

*I have a dream
I have seen the promised land.*



THE MIND OF CHRIST
By John A. Scott, Sr.,

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at the Church of Christ at White Station
On occasion of the assassination of
Martin Luther King, Jr. April 4, 1968**

Introduction¹

These are the times that try men's souls. The last few weeks we have, here in Memphis, undergone great upheavals. Emotions have been wrought up and tragedies of one sort or another have occurred that have had far-reaching consequences in our lives and in the lives of our fellow countrymen. It is during times like these when one who preaches

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must be reminded of the tradition in which he speaks. It is the tradition of the prophets, a tradition of the apostles, to speak where one is tempted to remain silent, but it is not easy to do so. Whether it be to speak or to remain silent when people are asking questions about Christian attitudes in times that are troubled like these. It is difficult to remain silent; in fact it is impossible.

As I think about situations like this, I am prone to say, or want to say, to my sons “If you expect to preach, if you expect to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, there are times when you are caught on the horns of a dilemma. It’s hard to speak and it’s hard to keep silent.

Everyone who preaches and everyone who teaches from the words of Christ knows that it is true. You know there is a verse which comes echoing back over and over, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, his father shall be ashamed of him in the Day of Judgment”. (Mark 8:38) So in these times of upheaval, I’ve asked myself, and I am sure you have asked yourself, “What is the mind of Christ? What is the attitude of Christ?” Because this should be my mind and my attitude, and your mind and your attitude, because we are Christian people. We strive to follow in the steps of Christ; it means that we constantly have to be adjusting our life so that we do not drift off course.

There is an instrument in an airplane, which will help the pilot keep on course to his destination even when the winds or other factors may blow him off his course.

And so with Christian people, there are times when, due to the forces of society, due to the emotions of upheaval, due to the problems that men face from day to day, it’s easy to get off course. It’s easy to drift ever so slightly and never be aware of being off course. So the pilot has to keep a constant check to stay on course.

Similarly, we need constantly to go back to the Word, constantly go back to the message of Christ and adjust our lives accordingly. Everyone who is a follower of Christ is compelled to take his position behind Christ and let Christ lead the way wherever that may go. And certainly one must do this with all humility. I feel I stand on secure ground when it comes to studying the Bible and making comments and practical applications to the everyday, work-a-day world.

Jesus, Servant of All

Christ stated His purpose at the very outset of His ministry to preach the Good News to the world. In the first place, when we are trying to understand the turmoil, or a little more about what the Christian attitude toward our turmoil should be, we should seek to understand what Christ’s attitude would be toward the people He served. Whom did Christ serve?

He said “I am among you as He that serveth” (Luke 22:27). I read the Gospels through with this one question in mind. I made an effort to select the passages and the lessons and the examples and the parables and the words of Christ that would give me some guidance and more detail. Now as I share them with you, it will give us all guidance as we study these matters together. But you know as well as I do, the kind of people Christ came to serve. Constantly the phrase is reiterated in the Bible that He was moved with compassion among the multitudes, for many different causes.

Jesus, a Man of Compassion

For example, to those that were afflicted with diseases-diseases that are not like what we run into every day, but the diseases of the outcast, the down trodden, the maimed, the halt, the blind. (Matthew 4:23) There were those who were lame and dumb and impotent. There were the lepers, there were the epileptics, those that were frothing at the mouth and going into seizures of various sorts. There were those with the dropsy, those that had been confined to the tombs and isolated in their condition because they could no longer circulate in society. The lepers were unclean and couldn't associate with the good people on the streets. And when we read example after example, here we can see that Christ was concerned about these people-from the dregs of life, He was concerned about them and showed His concern. "They that arte whole", He said, "need not a physician, but they are sick". These were the people He sought after. (Matthew 9:12)

But then in other categories when we look for the example of Christ, what other types and classes of people did He seek out? There were the Canaanites, commonly called "dogs", the Samaritans, then there were also the Publicans and the sinners and the beggars and the harlots; yes, people in all of these categories. And the reason given again and again and again is because He had compassion upon them. Because He felt sorry for them.

