

## *Tape 10*

All religion, all religion starts in a question. All human beings, wherever they live at whatever time they live, have a religious consciousness, and that religiousness for all human beings revolves around the single question that is indelibly implanted on it wherever you find human beings living. The basic question around which religious consciousness revolves and from which religions evolve is the question, what kind of God is God if God exists and what does God expect of me, if anything? The entire history of religion is an attempt to answer that question. What kind of God is God if God exists and what does God expect of me if anything? Religions, the various kinds and types, have all tried to answer that question in various ways. Some have said, you know that God is just someone who starts the universe up and lets it run and doesn't care what goes on now that he started it. Kind of a ?????????????? god. Others thought that God was a God that as long as you gave him proper cult, you know a proper kind of worship, he would be placated. Others thought God was evil. At any rate, that's the question out of which all religion and religious thought comes. What kind of God is God if God exists and what does God expect if anything. Basically said, it's a question about the nature of God and the purpose for his creation of the universe.

Many years ago I was driving along a road in New York State and I turned on the radio and happened to hear a national commentator about noontime. And this man, Paul Harvey, who has this syndicated program at noontime that millions of people hear around the country, he said on this particular program that United States women were not keeping up with the Asian hordes in producing babies, therefore there were not enough people in the United States to fight future wars, therefore the United States had to increase its nuclear arsenal if it were to keep its high standard of living. At the close of that program this particular commentator asked his audience to write to Congress asking Congress to pass a school prayer amendment to the Constitution of the United States – in the United States it's illegal to pray in public school. I thought about that and I thought about the question, what kind of God is God if God exists and what does God expect if anything, and as I thought about it I thought that the God that I believe, which is the God who is proclaimed, manifest and made known to the world in Jesus Christ, who I believe is the only true God, I said to myself that God doesn't want the United States of America to keep its high standard of living because so much of what's in the United States comes from the slave labor of children and women in southeast Asia and Taiwan, in Latin America. Children 8, 9, 10 years old going to work six days a week in sweatshops. Something like England 150 years ago. Living literally in dumps and going out and producing high quality tennis shoes so Americans can play tennis and in \$80.00 tennis shoes, and they wouldn't earn \$80.00 in a month. I don't believe the God that I believe in, the God of Jesus doesn't want someone maintaining their high standard living on the blood and the sweat of slave labor including child slave labor.

What kind of God is God if God exists, and what does he expect if anything? I don't believe in Paul Harvey's God, that's the name of the commentator, because his God justifies having a bigger nuclear arsenal to keep this superior standard of living. The God that Jesus teaches has nothing to do with nuclear arsenals or arsenals of any kind. His weapons are the spiritual weapons. Therefore, I don't want my children praying with his children, because if his children believe what he does they are praying to an idol, they are praying to a fiction, to an illusion, something that doesn't exist, something that is a way that they created God to justify a world that

they want and takes care of them but literally says the rest of the world be damned. They want a God that justifies their little island of tranquility. But a god that doesn't care about the global ghetto that surrounds that supports the island of tranquility. They want a first world god for the white middle-class first world. That's not God, that's not the God that Jesus teaches.

You know politicians like to have God on their side. Countries like to have God on their side. You know in the second world war every Nazi, every German soldier, every single one went out to battle to kill for Hitler with a belt buckle that read, ??????????????, God with us. Dwight Eisenhower, when he was running for President of United States probably made the epitome or the paradigm statement of how politicians talk about God. At the conclusion of a speech he said, I don't care what kind of god you believe in just so long as you believe in God. Like some much and perhaps nearly everything that politicians say it sounds profound but it's dribble. Can you imagine Jesus saying, I don't care what kind of god you believe just so long as you believe in God. Jesus comes in response to the serious question of human beings, that all human beings have, what kind of God is God and what does God expect. That's the great issue that Jesus answers and indeed that every religion as a serious religion tries to answer.

Now, Jesus does come with an answer as to what kind of God, God is and what God expects. For example, in the last conference we read the last judgment passage, Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus says what God expects of people. God expects mercy. Jesus says what God is. God is mercy. He says it not only in Matthew 25, I mean we all know the teaching of Jesus, I want mercy not sacrifice. Be merciful, that's what he wants, says God wants. Why? As your heavenly Father is merciful. The kind of God that God is, that Jesus teaches, and what that God expects is mercy.

