

It is very easy for us to reach the point where we take the atonement for granted. We take the beginning of the Christian life where we had a relationship with Christ as Saviour and now let's go on. Let's go on to greater truths, into deeper truths, into newer truths. But let's always come back to the foundation.

You know sometimes I feel like saying, that any sermon that does not somewhere in the course of the sermon tell how one can be saved through believing on Christ and what the death of Christ means, I feel like questioning whether it is a Christian sermon at all. I've heard many sermons that have assumed that people were Christians and how they can go on and advance in their Christian lives, and how they can make progress in this direction and in that and have made no mention anywhere of the foundation.

Now I don't mean that every sermon should be an evangelistic sermon. Not by any means. It is important to have the beginning. But we must not stay at the beginning. We must go on into the deeper things of Christ but we need constantly to come back to the beginning. And I feel that anyone who gives a Christian sermon should realize that you don't know who is there. You don't know who is there that does not know Christ as Saviour. You don't know who is there that may have heard about the death of Christ, but but it never sunk in.

Very often things have to be explained, explained and explained again. For seven years I taught beginning Hebrew, and I would explain the principles as clearly as I could, and explain it again, and explain it again. And somebody would raise their hand and say, Would you please explain so and so? Well, anyone who teaches finds that to be a common experience. It is even more common when you are preaching and nobody is thinking of taking an examination later and they tend to sit and relax. It may come in and in may not. I believe we should constantly go back at the foundations.

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At the beginning of the year it is particularly/for us to think upon this: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His suffering becoming like him in his death." Last year did the death of Christ come to mean more to you than ever before? Or has it become something that is less important in your life? Last year did you explain to others what it means to be saved by Christ? Or did you fail to pass on a testimony at every possible opportunity?

Whatever your spiritual situation was last year, have you stopped to appraise it and to look forward to the future and think how you may come to know Christ better this year! than you did last year. The atonement, the realization of the sovereignty of God in all that happens in our lives--to make these more real to us. It is good for each of us to appraise this. Is Christ really central in your life? Of course we don't want to stop with having become Christians. If we stop there we haven't really become Christians at all. We must go on. God's purpose is not that we simply receive Christ and that is the end; if he did He could take us on to heaven as soon as we were saved. It is His purpose that we should witness to others, and it is His purpose that each of us should grow in grace and increase in the fruit of the Spirit.