

Radio Address by Rev. Lee C. Moorehead
WOSU 8-15-45 27
O Brother Man! 1st Indianola - 7-30-44

I have always been deeply fascinated by Jesus' story of the Pharisee and the Publican whom he pictured as praying in the temple together. It is that Pharisee ~~which~~ ^{which} commands my attention this morning. A man's heart and mind are nowhere more fully revealed than on the occasion of prayer. The Pharisee's character is mirrored before us. He prayed with himself thus: "I thank thee, O God, I am not like the rest of man, thieves, rogues, and immoral, or even like ~~you~~ taxgatherer. Twice a week I fast; on all my income I pay tithes". In his prayer the Pharisee reveals that he did not think much of his fellow men. He evidently thought a good deal of himself, for his prayer was merely a rehearsal of his virtues before God. His prayer breathes an aloofness from his fellow men. It appears that he Believed in God, for he prayed to God. But a closer thought will show that he really believed only in himself. Thus his prayer was both unneighborly and lacking in a conviction of God. The very word Pharisee means "separatist" and this was surely a man who was trying to separate himself from his fellow men.

After spending three years in Boston I think I understand a bit better what the prayer of this pharisee amounted to. Someone once made a toast to Boston in the following manner:

And this is good old Boston,
The home of the bean and the cod,
Where the Lowells talk only to Cabots
And the Cabots talk only to God.

It is true, I think, that a good many people find it easier to believe in God than they find it to believe in man. Faith in ones fellow men may become at times quite a problem.

But this is a problem which must be dealt with by the Christian. Believing in one's fellow man may be for some a tremendous difficulty.

We can look all about us and see our fellow human beings engaged in all kinds of wickedness. We observe that our fellow man is not trustworthy: he will cheat, and steal, and lie. We observe that he is a creature whose natural passions rage in furious ~~id~~ disorder and ~~mis~~management. We observe man's own inhumanity to man. Crime and debauchery stalk our world's streets. And above all we ^{have} seen now mankind's most insolent and barbaric qualities unloosed in the madness of global war. Certainly if we look for it there is enough to destroy one's faith in his fellow men. Man can be fiendish and cruel and brutal. He can be seized by violent fits of evil.

But as we now peer out from amidst the fiery crucible of this world, we must face the fact that this problem is the most crucial problem with which we will have to meet in the future. Most of us speak rather glibly these days of the new world that is forming on the horizon. We expect a great deal of it, and we even talk sometimes of the brotherhood of all men. But if such a dream is ever to come true we must consider well the foundation upon which a peaceful world of brotherhood shall have to be built. And that is the faith of every one of us in his fellow men. I cannot regard a fellow human being as my brother if I do not believe in him. So it is that no thought of a future world of harmony can be very sound unless this more basic stake is driven.

We are just emerging, I think, from the age in which we thought too highly of man. We became so conscious of the powers of our humanity that we tended to minimize the importance of God. By building up our own importance we diminished, and almost did away with, the importance of God. But that age has crashed on the very wreckage of humanity, for we have found that we can't trust and live with each other. Hence we have now fallen into that tragic abyss wherein we believe neither in God nor our fellow men. If we are to arise from that, we shall have to see that Faith in God and Faith in Men are inseparable.

We have been hearing in these past few weeks a great deal about the so-called ROBOT BOMBS. This is a fiendish device of destruction invented by the mind of man whose potentialities are alarming and inconceivable. ~~It is a significant development of this war in that it is the very first instrument of warfare that may be operated without any immediate danger or harm to the operators.~~ It has brought us to a most terrible pass in the history of man's inhumanity to man; and now the most startling realization is before us: our very civilization is threatened by this example of what horrifyin g harm men can bring against each other. Now, then, I ask you: Is this not a sign and symbol of the fact that as men on this earth we do not trust in nor believe in each other? I need not draw for your imagination the implications that this turn has for our earthly society, but I do face you with this question: Can we the creature of this earth expect to avert a total destruction of our civilization without re-establishing our faith in each other? Do you believe, then, in your fellow men? Can you trust him and can you live with him?

Long ago an old English poet, John Donne, caught, out of the depths of understanding, the irrevocable fact that as men of earth we are all one. Sensing deeply the solidarity of the human race he wrote:

No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is as a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any manys death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

And years ago an American poet, grasping this basic oneness of all humanity, and fired from on high with a faith in God, hymned a thought which serves well this morning as our theme;

O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!
Where pity dwells the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

There are three on this theme which I feel thread more beautifully the tapestry of our common humanity with all of the peoples of the world.