Now it is your prerogative, your choice, to accept or to reject the understanding of what God expects that Jesus speaks about. As it is your prerogative and my prerogative, your choice and my choice to accept or reject Jesus, because the same question comes to us that came to Peter 2000 years ago, who do you say I am? And depending on my sense of truth I might say, well you're just another smart Jewish Rabbi or I could say, you're just someone who's a utopian. You don't know what you're talking about in real life. Or, I could say that indeed you're one of these, another of these near-Eastern holy men. Or I could say what Peter says, you are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. So it is your prerogative and my prerogative again to accept or to reject Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And if I or you reject Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God then there is absolutely no problem with us rejecting his teachings because the authority of Jesus' teachings do not depend on our ability to reason to them. The authority of Jesus' teachings depends and totally and exclusively on whose teaching them. The Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, therefore if I reject his position, if I reject him as the Son of God, then I have no problem rejecting his teachings.

But here is what I can't do, I can never accept Jesus and reject his teachings. I can reject Jesus and reject His teachings, but I cannot accept Jesus and reject his teachings. Why? First of all, on the simplest scale how can you say that someone is the incarnation of God and then reject what he says as true? That's absurdity. Another reason is, we cannot accept Jesus and reject his teachings because the only Jesus Christ available to the world is the Jesus Christ that we know from his words and his deeds, just like the only you and I in the world that we know is the you

and I and the person next to us by our words and deeds. We know people by what they say and what they do. That's how we identify them in real life. Take away everything a person says and does and you have a vapor, you have nothing. You have no idea who the person is. We know people by what they say and what they do. She wears a brown sweater. He talks with an accent. He combs his hair this way. He talks about politics in this fashion, or he likes soccer, or she's a wonderful ?????????? It goes on and on, thousands and thousands of things that we know about people and that becomes their identity to us. If we take those things away, the person doesn't exist for us. For example, suppose next week you're standing out just talking to someone on the street and I walk by and you say to the person you're talking to, oh there goes that priest that I just took the retreat from last week, that Immanuel Charles McCarthy. And you know you say to the person, he really thinks that we all just ought to buy more guns, that we really should work for justice by straightening everyone out that we get a hold of. And the other person says, oh is that so. Then you go on to weave an elaborate story, none of which is what I've ever said. That's not me. The person you're talking about is not me. All you have done, for whatever reason, is you've taken a name, Immanuel Charles McCarthy, separated it from a person and simply used the name to weave your own fantasy person. It might as well be a giant purple people eater you're talking about. It has no more reality in objective life than a giant purple eater. It's a figment of your imagination, but for some reason you put my name on it. So also with Jesus. When we separate Jesus from his words and his deeds, then we have the name but we don't have the person. We have a figment of our imagination that we have created. The only Jesus Christ there is available to the world and the definitive Jesus Christ there is available to the world and the definitive Jesus Christ there is available to the world is the Jesus Christ that's revealed in the New Testament. There is no other, none, zero. Revelation of Jesus Christ and God in Christ closes at the time of the New Testament. Any presentation of Jesus inconsistent with the New Testament is fantasy. For me to accept Jesus it is an unbreakable reality that I have to accept his words and deeds. I cannot go out and accept Jesus and say I am accepting someone who in the garden at Gethsemane, gee he led the attack, in fact after he finished with the garden at Gethsemane he went right down to Jerusalem and he wiped out Pilate. That's a figment of my imagination. I may be using the word Jesus, but if I bow down before that word it's idolatry. Jesus is just a Greek word for the Hebrew word Yeshua. A common ordinary word like John or James. Jewish people have the name today, Yeshua. Thousands have the name Yeshua.

Jesus, who is Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Jesus of the gospel says certain and does certain things, and this is the person who is God. Not another Jesus that we put all kinds of stories on. And certainly he is not a Jesus who goes out and teaches a word different from what's in the New Testament. So, it is your prerogative and my prerogative to accept or reject Jesus' teachings. It is your prerogative and my prerogative to accept or reject Jesus, but what we cannot do is accept the person and reject teachings. That's what I'm trying to say. It is impossible, and yet a large segment of Christianity since the time of Constantine has accepted the person, adored the person, they have literally painted icons of Jesus with a King's crown on, given all worship, honor, due praise, and so forth and so on, and then selected out which teachings and words they are going to follow and which teachings and words they are going to accept. Basically those teachings and words that supported the empire they followed, those teachings and words that did not support local interest they rejected.

