

Jesus: An Example of Consecration

MCCLINTOCK AND STRONG'S *Bible Encyclopedia* defines consecration this way: to be holy, often rendered 'sanctify;' to dedicate; to complete; the act of devoting or setting apart anything to the worship or service of God. Bible Students have added to this the thought that consecration means to be fully and completely dedicated to the doing of God's will.

The Son of God has always been consecrated. As the prehuman *Logos*, he was fully dedicated to God his Creator and fully engaged in his service and the doing of his will. Likewise, as the glorified Christ, from the moment of his resurrection to the Divine nature until now, and to the endless ages of eternity, he is similarly dedicated to the doing of his Father's good pleasure. We, though, wish to look at the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God as he came to earth, made a little lower than the angels at his first advent, and examine his consecration during that short, but vitally important period of his existence.

It was this aspect of his consecration, as the man Jesus, that was so critical to man's hope of salvation, and it was this aspect also which we most relate to as an example as we strive to follow in his footsteps as true Christians. We are in the flesh as he was—we, too, are going through the trials and testings of life (Heb. 10:33)—we, too, are striving to live a sacrificial life (Rom. 12:1)—we, too, must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10)—all similar to the experiences of consecration which Jesus carried out during his First Advent ministry.

Jesus is the perfect example of consecration, in that he faithfully carried out God's will and served him in absolute perfection, not only of heart intent, but of every thought, every word, and every deed. The fulfillment of his consecration vows was perfect in every way, without a flaw or a misstep. We cannot hope to achieve anything near such perfection. However, by looking at specific aspects of how he carried out his consecration, we can gain lessons which will help us attain, at least in a small measure, to the standard that he set for us. We want to look at six examples of Jesus' consecration, centered on six scriptures, all of which are based on his dedication to the doing of the Father's will, and examine those examples as they might help us.

DELIGHTING TO DO GOD'S WILL

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps. 40:8) Jesus' consecration and the carrying out of it was an absolute delight to him, because it was based on a total abiding of God's law in his heart. That law was so fixed in his character, and he was so in agreement with it, that

he always felt glad to do whatever God wanted him to do. God's attributes—his character—were so rooted in Jesus' being that doing God's will was a delightful proposition, regardless of outward circumstances.

This is an example to us. The Christian's consecration should be based on God's law, not merely outwardly but in the heart, with the same delight that was evident in Jesus' character. "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."—Eph. 6:6

LOOKING FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 5:30, *New American Standard Bible*) Jesus' consecration was guided by his continual looking to God and his word for guidance. Jesus, even though a perfect man, did not attempt to use merely his own judgment and thinking to guide his actions and words. He continually sought to know and follow his Father's ways, whether through prayer, the study of his Word, or by the knowledge gained through his own experiences.

This, too, is an example to us. If Jesus, being perfect, found it necessary to seek God's will and way, how much more must we look to God, his Word, and his overruling providence in our experiences for guidance. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,

which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” (I Thess. 2:13) By so doing we, in effect, also join with the words of Jesus (John 5:30), testifying that we seek not our own will, but the will of our Heavenly Father who has called us.

AN ACTIVE CONSECRATION

Jesus’ consecration was centered on action—doing his Father’s will, working his works. We read, “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” (John 4:34) His was not a passive consecration in which he sat idly by and waited for the Father to do all the work. It also was not merely a statement of faith, or an attitude of confessing faith, without works. It was not lip service. It was not a vague far-off desire to do something at some distant time in the future for God. His was a consecration built on taking immediate advantage—today—of speaking, doing, and acting in all aspects of life for the purpose of, in some way, helping to accomplish his Father’s will and work. Although the most important specific work of Jesus’ ministry was providing the ransom price, there was much other work which he also engaged in—speaking the words of Truth and doctrine, being a perfect example of character, engaging in service to others, performing of miracles, and much more.