-I-

If all men were created in God's image, it is then an insult to God for us to despise our fellow men. If we do not believe in our fellow men we cannot very well believe in God.

As a minister I believe in God or I should be something else than a minister. But I could not believe in God if I did not believe in my fellow men. Or, to put it another way which is equally true, I could not believe very well in my fellow men if I did not believe that God had made each of them out of His own love.

It was precisely at this point that the Pharisee praying in the temple made his mistake. He thought that he believed in God, but he could not have believed very strongly for he didn't believe much in his fellow men.

After living in New England for three years, ~~there~~ I had to come away having never seen one of the truly great wonders of nature. High up in the New Hampshire mountains there is a magnificent monument erected by God for the glory of man. The Old Man of the Mountain is the profile of a man carved there out of the stone on the side of a mountain. Since the time of its discovery, countless numbers of people have traveled there to see and then come away with the assurance that God did surely love the man he made to walk upon the earth. Years ago Daniel Webster made this significant comment about it:

Men hang out their signs indicative of their respective trades: shoemakers hang out a gigantic shoe; jewelers, a monster watch; and the dentist hangs out a gold tooth; but up in the mountains of New Hampshire, God Almighty has hung out a sign to show that there He makes men.

It is a fitting sign, I think, that God out of His great love, made men. We who are those men do well if we believe in God enough to believe in each other.

And this brings us to a significant fact about Jesus. I, personally, can believe in the Godlikeness of Jesus because Jesus himself believed so much in and worked so hard for his fellow men. It was Jesus above all of the men of history who brought to this world the love of God for the men whom He created. Can we, those men, do any less than believe in each other. Surely we bring insult and injury to God when we do not. Thus it would seem that no man is right with God who is not right with his fellow men.

For three years I walked a steady and familiar course down Boylston street in Boston. There each time I made that journey I passed the famous statue of Phillips Brooks. Phillips Brooks has no peer in the history of American preaching and as such is the hero of every young aspiring preacher. It was a thrill to pass that statue. There is the great preacher Phillips Brooks standing at his pulpit preaching the gospel of Christ with great power. Back of him may be seen the figure of Christ with his hand on the shoulder of the great preacher. People who knew him said that Phillips Brooks possessed great power; that when he walked down the streets of Boston he brought radiance into the lives of the people whom he chanced to meet. Such great power in men is usually a mystery, but not so in Phillips Brooks. I had heard it said that the secret of his tremendous influence over the lives of people was his great humanity. During this past week I have been delving into some of his great sermons. They are still magnificent and tremendous, and every word that leaps from the page as though he were speaking tells of the great heart of this man which knew so great a faith and love for his fellow men. Phillips Brooks' faith in God was accompanied by the warm flowing love for men. Believing in God as he did, he could not minimize the importance of a single human being.

Surely the essence of his ministry which was the same as Christ, was caught sublimely in Whittier's words:

"O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!

-II-

The goodness that is in man testifies to the existence of God.

Lest we let our enthusiasm for man be halted by his evil, let us not forget ~~that~~/ the great deeds of goodness that flow from his life.

Just ordinary, common men are pretty wonderful after all, How magnificently they respond in times of trouble! His goodness is not complete, but there is something in the very spirit of man that is high and noble.

God, what a world, if men in street and mart,

Felt the same kinship of the human heart,

Which makes them, in the face of fire and flood,

Rise to the meaning of True Brotherhood.

-Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Or take that magnificent spirit that is inherent in youth, and which has been expressed so nobly by Emerson,

So high is grandeur to our dust,

So near to God is man,

When Duty whispers low, "Thou must",

The Youth replies, "I can".

There is, after, all, something fine and noble about people. They are merciful, and kind and just.

On July First of this year a most amazing thing happened on the battlefield of France. Six German nurses were to be returned to their lines. As a final courtesy the German nurses were given their fill of orange juice, fried chicken, peas, and a salad. Then they were placed in two ambulances to be returned to their own lines. They were accompanied by two high ranking medical officers and chief of U.S. Army Nurses to insure that they would see nothing to report about Allied operations. At the appointed meeting place the American officers stepped out and saluted. The German major who received the nurses made an awkward attempt at friendliness. "It's a hot day, isn't it?" he said. The American

agreed but exchanged no more conversation as they boarded the ambulance and headed back to the Allied lines. Immediately after their return the firing resumed with a heavy exchange of machine gun and mortar fire. Now that is, I think, one of the travesties and jokes of the war. If men can stop long enough and get together for a purpose like that, then there is something about them in which I believe.

