

Chapel Flock



Open Water Ministries

# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

[www.chapel-flock.com](http://www.chapel-flock.com)



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## Worship Music

[Mary Did You Know-Go Fish](#)

[I Love To Tell The Story-Go Fish](#)

[Jesus and John-Lisa Gungor](#)

## Prayer

Lord, thank You for speaking to me today. Forgive me for the times I've acted like I was better than other people. I am sorry for that behavior, and I don't ever want to do it again. I ask You to convict me when I start to act this way and to show me how to quickly change my behavior. I really want to be an example that will make people want to know Jesus, so help me to change any part of my behavior that does not give a proper impression of Your holy character. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

## Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

### " Christ Magnified In Our Bodies"

Leonard Ravenhill

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

(316) 247-3623

Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

[chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net)

## Radio Stations

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## Bible Study Sites

[Chuck Smith Through The Bible](#)

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[Mike MacIntosh](#)

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[Virtue for Women-Cathe Laurie](#)

1 AFTER THIS, Absalom got a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2 And [he] rose up early and stood beside the gateway; and when any man who had a controversy came to the king for judgment, Absalom called to him, Of what city are you? And he would say, Your servant is of such and such a tribe of Israel. 3 Absalom would say to him, Your claims are good and right, but there is no man appointed as the king's agent to hear you. 4 Absalom added, Oh, that I were judge in the land! Then every man with any suit or cause might come to me and I would do him justice! 5 And whenever a man came near to do obeisance to him, he would put out his hand, take hold of him, and kiss him. 6 Thus Absalom did to all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 7 And after [four] years, Absalom said to the king, I pray you, let me go to Hebron [his birthplace] and pay my vow to the Lord. 8 For your servant vowed while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, If the Lord will bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord [by offering a sacrifice]. 9 And the king said to him, Go in peace. So he arose and went to Hebron. 10 But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, Absalom is king at Hebron. 11 With Absalom went 200 men from Jerusalem, who were invited [as guests to his sacrificial feast]; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not a thing. 12 And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy was strong; the people with Absalom increased continually. 13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom. 14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, Arise and let us flee, or else none of us will escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring evil upon us and smite the city with the sword. 15 And the king's servants said to the king, Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king says. 16 So the king and all his household after him went forth. But he left ten women who were concubines to keep the house. 17 The king went forth with all the people after him, and halted at the last house. 18 All David's servants passed on beside him, along with [his bodyguards] all the Cherethites, Pelethites; also all the Gittites, 600 men who came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. 19 The king said to Ittai the Gittite, Why do you go with us also? Return to your place and remain with the king [Absalom], for you are a foreigner and an exile. 20 Since you came only yesterday, should I make you go up and down with us? Since I must go where I may, you return, and take back your brethren with you. May loving-kindness and faithfulness be with you. 21 But Ittai answered the king, As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or life, even there also will your servant be. 22 So David said to Ittai, Go on and pass over [the Kidron]. And Ittai the Gittite passed over and all his men and all the little ones who were with him. 23 All the country wept with a loud voice as all the people passed over. The king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people went on toward the wilderness. 24 Abiathar [the priest] and behold, Zadok came also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God until all the people had gone from the city. 25 Then the king told Zadok, Take back the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, He will bring me back and let me see both it and His house. 26 But if He says, I have no delight in you, then here I am; let Him do to me what seems good to Him. 27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, Are you not a seer? [You and Abiathar] return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son and Jonathan son of Abiathar. 28 See, I will wait at the fords [at the Jordan] of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me. 29 Zadok, therefore, and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem and they stayed there. 30 And David went up over the Mount of Olives and wept as he went, barefoot and his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, weeping as they went. 31 David was told, Ahithophel [your counselor] is among the conspirators with Absalom. David said, O Lord, I pray You, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness. 32 When David came to the summit [of Olivet], where he worshiped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon his head. 33 David said to him, If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in the past, so will I be your servant now, then you may defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. 35 Will not Zadok and Abiathar the priests be with you? So whatever you hear from the king's house, just tell it to [them]. 36 Behold, their two sons are there with them, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them send to me everything you hear. 37 So Hushai, David's friend, returned, and Absalom also came into Jerusalem.

