

# WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO

By Pastor John Carlini, D.Mn

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;  
applause;  
I'd rather be His than have riches untold;  
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.  
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand

I'd rather have Jesus than men's  
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause;  
I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame  
I'd rather be true to His holy name  
(Refrain)

Refrain  
Than to be the king of a vast domain  
Or be held in sin's dread sway.  
I'd rather have Jesus than anything  
This world affords today.

He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom;  
He's sweeter than honey from out the comb;  
He's all that my hungering spirit needs.  
I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead  
(Refrain)

SING ALL THREE VERSES OF **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS"** #517

READ MATTHEW 6:19-21

MINI SERMONETTE **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS THAN SILVER OR GOLD"**

♪ SING VERSE 1 **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS"**

READ JOHN 1:41 / JOHN 12:20-22

MINI SERMONETTE **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS THAN MEN'S APPLAUSE"**

♪♪ SING VERSE 2 **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS"**

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:8-11

MINI SERMONETTE **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS THAN ANYTHING"**

♪♪♪ SING VERSE 3 **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS"**

DO WHAT YOU DO

CLOSING SONG **"I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS"**

BENEDICTION

# I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS

By Pastor John Carlini, D. Mn

Matthew 6:19-22 (NLT)

**“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.”**

Thanksgiving is a time for us to reflect on all the blessings we have received. And often we find ourselves thankful for material blessings. The problem with earthly blessings is that we can forget who gave us the blessings or we can misinterpret blessings. An example of this is, when I left my last church, the church decided to take up a collection for me as a memento of their appreciation I thought that was a nice gesture, ... until I read the bulletin announcement. It read, “Our minister is leaving the church this Sunday. Will you please send in a small donation? The congregation wants to give him a little momentum.” I’m not sure if that was just a typo or if there was a hidden message there. That’s the problem with earthly blessings however, I don’t think we focus on the greatest blessing of all, the fact that God offers Himself to us in a relationship.

You see, we often pray prayers, and say Amen to prayers, and sing songs with a lot of gusto and emotion but the problem is, I don’t think we give much thought to the words. About a month ago, I was singing this song with a lot of gusto, ... until I heard a small voice inside me say, “John, do you really mean what you are singing?” Let’s see if we are sincere about what we say and sing.

♪ SING VERSE 1     **“I’D RATHER HAVE JESUS”**

**I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold;  
I’d rather be His than have riches untold;  
I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands.  
I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand**

Here in verse 1 of the song, the poet says that he would rather have Jesus than material possessions. His desire is simply to be loved and led by Jesus. If he could be certain that Jesus loved him and that He belonged to Jesus, then money, wealth, and property means nothing in comparison to that.

Is that the way we feel? We talk about that in terms of human, romantic love. We tell our partners, “I would give up anything to be with you.” Those are nice sentiments ... but when we get married and the reality of paying bills hit, arguments soon follow and we wonder where those romantic sentiments have gone.

Jesus loved us in that way. He gave up the wealth of heaven to come and love us. He gave up absolutely everything, and if we want to be in a relationship with Him, He expects the same.

Listen to what He said, “Don’t store treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths, get rusty, and where thieves can break in and steal them. Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten, or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

Did you catch that last line? “Wherever you treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.” I don’t think this passage means for all of us to go and give away all our money. God may call some of us to do that at some time in our life, but that is not what He means in general. The point is: Do you spend your time and energy worrying more about money matters than you do focusing on your relationship with God?

This Thanksgiving, especially as we kick off the Advent/Christmas season, I would like us to get our priorities right. If you have received Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, then you are in a right relationship with God. And if that is the case, then no matter how much or how little money and possessions you have, ... you are rich. Why? Because you have eternal life, you will

spend eternity in heaven and there will be riches waiting for you that make everything we value on earth look like garbage. Remember this. If you are the wealthiest person on earth, but don't know Jesus, ... you are poor. You will be homeless and penniless for all eternity. However, if you don't have an earthly penny to your name, but know Jesus, you are rich. You have a mansion waiting for you in heaven and treasure to last you through eternity. Now that I stop to think about it, it really does make sense to make that choice. I know that I would personally rather have Jesus than silver or gold. How about you?

John 1:41 (NLT)

**The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Simon, and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means the Christ).**

John 12:20-22 (NLT)

**“Some Greeks who came to Jerusalem to attend the Passover paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, ‘Sir, we want to meet Jesus.’ Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.”**

♪♪ SING VERSE 2    **“I’D RATHER HAVE JESUS”**  
**I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause;**  
**I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause;**  
**I’d rather have Jesus than world-wide fame**  
**I’d rather be true to His holy name**

In the second verse of the song, the poet says that he would rather be approved by God than be approved by people. I often think to myself “Are the things I do geared more towards serving people, or are they geared more towards serving God? Every place I have worked, served, or studied, I received awards and honors. I have several degrees and have accomplished about all I really wanted to accomplish but really, in the end, is any of that stuff going to matter in eternity? When I get to heaven, is St. Peter going to announce my arrival by saying, “The Rev. Dr. Carlini,

honor student, athlete, military man, pastor of Devon Church?” And then are people going to flock to ooh and awe at my arrival? I don’t think so.

