It is not enough to know truth. We must love truth and sacrifice for it. We need not only knowledge which is power but wisdom which is control.

I warn you this morning my friends, we of 1949 A.D. will not escape the question of our Lord. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world of means—airplanes, automobiles, skyscrapers, and subways—and lose the end the soul? The words that the apostle Paul wrote in a letter to the church of Phillippi are still pertinent today. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. If civilization is to survive she must rediscover the moral and spiritual ends for living.

[Eternal God Out of whose mind this great cosmic un we bes thee. Help us to seek that which is high, noble and Good Help us in the moment of difficult disci- 


One of the tragic tendancies that has characterized man ever since the dawn of recorded history has been his attempt to escape his moral responsibilities. Man is forever trying to escape the realities of life. He is forever trying to make the false seem true; the evil seem good; the ugly seem beautiful; and the unjust seem just.
Moreover, man has to often concluded that he is a helpless victim of environment. This mistaken idea encourages him to blame everything but himself for his mistakes and weaknesses. As long as each individual refuses to accept his moral responsibility, there can never be any hope for a better life either for him or for the world.

One of the most amazing things about Jesus was his superb acceptance of life's great inescapables. He never ran away from anything. He faced life each day and thereby developed the capacity within himself to meet the inevitables as they came. When you know exactly what you must face, you are more likely to develop within yourself the capacity to meet those things which no one can ever escape.

First, you cannot escape yourself. You are the one person from whom you can never get a divorce. You can get a divorce from Tom, Dick, or Mary, but never from yourself. You will always have yourself before you. We talk a great deal about adjusting man to his environment. But it is my opinion that man will never become adjusted to his environment until he becomes adjusted to himself. A prisoner serving a long prison sentence once said, “Even if a man does escape the police there is something inside him. . . . its no use trying to beat. Death is mild compared to the thing a criminal finds himself up against. I give it up. I can’t explain it.” He could not get away from himself, his own conscience his own sense of guilt. You may try to escape self by daydreaming. You may try to escape self by flight into an imaginary utopian world. You may try to escape self by running into a mad world of pleasure. You may try to escape self by suicide. But the only way to escape self is to accept self.

Second, we cannot escape sacrifice. No one ever accomplishes anything in this life without sacrificing themselves for one thing or another. We say that Beethoven was a great composer and we marvel when we hear his fifth symphony or his moonlight sonata, but we must remember that he sacrificed unbelievable hours a day for practice.2 We say that Leonardo da Vinci was a great painter and we become captivated when we observe his beautiful picture, “The Last Supper”, but we must remember that when a young lad he spent many hours at home painting pictures.3 We say that Joe Louis is a great boxer and only two nights ago we marvelled as we heard him end a colorful career as probably the greatest boxer in history, but Joe Louis realized early that he could not stay up all night drinking and carousing if he was to be the champion of the world.4 We say that Marion Anderson, Paul Roberson and Roland Hayes are great singers, and as they sing the very fibers of souls are shaken, but we must remember that they spent many hours practicing while other boys and girls were spending all of their time playing and having a good time.5 We say that Jesus has been the most influential character in Western civilization, and as

---

2. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) was a German composer.
3. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) was a Renaissance artist and inventor.
we read his sermon on the mount there is something about it that penetrates our very souls, but we must remember that at a very early age he sacrificed his time to God, and finally he sacrificed even his life. There are people who expect the best in life without effort. But I tell you this morning whatever your potentialities may be, they will amount to little or nothing unless you subject yourself to hard work and discipline.

Finally we cannot escape Jesus. For 19 centuries we have tried to escape him. But only to find that every time we attempt to escape him he stands right before us. When management would attempt to exploit labor, we hear Jesus saying, “If ye do it unto the least of these my brethren ye do it unto me.” When we would stand on the street corner and lust after women, we hear Jesus saying, “ye have heard it said in old times thou shall not comit adultry, but I say unto you whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already comitted adultery in his heart.” When we would criticise others for their shortcomings and insist that they be turned out of church, We hear Jesus saying, “he who is without sin cast the first stone.” When we would hate members of another race, or of another nationality, or of another religion, we hear Jesus saying, “there went a certain man down the Jerico road who fell among thieves and the man who helped him was the man of another race.” Everywhere we turn we see that disturbing man Jesus. So I say that the only way to escape Jesus is to accept him.

This is the conclusion of the whole matter: We cant escape ourselves, we cant escape sacrifice and we cant escape Jesus. We had better accept these as the great inevitables of life

AD. CSKC: Sermon file, folder 75, “Facing Life’s Inescapables.”

6. The Sermon on the Mount is the common designation for Jesus’ teachings found in Matthew 5–7.

“A Way Out”

[22 May 1949]
[Atlanta, Ga.]

This handwritten document, the earliest known text of any sermon King delivered as associate pastor at Ebenezer, illustrates his use of personal experiences and