

Christ's House and Servants

Robert Murray M'Cheyne:

The Church On Earth Is Christ's House: "Who has left his house" (v34.). This parable represents the church on earth as Christ's home or dwelling.

Because He is the foundation stone of it. Just as every stone of a building rests on the foundation, so does every believer rest on Christ. He is the foundation rock upon which we rest. If it were not for the foundation, the whole house would fall into ruins - the floods and winds would sweep it away. If it were not for Christ, all believers would be swept away by God's anger; but they were rooted and built up in Him, and so they form His house.

Because He is the Builder.

Every stone of the building has been placed here by the hands of Christ - Christ has taken every stone from the quarry. Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and the hold of the pit whence were digged. A natural person is embedded in the world just as firmly as a rock in quarry. The hands of the almighty Saviour alone can dig out the soul, and loosen it from its natural state.

Christ has carried it, and laid it on the foundation. Even when a stone has been quarried, it cannot lift itself; it needs to be carried, and built upon the foundation. So when a natural soul has been awakened, he cannot build himself on Christ; he must be carried on the shoulder of the great master builder. Every stone of the building! Well may it be called Christ's house, when He builds every stone of it. See that ye be quarried out by Christ; see to it, that ye be carried by Him - built upon Him; then you will be an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Because His Friends are in it. Wherever a man's friends are, that is his home - wherever a man's mother and sister and brother dwell, that is his home; this, then, must be Christ's home, for He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said: "Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother." As long as this world has a believer in it, Christ will look upon it as His house. He cannot forget, even in glory, the well of Samaria - the garden of Gethsemane - the hill of Calvary. Happy for you who know Christ, and who do the will of His Father; wherever you dwell, call Christ calls it His house. You may dwell in a poor place, and still be happy; for Christ dwells with you, and calls it His dwelling - He calls you "My brother, sister, mother."

Christ is like a man who has gone a far journey (v34). Although the church on earth be His house, and although He has such affection for it, yet Christ is not here, He is risen - Christ is risen indeed.

He has gone to take possession of heaven on our name. When an elder brother of a family purchases a property for himself and his brothers, he goes a far journey, in order to take possession. So Christ is an elder brother. He lived and died in order to purchase forgiveness and acceptance for sinners. He has gone into heaven to take possession for us. Do you take Christ for your surety? Then you are already possessed of heaven.

Question: How am I possessed of heaven, when I have never been there?

Answer: Christ your surety has taken possession in your name. If you realize this, it will give you fulness of joy. A person may possess a property which he has never seen.

Look at your surety in the land that is very far off, call it His own, for the sake of His younger brethren: "These things I have spoken unto you, that your joy maybe full."

He has gone to intercede for us.

He has gone to intercede for unawakened, barren sinners: "Lord, let it alone this year also." Oh, sinner! why is it that you have not died a sudden death? Why have you not gone quite down into the pit? How often the Saviour has prayed for some of you! Shall it be in vain?

To intercede for His believing people - to procure all blessings for them. Often an elder brother of a family goes into a far country, and sends back rich presents to his younger brethren at home. This is what Christ has done. He has gone far above all heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us, and to ask the very things we need, and to send down all the treasures of heaven. Of His fullness have we received, even grace for grace. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you a comforter." Oh, Christian! believe in a praying Christ, if you would

receive heavenly blessings. Believe just as if you say Him, and open the mouth wide to receive the blessings for which he is praying.

He has gone to prepare a place for us. When a family is going to emigrate to a foreign shore, often the elder brother goes before to prepare a place for his young brethren. This is what Christ has done. He does not intend that we should live here always - He has gone a far journey in order to prepare a place for us: "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Oh, Christian! believe in Christ preparing a place for you. It will greatly take away the fear of dying. It is an awful thing to die, even for a forgiven and sanctified soul - to enter on a world unknown, unseen, untried. One thing takes away fear: Christ is preparing a place quite suitable for my soul - He knows all the wants and weaknesses of my frame - I know he will make it a pleasant home to me.

All Christ's people are servants, and have their work assigned them (v34).

Ministers are servants and have their work assigned to them. Two kinds are mentioned:

Stewards. These seem to be the servants to whom He gave authority. All ministers should be stewards - rightly dividing the Word of life - giving to everyone of the family his portion of meat in due season. Oh! it is a blessed work, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood - to give milk to babes, and strong meat to grown men - to give convenient food to everyone. Pray for your ministers, that they may be made faithful and wise stewards. There are few such.

Porters. He commanded the porter to watch. It is the office of some ministers to stand at the door and invite every sinner, saying "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Some ministers have not the gift of feeding the Church of God and watering it. Paul planted - Apollos watered. Some are door-keepers in the house of my God. Learn not to despise any of the true servants of God. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? He has appointed some to stand at the door, and some to break the children's bread - despise neither.

All Christians are servants, and have their work assigned them. Some people think that ministers only work for Christ; but see here: "He gave to every man his work." In a great house, the steward and the porter are not only the servants; there are many more, all have their work to do. Just so among the people of Christ. Ministers are not the only servants of Christ; all that believe on Him are His servants.