Take, for example, the passage that we read at the conference this afternoon immediately before this, Matthew 25 the last judgment passage. I was hungry you gave me to eat, thirsty you gave me to drink, and/or you didn't give me to eat or you didn't give me to drink. And then the people say, where did we see you, and Jesus said whatever you do to the least you do to me. One group goes off to eternal punishment, hell, the other goes off to eternal life. We all know the passage. We talked about the positive side of the passage this afternoon, mercy. But what does that passage say negatively? What that passage says negatively is this, apathy, indifference to human pain in the face of relievable human misery is radical evil. Apathy in the face of relievable human misery is radical evil. Indifference to human pain, when you can relieve it, is radical evil. That's what the passage teaches negatively, that mercilessness is radical evil, indifference to suffering. You see I say radical evil because how serious can an evil get in time than the fact that it ends that an activity ends up in hell for all eternity. That's radical evil. Well, think about it. Just think for a second. You know, hell has gotten a bad name because of the way we've dealt with it. We've made it unbelievable, we've made it a nonsense reality when it's deadly serious.

What does the word hell represent in human language? Well, the word hell represents a reality beyond time and space that no one knows, no one has ever seen and of which the five senses has no access. Therefore, there is no vocabulary for it since all our language comes from having a basic touch with the five senses. No one, no one can accurately describe the reality that's called hell. Now there are all kinds of pictures out there that people, there's all kinds of ways of looking at hell. For example, people do what's called anthropomorphise hell. You know they put a devil in there with a pitchfork, they make human images. And then they put flames as they would understand flames and so forth and so on, but we're talking about an experience that's beyond all human knowledge and senses. That's only an analogous way of talking about it. Another analogous way of talking about it is if people talk about hell as being something like an eternal nightmare. You create a consciousness for yourself in time, it's a bad one and that's what you're trapped in for eternity, like a nightmare. That's a psychological way of talking about hell. There's also a metaphysical way of talking about hell. Life is like God makes us as a ball of string and every sin pulls that string out and out and out until there is one final sin and we pull it and we're nothing. Hell is a total absence of everything, including God. But those are just images. What does the word mean in human language? The word hell in human language functions this way, it says beyond all images it says that it is possible to do something in time that will seriously and negatively affect your eternity. That's what the word says. It is possible to do something in time that will seriously and negatively affect your eternity. Hell is a word about time. It is not there for us to create images of our own liking about eternity which we know nothing about. And what does Jesus say above all else creates a negative eternity? Indifference to human suffering, indifference to human pain, apathy in the face of human suffering, that's what he says. I know other people and you know other people and they're all over the history of Christianity that preach hellfire and damnation, but you haven't heard one of them preach that indifference to suffering is the cause of it. They've got plenty of reasons to go to hell, but it's not the same reason Jesus taught. Jesus taught indifference to human pain, apathy in the face of relievable human misery is radical evil. This negatively effects eternity, and of course, it negatively effects time. People who could have been helped are not helped.

Let me read you this. This is from -- just one little paragraph from a Time Magazine and it's talking about college kids and graduation and jobs and all that business there. And it says, the loudest noise on campuses these days is the grind for grades. Corporate recruiters are drawing crowds and students and bringing good tidings that job prospects are not bad. Student demonstrations are rare, and when they do occur it's not against some big political issue, but usually against things like tuition increases. Erick Malowey of Harverford says, we are definitely apathetic, but it is a beneficial apathy. It's an apathy of satisfaction. We've been through enough for a while, we need a break. Now we can go forth and party without a feeling of remorse.

