

Is It I?

Introduction. Early in His ministry, Jesus began to make statements concerning His death (John 2:19-22). After Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16, Jesus began to reveal to His disciples how He would die (Matthew 16:21-22). As He goes to Jerusalem during the final week of His life, He took the disciples aside to tell them again what awaited Him (Matthew 20:17-19). The parable of the wicked vinedressers declares His rejection and death at the hands of the Jews (Matthew 21:33-39).

When He met with the disciples to eat the Passover, Jesus added a new element to the story: one of the disciples would betray Him (Matthew 26:21). Judas had already made the deal (Matthew 26:14-16). The Lord's statement produced an emotional shock and the disciples one by one began to ask, "Lord, is it I?" (Mark 14:19). Each of them was personally concerned if a weakness known to the Lord would cause them to betray Him. In Matthew 26:31, Jesus said that all of them would fall away that night. The others did not suspect Judas (John 13:29). In Matthew 26:25, Judas asks, "Is it I?" Perhaps this was an attempt to hide his plan. Perhaps the other disciples thought, "He is only guessing."

There are times when all need to look at our lives and ask, "Lord, is it I?" We must examine ourselves to know if we remain in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

I. ***"Is It I" Who Would Deny The Lord By An Unfaithful Life?***

- A. The conduct of a professed disciple can result in the Lord's cause being blasphemed (Romans 2:24; Titus 2:5).
- B. Many return to the corruption of the world and practice things which are not "fitting for saints" (Ephesians 2:3-4; 5:1-4; 2 Peter 2:20-22).
 1. We must always take heed of ourselves (1 Corinthians 10:12).
 2. The heart is like a garden which has "weed seed" in the soil, ready to spring up (Luke 8:5-8). We must constantly watch and remove what would result in evil.
- C. It is our task to remain faithful.
 1. We are commanded to be faithful (Revelation 2:10).
 2. We are expected to be faithful (Luke 17:7-10).
 3. Our faithfulness in little matters demonstrates a lot (Luke 16:10).
 4. We will be rewarded for being faithful (Matthew 25:21).
- D. There are a number of individuals in the Bible which are described as faithful (Moses, Antipas, Silas, Tychicus, Epaphras, Timothy, Onesimus and Paul). If you lived then, would you be described as faithful?

II. ***"Is It I" When Little Is Received From Worship Services?***

- A. Worship should make one "better" and is for "edification" (1 Corin-

ans 11:17; 14:26). The result is that we draw near to God and to each other (James 4:8; 1 John 1:7)

- B. Regrettably, this is not the case for all worshippers. Some admit they "get nothing out of worship services." Whose fault is it?
1. We should strive to make services as uplifting as possible.
 2. We must be prepared if worship is going to be edifying.
 - a) The body and mind must be alert if we are to comprehend and learn.
 - b) Worship requires the "spirit" (John 4:24). Is your mind free from distracting influences so that you are able to concentrate? Are you just too tired to listen?
 - c) Am I prepared to hear and make changes in my life (Ecclesiastes 5:1)? Lessons from God's word should "judge" me (Hebrews 4:12). One can be uplifted when they hear a sermon about sin or a refutation of false doctrine.
 - d) Many who are able to attend do not do so, or do so only occasionally. In these situations, little learning takes place.
 3. One of the best opportunities for building up the church is through Bible classes. But sometimes we do not take advantage of them. We are either absent and get no benefit, or we are here but do not learn. Greater learning takes place when we are able to discuss questions, seek answers to difficulties and make personal application.
 - a) An essential element for a good class is preparation.
 - (1) A teacher can teach only what he or she knows.
 - (2) Regardless of ability, a teacher must have knowledge.
 - (3) Preparation is more than "filling in blanks" or hurriedly reading verses before the prayer. We have to meditate, associate and form questions about the material and make application to the present situation.
 - b) Another essential element is participation.
 - (1) The mind must be alert and reasoning so one can ask questions and comment appropriately.
 - (2) This causes us to learn and the class to be more interesting to everyone.

III. ***"Is It I" When The Church Seems Cold And Unfriendly?***

A. Friendliness should characterize all of us. The "cold shoulder" has little influence for good on others. Paul commanded them to greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26).

1. Society is very cold and distant. People are looking for closeness and a sense of belonging. This is where so many churches fail.

- They greatly emphasize doctrinal soundness but do not reach out to others. They are simply cold (John 13:35).
2. If you went to a congregation that broke into little huddles after services and only a couple of people spoke to you, would you go back? A growing church has closeness that is obvious to all. If people come to a cold atmosphere, they will not come back.
- B. Sometimes, members complain that we have no joy and happiness, but I have observed a lot of times that they are usually the first ones out (Philippians 4:4). You have to "chase them down" in the parking lot to speak to them.
 - C. At times, some brethren are "offended," and they feel that others avoid them when they show no interest. How would you react? Our love for our brethren should be some of the strongest love we have (1 John 4:7-8). How should we show it? You tell me!

IV. ***"Is it I" When The Unity And The Growth Of The Church Is Threatened?***

- A. This can be the result of murmuring and complaining (1 Corinthians 10:10).
 1. There may not be deliberate effort on the part of members to tear down, but they are dissatisfied and the result is the same.
 2. We do not realize destructiveness of actions: murmuring is grievous sin. God punished the children of Israel quite harshly for murmuring (Numbers 14:1-11).
 3. Is the reason for the complaint that "things not going the way I wish"? If so, we need to clothe ourselves with humility (1 Peter 5:5).
 4. If we are prone to contentious, combative conflict, we will accomplish nothing as far as the grow of the church is concerned.
- B. If we have problems with other brethren, those problems need to be resolved (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17).
- C. When people see others falling away and none being brought to Christ, we need to ask, is it I? Jesus said that the fields were "white for harvest" (John 4:34-35).

V. ***"Is It I" When Another Is About To Be Overcome By Discouragement?***

- A. We have to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). These are excessive burdens that wear us down. We are our brother's keeper (Genesis 4:9-12; Job 2:11-13).
- B. How do we respond to another's burdens? Indifference? Let us never have the view that "he is responsible" or "she should have known better." We have a duty to encourage. We cannot go to heaven if we are

not concerned about others (Matthew 25:31-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14).

Conclusion. We need to look at various situations and ask, "Is it I?" The Lord speaks to those who would deny Him (Matthew 10:33). Remember that the time you have for self-examination is very short. I may never be able to say words rough enough for you to change; but there is something coming called judgment that will be rough enough. You may wear the mask today as a Christian or someone who does not need the gospel, but death will strip you and you will stand before the judgment seat (2 Corinthians 5:10). There are those who "judge" themselves unworthy of eternal life through rejection of the gospel (Acts 13:46). "Is it I?"