Other categories He gave: He said "The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost," (Luke 19:10) And of course, all people in the lost condition were the objects of Christ's compassion But there may be a number of reasons, and I don't propose to go into them today because we don't know this for sure, but there are a number of reasons I feel like why we have an emphasis throughout the Gospels of Christ's concern for the underdog, for the poor, halt, maimed and the blind. We are told He came to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to deliver the captives, to set up liberty those that were bruised. What does this mean? (Luke 6:17; 7:39; 8:28)

Significantly, it means to include the categories of people that have been abused, have been bruised, have been captive. On one occasion, John, after he was in prison, sent a message to Christ, and he said "I hear what you have been preaching and I don't know if you are the Messiah or not, but I'm confined to prison and would you let me know whether you are the Messiah?"

John had baptized Him, of course, before, but under the circumstances he wasn't sure about here. Jesus told the messenger "You go back and you tell John that the blind receive their sight and the deaf hear and the dumb speak and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

That was characteristic of the Messiah and all the messenger had to do was go back with that message and they would know that this was indeed the Messiah. (Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18; 7:22)

So these were the people to whom Christ went to preach and to serve. Let me hurry on. There's another category of passages of scripture that come to the front –the teaching of Christ concerning the lower classes in society. They had a number of classes in Christ's day, even as we had historically, in our own time. Though we like to talk and read about the classless society in our history books, we had it.

Pride

What about the subject of “Pride”? Concerning pride, there were lessons and examples and statements over and over again in the scriptures. Christ said, in essence, “The first shall be the last and the last shall be first” (Matthew 19:30) If we’re honest with ourselves, we have to confront this verse fully, honestly, and completely, and others like it. He said these things have been hidden from the wise, these have been hidden from those that are the upper crust and these things are revealed unto the simple. (Luke 10:21) What did He mean by this? He talked about the princes of the Gentiles who exercised authority over the people. (Matthew 20:25) He talked about the others who took positions of greatness among the people, but He said, “This shall not be so among you. Whosoever would be great, let him be the servant of all.” A mother of the sons of Zebedee, you recall, came to Him and said she wanted one son on the right hand and another on the left hand. And He said “You don’t know what you’re asking for. You don’t understand. This isn’t the way of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 27:56).

Then on another occasion He spake a parable unto them in which He said, this is where those who trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others, (Luke 18:9). This was the lesson that Bro. Hays spoke so well on last Sunday night. A parable for those who trust themselves, that they are great, and that they despise others. (Mark 10:42) I wonder how often, if Christ were preaching throughout our land and country today, He might not preach on this same thing.

Again Jesus girded himself and washed the feet of His apostles in order to show them what true greatness was, and true greatness was not what they thought it had been; and it was not what the people of our day commonly think (John 13:4) The natural man in the world and in society-the worldly in concept of greatness-is different from the concept that Christ had.

Deny the Self

“Whoever will come after Me,” Jesus said, “Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me”. (Matthew 16:24) You have heard me say time and time again this word, “to deny oneself”, has a double intent, it seems. One means that we sacrifice and that we do without things, and another one is that we deny the existence of the self and put Christ in ourselves and we no longer stand independently and so proud in our own right. But rather that we as individuals, have been put to death in Christ, in the character of Christ, and that the thinking of Christ rules in the place of the ego. (Galatians 2:20) So He said you can’t be my disciple unless you do deny yourself.” Again He said, “He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them from low degree (Luke 1:52) Verses like this go on and on. He talked about the Scribes, who loved the position, who loved the drinking, who loved the highest seats, who loved the chief rooms at the feast, who loved to be recognized as leaders and those who were exercising authority over the people, but inwardly they devour the widow’s houses. (Luke 20:41-47)

The contrast was that they put themselves up in position over the people while they deprived the poor and the widows. Jesus said the Gentiles are like the Jewish scribes and lord it over the people, but He said, “You shall not be like this” (Matthew 20:25). You who are in the Kingdom cannot be like this either. Do you see what the “mind” or “attitude” of Christ is? All of these verses and lessons are intended to mold and to shape and to make the attitude of Christians into the form of Jesus.

Hypocrisy

Here are some scriptures in another category talking about hypocrisy and the falling away. There's a rather difficult parable about a man who had an unclean spirit, and Jesus then refers to the fact that the unclean spirit was removed and the spirit must have dwelled not only in the man, but in his house as well. And when it was removed, the house was looked upon as being cleaned and garnished, and the man went to and fro in society. But then, after a time, when he returned there were seven other spirits all worse than the first, inhabiting the house. (Matthew 12)

Seemingly the lesson here is that a person can become a Christian, a person can follow Christ and can know what it is to have the Christian temperament and wear the Christian name, but then he can slip and fall and he can become worse than he was at the beginning. This is certainly in accord with other verses, which refer to the fall of men.

Jesus said there are times when you clean the outside of the cup and the platter and inwardly there is contamination and filth. He said you garnish the tombs of the prophets, but you are the ones who take the lives of the prophets. He said the Scribes devoured the widow's houses and yet make pretense with long prayers before the people. He said these receive the greater condemnation. The rebukes of Christ were certainly clear when He talked about hypocrisy and the pride that people have that goes before a fall. (Matthew 23:25,29)

Rich and Poor

Then there's another category of society in contrast to the rich and poor. These commandments are difficult to obey, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none. He that hath meat, likewise." (Luke 3:11) What does this mean? Oh it's an easy matter to rationalize and give excuses, and say, "Lord, we don't like to face up to these issues. Our way of life is different. We don't like to face up to pride, and hypocrisy, or we don't like to have to deny ourselves in certain ways." Of course we don't, but who told us that Christianity was going to be easy?

Another parable to influence our character: the rich man and his barns. (Luke 12) The contrast here is obvious. This is a well-known parable to all concerned. After this Jesus talked about another rich man who made a great supper and the guests didn't come to the supper as he had invited them. And so the master told his servants to "Go into the streets and into the lanes and you bring in the poor and the maimed, the halt, and the blind." And they went and brought in these people. And then he said, "Well, the house is not full yet. We're going to eat the feast, but first go into the hedge ways and into the by-paths and you bring in, as it were, dregs from society and they can eat, too." (Luke 14:16)

And when Jesus finished this parable, He had a spiritual application for it. This was clear. He said not many great are called. He reminded us that not many of those that you look up to as the standard, as the epitome of behavior in society are the ones that are called into the Kingdom. What else could He have meant?

Patience and Endurance

Jesus also talked about the patience and endurance the Christian character must live. He referred to the fact that if a man sins against you 70 times 7 times, you should have a forgiving spirit. Then Jesus gave a penetrating example for the Pharisees and the Scribes and the religious people of the day.

A certain king had a man that owed him a great debt and the king forgave the man this debt. Then the servant went out to another man who owed him, in turn, a very meager debt. And he wouldn't forgive him the debt. So the servant took the debtor by the throat and said "You'll be delivered to the tormentors and be tormented until you pay." (Luke 14:16)

And the application was to consider how much God has done for us. God, in His greatness by contrast, looked down upon us as mere human beings, and having done so much for us in the forgiveness of our sins and having given us all that we have, He now expects us to have the same kind of spirit. When we go to those who are beneath us, our attitude should be one of forgiveness and acceptance. It should be an attitude of love and compassion. I don't mean love by romantic affection, or like among friends and kinfolks, but love by the definition of "the will to do good."

This is the same kind of love that is referred to in so many other passages, for example, talking about loving one's neighbor. Jesus, one time said those on His right hand would be saved. And those on the left hand will be those who, He said "Have seen me when I was hungry, when I was thirsty, and when I was a stranger, when I was naked, when I was sick, when I was in prison, and they attended me when I was in these conditions." (Matthew 25:35) But people fail to see Christ in the lowliest and so seek out a rationale in resisting the Gospel saying, "Lord, this doesn't apply to me". So we speak out and say, "Lord, we don't understand. When did we see you in these circumstances?" And He says "Inasmuch as you did it not unto the least of these...the very least..." Pick out the least in society then, and we'll see where we have an obligation, where we've been passing over an obligation and a responsibility. God is our Judge.