*End of Side A, beginning of Side B.*

Now the reason I raise that is this, Harverford is a Christian college, it's Quaker, but the reason Time Magazine puts this in here is not to pick out of one college but to say this the mentality on college campuses. Listen to what this young man says at a Christian college. Starts out, we are definitely apathetic. What Jesus calls radical evil, he's bragging about after four years of Christian college. We are definitely apathetic. This is not some one dealing in closet apathy ashamed of his apathy. Oh no, I'm definitely apathetic. And then he says it's a beneficial apathy. It is an apathy of satisfaction. Precisely who is benefited by his indifference to human pain? The one person who dies every nine seconds from starvation, the elderly person in the rest home down the street languishing away with no friendship, no one to talk to, no one to care about her/him, the homeless person on the street cold and going crazy. Precisely who is benefited by his apathy? It is a beneficial apathy, he says. It is an apathy of satisfaction. Who is satisfied by indifference to human suffering? We have been through enough for a while, we need a break. This is probably, I mean this is what he said, but if you can imagine after four years of college such stupidity of thinking four years of American college is a tough life on this planet that you need a break after it. And here's the sentence, now we can go forth and party without a feeling of remorse. What Jesus calls radical evil, indifference to human suffering, mercilessness, this boy coming out of a Christian college, and a good Christian college, celebrates, parties over without an ounce of remorse.

How did he get that way? The only way that Erick Malowey could have gotten that way is if the two generations in front of him had nurtured him that way. He didn't make himself that way. Those people that built and those people that sustain the institutions he went through from family to school to church to college to everything else, the adult world of parents and grandparents, the world that controls the television and the media and the newspapers that affected his mind. They were the ones that made him apathetic, indifferent to human pain. When he came in and was born and was lying in the cradle he could have been a tremendous agent for mercy. He could have been nurtured, he could have been nurtured with an intensity to be concerned about suffering humanity, to follow the Lamb of God and serve people at his own expense that were in need and pain. To take his talents and use them for people in pain, but that wasn't done. He was nurtured in another world. The world of take care of number one, and if that works out relax soul because your bonds are filled.

Now, the fact of the matter is Christianity: Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant has developed an ethic of justified apathy. What Jesus teaches is radical evil the main line churches teach as

justified. Said in another way, they have developed an ethic of justified radical evil. Now you will never hear a bishop or a minister or priest, you will never hear them say, oh, you can be apathetic, you can be indifferent to pain. That's not the way it's taught. The ethics of justified apathy, the ethics of justified indifference to human pain, the ethics of justified mercilessness are taught in the first world churches masquerading that my primary obligation in the Christian life is to pursue the good life for me and mine. That I am first in foremost entitled to the good life, whatever the good life may be in my society. And after that maybe I can get around to doing a little charity. That, of course, is teaching, teaching what is just the opposite of what it is that Jesus says in Matthew 25.

How's that done? Well, in every area of life we know we have three things to offer to life in general to people. We've got time, our time, our life's time. One of the great questions of existence is what to do with time. We've got our time, we've got our minds with our talents and our abilities, whether it's to sew or be a carpenter or whatever the case may be -- we've got our time, we've got our mind and we've got money. Those are the three things we have to work with in history. Now everyone knows, you and I know, we're absolutely certain that time, mind and money that is spent for my pleasure is time, mind and money that cannot be spent to relieve other people's pain. We can't do both things at once. If I spend my time and my mind and my money for my pleasure, for my self indulgence then I cannot spend it to relieve other people's pain. It's that simple.

For example, there was a Catholic lady in the United States and this was many years ago, super wealthy person, and when wealthy people get divorced they try to keep it quiet, you know the lawyers settle it. They go into court and it's all over in 10 minutes. But this became a little sticky and then people got greedy and so it went to court unsettled, which meant all the records went out into the public domain. And it turned out that the newspapers carried what this woman had spent the previous year, and one of the items they carried was that this Catholic lady had spent the previous year, one year, \$10,000 buying underwear. Think of the use of mind, time and money. What does it take to walk through lingerie sections of stores, even if they're exclusive and expensive stores and the energy it takes to buy \$10,000 worth of underwear. Where else could that time, mind and money be used in a planet that's on fire with pain? Now when that came out there was not a word said that anything was wrong with it. Everyone laughed at it and thought, oh gee isn't that wonderful, she has \$10,000 to spend on underwear. Which of us though, which of us can cast the first stone at that lady however? Which of us doesn't use our time, our mind and our money, one or the other, in ways that are for pure self and unnecessary self indulgence and could be used to serve other people in desperate need.

