

Not to be Wasted

By Paris Reidhead

(Transcript of Tape)

I'm asking you to consider with me one of the most familiar verses in the entire Bible, John 3:16. It is a verse that we have known since earliest childhood. It is an inexhaustible store of treasures of grace. It comprises more of God's grace in fewer words than any other statement in the Scripture, in my opinion.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It is a verse that is little understood by us. Since its first truth is so clear and is so needful to us, we have a tendency to feel that is all there is in it. This verse was spoken to a teacher in Israel, one who had insight into the offerings and the sacrifices and the purposes and the promises of God. Consequently, he would have some background to understand the significance beyond the simple truth that it so clearly conveys. Our Lord is speaking to Nicodemus. He assures him that the means by which we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven is not by blood, nor by nature, nor by the will of man, but by God and the glorious and the supernatural work of God's grace. This is the primary meaning of John 3:16.

I want you to notice the very word in the verse that we usually neglect. It is the little word, "perish"... "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish."

Some years ago my wife and I were privileged to spend five weeks in the Holy Land. One of the most impressive experiences was to stand on the Mount of Olives. The guide pointed out to us the Beautiful Gate that had been sealed by Suleman, the Mohammedan, ruler of Jerusalem, who declared it would not be opened until Christ came through it again. We were impressed by the only portion of the wall which remained of the Jerusalem of our Lord. We looked at the city that was spread out before us, realizing that at the foot of the Mount were the very olive trees that had been old and gnarled when our Lord had kneeled among them 2000 years ago.

Then the guide pointed down the Valley of Jehoshophat, to the Brook Kidron. There was the place to which refuse was brought. In the time of our Lord all the straw, hay and debris that littered the streets and the homes was carried to the Valley and dumped and buried. Spontaneous combustion would set it on fire, causing a noxious stench and smoldering smoke and flame. This place had given rise to the New Testament concept of Hell; a place of burning, a place of smoke, and thus of torment.

As I looked at this area, my heart seized upon a new truth. This was not only a place of punishment, but it was also a place of refuse, a dump, where waste material was taken. A new meaning of the word "perish" came to my mind and heart. I would like to give you that as a brief paraphrase.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not be wasted and become refuse, but should begin to live now and go on living in the full meaning of life forever."

Now if you can accept this, you are going to see far more in the gift of God's Son than escape from punishment. Certainly you will see that. The Bible makes it very clear that our Lord Jesus taught that there was beyond the threshold of time a place of suffering, a place we call Hell, a place to which the rich man went, not because he was rich, but because he was impenitent and unbelieving. The impenitence of heart is evidenced that even in the midst of suffering he does not repent of his sin and plead for mercy; he only asks for comfort.

So it is we understand that God had to provide a penitentiary, a place to which the traitor, the rebel, the anarchist, the transgressor must be consigned. Were God to permit such to go to heaven and sing the praises of Him whom they despise, heaven would be an infinitely more intolerable place than Hell. Consequently, God provided a place that would be the residence of those whose moral gravitation drew them there. We are told that Judas took his own life, (Matt. 27:3-10)

There is a moral gravitation in every one of our minds, hearts, and spirits. Maybe some of you are in this audience because you have been inveigled into coming by your wife or your husband or another family member, or a friend. If you were where you wanted to be, it would be some distance from here.

By the same token, there is a moral gravitation in the human spirit. When a person dies he/she goes to the kind of a place desired in life. God has provided this place for Satan and the angels that fell with him. The demons of darkness and those who choose to live under the moral government of Satan and despise the grace and mercy of God will certainly go there. Now God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is so clear in the Word of God. The prophet Ezekiel declares (Ezek. 18:31 & 32) "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." In II Peter 3:9 we read, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

If anyone goes into eternity lost and makes his eternal dwelling place in this place we have described as the penitentiary of the universe called hell, he will have to do it over the pleadings of the Word of God, and remonstrance of conscience, the warning of friends, and the ruling of the Holy Ghost. It is possible for a person to die unsaved, and many do, but it is impossible to die unloved. We must understand this. God did not want man, made in His image and His likeness, made for Himself, made to be the object of His love, to be loved by Him, and in turn to love Him, to go out of time into eternity lost.

Oh, how marvelous is human personality, human beings...man, woman. Think of it. The wisest person who ever lived has never used more than 10% of potential brain power. Some psychologists who have measured it claim that it is merely two or three percent.

