

Scripture: Matthew 17:9.

Topic: Tell No One.

Text: Mt. 17:9b -- Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead"

Proposition: Jesus wished to avoid praise and attention because of the good, wonderful and kind works he did, in order that emphasis might be upon God the Father revealed in his own resurrection, showing love and eternity to all people, rather than temporary healing and help.

Date written: May 27, 1970.

Dates and places used:

5-31-70 OAKLAND PARK, FLA. ~~222-8~~

Author: Andrew D. ...

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Introduction:

1. We don't want to pick on our Catholic friends too much, but this story is just too good not to share with you:

A member of the Catholic Church approached her priest and said, "Father, my dog died, and I want to know if you think it is all right to have a funeral for him."

The priest said, "Yes, I think it's all right, if you desire one."

"And who do you think would be a minister to **conduct** it?"

The priest wasn't too happy with the thoughts of this funeral, so he said, "I know a good Methodist minister down the street. I believe he will conduct it for you."

"Oh thank you Fahter, and just one more question. How much do you think I should pay him for it, \$200 or \$300

The priest's eyes lit up, and as he slipped his arm around his parishioner, he said, "Why my friend, why didn't you say it **was** a Catholic dog?"

(Clyde Murdock, in A Treasury of Humor, Zondervan, as in Quote ~~XXXX~~ 5-3-70).

2. Sometimes we don't tell the <sup>whole</sup>

Introduction:

I don't want to pick on our Catholic friends too much, but this story is just too good not to share with you:

A member of the Catholic Church approached her priest and said, "Father, my dog died, and I want to have it buried in the church." The priest said, "Yes, I think it's all right, if you desire so."

And so he took the dog to the cemetery to be buried. The priest went to the cemetery to see the dog buried, so he said, "I know a good dog, but what minister does the service? I believe he will conduct it for you."

At the cemetery, the priest and the dog were questioned. The priest said, "I should say so for it's 200 or 300. The priest's eyes lit up, and as he slipped his arm around his parishioner, he said, "My friend, why didn't you say it was a Catholic dog?"

Editorial, as in those  
1935-3-20

So, folks as we don't tell the



about something, or we don't  
tell the whole story when someone  
tells it.

3. In the lecture that we read  
we have words of Jesus indicating that  
he didn't want an incident in his life  
to be about him, the whole life was  
lived, until the story was complete.  
A part of him telling "eternity" was  
and then, as they came down from the  
mount of transfiguration, "I'll no  
longer see you until the Son of Man  
is raised from the dead."

4. I might understand this par-  
ticular incident if it were an isolated  
example of Jesus' seeing  
himself for society about which he  
did not understand, but I don't see  
how I can understand it without  
knowing the whole story.

1. Jesus in the New Testament  
Jesus is recorded as having said this  
good news or evangelism made public.

2. In the New Testament Jesus is re-  
corded as having said that he also  
had a good disposition. He was not  
interested in the world's ways, but

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touched the man's tongue, looked up into heaven, and sighed, and the man could hear and speak. Jesus then "charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it."

2. In Matthew 8, Jesus is recorded as cleansing, or making well, a person with leprosy. Then "Jesus said to him see that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer him the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people."

3. In Mark 3, after a crowd pressed on him so strongly that he had the disciples prepare a boat for him, some "unclean spirits" among the people in the crowd called him the "Son of God." He "strictly ordered them not to make him known."

4. In Mark 5, there is an account about Jesus raising from death (but Jesus called it sleep, and maybe we should believe him) the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. "And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to

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give her something to eat."

5. In Mark 16, after Jesus responded to the remark by Peter, that "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and had given the disciples authority to do much of the kind of work he was doing, "he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ."

6. What are we to make of this obvious reluctance by Jesus to be known as the Christ, the Messiah? Why was Jesus so strongly determined to keep secret his good works and his real nature?

II. Possible reasons that might have motivated Jesus to want to keep secret his true nature could be many.

1. Jack Benny tells of the time he carried his violin case to the White House to play for the president. A guard stopped him and asked, "What's in that case?" To be funny, Benny replied, "A machine gun."

"Thank goodness," deadpanned the guard. "I was afraid it was your violin." (from Supervision, 4-70).

give her something to eat.

In the Bible, after Jesus was born to the virgin by the Holy Spirit, the Son of the Living God, and given the disciples authority to do such of the kind of work he was doing, the apostles charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

It is therefore to make of this obvious reference by Jesus to be known as the Christ, the Messiah, why was Jesus so strongly determined to keep secret his good works and his real nature?

The possible reasons that might have motivated Jesus to want to keep secret his true nature could be many.

1. Jack Benny tells of the time he carried his violin case to the Mike Brown to play for the resident. A young son of his and asked, "Dad, in that case?" To be funny, Benny replied, "No, in the gun." "Thank goodness, Dad cannot the word. It was afraid it was your violin." What a revelation!

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2. No matter how you disguise them, some things are bound to be known!

It seems as if Jesus fought a hopeless battle to try to keep his wonderful ministry quiet.

3. Perhaps he recognized, even as he asked for no publicity, that human nature being what it is, he would be told about anyway, no matter what he asked. Perhaps he realized that his stature would be even greater if the telling included the fact ~~that~~ he asked not to be told about, and thus he would be known as a modest and humble person. This would not be a phony pose, necessarily, but simply an example of refusing to be pompous and importance-seeking.

4. Perhaps Jesus realized that ~~xxxxxxx~~ stories of his healing, particularly as in the case of the leper, would antagonize the priests, who were both the religious and the medical authorities of his people. So he encouraged the leper to go to the priests and show himself and receive their certification of healing, as was the custom. He encouraged working through current accepted practices and authorities.

