WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD

This morning I am to speak to you about the most interesting subject in the world. Of course to some it will not be interesting at all. But to those who understand there is no subject so exciting, so thrilling, so gripping. What interests you? Some of you are interested in the movies. You like to see a good western picture where they shoot up the town. You enjoy the funny papers. You are interested in your games. You may be interested in your own homes. You are certainly interested in your dinner and in what you wear. You may be interested in your day school and Church school. But what I am going to talk about is far more interesting than any of these.

When Jesus was here he was more interested in this subject than anything else. The reason he was so interested is because he was so wise, he knew so much. His knowledge made him the greatest man that ever lived. It also made him the most gentle and the most strong. Wherever he went he talked to men about something that interested him most. What did Jesus find more interesting than all else in this wonderful world? We ought all to be able to guess the answer to that question: Jesus was more interested in God than he was in anything else.

It was the custom of Jesus to go to church every Sunday. When he was in church he spoke to people about God. But when the services were over he did not forget God, push him out of his mind and talk about other things. When he went out to dinner he entertained his friends by telling them about God. When he traveled about the country the one something he constantly talked about was
God. This he did because he was more interested in God than in any other subject. What he said also interested the people. They gathered about him by thousands just to hear what he had to say about God.

Why was Jesus so interested? Everybody is not interested in God like that. There are some folks who seldom think of God. They refuse to think of him because such thoughts make them uncomfortable. To think of God is to be frightened. The thought of God bores some folks. They yawn and say, "Let's talk about something interesting." All this is the case because these do not know God. They have wrong thoughts about him. Naturally, we do not love anybody whom we do not know. Even if we know somebody slightly, but have wrong thoughts about them we are not apt to be much interested. Why then was Jesus interested? Why should you and I be?

I.

You ought to be interested in God because he is so near. Some people have lost interest in him because they think of him as far off. He is away in some place we call heaven. He is away up yonder behind the stars. If you were to read that a certain house burned up over in Asia, it would not interest you much. But if the house of your next door neighbor burned up you would be interested. It is near. As long as you think of God as far away you will not be interested in him. You will not speak to him. If you know that your father is in New York, if you know that your mother has gone down to the city, you will not speak to her. You will only be interested enough to talk when those who love are near.

Jesus was interested in God because he knew he was close to him. He is close to you and me. He is nearer than the friend that sits at our side. He is nearer than the chair in which we sit. He is as near as the atmosphere that surrounds us. He is both with us and within our hearts. Because he is thus near,
he sees us and knows us and understands us, we can speak to him with the assurance that he will hear us. Everybody, therefore, ought to be interested in God because God is the nearest of all beings. **God is near here.**

II.

Jesus was interested in God because he knew him. Nobody is greatly interested in strangers. But when these strangers become friends, when we know them and love them, then we are interested in them. Jesus knew and loved God. He tells us that the same knowledge is for you and me, that we may know him. And when we know him we will certainly love him because he is so loveable.

When Jesus undertook to describe God he did not draw a picture, he said that God was our father. That is, he is like the fathers we know, only ever-so-much better, ever-so-muchmore loving and strong. He is our perfect father. Some of the fathers we have known are hard to beat. They can be wonderfully good to have around. I remember that my father and I were in the field together when there came a terrible rain storm. By and by when the rain had let up we started for home. I was walking behind, putting my tracks in the tracks made by my father. Every little rivulet had swollen from the rain into big streams. By and by I stepped in one of my father's tracks and felt myself sinking in the mud. I cried for help. My father at once came and gathered me in his strong arms and held me and carried me to safety. God is like that. When life gets too hard for us he comes to our help. He is our father.

Then Jesus was interested in God because God was interested in him and interested in everybody else. Some people have no interest in God because they think God is not interested in them. If you want folks to be interested in you I can give you the best way in the world—You get interested in them. A lot of folks think of God as interested in stars and suns. He is interested in the
whole big world. He may even be interested in nations and in kings, and in presidents, but he is not interested in just ordinary folks.

But that is all wrong. God is interested in everybody. He is even interested in flowers. Jesus looked at a lily one day and declared that it was more beautifully dressed than Solomon. The reason that it was dressed so beautifully was that God clothed it. He takes an interest in flowers. He is interested in birds. He is even interested in that trifling little bird called the sparrow. There are lots of sparrows, there were lots of them in his day. But Jesus said that God knew everyone of them and that if a single one of them died he took time to attend the funeral. One day Jesus told of a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. But when he led them home at night and counted them there were only ninety-nine. That shepherd did not say, "Well ninety-nine are enough. I will let that foolish sheep go." He knew the name of that sheep, was interested in it, went out into the night in search of it till he found it.

Now this God who cares for flowers and birds and sheep cares for you and me. My father had a big family of children, but he loved them and did not love them simply as a family, he loved us one by one. I was the youngest member of the family. Not only so, but I was looked upon as about the dullest. But that did not keep him from being interested in me. One night when the doctor said I would not live till morning he came to tell me about it, and to tell me not to be afraid. He had other children, but he loved me as if I were the only child he had. God is like that. He loves us individually. Because he is interested in everyone of us we ought to be interested in him.

III.

Then Jesus was interested in God because this God out of sheer love was always trying to help everybody. There were folks who didn't care for God in those days. There were folks who refused to love him, who mistreated him and broke his
heart. But he never became angry and resentful. There were two farmers that had their farms side by side. One of them was a good man and the other was sour, selfish, and mean. But God sent rain not only to the good man, but to the bad man too. And he made the sun to shine not simply upon the crops of the good man but on the bad man as well.

There was a boy once who got tired of his father's home and thought he could do better for himself, so he ran away. I tried that once. I suppose all of us try it sooner or later. This boy seemed to get along fairly well as long as his money lasted. But by and by he spent everything he had, went and hired himself to a man who gave him a job feeding hogs. He became terribly hungry and homesick. But because he had run away without any good reason he was at first too proud to go back home.

But at last he became so miserable that he could not stand it any longer. He said, "Even though I have run through with everything my father gave me, I am going back. Of course, he won't give me another chance, but maybe I can get a slave's job with him. Better than that, he might even make me one of his hired hands." So he set out for home. But before he came in sight of the house, there was his father out looking for him. And he ran to him and kissed him, and gave him a new pair of shoes, and a new suit of clothes, and put a ring on his hand. Then he made him a feast. In fact, he treated him just as he would have treated him had he been decent and had not made a mess out of things. God is always doing like that, Jesus said.

Now how about you and me? Are you interested in God? He is very near. He is eager for you to know him that you may be his friend. He is as interested in you as if you were the only person alive. He is eager to give you his best, even if you have been a bit selfish and mean. If you have what he offers God can meet every need of yours if you will give him a chance. But of course, not even He
can give what you refuse to take. If you desire to starve to death, how can you
go about it? It will not be necessary for you to burn up all the food in the
world, to poison all the water in the world. All you need to do is to refuse to
eat and drink. If you want to miss God all you need to do is to refuse to accept
him. He is passing your way this morning saying, "Follow me." If you will follow
him you may become his friend. Being his friend you may find joy for yourself.
You may know the yet deeper joy of helping others.