

July 10, 1957

## THE VALUE OF A SOUL

In the 16th chapter of Matthew, I want you to turn to the 24th verse through verse 26. I read these words: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?"

In this 16th chapter of Matthew, you will find almost the summation of the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has been going up and down the country side teaching and preaching to the people. He has been making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, the dead to rise. He has been going around doing many marvelous miracles. And as the Scripture says He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Now every time that Jesus performed a miracle, you won't find one miracle that He ever performed for Himself. He was always doing for others. And He taught that thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, and strength, but He also taught that thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Cf. Mark 12: 30-31). And if ever a person exemplified the love of neighbor, it was Jesus. You always find Him loving, tender, gracious, helping other people who were in distress and having problems and difficulties. Jesus helping others.

And then the Scripture says that the people listened to what He had to say. Great crowds of people thronged about Him all the time. I would like to have been in some of those crowds. I would like to have seen the look of compassion and tenderness on His face. I would like to have been in the temple that day when He took a whip and drove the money changers out of the temple. I would like to have seen Jesus, how tenderly He dealt with the woman taken in adultery. He didn't condemn her. He forgave her. I would like to have been with Jesus that day when He stood with the Pharisees and Sadducees, as we have recorded in the 23rd chapter of Matthew, and condemned hypocrisy. I would like to have been with Jesus through those experiences. I would like to have watched Him and seen Him.

The Scripture says that He spoke "as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29). You never hear of Jesus saying, "I think," "I hope," or "I suppose." He always said, "This is it." He spoke with the authority of God. And I think today that people want to hear the voice of authority. I don't think that people want to hear what my ideas are and what my philosophy is. I don't think people today want to hear the ideas of a minister. I think that people today want to hear the voice of authority--"Thus saith the Lord."

I think that today people want to know what is within the pages of this Book. Almost everybody has a Bible, but so few people know what the Bible says, what it teaches. When you read it, many times you don't understand it. You want to know in simple everyday language, but authoritative language.

Jesus said, "This is it--'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me'" (John 14:6). He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). He didn't say, "I think you will perish; I hope you won't perish." He said, "You will perish unless you repent." He didn't say, "I hope you're born again." He said, "Except ye are born again, ye cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven" (Cf. John 3:3). He didn't say, "You ought to be converted." He said, "Except you are converted, you cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven." I didn't say that. Jesus said it.

And in this 16th chapter you find three or four wonderful, thrilling things that I would like to spend the whole evening on. You find Peter's wonderful confession, where Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of the living God.

Then you find Jesus for the first time mentioning the church. Jesus said, "Thou art this rock. I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Cf. Matthew 16:18). Jesus said, "I'm going to build a church and hell itself shall not prevail against it." But you get a wrong picture from the average sermon there. It doesn't mean that here's a great defensive position like the Rock of Gibraltar, and hell attacks it and we'll all be able to just hold on. No, the gates of any oriental city were in the center of the city; and when the gates fell, the city fell. It means that the church is on the offensive:

thrusting, penetrating in its evangelistic outreach. And when the church is moving forward, Jesus said the gates of hell itself shall not prevail against it.

And certainly we have seen that in New York. We were told about the sophistication. We were told about the secularism. We were told about the materialism. We were told that people in New York were different. And certainly all of that is true. But it is also true of every small village and town and community throughout the United States and throughout the world. And the hearts of people we have found in New York to be the same as they are in other cities through the world. The exteriors may be a bit different, but the interiors--the heart, the longings, the desires--are the same. And when the church forgets its differences and forgets all of these things that divide us and joins hands as the churches of New York have joined hands, we see that hell itself shall not prevail. And God's name is glorified and men are born into the kingdom of God and added to the church daily. The gates of hell shall not prevail.

And then as Jesus was talking to His disciples, He suddenly turned to them and said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Now, as I said last evening, most of us today are busy building up statistics and trying to get people into the church in any way we possibly can, but Jesus wasn't doing that. There were many people who were following Jesus, but He always had a way of eliminating.