2. No matter how you disguise them, some things are bound to be known. It seems as if Jesus fought a hard-fought battle to try to keep his words from being misunderstood. His ministers quiet.

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5. The significance of Jesus ordering the crowd that pressed upon him at the lake ~~not~~ to make him known may be that he wished to avoid disappointing great numbers of hopeful people whom he could not possibly minister to, since he was already overtaxed by the sheer numbers of people. This may have lead to him commissioning the disciples, as told about in Matthew 16, and to the beginning of the Christian Church as an agency of mission and of healing.

6. Perhaps he asked to be kept unpublicised because he did not wish generally to be recognized as the Messiah until his resurrection. This is suggested by the Scripture of today which ~~xxxxxxx~~ quotes him as saying "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead."

7. These are but Scripture-based guesses as to why Jesus did not want to be known, to be praised, to be publicised, for his great works of mercy and healing. Obviously he did want as much secrecy as possible, and these may well be among the reasons. Believing that these are

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among Jesus' reasons for not wanting personal recognition, it seems to me that we can find

III. Implications for us in his reticence, in his wish to be kept unpraised and unthanked.

1. One fact~~x~~ is that people will talk about you when you do anything unusual. You can do very little without it "coming out." That is the way human nature is.

There is a story about a  $4\frac{1}{2}$  year old little boy who heard his baby brother begin to cry. He ran to the crib, put the pacifier in the baby's mouth, then told his mother, "He's all right now, Mother. I've got him plugged."

(Grit, 4-5-70, as in Quote 5-3-70)

You can't plug people's mouths, however, when you do anything outstanding, or something really good for them. They're going to talk, and start others talking about you. In fact, it really doesn't have to be very unusual to get people talking about you. Somebody is going to TALK ABOUT

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(John 12:70, John 12:70)

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you, no matter what. So give up the idea that you can have a secret life. Eventually it will out, and if it is a wrong kind of life it will then most likely hurt somebody whom you value a great deal.

2. A second implication of this ~~secretive~~ <sup>modest</sup> aspect of Christ's life is that it suggests what persons are wise to use established channels and duly-constituted authorities as much as possible in working for good, for people, for change.

This is showing up in the current protests against American involvement in Vietnam. The violence, blocking traffic, profane remarks, closing schools, are tactics which mainly let a few professional agitators use masses of students (and others) for purposes of their own, at little risk to themselves. Some very dedicated and sincere peace workers are beginning to realize this now, and are beginning to work through normal channels of our democracy to bring pressure to bear on legislators and other elected officials to see things their way. This is very legitimate in our type of government, ~~and certainly~~ To use

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persuasion, the ballot box, and one-to-one debate, or public debate, is certainly a Christian way of winning ones way, as compared to violence profanity, disruption of important functions, etc..

3. A Third implication of Jesus' reticence to receive public credit for his good acts reminds us that we should not promise more than we can deliver.

In this day of credit cards, some of us have to learn the hard way that when we sign our name to ~~x creditx~~ cards charge slips, it is easy to promise thereby to pay more than we are going to be able to. That's one modern way in which we promise more than we can deliver.

Another common way of doing this is to be so anxious to ~~gek~~ get a given job that we represent ourselves as being much more experienced and able than we really are, only to have our performance on the job later show us up as fakes.

A third failing in this matter of failure to deliver is to take on a task which we know how to do, but to take on too large a task, yet one for which we feel very responsible.

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~~xxxxxx~~ At such a point, Jesus commissioned the disciples, and through them many people in all ages thereafter, to help in his work. Likewise, in our responsibilities we can multiply ourselves by training others to do some parts of our task, and then passing on to them responsibility for those jobs.

4. The fourth, and main, implication of our Scripture, as I see it, is that we should accept Jesus as our Savior chiefly because of the resurrection and its implications, not because of miracles which he performed long ago.

We have preached here in recent months to the effect that the New Testament portrays Jesus as repeatedly not wanting credit for himself, but for God, for anything wonderful that he did. He wanted to be known not as a miracle worker, but as the Son of God, and there is plenty of Scripture to back that up. The passages that we read today all indicate his desire not to be praised and loved because of the unusual things he did. Rather, as our Scripture of today so well points out, he wanted to be known because he over-

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came death, because through that death he removed our guilt for sins simply if we repent and turn to him, because through his resurrection he gave to us a resurrection of life into endless and happy eternity too. This is the basis on which to accept Jesus, not because he might help us overcome temporarily (for a few years) some painful grief, pain or difficulty during this life.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus' wish to minimize publicity about himself during his incarnation (life on the earth in the flesh) does have several possible implications for us now, as we have seen.

2. The sermon topic we got from this Scripture is "Tell No One." These were words of Jesus which might suggest that we "tell no one" about Jesus.

In one sense that seems correct, if to tell them about him means that we try to force upon unwilling and resentful people faith which implies our own spiritual and moral superiority. We do not, we should not, want to spread that kind of faith and impression, but all too often some self-styled Christians seem to do so.

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3. However, we should tell someone, with modesty and humility, in natural ways and at natural times. We should share our faith in Christ with friends and with acquaintances. We do not put the emphasis on magic and miracles, on self-gain to be had from our faith, but on Christ's love, resurrection and on his sharing eternity with us; and with them, too, if they want it.

4. "Tell no one" that Jesus Christ is a mere miracle worker, a doer of good works, a mild and gentle teacher.

5. "Tell Everyone" that Jesus Christ is the risen Son of God, our Savior, our Lord of life and of eternity, ~~who can mean all that to them.~~

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