

What are You to Christ?

~Other Speakers S-Z: James Smith:

The love of Christ and his people is reciprocal, so also is their interest in each other. Christ is to his people--their portion, possession, and special treasure; they live upon him, rejoice in him, and look to him, under all circumstances, for all they need. This is truly wonderful; but not as wonderful as the consideration of what the Christian is to Christ--the least, the feeblest, the most imperfect Christian: for the connection and interest depend on the reality, not the degree, of saving faith.

The least member is part of the physical body, though most distant from the head, or generally concealed from view; just so, every Christian is one with Christ, beloved by Christ, and exceedingly dear and precious in the sight of Christ. As we have considered what Christ is to the Christian, let us, then, for a few moments, look at what the Christian is to Christ.

Believer, have you considered what you are to Jesus? If so, you will be prepared to answer the question; and though you may be obliged to think before you know where to begin, as also where you are to stop--yet you will be at no loss to answer as to some points. You will be prepared to say,

"I am the purchase of his blood!" He had set his heart upon me. He was determined to possess me. But as he would do nothing dishonorable, and as divine justice had arrested me, he determined to purchase me. The price demanded was great beyond calculation. The whole universe, apart from himself, was insufficient. Nothing would meet the demand but his own blood, his own life, himself! Having made up his mind, nothing could change his purpose, or alter his determination. He said, "They shall be mine!" And, therefore, "he gave himself for us." He redeemed us with his own "precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." We, therefore, "are not our own, being bought with a price." We are the purchase of his blood, who "is Lord of all."

He never forgets the price he paid for us, or the value he set upon us; nor let us ever forget that we are his property--but let us endeavor, always and everywhere, to glorify him in our bodies and spirits, which are his.

"I am the object of his care!" He cares for us. His care is constant, tender, and extends to our most minute affairs. "The very hairs of our head are all numbered" by him. He cares for our persons, comforts, and all our concerns. He, therefore, directs us to lay low at his feet, and confide in his care, saying, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him--for he cares for you." He exhorts us to be prayerful and thankful--but neither anxious nor worried, saying, "The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Jesus cares for his people always and everywhere: at home, abroad, in sickness, in health, in prosperity, in adversity, in life, in death. He never withdraws not his eyes from them--but ever cares for them, watching over them to do them good. He is the kind and careful Shepherd, that cares for every lamb in his flock, for every sheep committed to his trust.

"I am the child of his wise providence!" Brought by it upon the stage of time. Placed by it in my present circumstances. Dependant upon it for all my various supplies. On the bosom of his providence, I lean. In the hand of his providence, I trust. To the resources of his providence, I look. His providence is my sustainer. It provides for me. It daily supplies me. It has anticipated my necessities. It demands my confidence. It tries my faith. But it always supplies my real needs.

Providence is Jesus in action to do his people good. He hides himself often behind his instruments, or what we call second causes; but he is ever present, providing for and supplying the needs of all who place confidence in his word. His promise tells me what he will do--and his providence just does what he has told me. I cannot, then, be either friendless or fatherless, for the providence of Jesus acts toward me a father's part.

"I am the subject of his intercession." He ever lives to make intercession for me! He never forgets or loses sight of me. My name is on his priestly breastplate--my concerns are all under his eye. His blood speaks for me. His influence is exerted for me. He lives in heaven for my good. He is my Counselor--I am his client. He is my Advocate--I am his brother for whom he pleads. His intercession brought me up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock. His intercession supports my faith, and frustrates the malicious designs of Satan. His intercession brings down ten thousand blessings--and prevents innumerable evils!

Sweet thought this--Jesus intercedes with his Father for me! Yes, in all times of darkness and distress--in all seasons of danger and depression-- when my heart is cold and prayerless--when my faith is weak and wavering--when my hope is feeble and faltering--when my love is reduced to a spark, or appears extinguished--then, yes, then, Jesus intercedes for me!

