

**ALIBI, LULLABY, BY-AND-BY**

Matt.9:35-38; 28:19-20

**INTRODUCTION:**

**ONE OF THE GREATEST PROBLEMS** facing the church today seems to be HOW we can keep each other encouraged to be responsible citizens of the kingdom --- staying busy with citizenship responsibilities toward both Christians and non-Christians. AND, as is true with ANY problem, you're half-way to a good solution when you have a **clear understanding** and a **precise definition OF THE PROBLEM.**

THE **BASIS** OF THE DIFFICULTY SEEMS TO BE THREEFOLD: (1st) it's an **UNDERSTANDING PROBLEM** [knowing just what needs to be done]; (2nd) it's an **ATTITUDE PROBLEM**, and (3rd) it seems to be a **VALUE PROBLEM**, [that is, a lack of realization of HOW IMPORTANT it actually is in order to have a right relationship with God.] **Regarding # 1**, I'm sure most of us are probably **aware** and WHAT the Lord expects of us, as set forth in passages like **Matt.9:35-38-** "*And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 36 And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."* **Regarding # 3**, it SHOULD be quite easy for us to realize the IMPORTANCE of our efforts when we consider that it's KINGDOM BUSINESS: **Matt.28:19-20-** "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

**Primarily, in this lesson, we're going to be dealing with the "attitude problem".** In today's vocabulary, this could also be termed a "**LABOR PROBLEM**", because we seem to be trying to get out of "LABORING FOR THE LORD"! We want to suggest to you three pernicious (*harmful, deleterious, wicked*) attitudes that pervade (*penetrate, permeate*) the hearts of some of us who claim to be godly, HINDERING and THWARTING OUR EFFORTS in the progress of truth and righteousness! These three attitudes are the title of our lesson: "Alibi, Lullaby, By-and-By".

**"The Devil made me do it!"**

**I. THE ALIBI ATTITUDE.** [*An alibi is an anaesthetic that a coward administers to himself in the presence of a painful or difficult duty.*]

- A. The world is just FULL of **SUBJECTIVE** heroes --- they **WOULD** be .... **IF** --!
- B. Usually, the one making alibis [viz, **shifting responsibility**, **passing blame onto others**] can always find **100 good reasons** why **failure is honorable**, but remains blind to the fact that **VICTORY IS POSSIBLE!**
- C. The use of the alibi IS NOT NEW, in fact, it's as old as ---
  1. **Adam and Eve:** **Gen.3:12-13-** "*And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*
  2. **Moses:** **Exod.4:10-** "*Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."*
  3. **Gideon:** **Judg.6:15-** "*And he said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."*
  4. **The one-talent man:** **Matt.25:25-** "*And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours."*
- D. And the ineffective and impotent excuses they used haven't gotten any more reliable today. Today's choices include:
  1. For the person who's really paranoid: **"The world has conspired against me so I can't do it..."**
  2. An excuse a lot of us "heavy" people use: **"I'm a victim of heredity...it's in the glands!"**

3. And of course the “classic” that nearly all have used at one time or another: *“I’m just too busy!”*
4. OR, *“I’m just too young!”* If you ever even THINK of this, please consider:
  - a) Alex. the Grt. ascended the throne at age 20. At 33 he wept because no more world to conquer.
  - b) Geo. Washington was an adjutant general at 19, ambassador to France at 21, a Colonel at 22.
  - c) LaFayette was general of the whole French army at 20.
  - d) Galileo was 18 when he discovered the principle of the pendulum!
  - e) Martin Luther was only 29 when he nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany, defying the Pope!  
[It seems that parents pass this deadly disease to their children ... both by example and by making excuses for them when they should face up to their responsibilities and consequences of their own wrong-doing .... or laziness!]
5. One that many of US may feel justified in using: *“I’m too OLD!”* **AGAIN CONSIDER:**
  - a) Tennyson wrote “Crossing the Bar” at the age of **80**.
  - b) Benjamin Franklin signed the Dec. of Independence at age **81**.
  - c) Michelangelo designed the great dome of St.Peter’s basilica at age **87**.
  - d) Oliver Wendell Holmes, when he was **90**, had his pension cut by congress. Regarding this, he said, “I expect I shall be able to stand the pay cut, but what worries me is that I will not be able to put aside so much as usual for my old age.”
- E. Excuses [alibis] are always available -- IF YOU’RE LOOKING! **Prov.22:13**-[regarding the man who won’t seek work, **Sol.** says] *“The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!”*

“Sleepy Time Gal”

**II. LULLABY ATTITUDE.** *[A lullaby is a cradle song, a strain sung to sooth and lull a child to sleep]*

- A. Satan sings this sweet lullaby to both saints and sinners, in words like: *“Go to sleep ... no cause for concern ... no need for urgency ... relax ... take it easy!”* **Isa.30:9-10**- *“For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD; 10 Who say to the seers, “You must not see visions”; And to the prophets, “You must not prophesy to us what is right, Speak to us pleasant words, Prophecy illusions.”*  
**BUT GOD’S WARNINGS ARE FOUND IN:** **Amos 6:1**- *“Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, And to those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria, The distinguished men of the foremost of nations, To whom the house of Israel comes.”* **Rev.3:15-16**- *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 16 ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.”*
- B. If you, as a Christian, were as aggressive as someone like Madeline O’Hare [an athiest], or if the church of the Lord [in each congregation] were as aggressive as the communist party has been in the United States, we’d have a SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION!
  1. Communism was born in 1903 with 17 supporters ... NOW it controls over 1 billion people on earth!
  2. On average, American communists spend 38% of their income on communism!
  3. They are required by their personal discipline and desire to spend so many hours each week in the study of communism, and also many hours each week in public, UNPOPULAR, ANTISOCIAL activities!
  4. WHY would they do such things? **BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN IT!**
- C. While many of the Lord’s people SLEEP, enemies of the Lord sow tares! **Mt.13:25**- *“But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away.”* **Rom.13:11**- *“And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.”* **1 Cor.11:30**- *“For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”*
- D. REMEMBER, it was while Samson SLEPT that his strength was taken from him!

- E. Are We just comfortable Christians? Settled down to a comfortable balance between the world and God? Is this the “Cult of the Comfortable”? The “Religion of the Relaxed”? What is NEEDED often is the **WARNING TRUMPET CALL OF WATCHMEN!**

**“When I get a Round TUIT”**

**III. BY-AND-BY ATTITUDE.** [**“Time enough yet!” Putting off till later what should be done now ... giving procrastination sovereignty over immediacy!**]

- A. EZEKIEL prophesied grievous and terrible information for what was going to happen to Jerusalem. The RESULT in the “by-and-by” attitude of the people: **Ezek.12:27-** *“Son of man, behold, the house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies of times far off.’”*
- B. Some of those in **Athens [& elsewhere]** showed the SAME ATTITUDE: **Acts 17:32-** *“Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, ‘We shall hear you again concerning this.’”* **Acts 24:25;** **Prov.27:1-** *“Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.”* **Psa.89:47-** *“Remember what my span of life is; For what vanity Thou hast created all the sons of men!”* **Job.14:1-** *“Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil.”* **Jas.4:14-** *“Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”* **Jno.9:4.**

**CONCLUSION:**

It really won’t take a lot of self-examination to determine WHAT your attitude has been toward being the kind of person the Lord wants YOU to be, will it? You can try to EXCUSE yourself, or you can take hold of the hands of those who are SERVING GOD and strive diligently to aid and assist His cause while you’re living here on earth. What will you say to HIS invitation, RIGHT NOW?

**CLW/DRW-Sepul.**