## Chapter 15

And Absalom went out from the gate of the city, and when people would come from Israel to bring a matter for judgment, he would say, Oh what a shame that my father wouldn't appoint me as judge in Israel, because I could judge in these matters. You come to see my dad, he's so busy, he hasn't got time to see anybody. But bring the matter to me, let me judge it for you. And the people would start to bow to him, and he'd take them by the hand, and he'd kiss their hands (2Sa 15:2-6).

He was a shrewd politician, kissing the babies, and just saying the things that the people wanted to hear. "Oh, what a shame that I wasn't placed in a position that I could really help you? Oh, I could do so much for you if I were just in this position. It's a shame my dad is so busy, he really doesn't have time for people, you know busy running things. Oh, what we could do for you!" All of this you know.

And he began to steal the hearts of the people, those that would come to Jerusalem, he would steal their hearts. And when he felt that he was in a strong enough position, he headed for Hebron with some of the key leaders and he announced his kingdom there in Hebron. And when the kingdom was announced, then Israel began to gather unto Absalom. And some of David's counselors, one especially Ahithophel went with Absalom against David (2Sa 15:7-12).

This dissertation of his friend Ahithophel is expressed by David in the fifty-fifth psalm. Let's turn to Psalm fifty-five, and read of David's feelings over the desertion of Ahithophel who went with Absalom.

"Give ear to my prayer O God, and hide not Thyself from my supplications. Attend unto me, and hear me, I mourn in my complaint and make a noise because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked, for they have cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are

come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove then I would fly away and be at rest! Lo then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. Destroy O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about upon the walls thereof. Mischief also and sorrow in the midst of it. Wickedness is in the midst thereof, deceit, and guile depart not from her streets; For it was not (Here is his lament about Ahithophel), for it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could've borne it. Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would've hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company."

Then David's prayer of vengeance upon them for their deceit and treachery. So the desertion from David of some of his chief men. Yet there were those who remained true, but if word came that Absalom was coming from Hebron with an army.

Now David as I told you, his spirit is gone. Rather than defending himself, rather than setting up his troops to defend him from Absalom, and from the army that's coming with Absalom, David's spirit is gone. He makes no attempt to defend the city, to defend himself. But David begins an exodus from the city with his faithful followers and they start up over the Mount of Olives toward the wilderness. As they start up, David is weeping as he walks through the Kidron stream, and up the Mount of Olives. He has his head covered, and he's weeping and all of those that are going with him, their heads are covered, they too are weeping. What a sad and pitiful sight. David not even making a fight; David not standing up. This great valiant man not standing up, but fleeing. Absalom his son wAnd they told David, Ahithophel is among them. And David said, Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. And when David came to the top of the mount of Olives, he worshipped God, and behold, Hushai (2Sa 15:31-32),

Who was also one of David's counselors, an older man, came to meet him, and David said, "Hey, go on home, go back to Jerusalem, and maybe you can sort of subvert the counsel of Ahithophel." So David began to set up his men also to destroy the purposes of Absalom.

And the priests had come with the ark of the covenant, and David sent them back, Zadok and Abiathar, he sent them back with the ark of the covenant (2Sa 15:35).

Committing it really, and it is interesting to me David at this point was committing his case totally to God. "If God wants me to come back, you know the Lord will bring me back. If the Lord is pleased to help me, then the Lord will help me." But he's not gonna defend himself. He's not fighting for himself anymore. He is a broken man, and he is committing his case totally into the hands of God because this is really the fulfillment of this prophecy, really, because of his sin. Nathan said, "your sons are gonna rebel against you". He sees this just as a God's judgment and he's accepting it. He's committing himself totally into God's hands, and into this judgment that God has brought upon him. ill arrive at Jerusalem, and find out there are no defenses at all against him.

( Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

### The Cost of Being a Soul Winner

I want to say a word to you who are trying to bring souls to Jesus. You long and pray to be useful: do you know what this involves? Are you sure that you do? Prepare yourselves, then, to see and suffer many things with which you would rather be unacquainted.

Experiences which would be unnecessary to you personally will become your portion if the Lord uses you for the salvation of others. An ordinary person may rest in his bed all night, but a surgeon will be called up at all hours; a farming man may take his ease at his fireside, but if he becomes a shepherd he must be out among the lambs, and bear all weathers for them; even so doth Paul say, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." For this cause we shall be made to undergo experiences which will surprise us.

Some years ago, I was the subject of fearful depression of spirit. Certain troublous events had happened to me; I was also unwell, and my heart sank within me. Out of the depths I was forced to cry unto the Lord. Just before I went away to Mentone for rest, I suffered greatly in body, but far more in soul, for my spirit was overwhelmed. Under this pressure, I preached a sermon from the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I was as much qualified to preach from that text as ever I expect to be; indeed, I hope that few of my brethren could have entered so deeply into those heart breaking words. I felt to the full of my measure the horror of a soul forsaken of God. Now, that was not a desirable experience. I tremble at the bare idea of passing again through that eclipse of soul; I pray that I may never suffer in that fashion again unless the same result should hang upon it.

That night, after sermon, there came into the vestry a man who was as nearly insane as he could be to be out of an asylum. His eyes seemed ready to start from his head, and he said that he should utterly have despaired if he had not heard that discourse, which had made him feel that there was one man alive who understood his feeling, and could describe his experience. I talked with him, and tried to encourage him, and asked him to come again on the Monday night, when I should have a little more time to talk with him. I saw the brother again, and I told him that I thought he was a hopeful patient, and I was glad that the word had been so suited to his case. Apparently, he put aside the comfort which I presented for his acceptance, and yet I had the consciousness upon me that the precious truth which he had heard was at work upon his mind, and that the storm of his soul would soon subside into a deep calm.

Now hear the sequel. Last night, of all the times in the year, when, strange to say, I was preaching from the words, "The Almighty hath vexed my soul," after the service, in walked this self same brother who had called on me five years before. This time, he looked as different as noonday from midnight, or as life from death. I said to him, "I am glad to see you, for I have often thought about you, and wondered whether you were brought into perfect peace." I told you that I went to Mentone, and my patient also went into the country, so that we had not met for five years. To my inquiries, this brother replied, "Yes, you said I was a hopeful patient, and I am sure you will be glad to know that I have walked in the sunlight from that day till now. Everything is changed and altered with me." Dear

friends, as soon as I saw my poor despairing patient the first time, I blessed God that my fearful experience had prepared me to sympathize with him and guide him; but last night, when I saw him perfectly restored, my heart overflowed with gratitude to God for my former sorrowful feelings. I would go into the deeps a hundred times to cheer a downcast spirit: it is good for me to have been afflicted that I might know how to speak a word in season to one that is weary.

Suppose that, by some painful operation, you could have your right arm made a little longer, I do not suppose you would care to undergo the operation; but if you foresaw that, by undergoing the pain, you would be enabled to reach and save drowning men who else would sink before your eyes, I think you would willingly bear the agony, and pay a heavy fee to the surgeon to be thus qualified for the rescue of your fellows. Reckon, then, that to acquire soul winning power you will have to go through fire and water, through doubt and despair, through mental torment and soul distress. It will not, of course, be the same with you all, nor perhaps with any two of you, but according to the work allotted you, will be your preparation. You must go into the fire if you are to pull others out of it, and you will have to dive into the floods if you are to draw others out of the water. You cannot work a fire escape without feeling the scorch of the conflagration, nor man a lifeboat without being covered with the waves. If Joseph is to preserve his brethren alive, he must himself go down into Egypt; if Moses is to lead the people through the wilderness, he must first himself spend forty years there with his flock. Payson truly said, "If anyone asks to be made a successful minister, he knows not what he asks; and it becomes him to consider whether he can drink deeply of Christ's bitter cup and be baptized with His baptism."

