

A walk with Mr O (17)

I feel overwhelmed

I'm especially glad of our walk today, Mr O, because right now I feel overwhelmed and I need to talk about it. There is so much on my mind. I feel like a drowning man who is about to go under for the last time. . . .

Go on, get it all off your chest. But please slow down! I'm beginning to get old and it's hard for me to understand fast talk.

I'm sorry. But the world is in a mess, isn't it? There are war and tension and unrest everywhere you look. Our culture is riddled with sin. Bible-believing churches aren't having much influence and they have problems of their own.

Our standard of discipleship is very low. Lots of professing Christians are – to put it bluntly – worldly. Our prayer life is poor. We are not winning the lost as we should. And my own Christian life is no great shakes either. And everything is getting on top of me.

I get the picture. Stop now and let me talk straight. Your problem is that you are making the Christian life too complicated. You've got your mind on a thousand things at once.

You've forgotten that the Christian life is essentially simple. We are men and women of one thing. What did our Lord say to Martha at the end of Luke 10? 'One thing is needed'.

You've got my attention, Mr O. But I don't know what the 'one thing' is.

Yes, you do, but you need to stop and think about it. When our Lord told us to stop worrying about food and drink and clothes, He then said, 'But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.'

That's Matthew 6:33, of course, but I don't really know what it means.

And I'm not going to give you a detailed exposition. Put simply, in this verse our Lord is telling us to make an effort. Every day we Christians are to make sure that nothing, nothing, nothing is more important to us than God and the things of God.

When we are doing that, everything else will fall into place. By doing one thing we will have everything – that is, everything we need.

So, how does that work out in practice?

Well, you've got to start somewhere, so why not start by focussing on the word 'first'? Put God first. Do it chronologically. Start the day with Him. As your first act of the day, give Him time.

Make this your way of showing to Him that He is more important to you than your body is – more important than showering, dressing, eating, talking, travelling, working and relaxing; more important than family, friends, social media, world news and anything else.

So, you are basically underlining the importance of a 'Quiet Time'.

If you remember, we've already talked about 'the Quiet Time' and about the fact that personal Bible reading is no substitute for church. I am talking about what some previous generations used to call 'The Morning Watch'.

For example, Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, wrote, 'To some it is not at all easy to secure time for the morning watch, but nothing can make up for the loss of it'. Isn't that why the Saviour used to get up early, to go out and find a lonely place, and to give Himself to prayer there?

Robert Murray M'Cheyne believed that he ought to pray before he saw anybody else. This is what he wrote about the times that that didn't happen: 'I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. The when in secret prayer the soul is often out of tune. I feel it far better to begin with God – to see His face first, to get my soul near Him before it is near another.' You won't be with the Lord long before you find yourself reflecting on His great love, on the glories of the cross, and on all the benefits which Christ has purchased for you. With your mind filled with such great themes, you will quickly find that you are beginning to think clearly about everything else.