

Column

I am thinking of one who is always taking in but never giving out. Perhaps you have known such a person. He or she reads a never-ending succession of books, is always attending classes and seminars, always learning, but that is where it ends.

Oswald Chambers compares people like this to the Dead Sea in the Holy Land. Year in and year out it takes in fresh water, but there it stays and stagnates. As a result, no aquatic life can be found in its pool, thus giving it its name – ‘dead’. Chambers’ point is that this can happen with people.

At the college I attended, brick portals leading into the school carry the legend: “Enter here to increase in stature, knowledge and wisdom.” Those words are true and right. There is a time to come apart and prepare, indeed we all should be life-long learners. Even so, the time likewise comes when we must do something with the knowledge we have acquired. We must arise, dare and do.

Interestingly enough, on those same brick portals, on the side leading out, is another legend: “Depart to share your culture with all mankind.” The two balance each other. The water that flows in must flow out.

In both the Old and New Testaments, we find examples of days of preparation being followed by days of march. The wilderness wanderings of the Israelites during the days of Moses is one example. Their days in the desert was their schoolroom. Eventually, however, the bell rang; the term ended. “Arise and go over this Jordan” came the cry delivered by Moses’ successor Joshua.

A similar thing can be found in the New Testament. For around three and half years Jesus’ disciples were in the classroom with their Master. Then came the day for them to move out. Following His death and resurrection and just prior to His ascension, He sends them out with these words: “Go ye therefore . . .” What they had seen Jesus do, they were now to do.

The principle laid down in both of these episodes in salvation history remains relevant today. Indeed, we see this pattern every Sunday morning. Jesus’ believing people gather (these days either on-line or in-person) to take in knowledge and strength from their Master, but they are not expected to stay in that place. Rather, they are sent out into the world to love and serve the Lord . . . to dare and do.

Where are you in your life? Resolve to be more than a Dead Sea Christian.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast created man in thine own image; Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice among men and nations, to the glory of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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