



# Put God First

## THE BOOK OF MARK

*Lesson 17—Mark 10:32–52*

*Christ's Sufferings Foretold; Blind Bartæmus*

SECTION 1—DIVORCE

SECTION 2—AS LITTLE CHILDREN

SECTION 3—THE RICH YOUNG RULER

The young man who asked this question was a ruler. He had great possessions, and occupied a position of responsibility. . . .

He was a member of the honored council of the Jews, and Satan was tempting him with flattering prospects of the future. He wanted the heavenly treasure, but he wanted also the temporal advantages his riches would bring him. He was sorry that such conditions existed; he desired eternal life, but he was not willing to make the sacrifice. The cost of eternal life seemed too great, and he went away sorrowful; “for he had great possessions.”

*DA 518.2, 520.3)*

The ruler's possessions were entrusted to him that he might prove himself a faithful steward; he was to dispense these goods for the blessing of those in need. So God now entrusts men with means, with talents and opportunities, that they may be His agents in helping the poor and the suffering. He who uses his entrusted gifts as God designs becomes a co-worker with the Saviour. He wins souls to Christ, because he is a representative of His character.

*(DA 523.2)*

The young man's ability to acquire property was not against him, provided he loved his neighbor as himself, and had not wronged another in acquiring his riches. That very ability, had it been employed in the service of God in seeking to save souls from ruin, would have been acceptable to the divine Master, and he might have made a diligent and successful worker for Christ. But he refused the exalted privilege of cooperating with Christ in the salvation of souls; he turned away from the glorious treasure promised him in the kingdom of God, and clung to the fleeting treasures of earth.

*(RH March 21, 1878, par. 7)*

Jesus looked with love upon the young man, and faithfully pointed out to him his deficiency in keeping the divine law. He did not love his neighbor as himself. His selfish love of riches was a defect, which, if not remedied, would debar him from heaven. “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.” (CS 210.3)

“THE REWARD OF GRACE”

*CHRIST'S OBJECT LESSONS*

390-396

Our lives are to be devoted to God. He requires that we love Him with our whole **heart**, and **soul**, and **mind**, and **strength**, and our neighbor as ourselves. (2LtMs, *Lt 1a*, 1872, par. 23)

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

- Heart—*kardia*—“the heart” (Eng., “cardiac,” etc.), the chief organ of physical life (“for the life of the flesh is in the blood,” Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition the word came to stand for man’s entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life. (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*)
- Soul—*psyché*—Genesis 2:7—And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
- Mind—*dianoia*—faculty of reason
- Strength—*ischus*—capability, power, might
- **The whole being**—the heart, the soul, the mind, and the strength—is to be used in God’s service. (14LtMs, *Ms 130, 1899*, par. 60)

# HEART

- The gospel seed often falls among thorns and noxious weeds; and if there is not a **moral transformation** in the human **heart**, if old **habits and practices** and **the former life** of sin are not left behind, if the attributes of Satan are not expelled from the soul, the wheat crop will be choked. The thorns will come to be the crop, and will kill out the wheat. (*COL* 50.3)
- The ear may hear God's word, but the **spiritual perceptive** powers have departed. The **heart** is hardened, the **conscience**<sub>10</sub> seared. (*COL* 279.2)

- When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. (*COL* 311.4)
- The time of the Passover was drawing near, and again Jesus turned toward Jerusalem. In His heart was the peace of **perfect oneness with the Father's will**, and with eager steps He pressed on toward the place of sacrifice. (*DA* 547.1)

- God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the **heart is tested and tried** a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. (*CCh* 55.1)
- If the heart is **sanctified, submissive, and humble**, the fruits will be seen outwardly and will be a most effectual confession of Christ. (*CCh* 81.2)
- The mind cannot be clear to think and strong to act when the physical powers are suffering the results of feebleness or disease. **The heart is impressed through the mind**; but if, because of physical inability, the mind loses its vigor, the channel to the **higher feelings and motives** is to that extent obstructed . . . (*CCh* 207.5)

# SOUL

- So the work of grace in the **heart** is small in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the **soul**, an influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can measure its results? (*COL 78.1*)
- When truth becomes an abiding principle in the life, **the soul is “born again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the Word of God. When by the Holy Spirit divine **truths are impressed upon the heart**, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to co-operate with God. (*AA 520.1*)

- When in trouble, when assailed by fierce temptations, they have the privilege of prayer. What an exalted privilege! Finite beings, of dust and ashes, admitted through the mediation of Christ, into the audience-chamber of the Most High. **In such exercises the soul** is brought into a sacred nearness with God, and is renewed in knowledge, and true holiness, and fortified against the assaults of the enemy. (*ApM* 24.1)
- We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is **the life of the soul**. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength. (*SC* 98.2)

- All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are **the avenues to the soul.** (3T 507.1)

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: Psalm 101:3

Avoid **reading** and **seeing** things which will suggest impure thoughts. Cultivate the moral and intellectual powers.