He said, "Deny yourself if you're going to follow Me." Well, that immediately got rid of a great number of people, because they thought He was going to a palace to be a king. They thought they were going to be eating and living sumptuously. They weren't interested in self-denial. They weren't interested in denying self. But Jesus said, "If you're going to follow Me, you'll have to deny self. Everything that lends itself to selfishness, everything that lends itself to self-indulgence, you'll have to deny yourself."

"Well, you'd better excuse me, Jesus. You know I'm not so good at this denying self."

All right, then, you're excused.

And then He said, "You'll have to take up a cross." Now, we don't like that either, to take up a cross. It's not a beautiful little gold cross that you wear around your neck. It's not a cross that you wear

in the lapel of your coat. The cross was a place of execution.

It would be as though Jesus would come to this crowd tonight and say, "Take up your electric chair and follow Me. Take up the gallows and follow Me. Take up the gas chamber and follow Me." Why, that eliminates about ninety per cent of the people right there. Nobody wants to go to the gas chamber. Nobody wants to go to the gallows. Nobody wants to go to the electric chair. But that's what Jesus said: "Come and take up the place of execution and follow Me." What did He mean?

He meant that He was going to a Cross and die, and you would have to go with Him. It means that you would have to go back to your community, back to your home, and take your stand for Christ even though it means you're crucified to do it. It means going back to your office and living for Christ even though it means that they nail you to the cross and sneer and laugh. Even though it's unpopular to take a stand on a moral issue, it means taking a stand. It means taking your stand in the proper witness of the community. "Even if it means crucifixion, take up your cross and follow Me."

It means that if you're tempted to cheat in order to get a better job, or to lie, you'll take a poorer job in order to tell the truth. It means that you're willing to lose your reputation, lose everything, in order to keep your soul undefiled and to take your stand with Christ. It means loving and looking through the eyes of Jesus at the problem of the race, that is the burning problem in America today. Even though it means crucifixion, that's what He meant. And that eliminates thousands of people right away.

Are you ready to follow Him now? Oh, I want to tell you, following Jesus is not always popular. He has not promised us a popular way or an easy way. He said it's hard; and every time He spoke, He eliminated people who weren't willing to pay the price of following the Lord Jesus.

Then He said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" That's what I want you to think about. Here we find Jesus: He's taking your soul in one hand and the whole world in the other and evaluating them. Now, it's impossible for us to grasp what is meant by the whole world. You



may travel over it. It has been my privilege to be around the world; yet my knowledge of the world is extremely limited. The world includes all of its areas, all of its scientific discoveries, all of its libraries and all the knowledge that's in those libraries. All the mineral deposits, all the commerce, all the riches, all the governments, all the races, all the amusements and pleasures and powers of the world, are included in what Jesus meant as the world.

Now, He said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world....?" Have any of you gained the whole world? You may own a big chunk of Wall Street, where we were today, but you don't own the whole world. You may have a brain full of knowledge as a professor at Columbia University, but you don't have the whole world of knowledge. You may have talent as a singer on Broadway, but you don't have all the talent.

Not a person in this crowd tonight has the whole world. In fact, you only have one minute, little particle of this world. J. P. Morgan had only a little pittance of this world in comparison to the whole world. All of the United States combined in all of its power does not have the whole world. It has only a little bit of it. And yet Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I read in a religious magazine the other day that the money being spent here in New York for this crusade was far too much. I would like to ask that editor to take out his pen and write for me and calculate for me how much one soul that has been truly converted here is worth. How many thousand dollars would you say? How many hundred dollars if it were your soul? We've seen hundreds and thousands of lives changed. A man gripped my hand as we came in. He said, "The last three weeks have been the most wonderful three weeks I have ever spent in my life since Jesus came into my heart." How much money would you put on that? In hundreds of thousands of cases. Jesus said that one soul saved from hell and saved for His kingdom is worth the whole world. Your soul, yours, yours, the soul of this little boy, that little girl, is worth the whole world. We don't realize the value that God puts upon the soul of a man.

Your soul is valuable, first of all because it is eternal. Now the Bible teaches that you have a body, and certainly your body is a beautiful structure. But your body is matter; and no matter how strong your body is, no matter how healthy your body is, you are going to die. The Bible says, "It is appointed unto men

once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

We read in the Bible about all these men who lived so long and they finally died. Now, Adam lived 930 years. And do you know what it says in the 5th chapter of Genesis? "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty: and he died" (Genesis 5:5).