The church teaches an ethic of justified apathy, for example, I think probably is the same thing on Island, the numbers smaller but the reality would be the same -- when I last checked which was at least 10 years ago, do you know how much money was spent on racing in the United States 10 years, one year on horse, dog and harness racing in the United States? In one year \$88 billion was spent on horse, dog and harness racing 10 years ago and it's gone way beyond that now. One year, \$88 billion. You know every tax day in the United States, April 15 when people have to pay their taxes, there's always these political left wing groups that are out there in front of the tax office, you know, saying to cut 10% out of the military budget and give it for humanitarian purposes, you know? Or some of the real radical groups saying cut 15% out of the

military budget and give it for humanitarian purposes, you know? And then of course the real kooks are saying cut 20% out of the military budget to give to causes that people need help out. But here's the point, you don't have to cut anything out of the military budget to help all those people. All you have to do is get the Christians out of the racetrack and you've got the money. That's all. You don't have to pass laws forcing money to be taken from people to be spent here and there. The Christian community just has to allot its mind, time and money to mercy. That's all. Every trinket is a choice. Every trinket is a choice. We might say, in light of what we talked about, judgment being crises in the moment -- you know the word crises in judgment, it occurs here and now in the decision. Every trinket is a judgment. I'm saying, for example, if you're a dentist you need your dentist equipment and that's expensive stuff, and a dentist chair, you can't help people if you don't have it, and that all costs big money and that's fine. But whether you have to drink a quart of whiskey a day, that's another story. Can you imagine, can you imagine the mercy that could be brought to this world if the Christian for budget for alcohol was used to relieve people's pain? My heavens. And we can go on and on.

My point though is we have time mind and money as what we use in history. We can use them to serve and relieve other people's pain, to serve other people by relieving their pain, to be merciful or we can use it for our own self indulgence to be merciless. Now I'm not saying, for example, with dog racing or horse racing that is evil, that is not what I'm saying. If the way you get a lot of enjoyment in life is to watch a dog running around a circle, fine. Enjoy yourself. But, what I'm saying is, not that it's intrinsically evil, but that life is relational and in a world, and in a world where people are languishing in misery by the billions, is it right for the Christian to be spending his or her time, mind and money at this? That's what I'm raising.

You know after the Second World War there was a wonderful French priest by the name of Abbey Pierre, and Abbey Pierre started the Imais movement, a wonderful movement that's all over the world now, and basically it takes marginalized people, street people and so forth and so on and it tries to build community with them, it tries to give them a place to live, and not just food but a life. And Abbey Pierre's motto is, the Christian takes care of the least off first. The Christian takes care of the least off first. There are plenty of people to take care of the rich and the middle class because they've got money, but the least off has nothing and no one cares for them. And so that's where the Christian goes with his time, his mind and his money.

As Mother Theresa says, we, by giving our lives give to the poor for nothing what only the rich can afford. By the giving of our lives we give to the poor for nothing a quality of care that \$500 a day in the hospital could not buy. Why? Because it's a care with love, not just as a patient. And so Jesus comes along, Jesus comes along and he says, be merciful. And the consequences of being unmerciful is you become merciless, and those are consequences. What we have done is this, we have created a myth, instead of Jesus' teachings of mercy the Christian churches of the first world have created what's called a myth of progress. And the myth of progress replaces Jesus' teaching on active, concrete mercy. And the myth of progress is this, it says progress will come to the world without any sacrifice on my part. Progress will come to the poor without any hard work on my part. Progress will come to the oppressed without any risk or danger on my part. Progress will come to those suffering without any diligent effort on my part. Things will get better. The poor will get richer. The all day lines of pain at hospitals where poor people live will go. The sick will be healed, the lame will walk. The imprisoned will no longer be beaten by

guards and raped by fellow prisoners. In other words, progress will come while I sit back and have a drink and look at football on television. And that's not so. The mercy that Jesus teaches is a mercy that requires asceticism. The mercy that Jesus teaches is summed up on the cross, is summed up in the Lamb. It's the mercy that requires that I become a victim in order to serve those who are victims. It's a mercy that requires that I say no to legitimate gratifications that are mine in order that people that do not have something can have it, in order that pain can be relieved. There is no Christian mercy without asceticism. I have to pay a price in order to be a merciful person, and it's not a simple price. For that woman to give up her pursuit of underwear, that pursuit has become a second nature to her now, just like heroin. It's something you and I wouldn't do no more than we take heroin, but there comes a point after the use of something where you can't step away from it. You see it with men and women who have to be in fashion and have to be in style. You see it with the kids with the television and the newspaper advertising. Six months ago they didn't even know that such a T-shirt existed, now that have to have one, must have one. And of course nothing is thought of the fact that the T-shirt is being made by nine-year-old children in the dungeons of Indonesia.