One of the hardest things that students have to do when they go to the university is to narrow down their field of study. The higher you go in education, the narrower becomes the field. I had a professor who had a PhD in diseases of apple trees, but not all diseases. He wrote his thesis on warts of apple trees, but not all warts; just one kind of wart on one kind of apple tree. As someone has said, "You study more and more about less and less, until you know everything about almost nothing." The ocean of knowledge is infinite. The human brain is capable of all of this.

What a waste! To see a man or woman, with this enormous potentiality, to deem themselves worthy of nothing more than to go into this penitentiary of darkness, this place where there can never be the fulfillment of personality. One has described hell as a place where there can never even be the fulfillment of sin. There will be the eternal raging of lust with the inability to ever gratify that lust. In order to keep a semblance of moral order in the universe God has found the establishment of hell a necessity.

God sent His Son into the world that Christ might live a sinless life and die a sacrificial death, that whosoever believes in Him should not go to hell, a place of eternal punishment.

I grew up in a Christian home in Minneapolis. I had been trained in Sunday School and church, at the knee of my mother, and the preaching of a godly pastor. I had everything but life! At an old fashioned Methodist camp meeting God the Spirit exposed my heart to me. At first I thought the evangelist was talking about me; then I thought he was talking about another kind of Christian. Finally, the Spirit of God forced me to face the awful fact that if I died in my present condition and if God didn't have a hell, He would have to make one to take care of me. I was lost, lost! God saved me. During the drought of 1934, my father had lost his contracting and building business in Minneapolis and we had moved to a farm. Our only power for work was horses. Some of you may recall how dry and hot those drought years were. We had planted 66 acres of corn, but no rain fell. We thought the only way to save the crop was to continue to cultivate it and try to keep the soil stirred so there would not be too much evaporation. The horses couldn't stand the heat through the day. So we would awaken at three in the morning, harness the horses in the dark, as I learned to do. (I was only fourteen.) We would be in the field as soon as it was light enough to see the shoots in the corn row. At 6:00 A.M. we'd come in. I had to milk six or seven cows, eat a quick bite of breakfast, aiming to be back in the field at 7:00 A.M. We had to get out of the field by 9:30 or 10:00 because of the heat.

This particular morning, I left the horses at the end of the corn row, and took the old Mason jar wrapped in burlap up to the well to fill the jar with water and wet the burlap so evaporation would keep it cool. As I came around the side of the house, my mother came out. When she saw me, she said,

"Oh Sonny, I'm so glad to see you. I've some errands for you to do." What I needed right then, least of all, was errands. I was tired and hot and I had been up since three A.M. working, and I had to get back in the field. And I did something that I hope none of you understand. I sass'd my mother. And she spoke, and I sass'd her again! And she spoke, and I replied in the same manner.

When I had said that the third time, she looked at me and she said, "Sonny I thought you were a Christian." And she turned and walked through the screen door and back into the kitchen.

I was smitten through and through. I went out, set the jar on the top of the cow tank, went out to the hay barn, walked down between the mangers, crawled up the ladder into the mow and found a valley in the hay. I threw myself down, and I sobbed like a baby. I was smitten through, because I had discovered in that moment that I had carried into this Christian life a traitor, that if given leash, would betray me. I was frightened, because these first weeks of conversion had been so exquisite--such a delight--such joy! One of the things God had used to show me that I had never been born of God, though a church member, was that I had dishonored my parents in so many ways. And now here, I'd done it again. I can recall saying, "Oh God. Am I still lost?" In bitterness I wept.

Then in the midst of my weeping, I heard the faint echo of a song we had sung at camp meeting:

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin; the blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

And I knew that He had forgiven me, but I knew then, in that moment, that I had in me a nature, disposition traits, attitudes, which unless they were dealt with somewhere, somehow, some way, would betray me and rob God of all the glory that He wanted to get out of my life, and my life would be wasted!

Time passed. I recalled talking with a teacher at Bible school about this problem and others. He looked at me and said, "Oh, you're just too sensitive. Your conscience is too sensitive."

He patted me on the back and said, "You're going to grow out of all these problems. Don't worry too much about them. When you sin, ask the Lord to forgive you." And he sent me on my way.

In a few years, 1943, I went to the mission field. There I discovered, in this abrasive environment, that I had, as stated previously, a critical mind, a censorious spirit, and a sarcastic tongue. During those years on the mission field I worked hard doing linguistic survey work among the tribes that had not had the Gospel. But I so irritated my coworkers, my wife, and myself that a colleague remarked to me, "Paris, we know you, and we have reason to think you're converted, but with the way you cut with the sarcasm you use, sometimes I have wondered."