Well, let's read another one here and see what happened to him. "And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve: and he died" (Genesis 5:8).

Well, let's read another one down here. "And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died" (Genesis 5:14).

And then we read down here about Jared who lived 962 years and he died. Now Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived. Do you know how long he lived? He lived 969 years, but do you know what it says? It says he died. And Lamech lived 777 years, and do you know what it says? It says he died.

Now a lot of these men were great men. Why you know, a man lives 900 years, he's a pretty great man. But about all we know about them is that they died. You're going to live a few years--maybe sixty years, maybe seventy years, maybe eighty years; and at the end you'll die just like every other person. That's all.

Now, your body dies, but wait a minute. You don't die. I've got a watch. I look at this watch, and the case is a beautiful gold case given to me by some friends, I think, in Oklahoma. A beautiful watch. But I don't see the real valuable part of this watch; it's inside. It's the works of the watch that make it tick, that make it run.

I look at you and I only see the shell that you live in, because down inside of you is a soul, a spirit, that the Bible says is eternal. That spirit or that soul of yours is the part of you that has understanding, that has judgment that weighs and determines. It has the will which chooses or rejects the things brought before it. It has affections that cause us to love, to desire, to delight, or cause us to fear and detest. It has memory, which is the mental capacity of storing up our knowledge of ideas and events. It has conscience, which is the monitor of the soul, that

judges and pronounces verdicts on all that we say or do or think.

Now the Scripture teaches that that part of you is your soul and it is eternal. And it spends eternity either in heaven, which is with God, or in hell, which is away from God. The moment you die your body goes to the grave, but your soul lives on and on and on forever in what is called eternity, either in heaven or in hell.

I had a man tell me the other day, "Well, if I go to hell, there will be a lot of other people there. We'll have a pretty good time down there." You know, I've come to the conclusion in studying the Bible that if you go to hell, you won't see another person, because the Bible teaches that it's lonely, because hell means separation from God and separation from each other. It's the loneliness that is going to be such a torment in hell. The separation from God. The soul still existing, but a living death away from life and life in God and each other. The loneliness of it all.

A man says, "But I don't want to live forever." You have no choice in the matter. You're going to live forever whether you like it or not. You were born, you were destined, according to the Bible to live forever. You have a soul. The body is the house and the soul is the tenant; and the Bible teaches that that soul of yours is more important than your farm, more important than your bank account, more important than your jewels, more important even than anything else in your life. And yet how little time we spend on the soul, and how much time we spend on the body!

Suppose that a master told his servant to take care of his child while he was away. And when he came back, the servant came and brought the child's clothes and said, "Master, here are the child's clothes. We've pressed them. We've washed them. They are all bright and shiny."

"But where is my child?"

"Oh, we lost the child."

How foolish! That's what some of you are doing. You're taking care of the body well and good, but in so doing, you're losing the soul. How foolish! The soul is eternal and the body is temporary.

Secondly, the Bible teaches that your soul is valuable because of Satan's interest. The Bible teaches that there is another personality in the world that I talked on a few nights ago, called Satan. He is a mighty personality and the Bible calls him the "god of this age" (Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4), "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). The Bible calls him "a roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8), "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

He is a powerful personality that has tremendous power. And Satan knows that your soul is more valuable than anything else in the world; and so he works day and night to trip you up and to damn you and to get your soul in traps, to lay snares for you, because he knows your soul is more valuable than anything else in the world.

He entered the Garden of Eden to tempt Adam and Eve, to get their souls away from God. 2 Thessalonians 2:9 says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 1 Timothy 5:15 says, "For some are already turned aside after Satan." The Bible warns us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

All the way through the Bible we are taught that Satan is everlastingly day and night after your soul, because he knows how valuable it is; and he's going to try to blind you as to how valuable your soul is. He tries to keep you from knowing how valuable it is. He tries to keep you from even thinking about your soul. The Bible says in Acts 26:18, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins....." Satan is blinding those who perish. He wants to keep you from knowing how valuable your soul is. Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

And then thirdly, your soul is valuable because of God's concern for it. Psalm 33:18-19 says, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death....." John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 1 Timothy 2:3-4 says, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Again the Bible says that God is longsuffering to us and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (Cf. 1 Peter 3:9). Again the Bible says, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God is tremendously concerned about your soul, so much so that centuries and centuries ago He planned for the redemption of your soul. God loves your soul. He knows its value and He is willing to go to any lengths to keep your soul from being lost. God considers your soul valuable.

