

12-11-1966

A Man's Life

John Allen Chalk

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs

Recommended Citation

Chalk, John Allen, "A Man's Life" (1966). *Herald of Truth Documents*. 47.
https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs/47

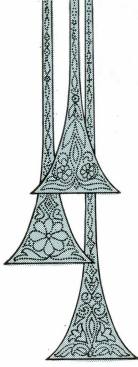
This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Herald of Truth Records at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Herald of Truth Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

A MAN'S LIFE



NUMBER 777
TRANSCRIPT OF THE

Herald of Truth
..... *radio programs*



HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST
radio program

P. O. Box 2439

Ablene, Texas 79604

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A Man's Life

Have you ever noticed how quickly the opening verses of the Bible bring one to the consideration of man's nature? Within the compressed majesty of Genesis, chapter one, the panorama of creation reveals not only the geological, botanical, and animal aspects of our world but, even more importantly, shows God's creation of that unique being — man! "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:27, 28).

Man not only bears the "image of God" in his nature — this is his uniqueness above the remainder of the created order — but he also possesses a special mandate from God to "subdue" and "have dominion" over all creation. A careful reading of Genesis 1:27, 28 further reveals that the only creature man was not told to dominate, the only animal over which man was not given supreme control, was himself!

This is precisely the place at which modern man makes his greatest mistake. The current talk of "autonomous man" and "man come-of-age" suggests a philosophy or view of man in complete contradiction to the Biblical view of God's highest creature. In fact, history, our present human experience, and Biblical teaching all combine to reveal that man's gross misunderstanding of his own nature and destiny results from his unwillingness to acknowledge God's sovereignty over his life and conduct. Solomon says, "A man's goings are of Jehovah; How then can man understand his way?" (Proverbs 20:24). The point is that man cannot understand his way when attempting to direct his own steps. God's word properly warns, ". . . it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Yet, most of us seem bent on securing and controlling our own lives. Personal security and continued physical life seem totally dependent on our own human efforts alone. It was a man under this very delusion who spoke to Jesus on one occasion. "And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). The questioner forever remains nameless, but one thing is certain, he spoke out of the common humanity that characterizes us all! The multitudes, that seek human achievement by human might through the building of human monuments for human purposes, this is the fabric out of which came this man requesting of Jesus, just like you and I do today, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me."

Out of this confrontation of Jesus and the unnamed man in the multitude came one of the greatest lessons ever taught about the nature and meaning of "a man's life," and that is the subject for our discussion today, "A Man's Life."

One of the tragedies of this situation, described in Luke's Gospel, is the misuse of the Master teacher by the brother wanting an estate settled. Jesus' answer reveals the enormity of the poor man's mistake. "But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14). This was not the purpose for which God sent His only begotten Son into the world (John 1:18). The greatest love in all history had not been displayed for this kind of assistance to mankind (John 3:16). In the midst of man's most badly needed ministry comes this mundane request regarding a petty material concern.

Instead of "words of eternal life" which Jesus was impowered to teach, our questioner wanted a judgment

about money. The apostles on one occasion were personally confronted with a challenge from Jesus, "Would ye also go away?" (John 6:67). To which Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). This was what men had desired for centuries. This was the satisfaction of man's inherent longing, eternal life. Cf this teacher with "the words of eternal life," one man, like most of us would have done, requested that He take the time to settle a financial quarrel. His request clarified in raw life experience a principle that Jesus had earlier taught. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Instead of a "relationship with God" which Christ could provide, this man requested the execution of a judgment at law. Jesus clearly taught, "no one knoweth . . . the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matthew 11:27). Paul explains in II Corinthians that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Here, at last, is our opportunity to know God and to be the friend of God through Christ, God's Son, and yet we ask, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me."

But the same Master is misused as surely today as He was on the occasion under consideration in our study. When we join forces with those Jewish leaders that "believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, . . . for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God," do we not misuse our Master? (John 12:42, 43). I want to ask you one question, "How many of your business associates know that you believe in Jesus Christ? How many of your family members know that Jesus is the guiding light of your life? How many of your fellow students realize that Jesus is your Savior?" We misuse the Master by a lack of complete belief in Him.

But no misuse is more disastrous than our unwillingness to acknowledge His sovereignty over our lives. Paul offers this imperative: "because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). To accept his sovereignty is to believe in Him so strongly that we publicly confess His lordship, repent of all our past rebellion and wrong, and unite with Him in baptism. Such obedience assures us of freedom from all past sins (Acts 2:38) and gives us a new life that benefits man and glorifies God (Romans 6:4).