Learn to be working Christians. "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls." It is very striking to see the uselessness of many Christians. Are there none of you who know what it is to be selfish in your Christianity? You have seen a selfish child go into a secret place to enjoy some delicious morsels undisturbed by his companions? So it is with some Christians. They feed upon Christ and forgiveness; but it is alone, and all for themselves. Are there not some of you who can enjoy being a Christian, while your dearest friend is not; and yet you will not speak to him? See here, you have got your work to do. When Christ found you, He said: "Go, work in my vineyard." What were you hired for, if it was not to work? What were you saved for, if it were not to spread salvation? What blessed for? Oh! my Christian friends! how little you live as if you were servants of Christ! - how much idle time and idle talk you have! This is no like a good servant. How many things you have to do for yourself? - how few for Christ and His people! This is not like a servant.

Learn to keep your own work In a great house every servant has his own peculiar work. One man is the porter to open the door, another is the steward to provide food for the family; a third has to clean the rooms, a fourth has to dress the food, a fifth has to wait upon the guests. Everyone has his proper place, and no servant interferes with another. If all were to be come porters, and open the door, then what would become of the stewardship? or if all were to be stewards, who clean the house? Just so, is it with Christians. Everyone has his peculiar work assigned him, and should not leave it. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." Obadiah had his work appointed him in the court of the wicked Ahab. God placed him as His servant there, saying; "Work here for me." Does any of you belong to a wicked family? Seek not to be removed - Christ has placed you there to be His servant - work for Him. The Shunammite had her work, When the prophet asked; "Wilt thou be spoken for to the king?" she said; "I dwell among mine own people." Once a demoniac whom Jesus healed, besought Jesus that he might follow after Him; howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith to him; "Go home to thy friends, and tell how He hath had compassion on thee." Learn, my dear friends, to keep to your own work. When the Lord has hung up a lamp in one corner, is there no presumption in removing it to another? Is not the Lord wiser than man? Everyone of you have his own work to do for Christ where you are. Are you on a sick bed? Still you have your work to do for Christ there as much as the highest servant of Christ in the world. The smallest twinkling star is as much a servant of God as the mid-day sun. Only live for Christ where you are.

Christ is coming back again, and we know not when: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping" (vv. 35-36). Two things are declared:

That Christ is coming back again. The whole Bible bears witness to this. The master of the house has been a long time away on His journey; but He will come back again. When Christ ascended from His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their sight, and they were looking steadfastly into heaven, the angels said; "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

That Christ will come back suddenly. The whole Bible bears witness to this. 1.) In one place it is compared to a snare which suddenly entraps the unwary wild beast: "As a snare shall it come on all that dwell on the face of the whole earth." 2.) Again, to a thief; "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." 3.) Again, to a bridegroom coming suddenly; "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh." 4.) Again, to the waters of the flood. 5.) Again, to the fiery rain that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah. 6.) And here, to the sudden coming home of the master of the house: "Ye know not when the master of the house cometh.

Now dear friends, I am far from discouraging those who, with humble prayerfulness, search into the records of prophesy to find out what God has said as to the second coming of the Son of Man. We are not like the first disciples of Jesus, if we do not often put the question: "What shall be the signs of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" But the truth which I wish to be written on your hearts is this: That the coming be sudden - sudden to the world - sudden to the Children of God: "In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh, at even, at mid-night or at the cockcrow, or in the morning." Oh, my friends! your faith is incomplete, if you do not live in the daily faith of a coming Saviour.

Watch: "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (v.37).

Ministers should watch. This word is especially addressed to the porter. "Watch ye, therefore." Ah! how watchful we should be. Many things make up sleep.

Want of faith. When a minister loses sight of Christ crucified — risen — coming again - then he cannot watch for souls. Pray that your ministers may have a watching eye always on Christ.

Seeing so many careless souls. Ah! you little know how this staggers the ministers of Christ. A young believer comes with a glowing heart to tell of Christ, and pardon, and the new heart. He knows it is the truth of God - he states it simply, freely, with all his heart - he presses it on men - he hopes to see them melt like icicles before the sun - alas! they are as cold and dead as ever. They live on in their sins - they die in their sins. Ah! you little know how this makes him dull, and heavy, and heartbroken. My friends, pray that we may not sleep. Pray that your carelessness may only makes us watch the more.

Christians should watch. Ah! if Christ is at hand.

Take heed lest you be found unforgiven. Many Christians seem to live without a realizing view of Christ. The eye should be fixed on Christ. Your eye is shut. Oh! if you would abide in Christ, then let Him come tonight - at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning - He is welcome, thrice welcome! Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Take heed lest you be found in any course of sin. Many Christian seem to walk, if I mistake not, in courses of sin. It is hard to account for it; but so it seems to be. Some Christians seem to be sleeping - in luxury - in covetousness - in evil company. Ah! think how would you like to be overtaken thus by the coming of the Saviour. Try your daily occupations - your daily state of feeling - your daily enjoyments - try them by this by this test: Am I doing as I would wish to do on the day of His coming?

Christless souls, how dreadful is your case! Death may be sudden - oh! how awful sudden sometimes is. You may have no time for repentance - no breath to pray! The coming of the Savior shall be more sudden still. Ye know neither the day nor the hour. You know not God - you have not obeyed the Gospel. Oh! what will ye do in the day of the Lord's anger?