**NOTHING BETWEEN**

Sunday School Lesson 7

*Lessons from the Hymnbook*

Isaiah 59:2

11/20/2022

**Introduction:** In our previous lesson, we studied the lessons learned from the hymn “What A Friend We Have in Jesus.” During that lesson, we regarded how the Lord is a friend who wants to bear our burdens for us. He took all of our sins upon Him. He has opened the door for us to bring all of our petitions before the Father. If we carry needless pain and do not have peace, we cannot blame the Lord. We also observed how the Lord is a friend who wants to encourage us through our trials. He is a faithful friend who will never leave us nor forsake us. He is able to be the best and most helpful friend because He knows everything there is to know about us. The Lord is also a great friend because He will stand up for us when no one else will. He is a refuge to us. He does not base His friendship on the opinion of man. Truly, He is a great friend. This week, we are going to be studying Biblical lessons that are found in the hymn “Nothing Between.” This hymn was written by Charles Tindley sometime around 1906. Tindley had become a pastor by that time, and he wrote this song while in the middle of a big building project for their church. Tindley was born to slave parents, and he was separated from both of them at a young age. He was not afforded any education as a child, but he had taught himself how to read and write by the time he was seventeen. This hymn was based on a sermon that he preached to his church to encourage them to let nothing between their relationship with the Lord.

1. **WE MUST NOT ALLOW WORLDLY DREAMS TO COME BETWEEN US AND THE LORD.**

* To start the hymn, we sing about the delusive dream of this world. Truly, this world’s dreams are both elusive and delusive. Zechariah 10:2 speaks of false dreams. In the Bible, dreams are regarded as direction from the Lord on what is going to happen or what we need to do. When we speak of dreams, we are generally speaking of what we want to do. These are our goals and plans. These are our desires for our own future. The world often projects out what our dreams should be. They show us a future that our flesh wants to happen. Yet, just like the false dreams in the Bible (Jeremiah 23:32), we shouldn’t hearken unto them (Jeremiah 29:8). Worldly dreams will have us chasing the future we think we need instead of listening to the Lord. We need to understand that He has a plan for us (Jer. 1:5; Prov. 16:3). While sometimes our dreams may align with what God wants for us, the way in which that dream is fulfilled may be different than how we would do it (Joseph).

1. **WE MUST ALLOW SINFUL PLEASURES TO COME BETWEEN US AND THE LORD.**

* To put it simply, sin separates us from the Lord (Isaiah 59:2). We have a great High Priest who is separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26). He is holy, pure, and perfect. If we wish to see His blessed face, we must recognize that all of those sinful pleasures separate us from Him. When we sing the hymn, we sing about renouncing all sinful pleasures. This means to declare our abandonment of them. Obviously, we continue to struggle with sin and the war between the old and new man, but it ought to be our heart’s desire and open declaration to fight against sin. Additionally, indulgence in sinful pleasure brings about the chastening hand of the Lord (Hebrews 10:26-31). We put ourselves at enmity with the Lord when we show that our pleasure is to do wickedly (Romans 1:32). During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, He spoke of why so many men were separated from Him and rejected Him. They rejected Him because they love darkness (John 3:19).

1. **WE MUST NOT ALLOW WORLDLY PLEASURES TO COME BETWEEN US AND THE LORD.**

* Worldly pleasures in and of themselves are not sinful. When we sing this second stanza of the hymn, we sing about keeping worldly pleasures from coming between us and the Lord. We then sing about how the habits of life seem harmless to us. These are the things that become reoccurring in our daily or weekly routines. They might be so commonplace that we do not even think about them. As believers, we ought to take stock of everything that we do to make sure that none of these things are hindering our relationship with the Lord. Anything that turns our heart or attention to put God in a secondary position is something that is harmful and considered idolatry. The Lord does not take kindly to being placed behind anything in our lives. He desires to be first. He expects to be first. He is worthy of first place. Let’s be ever mindful of where our hobbies and activities rank in our priorities of life. (Matthew 6:19-33; 22:37; Colossians 3:1-4; Romans 8:5; 1 Cor. 6:12)

