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"A More Excellent Way"

Scripture Lesson: - I Corinthians 12: 31.

Text: - I Cor., 12:31.

Introduction: - There is a more excellent way than that of serving God partially. The more excellent way is that which was indicated by Jesus when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

How many are serving God in this manner? Unless we are serving God in this manner, we are falling short of God's standards and God's purpose for our lives. There is every reason for putting God first in our lives, and there is no reason for not putting him first. The Scripture says, "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that repliest against God. The prophet Isaiah exhorts us, "Come now let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." It is a reasonable thing to seek God with the whole heart for the forgiveness of sin, for there is none other that can forgive sin.

I.

It is not only a reasonable thing to seek God in his saving and forgiving grace, but it is likewise a reasonable thing for us to commend all to him in the complete consecration of all that we have, of all that we are, and of all that we ever expect to be, consecrated, dedicated to him for time and for eternity.

In the exhortation in the introduction of the greatest chapter in the Bible on consecration, the twelfth chapter of Romans, we find these words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It is a reasonable thing that

that we consecrate all, that we place all upon the altar. In the act of complete consecration, the soul cries out in triumph, "O Lord, I am wholly thine forever more". In making such a consecration we need have no fears. God can do better with that which we commit to him than we can do with it. God is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all of them who are sanctified. God can do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

II.

God can make the seemingly impossible become possible. God can part the waters of the Red Sea, if need be, to give deliverance to his children. God can bring low the mighty and lift high the lowly. His arm is not short that he cannot save and deliver, in every perplexing and difficult situation. Our God can send judgment upon the wicked, and can even make the wrath of man to praise him. Our God is mighty and powerful, even to the tearing down of the strongholds of evil.

It is a reasonable thing to Give God first place in our lives because of the brevity of time. The Scriptures remind us repeatedly and with great urgency concerning this brevity of time. We have this solemn and urgent exhortation, "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." The thief that has been robbing us from obtaining our full heritage in the Christian life, is procrastination.

Many have delayed to put God first on account of business. The exhortation which God gives us concerning business is, "Be not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord". We have asked God to wait until our business conditions reached such a stage or point of development where we could put him first. God's claim on our lives is over and above any kind of business, it matters not how important that business may be.

The excuses that we put up in justification of our delay in putting God first in our lives are not valid excuses. None of them will stand the test in the day great day when all of us shall stand in the presence of the Judge of the whole

earth. All of these excuses in that day shall but mock us and put us to shame. All of our business relations should be regarded as a means for us helping us serve God and advance his kingdom in the world.

III.

Many fail to realize their weakness in the matter of unprofitable conversation and especially in the matter of conversation as it relates to others. We are here dealing with a very important matter as it pertains to the life of any individual or the church. Vast harm may be done by unprofitable conversation about others. How charitable are we in our attitudes and in the words that we speak concerning our fellow brethren in the church of Christ?

There is serious danger in that form of conversation about others which sinks to the low level of cheap chatter and gossip. Cheap chatter and gossip are the two most dangerous things to the spiritual life of an individual or a congregation. The Christian should avoid gossip and cheap chatter and shun it as a deadly serpent whose poison means death.

IV.

God's work does not go forward on programs of retrenchment, but upon advances where faith dares to step out over and beyond what may be in sight, on the cold basis of business. It is on the forward steps of faith that the kingdom of God has advanced and gone forward in the world.

Retrenchments in missionary programs and benevolences are always costly things for churches. One of the sure ways for a church to get started on the downward road, is to begin to cut on these things. The most extravagant economy that any church can initiate is cutting of her missionary program. Where are you putting your treasures? Are you placing them here in this world, or are you building for the mansion in which you shall dwell throughout eternity. We should so build for both this world and the world that is to come, that there can be no mistake about making heaven our home.