What Mercy Involves

This is the reason He gave us such passages as "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7) And repeated it time and time again. Jesus had compassion, compassion upon those who were sick, upon the epileptics, compassion on the outcasts, compassion on the hungry. And in the parable of the Good Samaritan, one known well to all of us, the challenging conclusion was, "And who is neighbor to this man?" (Luke 6:26) The answer was so obvious that those who opposed Jesus said "He that showed mercy upon him."

Luke chapter six is a section that is vivid with details of the merciful attitude, "Blessed are ye that hunger now for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company."

Who are those who are hated? Who are those who are separated? You can pick them out from the daily paper and then you will see whom Jesus meant here. "But woe unto you who are rich, for you have received your consolation." (vs. 26) Careful, don't pick out the rich from among all the others. We have to talk to ourselves if we are honest. We have to talk to old number one. In Christ's category of the rich I have to talk to myself.

"Woe unto you that are full now for ye shall hunger. (Luke 6:24) Woe unto that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for in the same manner did their fathers speak of the false prophets. But I say unto you that hear, 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you...' (Matthew 5:44)

Does this mean that we do it only from a distance? Does it mean that we can show concern for those of the Negro race by sending two men to Africa as missionaries and spend 11, 12, or \$13,000 to reach those, but have no obligation to those in our own city or in our own block or who are working for us in our homes?...or in our own church building?

“Bless them that curse you and pray for them that despitefully use you, etc...Love your enemies and do them good and never despairing for your reward shall be great.” (Luke 6:27, 35)

God is the one in the last analysis who sees the kind of life that we live, and if we're patient, if we're tolerant, if we show this kind of love. God knows it whether anyone knows it or not. And whether we're rewarded openly or not, God knows it.

“Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful.” Look at the standard of mercy that Jesus gave to us. This is the standard of mercy that God had toward us and that He has toward all the world, including the garbage men of Memphis.

What kind of mercy is this? This is mercy to the nth degree and it's a deeper mercy than I have, but I will have to work for it, I have to strive for it and I have to keep that as an end and a goal in view.

Other verses in this sixth chapter of Luke give us standards that are high and noble. Let me hurry on. What about these two verses? I think I could say nothing else this evening by way of quotations from the scriptures except these two and these summarize it: “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.”-The Golden Rule, (vs. 31)

All of the children in the lower grades can give you that from memory in one form or another. We can live all of our lives and fall short of the applications of this Golden Rule as Christ intended it. It's simple. It means we have to put ourselves in the other fellow's shoes. Now it's an easy manner to put ourselves in the shoes of those standing beside us, those that are our closest friends. It's an easy manner to love those who love us; it's an easy manner to attend to those that already have been showing an inclination to help us. But it's more difficult, isn't it, to love one's enemies. It's more difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of others-the downtrodden and the outcast-but we have to, we have to.

Our Neighbor and Society

Now speaking on the great commandments, Jesus said the first commandment is this, “Hear O Israel, thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first commandment, and the second, like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Mark 12:28)

In answer to the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus taught that one's neighbor is one upon whom we need to show mercy and he's the one that's at hand who needs to show it (Luke 6:20) But what's the problem?

We look into our society at the present time, we see that scores have been killed; we see property destroyed into the untold millions; we see hatred upon every side, and in the last melee, the precipitating event, the spark that set it off, was a spark here in Memphis. It's tragic. And all of us who are citizens of Memphis, who love this city, cannot help but

think about it. It's in all your minds, I know. You've been asking me, you've talked with others. Its been discussed in your classes, among yourselves. It's tragic that this has happened. People say "Why?" Does the Gospel have nothing to say to times like these?

I know there are many, many involvements, and I have neither the skill nor the knowledge to be able to determine and to explain the involvements of a situation like this. But I think that because of the very position that Christians occupy, they need to have their fingers on the pulse of society.