But Christ would not be deterred from His major purpose by the question we have noticed. He replied, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14). In the verses that follow this rejoinder Jesus masterfully reveals the real question uncovered by this superficial request. "And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

Notice the emphasis on "a man's life." Jesus says that the important issue in this confrontation is the essence of man's life. What is it all about? Why has God given life to each of us? What purposes are we to fulfill? What meaning, if any, should our lives have?

This is the question James asks in his General Epistle. "Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, then vanisheth away" (James 4:13, 14).

It becomes increasingly apparent, as one reads and studies God's word and human nature, that man's life is a quest, a proper kind of quest. God's Spirit moved the Old Testament prophet Amos to say, "Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live; . . ." (Amos 5:6). Jesus counsels, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). But the Master also warned His followers, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). Life is a proper kind of quest — the quest for God, His righteousness and kingdom, but not a quest for self.

Immediately following the Lord's counsel to His followers, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: . . .," He tells the parable of the rich fool. The obvious purpose of this story was to teach man that his life is certainly not a quest for material goods and physical possessions. Listen to this story from Jesus. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he

that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

We first notice from Jesus' story that "the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." How often we forget our stewardship of the land God created, a land which blesses us so plentifully. Moses reminded the nation of Israel, "Behold, unto Jehovah thy God belongeth heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is therein" (Deuteronomy 10:14). We properly observe, therefore, that God's land blessed a certain man with plenty.

But then we must also sadly observe that this blessed man failed his stewardship test, like so many of us. Every man in some form and under some kind of circumstance, peculiar to himself, must face the question, "What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?"

The real sorrow, however, comes when we hear this man, facing the major test of his prosperous life, say, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods." MY barns, MY grain, MY goods — it is already apparent what decision this selfish, ungrateful, insensitive man will make! How terrible his mistake in the face of our Lord's statement, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This poor man can see no cause beyond his own self-centered existence.

The most penetrating revelation of his real sin comes when he says, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." Here is the selfishness, purposelessness, and worship of pleasure that corrupts any of us who so surrender to the principles of the rich fool.

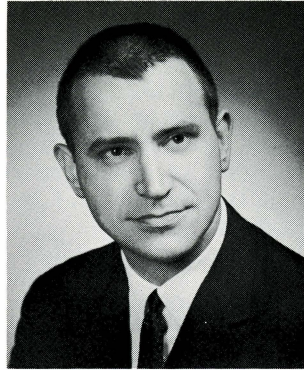
But also remember the reckoning that occurred. At the very moment, for the first time in his hurried, busy, anxious, worried life, when he can center every thought and effort on his own pleasures, comes that inevitable voice of judgment that all of us will hear. "But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" (Luke 12:20).

Man, especially selfish, unregenerate man, talks in terms of "many years." We all are prone to conduct our affairs as if everything will always be as it now is. But the apostle Paul reminds us, "When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall

in no wise escape" (I Thessalonians 5:3). The fool said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." But God said, "this night is thy soul required of thee." God always talks in terms of today, tonight, this very hour, this minute. Peter tells us, "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8).

Somehow he never realized that "life is for living, and for a kind of living that will help us to glorify God" (J. M. Reid, **British Weekly**, Aug. 4, 1966, p. 6). Walter Russell Bowie has best summarized the massive breakdown in this man's life. "If a man possesses in himself no generous thoughts, no great devotions, no immortal purposes, then certainly nothing which he thought he possessed can go with him to give dimensions to the soul that stands thin and naked before God" (**The Compassionate Christ**, p. 175).

Give meaning to your life by surrendering to Jesus Christ. Obey those New Testament instructions that detail your surrender to the Lord and Savior of your life. In full faith (John 3:36), in genuine repentance (Luke 13:3), in confession of your faith in Him as Lord (Romans 10:9, 10), and in baptism (Matthew 28:19, 20), give your life and its destiny into God's control. Make God's word your constant guide through a meaningful life of service and worship. With Jesus, the rich fool would say today, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."



John Allen Chalk, dynamic evangelist and long-time radio speaker, is the first full-time speaker on the Herald of Truth radio program.

He began his work with the Herald of Truth on January 1, 1966. Previously, Chalk was the featured personality in a 13 week Herald of Truth television series.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, he began preaching at 15. Chalk and his wife and two children now live in Abilene, Texas where he spends full time working with the Herald of Truth.

He is a graduate of Tennessee Tech and has written a book, "The Praying Christ and Other Sermons" and two tracts. Chalk was nominated for the Outstanding Young Man of Tennessee in 1964 and was named Cookeville's Young Man of the Year in 1963.