

ACCEPTING THE CAPSTONE

Text: Luke 20:9-19

Key Word: Capstone

Key Thought: Christ must be the Capstone of our lives

INTRODUCTION:

The beginning of each New Year reminds me of my first day of school when I was given a clean pad of paper to begin writing on. I can still remember placing the date up into the top right-hand corner and giving the page a title and a page number. And there I was ready to venture out on a new experience with a new teacher and often a few new pupils. Life seemed so simple back then. For some reason I didn't notice all the hustle and bustle of life.

A New Leaf

He came to my desk, with a quivering lip

The lesson was done

"Have you a new leaf for me, teacher.

I have spoiled this one"

I took his leaf, all soiled and blotted

And gave him a new one, all unspotted.

Then into his stirred heart I smiled

"Do better now my child."

I went to the throne with a trembling heart

The year was done.

"Have you a new year for me, Father

I have spoiled this one."

He took my year, all soiled and blotted

And gave me a new one, all unspotted

And into my tired heart He smiled,

"Do better now, my child."

Source Unknown

What Are the Benefits of Accepting Christ as the Capstone of Our Lives?

I. SANCTIFICATION

II. SIGNIFICANCE

III. SECURITY

I. SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification follows Justification. In justification our sins are completely forgiven in Christ. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit makes us more like Christ in all that we do, think, and desire. True sanctification is impossible apart from the atoning work of Christ on the cross because only after our sins are forgiven can we begin to lead a holy life.

The word “*sanctification*” refers to the process of being “*set apart as holy or for holy purposes.*” This is such a vital step in our lives. Without living a sanctified life we will never be at ease in our Christian life. Once we accept Christ as our personal Savior by asking Him to forgive us of our sins, we begin a wonderful journey of sanctification that heads toward our final destination - heaven.

God doesn't bring us to heaven immediately because He doesn't want to deprive us of this incredible experience. The only thing that will not make this a pleasant journey is if we continue to dig our heels in when God is attempting to guide us into greater truth.

*** Phillips Brooks, former minister of Boston's Trinity Episcopal Church, is perhaps best known as the author of “*O Little Town of Bethlehem.*” He was a very busy pastor, yet he always seemed relaxed and unburdened, willing to take time for anyone in need.

Shortly before Brooks died, a young friend wrote to him and asked the secret of his strength and serenity. In a heartfelt response, Brooks credited his still-growing relationship with Christ.

He wrote, “*The more I have thought it over, the more sure it has seemed to me that these last years have had a peace and fullness which there did not use to be. It is a deeper knowledge and truer love of Christ . . . I cannot tell you how personal this grows to me. He is here. He knows me and I know Him. It is the most real thing in the world. And every day makes it more real. And one wonders with delight what it will grow into as the years go on.*”

“*Our Daily Bread*”
October 14, 1994

The Pharisees had a major problem. They thought they were already completely holy before God. Yet they refused to recognize the wrong of their ways. Jesus used **The Parable of the Tenants** to expose their evil thoughts and deeds. He then told how they were rejecting God's purposes for their lives. He prophesied how they were going to kill Him and what effect that action would have upon them.

I. SANCTIFICATION (Contd.)

*“15. So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.
“What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?
16. He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to
others.” When the people heard this, they said, “May this never
be!”*

Luke 20:15,16

The owner of the vineyard is our Father God. He sent His Son, the One He loved, and the religious leaders of the day had Him crucified. **Hopefully no one in this place has rejected the Son of God.** Therefore, we should all be living a life of sanctification before God. There is no use in trying to play a game with God - He sees right through us. He knows those who are pretending to be something they aren't (Luke 20:20) or walking a life of duplicity (Luke 20:23).

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Back in my Bible school days I took a class on counseling that required me to read a book titled **“Effective Biblical Counseling”** by Dr. Larry Crabb. One chapter in the book asked the question, *“What do People Need to Live Effectively?”* The answer begins with my second point. He states that the primary point for personal worth among men is **Significance**.

As Christ is placed as the Capstone in our lives, a true significance takes place. A secular counselor will tell someone to search after **power and pleasure** to fulfill the primary needs we have. This has led us to the two major problems in our nation, which is **violence and immorality as spelled out in Romans 1**. Others counsel people to search for **buried conflicts**. But if we begin our process with a true act of Justification, most if not all of our problems can be addressed.

We then find our significance in who we are in Christ and how we serve His purpose for our lives. **The Capstone always keeps everything else into its proper place.**

Is your significance tied too closely to achievements - building buildings, reaching business goals, acquiring material possessions, climbing career ladders? There's nothing inherently wrong with these. But if you lose them, would your confidence completely crumble? If your sense of worth depends on them, **what happens when you reach the top of the ladder, only to discover that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall?**

The problem is that our world has a system of values that are upside down from the way God determines value. It lacks any sense of what Scripture describes as **“calling,”** or what the early Christians later termed **“vocation”** - a perspective that God has called and equipped people to serve Him through their work in the world. Instead, our culture encourages us to climb a **work/identity ladder** that is ultimately self-serving, and often self-destructive.