How, I hated it! I knew I was converted because I detested it! But I also knew that unless somewhere I found an answer to this problem, my life, my ministry, would be wasted. Back on the farm, at the age of fourteen, when I had sinned against my mother in sassing her and refusing to honor her, unless I'd dealt with it promptly there'd have been a barrier between God and me. Now, years later, as a missionary, supported by a church, I was face to face with the fact that somewhere there must be an answer to the tyranny of traits and disposition and personality, for these traits, disposition, and personality were going to utterly ruin my service for Christ. I Corinthians 13 states, "Love is very patient, very kind, never rude, never selfish, never irritated."

Oh, my soul! How that cut and burned and seared, and brought me to the realization that God isn't glorified by what we say, or what we know, or what we do, but by what we are!

(John 15:8) "He that beareth much fruit, herein is my Father glorified; so shall ye be my disciples." (Gal. 5:22), "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." These traits I did not have, not to the degree in which Christ would be honored.

The truth I wish to press to your heart is this. I know you. I know about you, and I know that my problem is similar to yours. Oh, maybe not identical. Maybe the woof is a little different, but the warp is the same. I know that early after you were pardoned and forgiven you discovered that you needed more than pardon from past sins and forgiveness for the crimes you committed against the Lord. You had that, but if you were honest with your spirit, you were crying out as Paul did in Romans 7 when he gave that universal echo of the forgiven heart, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" He had discovered that he had been set free from the Law of Moses and its penalty. But there was the law of sin and death, the laws that he had learned when he was in sin and under the sentence of death. Now, pardoned and forgiven, he carried these habits and attitudes and dispositions with him into the new life. The result is that his heart is crying out for deliverance from something that is eating and burning in him...this realization that he has a traitor in his heart that will rob God of the glory He deserves in this life.

Now we have to see that the Spirit of God is moving through the Word of God to teach us that there is a sense in which a person can be saved from Hell and still perish as far as effectiveness and usefulness in life is concerned. In other words, the days of your life can be wasted because you have not entered into the secret of victory and deliverance. Whenever a child of God sins, fellowship with God is broken. God no longer uses him. Prayer goes unanswered; he falls into the attacking clutches of Satan, and into the chastening hands of God. Sin must be dealt with in the way God prescribes: judged, forsaken, hated. Whenever we permit sin to have dominion over us, we rob God of the glory He should get out of our lives. Therefore, His concern is not only to provide some means of cleansing after we sin, but to provide victory.

A number of years ago, I was speaking to a group of students from Harvard, Wellesley, and MIT, and some other universities in the Boston area. I was outlining to them this way and means of victory that God has provided. Some time later I was back in the area. One of the young men met me. One of the things that I appreciate with students is their honesty with those who minister to them.

This Young man blurted out, "You know, it doesn't work, this teaching you have; it doesn't work. I want you to know that if you're going to talk about this victory business, that as far as I'm concerned, you're wasting your time, because I have tried it, and it doesn't work."

"Well," I said, "I'm awfully glad to find out now, rather than in the last of the three days we are spending together. Let's find out what you tried and what doesn't work. What is it?"

"You said that there is victory for the child of God."

"Yes. And what did you do to have it?"

"Well, I took that verse that says that God is faithful and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13)

"Yes, go on."

"Well, every time I was tempted I would quote that verse back to God and say, 'God, Your Word says that you are able to make a way of escape.' And it doesn't work. It just doesn't work. I never had victory."

"Let's just open our Bibles." We turned to the verse, I Corinthians. 10:13. "Now read it." And he read it.

"Now what does the verse say?"

"It says, 'He will make a way of escape!'"

"Oh no," I replied. "This verse says He's going to make a way of escape. What is the way of escape?"

"I don't know."

"Well, let's be honest. Let's not say it doesn't work, but rather than you didn't know how to work it."

"Yes, I guess so."

And then we went over to Romans 6. "Now this is the way of escape. Christ not only wanted to save you from what you've done; He wanted to save you from what you are! So He not only died for you, He died AS you. He took you with Him to the Cross, and since He was there AS you, you were there with Him. And notice what it says. 'Our old man is crucified with Christ.'"

"I never saw that."