When Satan tempts me on earth, or accuses me in heaven--when all within and without is dreary and distressing--then, yes, then, Jesus intercedes for me. This moment, and every moment, Jesus makes me the subject of his powerful and prevailing intercession!

"I am the temple of his Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has taken possession of me in his name. He dwells in me. My very body is declared to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. He came to me as the Spirit of Christ. He claimed me as the Spirit of Christ. He entered my heart as the Spirit of Christ. By his work he proves himself the Spirit of Christ. He daily keeps me sensible of my need of Christ. He shows me the exact suitability of Christ. He leads me out of self--to Christ. He teaches me to renounce every other name but the name of Christ; so that I build on him, and on him alone, for pardon, peace, and final acceptance with God.

The Spirit of Christ dwells in me--this is my evidence that I am Christ's. How wonderful, that a nature so depraved, that a creature so insignificant, that a sinner so vile--should be constituted, consecrated, and acknowledged to be the temple of the Spirit of Christ! Yet so it is!

"I am the epistle of his love." Manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ. His truth is written on my heart by the finger of his own Spirit, and I am sent into the world to bear witness of his love. He sends by me to sinners. He speaks by me to sinners. He opens by me his loving heart to the guilty sons of men. He says, "Go publish in every direction, in characters and terms that all can read and understand, that I am Jesus--that I save the vilest--that I save freely--that I save all who come unto me--that I delight to save any, even the foulest transgressors--that I not only save--but raise those whom I save to the highest dignities, and confer on them the greatest honors. Proclaim abroad, that my heart is love, that my blood has made an infinite atonement for all sin--that I am exalted to give repentance and pardon--that I have made peace between God and all who come unto him through me."

Oh, wondrous mercy, to constitute me his epistle of love! But if I am really a Christian, I am a living, authentic, and useful epistle of Christ!

"I am a joint heir with him of the eternal inheritance!" Jesus is appointed heir of all things. All things are committed unto him by his Father. He has all power and authority in heaven and in earth. He claims the universe as his own. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ! Romans 8:17. When he said this, the apostle had special reference to our priceless eternal inheritance--an inheritance that is reserved in heaven for each of God's children, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay! But what tongue can tell, what heart conceive, what is included in being a joint heir with Christ? The blessing seems to be as vast as God's loving heart, and as boundless as God's own eternity!

Well may it be said, "What we will be--has not yet been revealed." Nothing could please us better than to add, "But when he shall appear--we shall be like him." Like him! this is just what we desire. Like him! this is the sum of all our prayers. Like him! this stretches to the utmost bounds of all real excellency. Like him! This is doing for us exceeding and abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Like him! this is conferring on us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Oh, believer, what privileges are yours! What dignities are conferred on you! How favored, how honored, how glorious are you!

How much Jesus makes of you! Can he possibly make more of you than he does? He calls you his love, his dove, his undefiled one. He considers you as of more value than his own comfort, or even his own blood. He was willing to labor and suffer for thirty-three years, and then to die the most painful, shameful, and ignominious death for you.

And he has never ceased to think of you or taken his eye off you for one moment, since he brought you on the stage of time--but especially since he called you by his grace. You are the purchase of his blood--the object of his care--the child of his providence--the subject of his intercession--the temple of his Spirit--the epistle of his love--and a joint heir with him of the eternal inheritance. What more can you be--or desire? Can he esteem you more highly? Can he love you more heartily? Can he display his grace in you more fully?

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But unbelieving SINNER--what are you to Jesus? You are his enemy! You are opposed to him. You love him not. Should he deal with you according to your sins, or reward you according to your iniquities--how fearful would be the consequences, how dreadful the result! Can you read of the believer's privileges without wishing to enjoy them? Can you hear of the Christian's honors without desiring to share them? Is the love of Jesus nothing to you? Is the blood of Jesus treated as a common or worthless thing by you?

"Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!" The way of escape is cast up before you; the entrance is close by you--strive, then, to enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto life, and few there be who find it. Will you be among that few? Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, many there be that go in thereat. Will you be among the many?