When I look around us, in the first place, we can see hatred abroad in the land. It is a part of the mood of the times that there is unrestrained hatred. Oh, I'm not only charging Memphis right now. I'm talking about our country today. People were rejoicing right and left when Johnson left the race. Whether they could agree or not, the principle of hatred was coming to play here. It's not a matter of politics at this point. I'm not talking about politics and I'm not talking about economics, though this is involved. But the basic issue in our society is morality. There were those who said, "Well, what's Johnson's angle?" Then there were the races that showed their hate, age groups showed hate, political extremes hate, white races hate, Negro races hate. The hawks complain that we are not killing enough Viet Cong, while doves say that we are killing the women and children and babies needlessly. And everybody criticizes everybody else.

Something is wrong when Christian people cannot begin to exercise the leavening of society that they should in a nation that is called a Christian nation. Something is wrong with our practice of Christianity.

And if Christian people can't exercise a leavening influence in our society and be a light to the world, and the salt of the earth, as Christ said they were meant to be, something is wrong with us. It's not the Gospel; it's not the theory. Something is wrong with our practice of it.

First Century Christianity

A long time ago only 12 men, certainly a minority in society, were able to turn the world upside down for Christ, and when there are hundreds of thousands of people who wear the name of Christ and are unable to exercise something to stop this kind of hatred that is abroad in our world, SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THOSE THE WEAR THAT NAME.

The power is in the Gospel. The power is in Jesus Christ, but it gets watered down, and if we fail to bear witness and we fail to use our influence as Christians, to have our society a law-abiding society, then something is wrong. There is something dreadfully wrong with our policemen still having to wear their riot hates in the streets even after the upheaval is all over. It means that it isn't all over.

Potentially we still have our problems. When we look at our own situation, I think it is just a practical application from the lesson we had on the forces at work in the crucifixion of Christ we see how hatred and prejudice work irrationally. I think a practical application of this, at least, has come home for me. I don't know about you. I can't judge you. But for me, I have to apply it to myself. And as I look at the situation, I can't condemn our Mayor, though he has a part to play. I can't condemn our Council, though they had a part to play, because they represent us. Each plays a part.

Responsibility

We can't condemn the labor union per se, but they have a part to play also with outside leaders coming in. When we try to go back to first causes for what has happened here, certainly it is complex. But I think that **we, as citizens can't put it off on someone else**, as some have been wanting to do because we are citizens of Memphis. We represent the people who live here. I am a Memphian, and because I am, I therefore have a part in this and a responsibility to bear.

The electorate is partly responsible then because they have permitted the conditions to exist and to trigger the catastrophic events that took place in the last two weeks or so. We who did not object and those who upheld the Mayor and the Council, -whatever our position-we have to help shoulder the load of responsibility. And it's easy to keep saying, "Well, if certain things didn't happen, or if this or if that." The point is it did happen. Sure, the nation was a tender box. And sure, we cannot say that people killed by the scores in other places are directly our responsibility. But we can look back upon the facts of the matter that are now history, events that were here triggered this.

In my opinion, we have a responsibility. If we did not object, we have a responsibility, if we have not spoken out clearly and specifically. I had more than one opportunity to object and I didn't do it. And I don't mind telling you I feel, in part, guilty. And I didn't speak out enough about the conditions of our beloved city and about the conditions that were going on and were setting the stage and the scenes that could be triggered by something like this. I'm not talking now in detail about the specifics of union wages or recognition or what have you. I'm talking about the underlying fiber that laid the foundation because of our feeling for one another.

This is the thing Christian people have to think about and examine ourselves about.