Among the most dangerous resorts of pleasure is the **theater**. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements.

The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.

There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive.... The great God whose glory shines from the heavens, and whose divine hand upholds millions of worlds, is our Father. We have only to love Him, trust in Him, as little children in faith and confidence, and He will accept us as His sons and daughters, and we shall be heirs to all the inexpressible glory of the eternal world. (*ML* 86)

# MIND

- Wherever an influence is exerted to cause men to forget God, there Satan is exercising his bewitching power. When men yield to his influence, ere they are aware the **mind is bewildered and the soul polluted**. The apostle's admonition to the Ephesian church should be heeded by the people of God today: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Ephesians 5:11. (AA 290.2)
- There is always a bewitching power in heresies and in licentiousness. The **mind** is so deluded that it cannot **reason** intelligently, and an illusion is continually leading it from purity. The spiritual eyesight becomes blurred, and persons of hitherto untainted morals become confused under the delusive sophistry of those agents of Satan who profess to be messengers of light. It is this delusion which gives these agents power. Should they come out boldly and make their advances openly, they would be repulsed without a moment's hesitation; but they work first to gain sympathy and secure confidence in themselves as holy, self-sacrificing men of God. As his special messengers they then begin their artful work of drawing away souls from the path of rectitude by attempting to make void the law of God. (AH 330.1)

- The mind of a man or woman does not come down in a moment from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to transform the human to the divine, or to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed. Though formed in the image of his Maker, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him. As he ceases to watch and pray, he ceases to guard the citadel, the heart, and engages in sin and crime. The mind is debased, and it is impossible to elevate it from corruption while it is being educated to enslave the moral and intellectual powers and bring them in subjection to grosser passions. Constant war against the carnal mind must be maintained; and we must be aided by the refining influence of the grace of God, which will attract the mind upward and habituate it to meditate upon pure and holy things. (*AH 330.2*)

- Readers of frivolous, exciting tales become unfitted for the duties of practical life. They live in an unreal world. I have watched children who have been allowed to make a practice of reading such stories. Whether at home or abroad, they were restless, dreamy, unable to converse except upon the most commonplace subjects. Religious thought and conversation was entirely foreign to their minds. With the cultivation of an appetite for sensational stories the mental taste is perverted, and the mind is not satisfied unless fed upon this unwholesome food. I can think of no more fitting name for those who indulge in such reading than mental inebriates. Intemperate habits of reading have an effect upon the brain similar to that which intemperate habits of eating and drinking have upon the body. (*AH* 414.3)

# STRENGTH

- A lawyer came to Christ with the question, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Christ placed the burden of the answer upon the questioner by asking him, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Before the whole multitude the lawyer replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” And Christ said, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” [Luke 10:25-28.] **The whole being**—the heart, the soul, the mind, and the strength—is to be used in God’s service. What is there left that is not devoted to God? (14LtMs, *Ms 130*, 1899, par. 60)

- The **physical life** is to be carefully educated, cultivated and developed, that through men and women the divine nature may be revealed in its fullness. God expects men to use the intellect He has given them. He expects them to use every reasoning power for Him. They are to give the conscience the place of supremacy that has been assigned it. The mental and physical powers, with the affections, are to be so cultivated that they can reach the highest efficiency. Thus Christ is represented to the world. By this painstaking effort man is qualified to co-operate with the great Master Worker in saving souls unto life eternal. This is why God entrusted us with endowments—that we might have life, eternal life, in the kingdom of God. (14LtMs, *Ms 130, 1899*, par. 61)
- Satan is approaching **every soul** with some form of temptation on the point of indulgence of appetite . . . (*RH* April 19, 1887, par. 7)

- No one could be more decidedly tempted than was Daniel. He was apportioned wine and meat from the king's table; but Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not drink of the king's wine, nor eat of the luxuries of the king's table. . . .
- Through intemperate appetite Adam and Eve lost Eden. If we gain the paradise of God, we must be temperate in all things. . . . The highest intelligences of heaven watch the conflict going on between the tempter and the tempted. And if the tempted turn away from temptation, and in the strength of Jesus conquer, then angels rejoice, and Satan has lost in the conflict. (*RH* April 19, 1887, par. 9, 11)