Fourthly, your soul is valuable because of the nature of its loss. Oh, it's a tragedy to lose your health. It's a tragedy to lose your wealth. It's a tragedy to lose your friends and your character. But what a terrible tragedy to lose your soul! And there are thousands and thousands of people sitting before me tonight and behind me whose souls at this moment are lost. You're lost from God. You're lost from the Kingdom of God.

There are many of you living in perplexity, in bewilderment, in confusion. There are others of you who are living perfectly peaceful lives, because you've resisted the Spirit of God so long that the Spirit of God cannot even speak to you any longer. Your soul is lost and you don't even know it. You are standing on the precipice of hell and destruction and you don't even know it. What a tragedy to have a man so blinded by the world, so filled with the amusements and the lusts and the self indulgences of this world, that he has no time for his soul!

A few years ago we had a child in Western North Carolina, where I lived, who wandered away from the house. For two days it was wandering about in the mountains, and almost all of Western North Carolina went out to look for the child. Everybody, thousands of people, crawled through the mountains looking for the child. And yet, a man's soul can be lost and very few Christians are ever concerned.

A little boy, when we first came here, by the name of Benny Hooper fell in a well, and the whole nation was turned upside down until they got the little boy out alive. One little boy was lost. And yet tonight there sit before me thousands of men and women whose souls are lost, and it never has a line in a newspaper. How mixed up our values are!

Christ changed that all around. What He said was revolutionary. He said, "Take no thought of

what you eat or drink" (Cf. Matthew 6:31). Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." In other words, Jesus reversed the whole trend of the world. He said the most important things are the souls of men.

Yes, your soul is lost tonight. What does that mean, "lost"? It means that you're separated from God, spiritually dead, spiritually lost. That's the reason you have so many miseries, troubles, difficulties, that burden you down. We are living in an age today when everybody is going on tranquilizing pills trying to relax with aspirins thrown in between. Four million chronic alcoholics, trying to get some sort of peace, some sort of victory, some sort of stability. Why? Because your soul is separated from God, and your soul was made in the image of God.

Why is it that a man can make a million dollars and still be miserable? Why is it that a girl can go to Hollywood and become a star and still be miserable and flit from husband to husband? Trying to find peace! And she says after she marries her fourth husband, "I hope to God I find happiness this time." Do you know why? The poor girl, her soul is missing. You see, she thought that happiness was in glamour. She thought it was in bright lights. She thought that happiness was in the stage. She thought that happiness was found in money. And it's not found there!

The Bible says you can have pleasure temporarily. You can have pleasure in sin for a season, for a short time; but true happiness and true peace are found when the soul comes back to the Maker. Saint Augustine put it well long ago when he said, "The soul is restless till it finds its rest in God." You see, you're separated from God. Your soul was made in His image, and you can't find peace and joy and rest and forgiveness until it comes to God.

And then, last of all, your soul is valuable because of the price paid for its redemption. Your soul was separated from God by sin, and all of us are sinners here tonight. Sin is what made our souls lost. Sin came between us and God. We're all sinners. We've come short of God's requirements, and that's sin. But God said, "I love you. I love you. I love every one of you." God commendeth His love. God loved us so much that He gave His Son. You see, we deserve hell.



We deserve judgment. We deserve death.

But God said, "Wait a minute. I'll give my Son to take your judgment and your hell and your lost condition and let Him take it upon Himself. I love you so much that I'm willing to give my Son." And so "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). When I see the nails in His hands on the Cross and I see the spike in His feet and I see the blood coming out of His side, I see the love of God outpoured and God saying, "I love you. I love you. I want to save your soul. Your soul is the most valuable possession in all the world. I've given My Son in order to redeem your soul back. I sold all that I have. I gave everything that I may purchase the pearl of great price."