I do not believe that within the very deepest parts of the souls men are mean and cruel and evil. I believe that men are essentially good and fine, and if given a chance they will rise to the meaning of

True Brotherhood. Some people in these days are having difficulty in trusting God, but they look at it all wrong. They see only the evil in men, and not the good. III- consequently they cannot see the goodness of God in the goodness of men.

If you trust in redemption, you can believe in your fellow men.

If ~~you~~ we are going to be followers of Jesus, we must remember that he said himself that he came to "seek and save those which were lost."

John Wesley was something of a bigot and an autocrat. He was not the easiest man to get along with unless he could be given the full reins in every enterprise. At the height of his career he had almost dictatorial powers. But there ~~was~~ was one belief which he held to most passionately: he believed in his fellow men. He had always had a high faith in God. Early in his life everything he had and was was dedicated to God. But for the first years of his ministry he seemed to be a miserable failure. He went on a missionary journey to Georgia but returned a miserable failure. He was strict in his own self discipline, but there was something lacking in his ministry. On that famous night in Aldersgate Street he discovered what it was. He went out from that meeting with his heart warmed, and for the first time he began to appreciate the souls of his fellow men. Before he had been most concerned about his own soul. But now his heart became the great warming fire that lit all of England with a new ~~era~~ ^{aura}. And the success of his ministry ever after was due to the fact that he was concerned about human

life as he went about helping his fellow men. Out of his intellectual belief in God he had come to believe in his fellow men, and consequently wherever he met them, whatsoever might have been their state, he trusted that they could be redeemed. He went to the coal miners - rough and uncouth men - and he preached to them in the field. He believed in their redemption.

The secret of trusting in redemption for all men is, I think, the realization that every human person is a child of God. Once you take that attitude your attitude toward every man changes. And if he is base and lowly and mean, you will then trust in his redemption, for you will reason that he is a child of God and that having fallen short he must be brought back to his fullest, best self, which is of God.

This calls to our attention the great need for sympathy in our world. If we could perceive beneath ~~the~~ every hardened, human crust and sense that there is a life-soul teeming with smothered aspirations, crushed by disillusionment when ideals have gone awry, and frustrated in strife - then we would be able to bring sympathy into our faith in our fellow men. For when you show your belief in a fellow man you do something for him. Sometimes you change his very life. I am convinced that many people are lost in fruitless living because they have never have had anyone believe in them seriously.

Consider, for a moment, the tremendous faith that Jesus had in his fellow men. He trusted and believed in them. Above all he sought for their redemption. He trusted and took Judas into his inner group despite the fact that he must have known of his inward waywardness. Jesus knew and understood him and by his very action tried to help Judas overcome himself. Evidently he believed in Judas as a child of God. He believed in Peter whose emotions and will were always a source of trouble. Yet it was Jesus who saw the rock-likeness of Peter's character, and he believed that it could be converted, that Peter could be redeemed from his vacillating self. Even the Sons of Thunder he must have believed in.

All in all Jesus took a group of common ordinary men - men with common weaknesses and sins. He made them his disciples. He trusted in them and taught them of redemption.

Thus it is that human nature, the greatest thing we humans know, ~~was~~ became in Christ the highest and the best. Above all other figures of history Jesus taught us to believe in each other. Surely Whittier's words were inspired from the great, all-human-encompassing heart of Jesus:

O brother man, fold to thy heart they brother!

During the first world war the lifeless body of a young man was taken from a battlefield. His life had been struck down in its youth. ~~He left a wife~~ The world at war had deprived him of the family joys of his wife and son who waited for him back home. But despite all of the blackness and treachery of war; despite all of the folly of his fellow men with whom and against whom he fought, he must have believed in life and in the ultimate goodness of his fellow men. For in the pocket of his jacket where found these words scrawled in pencil:

Suddenly one day

The last ill shall pass away;

The last little beastliness that is in our blood

Shall drop from us as the sheath drops from the bud;

And the spirit of man shall struggle through,

And spread huge branches underneath the blue.

In any mirror, be it bright or dim,

Man will see God staring back at him.

And if those ~~wild~~ words can be the thought of one who saw brutal man at his worst as he wrote; if those words express, as they do, a belief in life, and God, and man, then surely there is hope for our civilization if we can say in our way,

O brother man, fold to thy heart they brother!