- **Tea** is a stimulant. It increases an excitement beyond its natural action, and the whole mental powers are unduly aroused, after which come corresponding languor and debility. There is a nervous trembling which is interpreted to be a need of more vigor. Or, again, the coffee or tea is resorted to for the purpose of recruiting the energies, and thus artificial strength instead of natural deceives the tea-drinker to think that the strength is derived from the charming cup of tea, when it is only the exhausted energies spurred up to unnatural action, wearing away imperceptibly the life forces. They have thus stimulated the brain nerves to unnatural labor. (*RH* April 19, 1887, par. 13)

- **Coffee** is a hurtful indulgence. It temporarily excites the mind to unwonted action, and the effect is prostration, sadness, exhaustion of the mental, moral, and physical forces. The mind becomes enervated, and unless through determined effort the habit is overcome, the activity of the brain is greatly lessened. All these nerve irritants are wearing away the life forces, and the restlessness caused by shattered nerves, the impatience, the mental feebleness, becomes a warring element against spiritual progress. . . . In some cases it is as difficult to break up this tea and coffee habit as it is for the inebriate to discontinue the use of liquor. The money used for tea or coffee as a common drink is worse than wasted. It does the user, be it man or woman, harm and that continually. (*RH* April 19, 1887, par. 14)



# Put God First

MARK 10:32-52

MATTHEW 20:17-34

LUKE 18:31-43

The time of the Passover was drawing near, and again Jesus turned toward Jerusalem. In His heart was the **peace of perfect oneness with the Father's will**, and with eager steps He pressed on toward the place of sacrifice. But a sense of mystery, of doubt and fear, fell upon the disciples. The Saviour "went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid."

*(DA 547.1)*

Everything not comprehended in truth is **the guesswork of man**. Professedly high and learned men may be fools in the sight of God, and if so, the high and learned statements of their doctrines, however they may please and humor the senses, and though they may have been handed down from age to age, and rocked in the cradle of popular faith, are a delusion and a falsehood if not found in the inspired lessons of Christ. He is the source of all wisdom; for He placed Himself directly on a level with the eternal God. In His humanity the glory of heavenly illumination fell directly upon Him, and from Him to the world, to be reflected back by all who receive and believe on Him, mingled with His perfection of character and the luster of His own character. While Christ stood forth distinctly in His human personality, and appealed in striking but simple language to humanity, **He was in such perfect oneness with God that His voice came with authority, as the voice of God from the center of glory.** (*FE 406.1*)

“At that day ye shall know,” without a dimming veil to obstruct your view, “that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” How many read this promise, so rich, so glorious, and yet do not grasp its preciousness! Jesus virtually says to all such, “Your faith is feeble; you do not discern my oneness with the Father; neither do you comprehend the fact that **I am identified with all who believe in me, that they are one with me, their interest is my interest, my interest and work is theirs.**” The perfect oneness of Christ with his obedient believing children is the same as that which exists between the **Father and the Son.** (*ST* November 23, 1891, par. 8)

Again Christ called the twelve about Him, and with greater definiteness than ever before, He opened to them His betrayal and sufferings. “Behold,” He said, “we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” (*DA 547.2*)

Had not Christ Himself promised that many should sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God? Had He not promised to all who had left aught for His sake a hundredfold in this life, and a part in His kingdom? And had He not given to the twelve the special promise of positions of high honor in His kingdom,—to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? **Even now He had said that all things written in the prophets concerning Him should be fulfilled.** And had not the prophets foretold the glory of the Messiah's reign? In the light of these thoughts, His words in regard to betrayal, persecution, and death seemed vague and shadowy. Whatever difficulties might intervene, they believed that the kingdom was soon to be established. (*DA* 547.3)

It is only when the sinner feels the need of a Saviour, that his heart goes after the One who can help him. When Jesus walked among men, it was the sick that wanted a physician. The poor, the afflicted and distressed, followed after him, to receive the help and comfort which they could not find elsewhere. **Blind Bartimaeus** is waiting by the wayside; he has waited long to meet Christ. Throngs of people who possess their sight are passing to and fro, but they have no desire to see Jesus. One look of faith would touch his heart of love, and bring them the blessings of his grace; but they know not the sickness and poverty of their souls, and they feel no need of Christ. Not so with the poor blind man. His only hope is in Jesus. As he waits and watches, he hears the tread of many feet, and he eagerly inquires, What means this noise of travel?

*(RH March 15, 1887, par. 3)*

The by-standers answer that “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” With the eagerness of intense desire, he cries, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” They try to silence him, but he cries the more vehemently, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” This appeal is heard. His persevering faith is rewarded.