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18,19). Him who knew no sin, He made Him to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him (Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21). Galatians 1:4 says, "Who gave himself for our sins...." Titus 2:14 says, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us...."

Your soul is valuable because of the price paid. God gave the choice Jewel of heaven, His only begotten Son, and saw Him lashed and beaten and whipped and finally killed on a Cross to redeem you, to pay the price of your redemption, to buy you back from the bonds and slavery of sin. And tonight God is willing to forgive you, He is willing to take your soul out of its lost condition and bring you back into fellowship with Himself on the grounds of the work of Calvary and on the grounds of the glorious, victorious, triumphant resurrection.

But God says you'll have to do something. I've studied this Book for twenty years and I do not see how any man could get to the Kingdom of Heaven unless he's done three things.

First, you must repent of sin. You must renounce sin. You must be willing to say No to sin. You must be willing to turn your back on sin.

Secondly, you must be willing, as an act of faith, as an act of your will, to receive Christ.

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Thirdly, you must be willing to follow Christ and obey Christ and serve Christ in the fellowship of His church. Are you willing to do that? Oh, I'm not asking tonight, I'm not asking, "Are you in the church?" I'm not asking, "Have you been confirmed?" I'm not asking, "Have you taken the sacraments?" I'm not asking tonight about your external forms of religion. I'm asking, "Is your soul saved? Do you know it?" If I didn't know that my soul had been redeemed, you couldn't drag me out of Madison Square Garden till I settled it.

When the Andrea Doria was going down in the sea, the baggage, the jewelry, was forgotten in the frantic effort to save life. I trust tonight that you will be willing to leave the excess baggage behind in your life, the sinful things of your life that you consider so important. Leave them behind, because you're on a sinking ship; and tonight God is throwing the life preserver out to you. I beg of you to grab it and receive the Savior. And in losing all of this back here, the baggage, Jesus said, You'll find a new life. And He'll give you new jewelry, new pleasures, new joys, new happiness, and a new life that you never dreamed existed. Not only life here, but life to come, because you become a partaker of God's life. You become a child of God, grafted into the life of God Himself.

When the Pan-American plane went down in the Pacific, they had to leave their baggage on board. I wonder how many stood up and argued, "I've got to carry my baggage with me." He was so glad to get out of the plane and get into a lifeboat that he didn't know what to do.

I tell you, suppose Jesus says that you do have to deny self. Suppose Jesus says that you do have to take up a cross. It makes no difference if you have to crawl across the United States on broken glass in order to save your soul; brother, you'd better do it. But you don't! Blessed be to God. You do have to deny yourself, and you do have to take up a cross. But when you come to Christ, He gives you a new life. And then you start walking with Him.

A little boy said to his daddy one day, "Dad, do you have your soul insured?"

"Well, son, I'd never thought about that. Why do you ask?"

He said, "Well, I heard Uncle George say that

you had your house insured and your life insured. I want to know if your soul is insured."

And some of you businessmen consider yourselves smart--you've got your house insured, you've got other things insured; but you haven't got your soul insured. You've built everything in your life for its security even to the planning of your funeral, but you haven't planned for where you are going to spend eternity. I beg of you to settle it tonight and give your life to Christ.

What you do tonight in receiving Christ may seem foolishness to you and to others. The Bible says so. The Bible says that the preaching of the Cross is foolishness to them that perish (Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18). The Bible goes further and says that it's nonsense. "Do you mean to tell me that if I come and stand at the foot of the Cross by faith and receive Christ, that my sins can be forgiven and I can receive a new life and I can go to heaven and I can have a new power to live for God?" Yes. You say, "Well, that's over-simplified." That's only the beginning.

You must make a beginning. You are going this direction in your life, and it means that you turn around and you start a new direction. It's being born again. Then you start walking with Christ, living for Christ, reading the Bible, praying, going to church, witnessing for Christ, growing in Christ. But I want to ask you tonight, have you taken that initial step which means repentance, receiving Christ by faith, an act of the will?

