**“You Ain’t Got Me Yet!”**

Many years ago – it seems like a former dispensation by today’s standards – a very young preacher baptized twenty-one people in the cold, clear waters of a Kentucky creek. As he climbed the narrow trail out of the hollow – wet, tired, but oh, so happy – a local “rowdy” fell in step with the boy and boasted, “well, preacher, you ain’t got me yet!”

As I remember it – and this gets better every time I tell it – I said, “Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, what makes you think that I want you? I don’t want you – it is the Lord that wants you – although I find it difficult to understand why. But He wants you, and died to save you. You just turn your face up to heaven and tell the Lord, “Lord, you ain’t got me yet!”

Whatever I said (it was something like that) the heckler grew silent and soon we were parted. But the memory lingers, and has become an illustration in many sermons.

The invitation to salvation from sin is not a “church” invitation; it is the invitation of the Lord. “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.” (Rev. 22:17) But it is “come” to the Lord. Christ invites – “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28) He alone is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. 5:9)

The church does not save, it is the saved. People being people, some will “compass sea and land to make one proselyte” – to swell the church roll, for prestige, higher collections, or, knowing no better, out of loyalty to “the party.” At the worst, this may make the “convert” “twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matt. 23:15) and at the best, to be charitable, it can do no more than make another “party” member. It can never make a true Christian, for this calls for free-will acceptance of the cost of discipleship and full dedication to Jesus Christ.

In Antioch preachers preached “the Lord Jesus.” A great number believed and turned “unto the Lord.” Barnabas exhorted them to cleave “unto the Lord.” And others were added “unto the Lord.” (Acts 11:20-24) These people were “the church” in Antioch, and I certainly have no objection to so speak of them. (v. 26) But they were the church “of Christ” (belonging to the Lord) because it was the Lord who bought them and called them. They came to the Lord in the primary sense and to other brethren only in a secondary sense. (2 Tim. 1:8-12) We commit ourselves unto the care and keeping of the Lord.

I believe much of our preaching fails for want of proper emphasis. Men need Christ, and Christ invites!! When men truly come to Christ, they become a part of His church.

And what happened to the rowdy who said, “You ain’t got me yet?” Well, ten or twelve years later I was passing through Kentucky and stopped for worship in a certain country community. Can you guess who was leading the singing? That’s right! The Lord finally “got” him.

Robert Turner, Plain Talk, November 1968