"You should have. I spent three days talking about it," was my response.

The young man replied, "Yes, I guess I didn't understand, did I?"

"No, it appears that you didn't. But you're going to understand."

His reply: "I certainly want to, because I'm so ashamed of myself this past year."

As we went on into the truth, he began to see that the Lord Jesus Christ not only died to save him from hell, but died to save him from himself--died to save him from bondage to temptation and appetite--died so that he could be delivered from the tyranny of his own nature and his personality. We went on a little, and he saw that the way of escape was to, in the moment of temptation, recognize that he was on the cross with Christ. "Father, the part of me that would say this, or think this, or want this, or do this, is the part that died the day Christ died."

I saw this young man some months later. One of the first things he said to me was, "It works! It works!"

Yes, it works, because God so loved the world, that He wanted you to be a witness to the world, and His purpose was not only to save you from hell, but to save you from everything that would interfere with your being that witness. You wouldn't be wasted! You could begin to live now in the meaning of this resurrection life, and go on living forever.

The Word of God teaches clearly that God has a plan for your life, a plan that He made before He made the world. He called us and saved us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was in Christ Jesus before the world began. (Ephesians 1:3-12)

The essence of consecration is to say, "Father, I want thy will to be done in my life." Our Lord taught us to pray that way. "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy will be done, on earth, (in my life) as it is in heaven," (Matthew 6:9). This implies that the Father has a will. He knows everything, and He knows what's best. And because He is love, He wants what's best. And because He's God and sovereign, He's able to produce what's best, when you want what He wants. Thus it is, that if you, as a child of God, saved from the penalty of your sin, and even saved from the power of temptation, somehow are so inconsiderate of Him who made a plan for your life, and unconcerned about the best use of your life, that you want to go on simply living a decent life, secure against hell, but an embarrassment by your temperament, you may be able to do it.

Oh, I have talked with many who have said, "You know, I believe that somewhere years ago I missed God's plan for my life and that my life has been wasted." Now, what do they mean? They've been living in open sin? Not so. They've been living in grossness? No! They are lost? No! They know that the past is under the blood. They know that they know the way of victory. But, you see, they have been content to go on without that embrace of the will of God for their life. It isn't just enough to have a moment of surrender. "Lord, I want thy will to be done." We must live every day from that time on, and every issue that arises must be met in the light of that surrender. Therefore, every issue, every decision must be made in the light of the original decision which committed us to the will of God.

For example, if you were to start to drive from Minneapolis to New York state, you must first decide to go east instead of west. But there are many areas of the East that you could visit, Chicago, or possibly Philadelphia or Washington, D.C. There is not just one decision, but a series of decisions are involved. Each is important.

Perhaps there is a crosswind over the highway, and you must correct your car against that crosswind or you'll end up in the ditch as a result of your carelessness. I find that in the Christian life many of God's children who began to run well, were hindered. A crosswind buffeted them, a groove in the road caught them, and instead of correcting to the overall master passion of their lives, they followed the groove or went with the wind, and ended up in the ditch. What ditch? the ditch of stalling; of waiting; the ditch of lost days or years. God's love for a lost world is so keen and so constant, that He wants to save you from hell, to save you from the heartache that comes from sin, and from the disappointment and loss that comes from being bound by habit and attitude, and from the frustration that comes from the knowledge of wasted years.

When you came into the world God gave you life and time. Life is made up of time. Every minute is a responsibility. He doesn't want you to waste days or years. Nor does He want you to squander talent and potentiality.

The Apostle Paul had great talent. His forensic ability is unchallenged. His logical powers are perhaps unequaled. He is said to be one of the five greatest intellects of history. But when God saved him, it wasn't to sanctify the abilities that Saul had honed and developed at the University of Tarsus. It wasn't that at all. God was not going to use this particular area of the talent and strengths and powers of Saul of Tarsus. Why, in fact, he had to spend three years in unlearning! Three years... to the point at which he could say that in his flesh there was no good thing. That certainly wasn't the attitude of a man who was the successor to the head of the Sanhedrin, who was determined to be the ruler of his people Israel. That is the attitude of a man who has discovered that the things he counted gain to him were loss to Christ. Therefore, it behooves you to recognize that God has a right to use anything and everything that He has invested in you. There may be abilities and capacities that you are not aware of, but they are His, and He has a perfect right to use them. You have an obligation, therefore, to abandon to Him all that is in your life and to permit Him to bring out of your life anything and everything that He wants.

