

Let us turn to Luke 9:57-62. (reading text) . . . .

I'd like to think with you a little about that last verse.

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in ~~the~~ kingdom of God." I'm glad the NIV has the word "service" in it-- service in the kingdom of God. This is not a verse about salvation. Salvation is a free gift of God. You cannot earn salvation. It is given us to us by the Lord through simple faith in Christ. But if we truly have been saved and belong to Christ then we will inevitably go on to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and to learn what God's will is for our lives and to carry it out.

I imagine many of you have read Chas Coulson's book Born Again, which was one of the finest books I ever read. It is a wonderful presentation of the way God took an extremely able and tremendously ambitious and rather unscrupulous man and led him through the instrumentality of others, but led him very definitely to turn aside from all that had been important in his life before and to turn to God, and to put Christ first in his life to the extent that he confessed to something that he probably would not have been convicted but which he knew was wrong, and so he deserved punishment and so he was put in prison, for several months as a result of this.

His book Born Again I found to be one of the most inspiring books I've read. I heard last week he had a second book that was even better than that. I couldn't quite believe it. I got the book. It's called Life Sentence. It is indeed a gem. It shows how God has worked in his life and used him since. I highly recommend it to all of you.

I have been particularly impressed in this second book with some of the little quotations that he puts at the beginning of each chapter. At the beginning of the first chapter he has a quotation from D.L. Moody. Moody said, "When I was converted I made this ~~xxx~~ mistake: I thought the battle was already won, a crown already in my grasp. I thought the old things had all passed away that all things had become new, and that my old corrupt nature, the old life, was gone. But I found out after serving Christ for a few months that conversion was only like enlisting in the army. That there was a battle on hand."

At the beginning of ch. 2 he has a quotation from C.S. Lewis: that impressed me very much. Lewis said: Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuilt that house. At first perhaps you can understand what he's going. He's getting the drains right, and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought--throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor ~~at~~ there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought