

The thoughts of Jesus are well expressed in a hymn: I gave my life for thee." This hymn could be misunderstood as meaning I've done this for you; it's up to you to repay me! I think that's a misunderstanding of the hymn. I think the hymn is reminding us of what He has done, reminding us of our duty to Him who did so much for us.

"I gave my life for thee, my precious blood I shed
 That thou mightest ransomed be and quickened from the dead.
 My Father's house of light, my glory circled throne
 I left for earthly night, for wandering sad and lone.
 I suffered much for thee, more than thy tongue can tell
 Of bitterest agony to rescue thee from hell.
 I gave my life for thee. What hast thou given for me?
 I left it all for thee. Hast thou left ought for me?
 I've borne it all for thee. What hast thou borne for me?"

As we go on, no matter how consecrated we are to the Lord, we will find that the temptation to sin has not left us. You will be amazed when you see how many a minister serving the Lord effectively as far as you can see, seeming to accomplish much for Him, finds himself entangled with some interest in some woman other than his wife. In some cases overt sin; in others only indiscretion. In others perhaps a wrong impression altogether the people have received. But through the years it is amazing how many you hear of. Doing wonderful service as far as you can see today, and tomorrow running a grocery store, developing some kind of a business because he had to leave the ministry because of rumours of his interest in some other woman, or of his unfaithfulness to his wife.

Hesitate before you get married. Think very carefully whether the woman you are marrying is really the one who is devoted to the Lord and whom you should marry. But after you have married here if you belong to Christ, put thoughts of all other women out of your mind and remember that you have taken a vow forsaking all others to put her first as far as your earthly relationships are concerned.

There are probably as many men gone shipwreck in their ministry through failure at this point as in any that I know of. The power of carrying through, of avoiding the blandishments of sin, of avoiding the discouragements or failing to give in to discouragements, but pushing on for Christ. This is an appropriate time of the year to mention this for all of us. It is good for us to think of it at all times. You have put your hand to the plow. Are you ready to truly to truly continue on without looking back?

That is all that is explicitly stated in the verse. But I think there is an implication in the verse that is also very worthy of our consideration. No one who puts his hands to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. I looked at two or three commentaries on this verse, and found that each of them stressed this idea that Christ is speaking there to people on the hills of Galilee was thinking of the peasants, or at least his hearers were thinking of the peasants as they went out with their