

That Which is of "First Importance."

1 Cor 15:1-8

Introduction

- A. It has often been said, "You know a good deal about a person if you know what is important to them." That is a true statement. It was the Lord Jesus Who said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," Matt 6:21.
- B. There are a few passages of Scripture where our Lord states what is important **to Him**. We need to give heed to what **He has said** about such priority.
- C. The Apostle Paul was very aware of what was important to God. His life and ministry were patterned by such priority. One significant factor in Paul's life was his definition and explanation of "the gospel." Note 1 Cor 15:1-4

I. The Importance of the Lord Jesus.

*For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and **precious** cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 1 Peter 2:6*

Comment: Our Father's constant focus is on the Lord Jesus. It is His goal to exalt His Son. He decreed that all creation would be "for Him," and "in everything He would have the supremacy" Col 1:16,18. His solemn counsel for every person is to "be fearful ... tremble ... and **kiss the Son** lest He be angry with you" Psalm 2:11,12. At the Transfiguration our Father said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased, **Listen to him!**" Matt 17:5. These are serious warnings. We must give heed.

A. The Importance of the Lord Jesus for the Believer's Daily Life.

- 1. The focus of our Heavenly Father must be our daily focus. The Lord Jesus must be recognized, honored and obeyed, in every area of our life. All self-centeredness must be nailed to His cross, Gal 2:20; 5:24.
- 2. The Lord Jesus is worthy of our surrender and single focus of life. He is the fullness of love, holiness, truth, life, and faithfulness, Rev 1:5; 4:8; John 14:6. Because of Who He is — He is worthy of our trust, love, adoration, and praise.

B. The Importance of the Lord Jesus for the Believer's Ministry.

- 1. The Lord Jesus is the revelation of God to us, John 1:18, Heb 1:1,2.
- 2. The Lord Jesus is the Redeemer — He loved us and died for us, Rom 5:8; Eph 5:2.
- 3. The Lord Jesus is the source of all grace, 2 Cor 8:9; 9:8; Eph 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3.
- 4. The Lord Jesus is the very heart of the Gospel, John 1:12; 3:16-18; Rom 1:1-6; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 15:3,4.

II. The Importance of the Work of the Lord Jesus.

*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with **the precious blood of Christ**, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:18,19*

Comment: One of the most prevailing themes of both Testaments is the sacrificial redeeming work of the Lord Jesus. Consider the Passover, the tabernacle, the priesthood, the Levitical Sacrifices, the prophecies, the sermons in Acts, the emphasis on His work in the Epistles, and the worship in the Revelation. This theme must be ours.

A. The Importance of the Work of the Lord Jesus for the Believer's Daily Life.

1. In His work the Lord Jesus was/is the Representative of all believers. He lived, died, rose, ascended, sent the Holy Spirit, intercedes, and is coming **for us**, Rom 5:8,19; Eph 2:5,6; Acts 2:33; Heb 7:25; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:17.
2. All believers were identified in the work of the Lord Jesus. **In Him we lived, died, rose, ascended, and received the Holy Spirit**, Rom 5:19; 6:3,4; Eph 2:5,6; Col 2:11-15; 3:1; John 20:22; Acts 2:33, 38,39.
3. We may not live as though the Lord Jesus did not do His work for us. We are personally involved in each aspect of His work and must learn to live that way. We must surrender to God, stop sinning, give up our selfishness and pride, live controlled by the Holy Spirit, obey God out of love, and serve Him. Rom 6:1-19; 8:1-17; Gal 2:20; 5:15-25; Eph 4:22-32; 6:10-18; Col 3:1-17.

B. The Importance of the Work of the Lord Jesus for the Believer's Ministry.

1. Our message is the proclaiming of the Lord Jesus as a Person and His continuing powerful presence with us. Our work is to cooperate with Him. Rom 1:1-3; 1 Cor 15:1-4; 2 Cor 5:19,20; 6:1; Matt 28:18-20.
2. Our message is strikingly different from that of any other "religion." We call people to repentance and faith in a living Person, on the basis of His historical work, and through the authority of His powerful Word. Acts 2:32; 3:15-26; 5:30-32; 10:34-43; 13:26-41.

III. The Importance of the Word of the Lord Jesus.

*Through these he has given us **his very great and precious promises**, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:4*

Comment: The Scripture is so important to our Heavenly Father that He gave His Son, Who is all revelation to us, the wonderful name — "**the Word of God**," Rev 19:13. Therefore we know Him as "the Living Word." and the Scripture as "the written Word." We must recognize the great value and importance our Heavenly Father has placed upon the Holy Scripture. We neglect it and disobey it to our grave peril.

A. The Importance of the Word of the Lord Jesus for the Believer's Daily Life.

1. The authority, value, and power of the Scripture are constantly held before us in the Bible. We are reminded that it is inspired, final authority, and truth, 2 Tim 3:16; 1 Thess 2:13; John 17:17.
2. The Lord Jesus spoke of the written Word of God as final authority. He asked, "Have you not read what God said to you?" Matt 22:31. The message of the Scripture is clear: to obey God is to obey His Word and to disobey His Word is to disobey Him, Luke 6:46-49. We are warned about the seriousness of neglecting and disobeying the Word of God, Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-19; 4:1,2; 10:26-31; 12:25-27.
3. The Scripture has been given to us as a blueprint and roadmap for life. It is very important to understand and implement this principle. When we surrender to God on the basis of His Word, and choose to obey it — then the Word of God becomes a powerful transforming factor in our life. Rom 6:16-18; Phil 2:12,13; 1 Peter 1:22.
4. We will be held accountable for believing and obeying His Word. Psalm 119:105; Matt 7:24-27; John 12:47,48.

B. The Importance of the Word of God for the Believer's Ministry.

1. How wonderful — we have an authoritative Word to proclaim, 2 Tim 3:16,17.
2. How wonderful — our Lord works with us through His Word, Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3
3. How wonderful — the Word we proclaim will be effective and powerful, Isaiah 55:10,11
4. How wonderful — the Word we proclaim will bring conviction, faith, repentance, forgiveness, freedom, sanctification, and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit to those who hear, 1 Thess 1:5; Rom 10:17; Acts 2:38,39; 10:43; Rom 6:16-18; John 17:17; 1 Thess 1:5.
5. How wonderful — and yet how serious to know that we have been given a ministry, the Word of God to proclaim, and will be held responsible for faithful obedience, 1 Cor 9:16-18; 2 Cor 3:5,6; 5:19,20; Heb 2:17.

Conclusion

We must face the issues raised in these passages of Scripture. We have been called to love and obey the Lord Jesus, to live in harmony with His work, and to believe and obey His Word. Such a life is totally beyond any of us. We must surrender totally to God, and ask Him to work in our life so we can worship Him, love Him, obey Him, and grow in His grace. We need His constant ministry.

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