1. **WE MUST NOT ALLOW A COLD HEART TO CREATE A GULF BETWEEN US & THE LORD.**

* If you have ever read Romans 8:35-39, you’ve likely found great comfort in these verses. This passage of Scripture speaks to the love of God. It tells us that there is nothing that can separate us from His love. Simply put in comparison to our hymn, there is nothing that can come between God’s love for us. Now, let’s consider this in reverse. Is there anything that come between our love for Him? We have already spoken about those hobbies or activities that can distract us from our walk with God. Yet, there are many areas where our affection can be given. We live in a day where people “fall out of love” regularly. They allow things to come between their relationships. If this is commonplace with our relationship with each other, it should not surprise us that this is often commonplace in our relationship with God. How strong is your love for Him? If it is not strong, then it will probably not be long before something gets in the way. Let’s never leave our first love (Revelation 2:4). We must keep our hearts fixed on Him. (Psalm 57:7; 108:1; 112:7; Deuteronomy 6:5)

1. **WE MUST NOT ALLOW PRIDE OR POSITION TO COME BETWEEN US AND THE LORD.**

* When we are filled with self, we leave no place for God. We must decrease so that He can increase (John 3:30). The Bible shows us clearly that the prideful man will not seek after the Lord (Psalm 10:4). Why is that? The simple answer is that he sees no reason to. He can handle everything Himself. From his lofty perspective, he does not need God. Thus, pride causes a great separation between man and God. Pride caused man to fall in the Garden. Pride also brings about contention (Proverbs 13:10). It will put us at odds with both God and others. There are many prideful men in this world who will never come to know the Lord because of their pride (1 John 2:16). In addition to pride, we see how position can create something between us and the Lord. There are several examples of this in Scripture. I think King Agrippa in Acts 26 would be a good example of this. He was an “almost” Christian. I believe his position kept him from making a decision of faith in the Lord. Esther was also tempted by position. She almost let it come between her and the Lord. Thankfully, she had a wise counsellor in Mordecai to help her make the right decision.

1. **WE MUST NOT ALLOW ANOTHER PERSON TO COME BETWEEN US AND THE LORD.**

* It is a wonderful thing to be able to have friends in this world. The Bible speaks to the great blessing that a good friend can be. It is a wonderful thing to be married. Even in mankind’s perfection, God saw the need to give him a helpmeet. It is a wonderful thing to be a parent. Children are a gift from the Lord. They make our lives very exciting! Our call as Christians is social in nature. It requires us to interact with others in this world. Yet, we must remember that for all of these relationships, our relationship with the Lord must remain the single most important one. Sometimes, the issue with other people is that we allow people in our lives who we should know are going to cause problems between us and the Lord. An example of this would be Solomon. He was warned in advance that marrying heathen women would cause him problems in his walk with God (Deuteronomy 17; 1 Kings 11). When we are unequally yoked, we can only go one direction (2 Cor. 6:14). Other times, we allow people to come between us; even though they are not directly responsible for it. The Lord tells us that we have to deny ourselves and others to follow Him (Matthew 10:37; 19:29; John 12:43).

1. **WE MUST NOT ALLOW THE PAIN OF TRIALS TO COME BETWEEN US AND THE LORD.**

* Hardship has a way of creating division between those that we love. Sadly, you see this happen when parents lose one of their children (Job 2:9). You also see this when a husband and a wife go through financial or other challenges. We also see this in the church. When there is trouble in the church, you often find little things that come up between church members (1 Corinthians 1:11). If we are not careful, we can also allow this to happen in our relationship with the Lord. Trials are not meant to cause division between us and God. They are meant to draw us closer to Him. While times of trouble can cause division, times of trouble are also great opportunities to draw even closer together with each other. It’s important that we do not blame God when the troubles come. We must continue with pray and much self-denial. If it becomes about self, then we will allow our feelings to get hurt at the trials that come. We must remember that we are going through all of this for the cause of Christ. He went through so much more for us! (1 Peter 1:7; 4:12; 2 Corinthians 8:2)