For us, as with Jesus, our consecration involves work and activity, with particular emphasis on the thought: there is work to be done today. As the Apostle James says, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is

like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” (James 1:22-25) Some of the ways we work out our consecration are: study of the Word of God; coming to know his plan; character work; service to our brethren, ecclesias, conventions, and even those in other parts of the world; witnessing and comforting those that mourn in the world; spreading the message of Truth by all the various means available; encouraging our brethren; bearing each other’s burdens; being examples in the workplace and in the home; doing all things as unto the Lord. These are just some of the works which should accompany our consecration. No single member of the body of Christ can do every work there is to be done for the Lord, but all can, and must, be engaged in some aspect of work for the Lord.

PUTTING ALL EXPERIENCES IN PERSPECTIVE

Jesus’ consecration was always carried out within the view, perspective, and framework of his Father’s plan of salvation. As recorded in John 6:38-40, he states, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may

have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” Jesus desired that all would believe on him and have everlasting life at the last day—first the church, then afterward the world of mankind during his righteous kingdom. Anything that did not serve as a means to that end was of no interest to him. Yet the least member of mankind, the lowest esteemed, the most sinful, he did not cast aside, because he lived for the ultimate purpose of his Father’s plan, that God would have “all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim 2:4), and gain everlasting life. That is the ultimate goal Jesus was working toward, and everything in his life was bent in that direction.

The example to us is the same. The Christian should always live with the perspective of God’s plan in view, even in the midst of trial and sufferings. The Apostle Paul expresses this perspective beautifully in his epistle to the Romans. “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for [our] adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”—Rom. 8:18-23, *NASB*

TURNING ALL THINGS OVER TO GOD

“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” (Matt. 26:42) The depth of Jesus’ consecration allowed him to put himself completely in the hands of his Father in times of difficulty. Even as the perfect man Jesus, he had experiences in which it was necessary for him to completely turn himself over to his Father for guidance, direction, and leading. He realized that even one as dedicated to God as he was needed the guiding hand of his Father, especially during the most difficult of experiences. This was not weakness on Jesus’ part, but actually strength of character in that he chose to do this very thing, rather than perhaps, under the extreme stress of trial, do something that would have proven to be out of harmony with God’s will.

What a humbling example this is to us. If Jesus felt the need to place himself, a perfect man, into God’s hands during his most difficult experiences, how much more so must we do likewise. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. . . for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb. 4:16; 13:5,6) Our boldness is not in ourselves, but only in the Lord, that he can and will direct each and every issue of our life if we will but let him do so. How our sentiments should be ‘Not my will, but thine, be done.’

KEEPING THE GOAL IN VIEW

The goal which Jesus had in view he expressed in prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) How so? Jesus' consecration was with the ultimate goal in view that eventually God would be exalted by all, whether in heaven or in earth, and that his will would be done on all planes of existence. Jesus' desire was that not just he, and not just his disciples, but all men, in heaven and on earth, and all the angelic hosts, would together one day echo in complete harmony the same words—those of our opening text—"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart." With this as his goal, Jesus had confidence that by being faithful he would have a part in bringing his Father's plan to completion.

The example to us is clear. Consecration will eventually be universal, in earth and in heaven. God's plan will come to fruition, and will not tarry. Therefore, with the goals of God's plan in view, let us not waver nor tarry in our confidence toward God or in the fulfillment of our consecration vows. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."—Heb. 10:35-37

IN SUMMARY

Recapping the examples contained in Jesus' consecration and its fulfillment which we have considered here:

1. Jesus' consecration and its fulfillment were a delight to him, because God's law was within his heart.

2. Jesus' consecration was guided by his continual looking to God and his Word for direction and instruction.

3. Jesus' consecration was centered on action—doing God's will and working his works.

4. Jesus' consecration was always carried out with the perspective and within the framework of God's plan of salvation.

5. Jesus' consecration and its depth allowed him to put himself completely in the hands of his Father, especially in times of great difficulty.

6. Jesus' consecration had a goal always in view, that one day all in heaven and in earth would likewise delight to do God's will.

May we take these examples of Jesus' consecration to heart, as he is our great pattern, and use them to help us fulfill the vow that we have made with God, our Father. ■