Not only is physical sight restored, but the eyes of his understanding are opened. In Christ he sees his Redeemer, and the Sun of righteousness shines into his soul. All who feel their need of Christ as did blind Bartimaeus, and who will be as earnest and determined as he was, will, like him, receive the blessing which they crave. (*RH* March 15, 1887, par. 3)

Now you may call upon Jesus as blind Bartimaeus, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” [Mark 10:47.] He was told that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. He does not stop to calculate the chances of failure—the precious opportunity may be lost. He wastes no time in studying proprieties of speech or attitude, but cries in his **last chance**, “Jesus of Nazareth have mercy on me.” He was not only blind of natural sight, but he was a debased sinner; he asks for mercy, such as Christ is pleased to give the guilty. If he has that mercy, he knows that he has everything, and he is determined to have this mercy from Jesus, which means so much to him. When Jesus calls him to come, he does not wait a second bidding, he waits not to be led. He rushes in his blindness in the direction of the voice. He is ready to risk everything, only to hear the blessed words of sins forgiven. Jesus heard the request and answered it. Blind Bartimaeus received his sight and followed Jesus. (6LtMs, *Lt 1d*, 1890, par. 14)

The beams of righteousness shine into the darkened chambers of his mind, and light, happiness, [and] sight restored, he goes on his way rejoicing. The darkness of the long night of years is rolled back. A new world opens before him, and hope and consolation, so sweet and grateful, has come to his heart. He is made, through faith in Christ, a partaker of the divine nature. I present this case before you; I entreat of you to seize this opportunity, now, while it is called today. “If ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts.” [See Hebrews 3:15.]  
(6LtMs, *Lt 1d*, 1890, par. 14)

Jesus, unseen, is by your side. Yes, Jesus of Nazareth passeth by to administer to you of His grace and compassion and to rescue you from the destiny of **despair**. He hears every sigh of penitence. He knows the longings of the heart for peace, that peace which He alone can give. Jesus puts to every soul the question, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” [Mark 10:51.] (6LtMs, *Lt 1d*, 1890, par. 15)

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

(Revelation 3:20)

Revelation 3:14–22

Revelation 17:4

Revelation 18:7

Revelation 19:8, 11

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18. (*COL* 311.3)

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. (*COL* 311.4)

In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home **His bride to the Father's house**, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; ... but thou shalt be called My Delight; ... for the Lord delighteth in thee." "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Isaiah 62:5, 4, margin; Zephaniah 3:17. (*DA* 151.1)

He who came from heaven to be our example spent nearly thirty years of His life in common, mechanical labor; but **during this time He was studying** the word and the works of God, and helping, teaching, all whom His influence could reach. When His **public ministry** began, He went about healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and preaching the gospel to the poor. This is the work of all His followers.

*(Ed 267.4)*

“He that is greatest among you,” He said, “let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For ... I am among you as he that serveth.” Luke 22:26, 27. (*Ed 268.1*)

Love and loyalty to Christ are the spring of all true service. In the heart touched by His love, there is begotten a desire to work for Him. Let this desire be encouraged and rightly guided. Whether in the home, the neighborhood, or the school, the presence of the poor, the afflicted, the ignorant, or the unfortunate should be regarded, not as a misfortune, but as affording precious opportunity for **service**. (*Ed 268.2*)

Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them at their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs. He carried His instruction into the household, bringing families in their own homes under the influence of His divine presence. His strong personal sympathy helped to win hearts. He often repaired to the mountains for solitary prayer, but this was a preparation for His labor among men in active life. From these seasons He came forth to relieve the sick, to instruct the ignorant, and to break the chains from the captives of Satan. (*DA* 151.2)

The example of Christ in linking Himself with the interests of humanity should be followed by all who preach His word, and by all who have received the gospel of His grace. We are not to renounce social communion. We should not seclude ourselves from others. In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men touched by divine truth. There is another field of labor, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly, and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment. (*DA 152.2*)

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:25)

One sat alone beside the highway begging,  
His eyes were blind, the light he could not see;  
He clutched his rags and shivered in the shadows,  
Then Jesus came and bade his darkness flee.  
When Jesus comes the tempter's pow'r is broken,  
When Jesus comes the tears are wiped away.  
He takes the gloom and fills the life with glory,  
For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.

From home and friends the evil spirits drove him,

Among the tombs he dwelt in misery;

He cut himself as demon pow'rs possess'd him,

Then Jesus came and set the captive free.

When Jesus comes the tempter's pow'r is broken,

When Jesus comes the tears are wiped away.

He takes the gloom and fills the life with glory,

For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.