There is no mercy without asceticism. Christian asceticism is not, not doing something in order to look good before God. I give up Guinness during Lent and I say, what do you think of that God? I'm back on the right track. That has nothing to do with it. It is the Lamb of God, it is the cross. It is the willingness to accept suffering to be a victim and order that others can have life. That's the nature of Christian mercy. It is summed up in the Lamb of God. The aberration at Nark, what John the Baptist says of Jesus, there is the Lamb of God. What we say all the time, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Or Lamb of God have mercy on us. It is the idea that Jesus had to become a victim in order to love, in order to be merciful, and we in the imitation of Christ, the same thing is necessary. To rearrange the use of our mind, time and money, which is absolutely essential for mercy, cause no society nurtures anyone in mercy. To rearrange the use of our mind, time and money is to deny very real artificial needs that have been created in us. I don't know what they are. I have them, you have them. But I know to fast from them in order to serve others, not just to fast but to serve others, I know it's difficult. Say you've got a smoking habit. How much does this Christian population spend on cigarettes? Trillions of dollars a year, trillions of dollars. Now you give up the cigarette money and you use it, for example, to support a school in Haiti or to support something that's going on in terms of food or getting medicines to the people in Haiti. It's not easy to give up the cigarette habit if it's a long-time habit. You're not doing it to look good before God or because you enjoy it. You are doing it to be a merciful person. It's part of the mind, time and money that you have, to come out in front of the television, to come away from the television and to walk into the chapel and to spend that hour praying for people -- that's a merciful effort. But to walk away from television if you're nurtured in it and you like it, that's a tough effort, and whatever it may be. And so it goes for each of us. And so there is an asceticism to mercy in the gospel and that is precisely what the Lamb of God presents to us. The one who suffers in order to give life to others so that others may have life. We give the gift of life to others by our own willingness to suffer on their behalf. And you say well, think about it, think about all the time people that spend in nonsense, say television. To rearrange that time and say to go down to a rest home two, three times a week just to sit and be with someone, that's mercy and that's costly if you like television, whatever else you do.



There is an asceticism to Christian mercy. Christian mercy is founded in the symbol of the cross. It is not that secular thing where we throw a few pennies out after we've had a grand time for ourselves. It is a way of life. It is a way of life based on the cross of Christ, based on the Lamb of God. It is a way of life that gives life. Said in another way, the tongue can be an instrument of mercy or the tongue can be an instrument of mercilessness. I may be nurtured quite well. When people say something to me to know how to respond just like that and put them down, cut them off, straighten them out, but I can also use the tongue as an agent to bring kindness and care, forgiveness, goodwill. To bring life to someone, even someone who dislikes me or hurts me or to someone who doesn't even know me. We Christians are given the gift of faith in baptism in Christ for nothing short of becoming divine. We are made to be divinized. We are to become one in God. The union is to be one. That process of divinization takes place in us when the tongue becomes an agent of mercy, to that extent it's divinized. When the hand reaches out in mercy, to that extent the hand is divinized. When I walk with someone that says he can't walk and so forth and help him, to that extent divinized. Everything I do in mercy is a participation in divinity, for mercy is the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and the Redeemer. But the cost is the cross and asceticism. For mercy is not an occasional thing in the Christian life. Mercy is the center of the Christian life because it's active lived mercy. That is the primary proclaimer of what Jesus proclaimed, God, who is Father, who is rich in mercy. And that's what we've given the gift of faith to in Jesus, to proclaim what he proclaimed and to have what is our mission what is his mission. The life of mercy that proclaims what kind of God God is, mercy. And what does God expect? Mercy. And that life is purchased at the cost of self sacrifice, of following the Lamb of God who gives up his life in order that others may have life.