Keith and Vi Hunt were Intervarsity staff workers at the University of Michigan. A young medical student came several times to talk with the Hunts about the claims of Christ on his life. The witness of other students had moved him to the point where he was considering the possibility of becoming a Christian.

One night he was sitting in the Hunt home, he questioned, "Now what difference is it going to make to me personally when I become a Christian?"

Keith responded, "Well, tell me, how did you decide to become a doctor?"

The young man responded, "My grandfather was a doctor, my father was a doctor, and all my life I've planned to be a doctor."

Keith chose his words carefully. "This is the difference coming to Christ makes. When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have to take your plans to be a doctor and put them in His nail-pierced hands. Because, you see, you made these plans to be a doctor before you came to Christ, and when you come to Christ, you don't announce, 'Now Lord, I'm coming to you as a doctor.' You come to Him and say, 'I'm coming to You, period! Thy will be done'."

The med student retorted, "Now wait a minute, Keith. Let's get something straight. I'm considering becoming a Christian, but there's one thing you have to understand. I'm going to be a Christian doctor. I'm going to be a doctor! Christian or no Christian. I'm going to be a doctor. See, I'm going to be a doctor!"

After that emphatic statement, Keith went over to the closet to bring his guest's coat. "I'm awfully sorry; I'm terribly tired, and I know Vi is tired. If you don't mind, I think we should end this conversation." With that the young man was out the door and on his way back to his dormitory room. He knew he's been given the brush-off, and when he left, he was stony.

The Hunts went up to bed, but they couldn't go to sleep. They prayed for a long time that God would somehow get to this young man...help him to understand what was involved in coming to Christ. About 6:00 A.M. the ringing of the doorbell jarred them awake. Finally, Keith got up, put on his robe, and sleepily answered the door. There stood the young med student.

"What's the matter? Did you forget something?"

"No, Keith, when I left here I was cursing you under my breath and determined never to step back into this house again. I know you gave me the brush off, but I deserved it. About three o'clock this morning, I realized that if I came to Jesus Christ, I would have to take Him on His terms, and not He take me on mine. Keith, I'm ready to pray. I'll be anything Jesus Christ wants me to be. Will you pray with me?"

A few minutes later this second year medical student had opened his heart to receive the Son of God, because he had discovered that when you come to Christ, you don't bring Him your plans to approve. You come and say, "Lord, Thy will be done." You are not what you were; you are changed!

Recently I was conversing with a friend. I became very upset when he described himself with a word I won't repeat. I rebuked him and said, "Don't ever say that about yourself again."

"Why?"

"No man is a noun! No woman is a noun! You're far bigger than any noun. You are made in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, and brought into the family of God, and don't call yourself a noun!" Some people say they're a farmer, a teacher, a doctor, a lawyer or a preacher. I don't believe a Christian has a right to equate himself with a label. You are a child of God! You are anything He wants you to be! If He wants you to be a shepherd on the backside of a Midian desert, you're a shepherd! Do you understand? You don't commit yourself to a noun. You commit yourself to the Son of God. You are what He wants you to be. Don't accept the security and comfort of being a "noun", instead of being a man or woman obedient to the Father.

Study the Apostle Paul. Take the time element from his ministry. This is what you discover. Out of the 35 years of service, over which his ministry extended, you can account for only eighteen years. For seventeen years, he was doing what God wanted him to do, but in no conspicuous public place. We don't know what he did. Perhaps he was farming; maybe he was running a tent shop. But Paul was utterly available to Jesus Christ. He finished the course! (Acts 20:24)

This is what I am trying to press on your hearts. Christ died to save you from the futility of a dead-end street, to save you from wasting your life as a victim of attitude and habit. He died that there might be brought out of your life everything that can glorify Him and bless a needy world. He doesn't want any of it to be wasted.

Something else; it is possible for one who has been saved from the fear of hell, from habits and attitudes, from blundering through life and groping through time, even while being on the right road, walking in the right direction, to still go on that trip of life unprepared. Oh, what a sad thing. To be wasted, as far as the matter of walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit is concerned.

God's great delight and desire is that you should walk, not in your own strength or energy, but in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. You should not be wasted in the sense of walking in the energy of human personality, trying to do divine service with natural ability. On the contrary, you should know the fullness of Christ and walk in that fullness. And it would be no longer you, but Christ living in you. God doesn't want you to try to live this life in the energy that is utterly inadequate for it. For the Christ life is unnatural to me, to you, and perfectly natural to Christ.

