been in obedience to the tempter -- Christ would not obey the devil and, as well, realized such sustenance would last only a short while; whereas, the Word of God is spirit and it is life and would endure forever -- He chose the far more important thing, living by the Word of God (Mat. 4:4; Jn. 6:27, 63). Notice -- He didn't use human reasoning or express His ideas about it, BUT, rather, lived by exactly what was written in Scripture -- "It is written" (Mat. 4:4). The example you are to follow today! Again, His very life was in danger -- being placed on the "pinnacle of the temple" -- yet He chose to obey God rather than the tempter (Mat. 4:5-6). He was definite in knowing what to do in such a situation -- live by the Scripture, "It is written" (Mat. 4:7). Since the tempter couldn't lead Christ into sin through these maneuvers, he tried a third. He offered Christ the kingdoms of this whole world and all of their glory -- if He would just fall down and worship him (Mat. 4:8-9). What would you have done? Some bow down and worship an employer just for a job -- nothing at all compared to the whole world, including all employment, etc. Do wives prefer to obey the tempter by refusing to obey their husbands as God's Word clearly reveals they ought? Do you husbands refuse to be over your wives as Christ is over the Church -- with love, compassion and understanding, yet with unquestionable rule? Are all members of the church afraid to rebel against authority God has placed in the church -- preferring to obey the tempter instead (I Sam. 15:23). Some in the church in Paul's day preferred to have their own carnal, selfish, rebellious way and TURNED ASIDE AFTER SATAN (I Tim. 5:15) -- let us fear to take these things lightly but let us DENY SELF when we see we are going contrary to God's Word -- let us FOLLOW CHRIST in all things! Let us not kid ourselves -- you either obey God or you obey the devil, there is no in between road (Rom. 6:16). Christ can help you overcome anything and be obedient to God's rule IF YOU REALLY WANT IT (Heb. 4:14-16; 2:17-18; II Pet. 2:9; Jude 1, 24); just as the Father helped Christ as He sought God's rule in His life above all things (Mat. 4:10-11). Let us follow Christ's example in denying self, seeking to save our lives or desiring riches -- when to do so means we go contrary to God's Word and His rule in our lives.

We must seek God's glory and immortality above all things (Rom. 2:7; Col. 3:1-4), performing the commission we have been given with zeal -- before the Kingdom can come and our deliverance from the weaknesses of the flesh (Mat. 24:14). The disciples sought glory and immortality, so were anxious to learn just when Christ is to return -- to change their mortal bodies to conform to His glorious Body (Mat. 24:3). Christ looked down to our day now -- seeing the Work He was to perform through us -- and informed them that this GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom or Government of God would have to be proclaimed to the WHOLE world, unto all nations, before the end of this present man-made society and system would end (Mat. 24:14). Are we thrilled and joyful that God has called us to have a part in this very work Christ spoke of, foretold by the prophets of old, and the greatest Work Christ will every carry out through mortal flesh? We need a right perspective of this -- lest we neglect such a great salvation and fall short of the glory to which we have been called and miss out on the work we will be doing under Christ throughout the millennium, the great white throne judgment period and THROUGHOUT ALL ETERNITY! It is time we wake out of our sleep, for the time is nearer than we may have thought (Rom. 13:11; I Ths. 5:1-8).

In Christ's wonderful prayer just before He was crucified, He looked down to our day and prayed for us! He prayed for those of us who are believeing on Christ through the disciples word (Jn. 17:20). He is going to see to it that the whole world admits that He has loved us -- that Christ was coming through our fleshly bodies performing this end-time Work (Jn. 17:23). Christ knew that to the Philadelphian era of the Church, He would open the "doors" of radio, T.V. and the printing press through which the GOOD NEWS OF THE WORLD TOMORROW would be proclaimed to the whole world, unto all nations, just before He returns (Rev. 3:7-8). And just as He promised in John 17:23, He will make the whole world come to us, admit that He was working through us and worship at our feet, admitting that He loved us (Rev. 3:9). This, of course, will be after Christ is here and we are changed into spirit, members of the God Family and worthy of worship -- it is idolatry to worship anyone except God.

How did Christ know that such a work would be carried out in these end times? Because He understood and believed the prophets! Many places in the prophets, this work is spoken of. We need to know and rejoice that we have been given such an honorable work to do!