II. SIGNIFICANCE (Contd.)

Climbing that ladder can be very misleading. The higher one goes, the more one's identity, value, and security tend to depend on the nature of one's work. But what happens if we lose our position, titles, or high-level compensation? Perhaps this explains why severe emotional problems like drug and alcohol abuse, abuses of a spouse and children, divorce, even suicide - often accompany job loss. **If our significance relies on our job, then it dies when we lose our job.**

God calls us to a far more stable basis for significance. He wants us to establish our identity in the fact that we are His children, created by Him to carry out good works as responsible people in His kingdom (Ephesians 2:10). This is our calling or vocation from God.

According to Scripture, our calling:

- is irrevocable (*Romans 11:29*).
- is from God; He wants to let us share in Christ's glory (*II Thessalonians 2:14*).
- is a function of how God has designed us (*Ephesians 2:10*).
- is an assurance that God will give us everything we need to serve Him, including the strength to remain faithful to Him (*I Corinthians 1:7-9*).
- is what we should be proclaiming as our true identity (*I Peter 2:5, 9*).
- carries us through suffering (*I Peter 2:19-21*).
- is rooted in peace, no matter what the circumstances in which we find ourselves (*I Corinthians 7:15-24*).
- is focused on eternal achievements, not merely temporal ones (*Philippians 3:13 - 4:1*).

Above all else, believers are called to character development, service to others, and loyalty to God. These can be accomplished wherever we live or work, whatever our occupational status or position in society. If we pursue these, we can enjoy great satisfaction and significance. No matter what happens on the job, we can join Paul in saying, "*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*" (*Romans 8:28*)."

"The Word in Life Study Bible" New Testament Edition
Thomas Nelson Publishers
Nashville; 1993, p. 180

III. SECURITY

I mentioned earlier a book titled “*Effective Biblical Counseling*.” It also made mention of something very **important for women**. He said that the primary point for personal worth among women is Security.

Once again if we follow a Biblical perspective on this, we will have no problem accepting this. But if our lives are governed by secular thought, we will tend to argue this point. Unfortunately, our world has attempted to confuse the roles of men and women.

A woman’s need for security demands that she be loved, accepted and cared for, both now and forever. I believe that a woman must have given her input into the original traditional vows.

“I _____, take you _____, to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish 'till death do us part. And hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.”

Traditional Wedding Vow

Women are very sensitive to what is truly secure and what is not. It is a God-given gift. A secure woman does not have to be told she is secure just as an insecure woman doesn’t have to be told of her state. Our world would be a safer place if women were involved in security procedures. They have a sixth sense that is often called a “**woman’s intuition.**”

“A Japanese attack on Hawaii is regarded as the most unlikely thing in the world, with one chance in a million of being successful. Besides having more powerful defenses than any other post under the American flag, it is protected by distance.”

Recorded by Journalist Clarke Beach
“*At Dawn We Slept*”
Originally written by Gordon Prange
written on Sept. 6, 1941
The fateful day was Dec. 7, 1941

If your security is not based upon the Capstone of all mankind, then what is it that you are depending upon to hold you up and save you? Is there anything that can truly substitute God in our lives? Are we foolish enough to wait until a problem arises before we decide to venture out on our journey of life for 2024? It would be absurd to get halfway into the year and then begin to consider where you have placed your trust and security!

III. SECURITY (Contd.)

** The story is told of a monastery in Portugal, perched high on a 3,000 foot cliff and accessible only by a terrifying ride in a swaying basket. The basket is pulled with a single rope by several strong men, perspiring under the strain of the fully loaded basket.

One American tourist who visited the site got nervous halfway up the cliff when he noticed that the rope was old and frayed. Hoping to relive his fear he asked, *“How often do you change the rope?”*

The monk in charge replied, *“Whenever it breaks!”*

**

“Daily Walk”
March 30, 1992

I encourage you to walk humbly before the Lord this year. If you need to fall upon anything, fall upon the Rock - Jesus Christ - who is our Capstone in life. Humility could save your life.

“Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Luke 20:18

C:\My Documents\WPWin(2021)\Sermons.2024\Foundational Truths\Luke 20_9.19.wpd

Date: Jan 21/24

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Jesus Lover of My Soul (Jesus I will Never let you Go) - G

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“It is possible to evade a multitude of sorrows by the cultivation of an insignificant life.”

John Henry Jowett

III. SECURITY - *Luke 20:18*