Oh, I know, you may believe in the Bible; you may believe in the church; you may believe in God; but that's not enough. You may be a member of some church, but that's not enough. You must, by a volitional act of your will, receive Christ. Have you done that? Has there ever been a time when you did that?

It's very much as if I get down on this platform. I look up at the upper platform. I know it's built to hold a man. I believe it will hold me. But I'm not committed to it. I'm not standing on it. I must get up on it and stand on it. That is the step I'm asking you to take tonight. I'm asking you to get up on Christ, to stand on Him, to trust in Him wholly and solely for your redemption and the forgiveness of your sin and the salvation of your soul. Will you do it?

I want to tell you something else. You

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cannot come to Christ unless the Spirit of the living God draws you and moves you and convicts you and prepares you and persuades you. Now, He's doing that tonight, because that other voice is speaking. Your heart is being pricked. There is a little voice saying, "You need God. You need Christ. You need to be sure your soul is saved." That's the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Now, if you resist that voice, He may never speak to you quite like this again. Because the Bible says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (John 3:8). It's mysterious in the way it blows. You cannot understand the wind. Neither can you understand the moving of the Spirit of God.

You don't have to understand all that I'm saying tonight, to find Christ. You don't have to understand all about God and redemption and the Bible before you come to Christ. You don't understand all the processes of breathing, but you breathe. You don't understand all the processes of digestion, but you eat food. You don't understand all the processes of coming to Christ, but you come to Him by faith. He does the rest.

I'm going to ask you to come to Him tonight. I'm going to ask you to receive Him. I'm going to ask you to turn to Him and trust Him. I'm going to ask you to get up out of your seats, hundreds of you from all over this building as we've seen thousands come, and I'm going to ask you to stand here quietly and reverently as a symbol that you are receiving Christ.

You say, "Well, Billy, why do I have to come down there?" Jesus said, "If you're not willing to confess Me before men, I'll not confess you before my Father which is in heaven" (Cf. Matthew 10:32-33).

But there's another reason. It's an act of the will that settles it and seals it. When Jesus saw the man lying on his back for thirty-eight years, He told the man a strange thing. Why didn't Jesus heal him right where he was? But He didn't do it. This man had tried to get up a million times, but he had failed. He had quit trying. But at the Word of Jesus--Jesus said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5:8)--as an act of faith, that man had to take up his bed; and he did it solely on the Word of Jesus. When he did it, he was healed.

At the Word of Christ you come to the Cross  
~~and give~~ your life to Him. He changes your life because

it's a supernatural act that He performs. It's called regeneration and new birth. Are you willing to do that tonight? You come. Hundreds of you. Don't let distance or friends or anything keep you from the Savior. You come. If there's a doubt in your heart that this thing is settled with God, you come; and let Him forgive the past and change the future.

If you're in a delegation, they'll wait. From all over the balcony, I know it's a long way down here, but the escalators are running. Jesus went a long way to the Cross to redeem your soul; certainly you can come a few steps and give Him your heart and your soul and your life.

I'm going to ask that nobody leave the Garden now, not a person at this holy moment. I'll ask that our heads are bowed in prayer. While we pray, I'm asking you to come by an act of your will and present your soul to the Savior, to be sure of the redemption of your soul. You come right now. Men, women, young people, whatever race, whatever creed, you may be Jew or Gentile, whoever you are, you come tonight and present your soul to Christ and let Him forgive and cleanse and make you a new person and give you a new life.

Whole families can come together. Sweethearts can come together. Your friends will wait on you. Your delegation will wait. But don't you let anything keep you from the Savior tonight. From back here, all around, way back in the back balconies and over here and down here. There is a little voice saying, "Come." You come. Get up out of your seat right now and come, and stand quietly and reverently. After you've come and all of you are here, we are going to say a word to you and have a moment of prayer and give you a verse of Scripture in the counselling room before you go. Then you can go back and join your friends.

In one simple act your whole life can be changed. Your soul can be changed, and the peace of God can flood your soul. You come. We're going to wait. There is plenty of time. While the choir sings softly, "Just as I Am." You may be a member of the church or you may not be. I'm not asking you to join a church tonight. You may be a Sunday school teacher. I don't know who you are, but you need Christ. You come.