

# Thoughts of Jesus

## The Frugal Jesus

FRUGALITY is a virtue that both the poor and the rich should possess. A person may have sufficient means to supply himself with all he desires, but this does not give him a right to be spendthrift and wasteful. The poor, of necessity, should be frugal, but even among these there are many who exercise little thrift.

Jesus lived among the poor. He knew what it was to be in want for even the necessities of life. Yet He could have been rich if He had wished to avail Himself of the powers with which He was endowed.

One particular experience in the life of Jesus reveals His frugal spirit as well as His ability to produce wealth. By simply blessing and breaking five barley loaves and two small fishes, Jesus was able to feed five thousand men at one sitting. Thus He revealed His great power.

In this connection it is surprising to read His command to His disciples when the people had eaten all they wanted: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." John 6:12.

Some might wonder why Jesus was so particular. Was it because of His very evident neat and orderly ways or because of His economical habits? It must have taken quite a little time to gather up those fragments, and the hour of the day must have been late after the arduous ordeal of passing out the food to five thousand people. But for Jesus it was just as necessary to dispose of the fragments properly as it was to prepare the meal carefully.

We may wonder what He did with the twelve baskets that were filled with the leftovers from the great feast. We are told: "After the multitude had been fed, there was an abundance of food left. But He who had all the resources of infinite power at His command said, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.' These words meant more than putting the bread into the baskets. The lesson was twofold. Nothing is to be wasted. We are to let slip no temporal advantage. We should neglect nothing that will tend to benefit a human being. Let everything be gathered up that will relieve the necessity of earth's hungry ones. And there should be the same carefulness in spiritual things. When the baskets of fragments were collected, the people thought of their friends at home. They wanted them to share in the bread that Christ had blessed. The contents of the baskets were distributed among the eager throng, and were carried away into all the region round about. So those who were at the feast were to give to others the bread that comes down from heaven, to satisfy the hunger of the soul. They were to repeat what they had learned of the wonderful things of God. Nothing was to be lost. Not one word that concerned their eternal salvation was to fall useless to the ground." - *The Desire of Ages*, page 368.

It is clear that Jesus could not tolerate waste, even amid abundance. He was economical without the taint of penuriousness. He saved, not that He might add to His own possessions, but that He might have the means by which to help others and also that nothing good might be lost.

Some may feel because they have no great means to give to preaching the gospel, nothing much can be expected of them. However, this experience of Jesus teaches us that although we may have little left after we have cared for our own needs, yet through frugality and thrift we will be able to save something for the Master's use. He then can bless and multiply it to the good of many.

The teachings of Jesus emphasized the necessity of frugality on the part of all who follow Him, and He spoke against the pursuit of gain for the sake of acquiring an abundance of earthly possessions.

Like a runner in a race who is determined to win, and strips himself of all impediments, so the Christian must lay aside every weight and run with patience the race that is set before him. (Hebrews 12:1.)

This is what Jesus tells us: "Whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33.

Here the principle of renunciation, in contrast to acquisitiveness, is emphasized. Again He says, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Luke 12:15.

Jesus' conception of life is wholly contrary to that which we are taught in these modern times, when abundance and waste go hand in hand. But Jesus came not to teach men how to blend into their environment and be subject to it, but how to be different and to be independent of it.

In the parable of the talents Jesus taught that men should not be wasteful with any endowments. One may waste them as the prodigal did, or he may do so, as did the one-talent man, by hiding them in the ground. Talents are to be put to use. All of us should ask, What am I doing with the talents that have been given me? For instance, there is the talent of time. What am I doing with it? Do I have much or little leisure? Am I wasteful of it? Some have only a little time of their own beyond their assigned duties. If we are in that class, then what are we doing with the one talent of time that we have?

Do we say, "Oh, I have only a little time left. I will not do anything special," and thus waste it? Jesus wanted to teach us that we can do much with little when His blessing is added to it. No time is too short to make some use of it, either for the up building of our character or for the blessing of others.

Jesus taught the lesson, both in His life and His words, that we should give careful attention to little things. Not many have riches to give or much time to offer the Lord. If we do anything at all, it must be in the conservation and right use of the pennies, the minutes, and the little talents that we have.

So let us be frugal as was Jesus, never wasting any of the gifts of Heaven, but making the best use of all things that are in our possession, that we may live to the glory of God and for the blessing of those around us.