



**A
LETTER
FROM YOUR
PASTOR:
JULY 2021**
by Lee Shipp

THE PRICELESS THINGS OF GOD

Leonard Ravenhill remembers Robert Murray M'Cheyne and suggests he was perhaps the loftiest of believers to come out of Scotland. Few people ever demonstrated such a Christian character as M'Cheyne. He knew Hebrew well enough to converse with the greatest of scholars. His scholarly tastes gave him an appetite for the finer poets of the Greek classics. He kept his diary from prying eyes by writing in Latin. His well-refined abilities also produced many noble hymns still sung by the Church today!

But M'Cheyne excelled in a greater art than any of these or all of them combined, for M'Cheyne is remembered as a man of prayer. Churches larger than his offered a rich price tag for his ministry, but with grace he refused them all. He was contented with his lot because no church could offer him more time for prayer. "How real God is!" He once said to himself. "God is the only person I can talk to."

After this saintly pastor's death, a visitor went to see the great church. The custodian showed him around. Some of M'Cheyne's books were still there. "Sit down here," said the canny sexton, leading the young visitor to the chair where M'Cheyne used to sit. "Now put your elbows on the table." The visitor obeyed. "Now put your face in your hands." The visitor again obeyed. "Now let the tears flow. That was the way Mr. M'Cheyne used to do!"

Then the amazed visitor was led into the very pulpit where the impassioned M'Cheyne had once poured out his soul to God and poured out God's message to the people. "Put your elbows on the pulpit. Put your face in your hands." The young man obeyed. "Now let the tears flow. That was the way Mr. M'Cheyne used to do!"

EXAMINE YOURSELF

I had to find out. Is God the sole possession of my heart? Am I hungry for Him? A.B. Simpson was so inflamed with the heart of God he would rise early before dawn to abide with God. He would sit in his study with a Bible and globe before him. Then he would cry for the heart of God for the nations. As the tears flowed, he would grab the globe, pulling it close to his chest, and the tears would fall upon the globe going all over the world. Is it any wonder God gave him many souls?

I had to find out! I want this Divine fire in my heart. I passionately want to suffer the loss of all things for Jesus! Can I live my present Christianity without God? Do I live it without God? Is this New Testament Christianity in my

heart? Oh, the modern examples of the faith are so anemic! Tozer said, "Let the average man be put to the proof on the question of who is above, and his true position will be exposed. Let him be forced into making a choice between God and money, between God and men, between God and personal ambition, God and self, God and human love, and God will take second place every time. Those other things will be exalted above. However the man may protest, the proof is in the choices he makes day after day throughout his life."

Oh, I want my heart to rise with a Spirit-inflamed cry, "I choose God!" I want my heart to be God-possessed, like Abraham. When Lot contended with Abraham over their vast possessions, Abraham was quite content to allow Lot to choose whatever territory he wanted. Abraham knew that it did not matter what Lot chose, he could not take Abraham's priceless treasure – the presence of the Lord. Or consider the three Hebrews who were willing to die in a furnace for the love of God.

What gripped Paul's heart that he sought a martyr's death? I don't know what's happening to me ... but I welcome it! I long to sing with Faber,

*"Only to sit and think of God, oh what joy it is!
To think the thought, to breath the name,
Earth has no higher bliss.
Father of Jesus, Love's reward! What rapture will it be,
Prostrate before Thy throne, to lie, and gaze on thee!"*

**"IS GOD
THE SOLE POSSESSION
OF MY HEART?"**

How many would-be saints today tremble over their unstable hearts? Where is the fire and passion of Wesley, as he would cry,

*"Oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, o take and seal it;
Seal it for Thy courts above!"*

David Wilkerson asks,

"How many of us would serve Him if He offered nothing but Himself? No healing. No miracles, signs, or wonders. What if – once again we had to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods? What if – instead of painless living, we suffered cruel mockings, stoning, bloodshed, being sawn asunder? What if – instead of our beautiful homes and cars, we had to wander about in deserts in sheepskins, hiding in dens and caves? What if – instead of prosperity, we were destitute, afflicted, and tormented? And the only better thing provided for us was Christ?"

Please allow me to answer his question. Only love would respond to such a demand by saying, "I will!"

A DIVIDED HEART IS THE DEVIL'S STRATEGY

Satan doesn't come with one swift blow and wipe us out. He comes cunningly and in stealth. His objective is to slowly divide our hearts. Once the heart is divided the life will soon collapse. Jesus said, *"...If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan revolts against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end."*

It is so easy to divide man's heart. Simple little thoughts can steal our hearts away ... thoughts, which keep us from prayer ... from Bible study. Satan knows that thoughts can eventually enter our hearts, redirecting our affections away from Jesus to lesser things; things that are destructive and dark.

It all started that way with Judas. A thought in his mind which got into his heart. This intruding thought would later possess Judas' heart and a Trojan horse would open the door for Satan to waltz right in and bring his life down.

My heart cries with the Psalmist, *"Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy name"* (Psalms 86:11).

I don't want to imagine there is something worth dying for.
I don't want to hope there is something worth dying for.
I don't want to merely believe there is something worth dying for.
I want to possess that which is worth dying for!

I want a heart that will not shrink from rejection or hatred. I want a heart so set upon Jesus that it is forever established. I want a passion to burn in my heart for Christ. I want to be baptized in Holy Ghost fire, I want this truth to possess me ... to consume me ... to stir me!

As Jim Elliot, I ask,

"Am I ignitable? God deliver me from the dread asbestos of 'other things.' Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be a flame. But flame is transient, often short-lived. Canst thou bear this, my soul - short life? In me there dwells the Spirit of the Great Short-Lived, Whose zeal for God's house consumed Him. 'Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.'"

I want to express my devotion for Jesus with no holding back. I want my heart to explode with love and praise, not considering what men think. I want all men to know how much I think of God. Though they may think me crazy - I no longer care for their opinion!

I want the precious things of God! The priceless things. If this means I must wrestle with God, like Jacob, then God give me the grace to do so. If it means I must live with a limp, so be it as long as I live with Jesus! I long to be brought to weakness so I fully know His power. I long to be reproached for His Name's sake so I may have fellowship with Him in His suffering. I want my heart to be all in. When you said to seek your face my heart said, "Your face oh Lord I will seek!" I want to walk into His furnace with passion and be refined. I don't want the cheap substitutes the Christian world is offering. I want God, not money! I want God, not your accolades! I want God more than life! Oh, blessed Father, I will show them all that it is not the blessings that cause me to follow you!

I want to reverence God! I want my heart to fear Him. I want to tremble. Oh, perhaps you do not understand my efforts to express my heart. Honestly, I find it very difficult to put these longings into words; however, I find it necessary to try. I'm still learning. I'm still reaching forward to what is before me. I am still apprehending that for which I have been apprehended - I run towards this upward calling with all the grace I have. I want my reverence to affect me ... all of me:

The way I act,
The way I dress,
The way I give,
The way I go to church,
And the way I choose my friends!

Lee Shipp
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