God inspired the prophet Habakkuk to write of the work being done through us of warning the Chaldeans -- the people of northern Italy who will be in combine with 10 other nations, forming the Beast, to attack God's people Israel and, later, North Africa and parts of the middle east -- they will be punished for the military movements they plan to carry out (Hab. 1:5-6). The vision was for our day -- the end time (Hab. 2:2-3). Just before Christ comes to fill this earth with His knowledge and glory (2:14). Yes, just before Christ comes, He foretold through the Prophet Habakkuk that His Work -- of preaching the Good News of The World Tomorrow -- would be revived (3:2), a work which will be carried out just before the heavenly signs occur (3:11).

Through the prophet Isaiah, God foretold of this marvelous and wonderful work -- the Work which will eventually be known throughout, yes around the world. Notice what Isaiah was inspired to write, "Therefore" -- because of all the religious deception throughout the world brought on by traditions of men, nullifying the Word of God (Isa. 29:13) -- "behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder" -- a work which has to show the error of the teachings of the religious wise men -- "for the wisdom of the wise man shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent man shall be hid" (Isa. 29:14). God has to restore and proclaim the Truth because religious leaders have so twisted and perverted God's Word that no one can understand otherwise (II Pet. 3:16; Jer. 7:28; Isa. 60:2). They claim that the Book of Revelation and other books of the Bible can't be understood (verse 11) -- but Christ through this Work has made it understandable in the booklet "The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last"! They claim God's laws are done away and preach we are to follow the popular traditions of Sunday, Christmas, Easter, etc. (verse 13); they "seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark" (verse 15) -- they turn the Truth of God upside down through their intellectual arguments and through their higher criticism (verse 16). This Work is foretold to occur just before Christ comes to open an understanding to all (verses 18 and 24) -- just before the "terrible one", Germany, "is brought to nought" (verse 20) and a few years before Israel has been delivered from a captivity in Europe and have been restored to the land of Palestine (verse 23). Yes, Christ understood the timetable of prophecy -- He knew such a momentous Work was to be done just prior to the captivity of His people Israel and His return to the earth!

God is going to accomplish this Work -- that means greater and greater growth, more and more material blessings with which to carry out this commission, etc. -- but we have our part to perform. You rightly reap the benefits of this work -- hearing The World Tomorrow broadcasts, reading The Plain Truth and The Good News magazines, studying the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course and the various booklets and pieces of literature -- ONLY if you are putting your part into the Work, praying fervently for it, and striving diligently to help out financially and in other ways.

If we do our part faithfully, God promises we will escape the horrifying **TRIBULATION** which is coming upon the whole world in just the next few years (Rev. 3:10); that we will be given a position, eventually, in the very Headquarters of the Universe, New Jerusalem (verse 12). **BUT**, get this and get it well, those who take this **WORK** lightly, feeling they can reap the benefits without putting all they can into it -- just wanting to get and not give -- are going to fall into a **LUKEWARM**, insipid, unprofitable state and miss out on salvation and the blessings to follow. Read about the group which is to arise, take advantage of the fruit produced by Christ through this Work, but who will not be subject to God's Headquarters Church in Pasadena, California; who will not send in their tithes and offerings to either Pasadena or the headquarters in their country and who only want to feel important, spiritual, have a lot of head knowledge, **BUT WHO DON'T WANT TO DENY SELF, PUT GOD'S KINGDOM AND HIS WORK BEFORE THEIR OWN LIVES, AND PUT GOD'S WORK BEFORE ANY MATERIAL THING WHICH WILL NOT BETTER HELP IN FURTHERING THE GOSPEL COMMISSION GIVEN TO THE CHURCH!** Such a group is prophesied to come up -- and probably very soon -- and anyone can fall into such a category quickly -- if he is not praying, studying diligently, fasting on occasion, and putting his all into this work of proclaiming the Gospel -- and we must make sure we **LOVE GOD**, are concerned above all things for His Work and strive to be an obedient, profitable servant. Read about the condition you and I can't afford to fall into (Rev. 3:14-21). God doesn't want **LUKEWARM**, ungrateful, unthankful, lethargic, spiritually weak, pleasure seeking, work despising, materially minded people -- **HE CALLED US TO BE A PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS** (Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14).
ARE YOU???