What is He asking us to do? He is asking us to present our bodies to Him and to permit Him to fill us with Himself and to live in us His own life. Charles Finney said, "God has commanded us to be filled with the Spirit. If we do not walk in the fullness of the Spirit, we're going to be responsible for everything wrong that we did because we weren't filled with the Spirit, and we're going to be responsible for all the good we didn't do because we weren't filled with the Spirit." Christ doesn't want us to waste one day, one hour. His desire is that you should have the crisis experience of being filled with the Spirit, and that you should walk in the fullness of Christ. His Word is literally, "Be being filled with the Spirit."

Years ago F.B. Meyer came to George Mueller at Keswick in England. He asked him, "Father, why is it that sometimes I preach with power and sometimes it seems so flat?"

Brother Mueller replied, "It's because you breathe out twice when you have breathed in once." To breathe out without breathing in is a waste of time.

Do you understand the necessity of a secret place alone with God, a place for Bible reading and prayer, but above all for worship? You must have a place of breathing out in worship and breathing in, drinking of Him Who is the living water, breathing of Him Who is the holy breath. God doesn't want one hour or day of your life to be wasted, lived merely in the energy of a dedicated human personality. He wants you to live and walk in the Spirit.

There must be discipline if you are to walk in the Spirit's fullness. In familiar words of the hymn by William D. Longstaff,

*"Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
abide in Him always, and feed on His word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.
Take time to be holy, the world rushes on,
spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
thy friends in thy conduct His kindness shall see.*

*Take time to be holy, let Him be thy guide,
and run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
and, looking to Jesus, still trust in His word.
Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
each thought and each motive beneath his control.
Thus led by His spirit to fountains of love,
thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.*

The Psalmist David reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God," (Psalm 46:10). Literally, in the Hebrew it is to be relaxed and know that He is God. Busy mothers with little children, working fathers coming home at night, and all of us who want our lives to have some fragrance and radiance for Christ, we must understand how important it is to dwell in His presence, to drink of His fullness, to breathe in of the life of the Lord.

How many of us have breathed out twice when we've breathed in only once? And that breathing out in service and activity is so empty, wasted.

"Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with Thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity."

--Edwin Hatch

How imperative it is for us to take John 3:16 to its larger implications. This troubled world waits to see Christ in us. People don't believe what we say, only what they see. Unfortunately they are not usually impressed by what they see. In John 17:21, our Lord prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me." It is not enough to have our minds taught truth, our hearts committed to His service, our spirits laying hold of victory, our past sins under the blood and forgiven. We must take time to worship Him, to inbreathe of His life, to drink of His fullness. If you have been born of God, you want to be like Christ, to grow up into Christ.

"Oh, to be like Thee. Oh, to be like Thee.
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art.
Come in thy fullness, come in Thy pureness.
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart."

Years ago I had returned from a speaking tour to our home in Orlando, Florida. Three-year-old Sarah was standing on a stool "helping Mommy" in the kitchen. I was sitting in the adjoining breezeway watching. (Mothers, you understand about that. It only takes twice as long when a three year old helps.)

Sarah came out to the breezeway, so proud of herself. As she smoothed out her pretty little dress, I said, "What have you been doing, honey?"

"Oh Daddy," she said as her face all lit up, "I've been helping Mommy!"

"Did you enjoy it?"

"Oh yes, I like to help Mommy!"

Then she said, "Daddy, do you know something? I can hardly wait to be big like Mommy, 'cause she does everything so good!" And she turned and skipped away.

I rested my head on the back of the settee. Tears came to my eyes. And I thought to myself, "Father, when You made a little girl, You put into her heart a desire to be like Mommy, to do things like Mommy. When You made your children, and brought them out of death into life, out of darkness into light, didn't You put into their hearts a desire to be like Jesus? Why are they so indifferent? They seem just to want to be saved from hell. Is that all they want? Maybe that's all they know about."

But if you've been born of God, it isn't all you want. You want to be like Him. You want to honor Him. You want to glorify Him. You want your life to count; you don't want it to be wasted in sin, in failure, in defeat, in groping, in powerlessness. You want to live every moment of every day in such a way that in that hour when you see Him, your life will have been to the praise and the glory of His grace. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not be wasted and become refuse, but should begin to live now and to go on living in the full meaning of life forever."

We are "Not to be wasted!"