Real Issues Involve Christian Principles

So the real issues, I think, come down to Christian principles, the principle of understanding and consideration. We can thank God this wasn't the biggest riot Memphis ever had. The biggest riot Memphis ever had was a long time ago-1866 I believe it was. The north end of town and the south end of town had it out and scores of people were killed. About the turn of this century-1900, there were those who came into the city and said the thing that can change Memphis from a city where booze was free and easy and prostitution was rampant, was to change the moral fiber of the people here. And history shows that since 1900 Memphis has been known as a city of churches. But the city of churches has been washing the pot and the platter on the outside, and has left contamination on the inside. We've said "Peace, peace, where there is no peace." We've cheerfully washed and garnished the sepulchers on the outside and they are gleaming white in the sun, but inwardly they are filled with dead men's bones. (Matthew 23:29)

And we can deny this and deny it, but the sooner we face up to it and say "Lord, forgive us for our inactivity, for our complacency, for keeping quiet on the principles of Jesus Christ," the sooner we can go to God on our knees and ask Him to help us. That much sooner, then, we can have the guilt off our shoulders.

Of course, outsiders stirred up the people. We don't like outsiders interfering. I don't like outsiders coming in either, and of course, we can say, as people have said, "Martin Luther King had no business being here." I said that after he was in Memphis the first

time during the riot. And I believed it. But then the Golden Rule came out of the darker recesses of my mind into the light of day and hit me.

Apply the Golden Rule

Suppose my people were abused and subjugated. The only way at their disposal to show their objection and to be heard would be to march in a mass meeting. I would go to be with them. If you were those people, I would be with you. Before God, I believe I would have to admit that. I think the Golden Rule requires me to say what I would do if the situation were reversed. I'd be with you and you know that. To stand or fall I would go down with you. Of course, people say,--and there's a technicality here—that the strike is against the law. And there are other ramifications of this and I don't want to pass over them lightly.

Hypocrisy of Pharisees

Let's consider a few verses of Scripture at this point, which as far as I'm personally concerned, apply here. The Pharisees were masters at quoting a law for what they wanted to do. They were masters at giving an excuse, at laying heavy burdens and laws and technicalities upon the people. So Jesus one time came to the Pharisees and said,

“You are careful to tithe mint and anise and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these you ought to have done and not to have left the other undone.” (Matthew 23:23) I think it is analogous. I think it applies. I believe it. I may be wrong, yes, but I believe this to be true. If any man would go to law and take away thy coat,” said Jesus then give him thy cloak also.” (Matthew 5:40) Well, what does that mean? “If any man will compel you to go one mile with him, go with him two... Woe unto the world because of offenses, offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom offenses do come.” (Matthew 18:7; Luke 18:1) Again, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

And again, “What do ye more than others?” (Matthew 5:47) There's wrong on both sides and you know I don't uphold riots. It's wrong before God. It was a riot that took the life of Christ. No, I don't uphold riots. I'm not presenting what could be termed by some, perhaps, a Yankee point of view. When I was a child, I can remember my mother taught me in Oklahoma in the 1930's to always use the term “colored people” when referring to the Negro race. She was from a strong southern tradition but she was a faithful sincere Christian and my father followed through and taught me respect.

Need for Repentance

No, I'm not presenting a biased sectarian viewpoint. I believe this is the attitude of Christ. So in concluding I would say we have to repent. I do. When I think again and apply these scriptures and as I read through this with this in mind, I would say to myself, “What if John the Baptist were to return again to the wilderness down on the side of the Mississippi River, along the Wolf River bottoms or along Nonconnah Creek. And if he were preaching again, what do you think his theme would be?” I think his theme would be to us, “Repent ye and bring forth fruits of repentance,” (Matthew 3:8) just as he preached to the people along the banks of the Jordan so long ago.

And I think if Christ were to come again and preach to us in our time, He would say cover over the strife and the turmoil and the hatred in people's lives by love, by respect. This would be His attitude, I firmly believe. There are those that are extremists on both

sides. And neither group should be held accountable for the extremists. Of course, it's hard to say, "Lord, forgive me. Lord, I repent." It's difficult, but the commands of Christ have not always been that easy.