This is why I am so certain of that. I don’t know if I would have worked so hard had I not received rewards, respect, or recognition for the work I did. I think I have worked for most of my life in order to receive man’s applause and for the notoriety. I have worked hard and become successful in order to feed my own ego.

I have a missionary friend who reminds me how to know if I am on track. He says, “You will know if you are really a servant by the way you respond when those around you treat you like one.”

I know that we are good at fooling ourselves by saying that we are working hard to please God, but how long will we keep working at that pace and be content if people treat us badly and we don’t get the credit and respect we think we deserve?

Maybe you are a little confused by the verses I picked for this section. Let me read them once again for you. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Simon, and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means the Christ). ... Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem to attend the Passover paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.”

We don’t read much about Andrew in the Bible, but he is extremely important. Andrew is a guy who is content to simply serve Jesus and get no earthly credit or recognition. Andrew is someone who is content bringing people to Jesus. Did you notice whom Andrew brought to Jesus? Peter arguably the most important apostle of all. Andrew didn’t have the reputation that Peter, James and John had. They were flashy and up front, well known apostles. But when some Greeks

wanted to meet Jesus, they approached Philip who knew to go to Andrew, and Andrew escorted them into the presence of Jesus.

That's whom I want to be like. I want to be like Andrew. I want to start and measure success in my life by how many times I lead people into the presence of God. If I meet unbelievers, I want to introduce and bring them to Jesus. If believers are hurting or have lost their way, I want to bring them back into the presence of Jesus for healing. I don't need any more awards or recognition. Those things will not do me any good in heaven. So as I think about it, I want to please God, not people. I want to work for God's applause, not human recognition. How about you?

Philippians 3:8-11 (NLT)

**“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me for God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that, somehow, I can also experience the resurrection from the dead!”**

As I examine my life, I can see how easily distracted I am. I have a lot of interests and I pursue a lot of hobbies but as I grow older, and as I have been growing as a Christian, I find that I am more and more drawn to the Bible and spending quiet time in God's presence. I do want to become all that God wants me to be, but I'm not sure I am too thrilled about the process.

♪♪♪ SING VERSE 3 **“I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS”**

**He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom;  
He's sweeter than honey from out the comb;  
He's all that my hungering spirit needs.  
I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead**

The poet says in verse three that he would rather have Jesus than life itself. He is hungering and thirsting for Jesus. That's what the Apostle Paul said in these verses. Listen again to what the

apostle Paul says: Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead! Is that something we aspire to, sharing the sufferings of Jesus? To simplify what growing in Christ is all about, we could say that it is a continuous cycle of dying to ourselves, and coming alive to Christ.

Take for example, the beginning of our Christian walk. In order to become a Christian, we had to reject the notion that we are good in any way, we had to die to the idea that we have earned the right to approach God. We had to give up the idea that we could do enough religious things to make it to heaven. In fact, we had to admit that we were totally helpless and totally deserving of hell before we could come to Jesus in fact. In essence we had to die to ourselves in order to come alive in Jesus.

That is the model for the rest of our Christian life. When the Holy Spirit reveals a portion of our lives that He wants control of, the proper response is to die to our selves, and be filled with the Holy Spirit in that area of our lives. When it comes to our egos, when it comes to our finances, when it comes to our success, our sex lives, our relationships, everything in life, we are to surrender to God, die to self, come alive in Christ, giving complete control to the Holy Spirit. That's what it means to mature as a believer. Oftentimes the process is painful because dying is not a pleasant experience. And that's the question and the sentiment of the poet and of the Apostle Paul. They hunger and thirst for righteousness. They are willing to undergo any kind of suffering in order for

God to do His work in them. As I sing this song, I have to ask myself, “Do I love Jesus more than life itself?”

What I’d like us to think about this evening is this. When we sing, when we pray, when we talk, I’d like us to consciously think about whether or not we are sincere or not.

**“One day, a little boy was asked to thank God for the snacks in his Bible class. ‘Dear God,’ said the five-year-old boy, ‘thank you for my mommy, my daddy, and my teacher. Thank you God for the animal crackers we are going to eat.’ Then he paused for a long time. Everyone began to squirm and get restless. They waited and waited. Finally, the teacher quietly asked him if there was anything wrong. The little boy slowly raised his head and in a very low whisper asked, ‘Are we going to have anything to drink with the cookies?’ His teacher said no. Immediately he bowed his head and said, ‘Amen.’”**

That was no formal or ritualistic prayer. That little boy knew exactly what he was praying for. That’s my challenge to all of us. We need to pay attention to what we sing and pray. We need to sing and pray with understanding, ... and really mean it.