Many Refused to Follow

Remember the Scribe that came to Him; remember the rich man that came to Him. Remember the others that Christ invited to come and follow Him, and there are half dozen cases like this where they said, "Lord, let me do this first". (Matthew 8:22; 19:21) Or, I have this reason not to follow at this time. One time He was preaching a sermon to His disciples on this subject and the disciples said, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?" (John 6:60)

Of course it's a hard saying. It means in a sense, denying ourselves. In that day and time we are told that many went back and walked with Him no more. Why? Because the saying was too hard. Because the requirements were too great. Christianity isn't that easy. People settled here in our country because they wanted to get away from the caste system of Europe. And if you want the most vivid lesson on the caste system, read James, Chapter 2. Read James 2 before you go to bed tonight.

But if we as Christians have not been made to feel uncomfortable very often in our lives, then something may be wrong with our brand of Christianity. It may mean that we are marching with the world. It may mean that the natural man has taken over. It may mean that the natural man and the world about us has influenced us to such an extent that there is no longer any difference between the Christian and the man in the world with whom he rubs elbows day by day. If we don't feel uncomfortable at times, if we don't feel a little different from the rest of society, then something may be wrong.

We're not bearing our witness properly. Jesus said "Woe be unto you when all men speak well of you." (Luke 6:26) Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:20) He said it again and again. "What do ye more than others?" (Matthew 5:47) He said, "Ye shall be hated of all men of the world for my sake," (Matthew 10:22; 24:49) and on and on.

Romans 12:1 "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." What does it mean to be different from the world? Not to be conformed to the world, said Paul. You have got to be transformed from the world and that is by the renewing of the mind. We can't think as the world thinks. We can't think as other people in society think if we're going to follow in the steps of Christ.

James 2 talks about respect of persons, about how God chose the poor of the world to be heirs of the Kingdom. He had despised the poor, and Peter, in two or three chapters of his letters, talks about the suffering Christians must endure to the end if they stand up for Christ. Let us pause for a moment of prayer:

Prayer of Penitence

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, Thou hast been good to us in so many ways; Thou hast given us a land of plenty; Thou hast given us freedom; Thou hast kept us from persecution that many people in foreign countries endure because of their persuasion of Jesus Christ; Thou hast delivered us from the tormentors; Thou hast given us periods of

comfort and ease with which we may serve Thee and we may go about our way without fear or molestation and for this, our Father, we are thankful.

FATHER, there are times when, as we look about us, we are grieved, and even as Jesus looked upon the city of Jerusalem as a people and said “Would that ye had peace in your city.” So we look among us, in our own city and cities of our land, and we call out for peace. We call out for love and we call out for patience and tolerance and understanding and the ability to apply the Golden Rule and to stand in the other fellow’s shoes.

FATHER, give us the courage; give us the strength that we may do this. FATHER, as we come before Thee at this time, we remember Nehemiah, a long time ago, came before Thee, the same God our Father and said, “ I must confess my sins and the sins of my people, for we have left undone Thine ordinances and Thy statutes and thy commandments.” So Father, for myself, in penitence and asking Thy forgiveness, I come. And for those who may share this same feeling—others who, because of their convictions may share this same—we ask on behalf of all those who feel this way, forgiveness.

FATHER, help us to bring forth the fruits of repentance. Help us to see our responsibility for our society, that we cannot stand aloof and at a distance and let the rest of the world go by without concern, without being willing to do something to help the world and contribute something to the welfare of the betterment of mankind.

FATHER, be with our Mayor, be with our Councilmen, be with our policemen, be with those in high places, give them wisdom and judgment. Help them that they may bring the strife in our city to an abrupt end. And not only upon our local level, but be with those in high places of our national government and international government that we may have peace abroad; that all races may come again to a period of tranquility in the hearts and in the lives of our people so that we are not threatened with death, injustice, pillaging, and rioting and war.

FATHER, we pray urgently and diligently and with all the faith that we know, in the name of Jesus Christ, Who set the standard for the world.

Amen.

POSTSCRIPT

During the delivery of this sermon, two or three couples walked out of the assembly. Later a few others left the congregation. Still later when our busing program was started in order to cooperate with city wide school integration, a few others left the congregation. But when some other people over the city saw our intent and took note of our attitude, they joined with us because they admired our position. This sermon was in harmony with the thinking of our elders who supported this position without question.