I was led to think of this by the prayer which has just been offered by our esteemed brother, Mr. Levinsohn. He is, as you perceive, of the seed of Abraham, and he owed his conversion to a city missionary of his own nation. If that city missionary had not himself been a Jew, he would not have known the heart of the young stranger, nor have won his ear for the gospel message. Men are usually won to Christ by SUITABLE instruments, and this suitability often lies in the power to sympathize. A key opens a door because it fits the wards of the lock; an earnest address touches the heart because it meets the state of that heart. You and I have to be made into all sorts of shapes to suit all forms of mind and heart; just as Paul says, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." These processes must be wrought out upon us also. Let us cheerfully bear whatever the Holy Spirit shall work within our spirits that we may thus be the more largely blest to our fellow men. Come, brethren, and lay your all on the altar! Give yourselves up, you workers, into the Lord's hand. You who have delicacy and refinement, may have to be shocked into the power to benefit the coarse and ignorant. You who are wise and educated, may have to be made fools of, that you may win fools to Jesus; for fools need saving, and many of them will not be saved except by means which men of culture cannot admire.

How finely some people go to work when the thing needed may not be daintiness, but energy! On the other hand, how violent some are when the desired thing is tact and gentleness, and not force! This has to be learned; we must be trained to it as dogs to follow game. Here is one form of experience—The brother is elegant; he wishes to speak earnestly, but he must be elaborate, too. He has written out a nicely prepared address, his notes are carefully arranged. Alas! he has left the priceless document at home! What will he do? He is too gracious to give up: he will try to speak. He begins nicely, and gets through firstly. "Fair and softly, good sir." What comes next? See, he is gazing aloft for secondly. What should be said? What can be said? The good man flounders about, but he cannot swim he struggles to land, and as he rises from the flood you can hear him mentally saying, "That's my last attempt." Yet it is not so. He speaks again. He gathers confidence; he grows into an impressive speaker. By such humiliations as these the Lord prepares him to do his work efficiently. In our beginnings we are too fine to be fit, or too great to be good. We must serve an apprenticeship, and thus learn our trade. A blacklead pencil is of no use at all till it is cut; the fine cedar wood must be cut away; and then the inward metal which marks and writes will have fair play. Brethren, the knife of affliction is sharp, but salutary; you cannot delight in it, but faith may teach you to value it. Are you not willing to pass through every ordeal if by any means you may save some? If this be not your spirit, you had better keep to your farm and to your merchandise, for no man will ever win a soul who is not prepared to suffer everything within the compass of possibility for that soul's sake.

A good deal may have to be suffered through fear, and yet that fear may assist in stirring the soul, and putting it into a fit posture for work; at least, it may drive the heart to prayer, and that alone is a great part of the necessary preparation. A good man thus describes one of his early attempts at visiting, with the view of speaking to individuals upon their spiritual condition: "I was thinking, on the way to the residence of the party, how I would introduce the subject, and all that I would say. And all the while I was trembling and agitated. Reaching the door, it seemed as if I should sink through the stones; my courage was gone, and, lifting my hand to the knocker, it dropped at my side without touching it. I went partly down the steps from sheer fear; a moment's reflection sent me again to the knocker, and I entered the house. The sentences I uttered and the prayer offered were very broken; but thankful, very thankful I am that my fears and cowardice did not prevail. The 'ice was broken.'" That process of ice breaking must be gone through, and its result is highly beneficial.

O poor souls, you that wish to find the Savior, Jesus has died for you; and now His people live for you! We cannot offer any atoning sacrifice for you; there is no need that we should; but still we would gladly make sacrifices for your soul's sake. Did you not hear what our brother said just now in his prayer,—We would do anything, be anything, give anything, and suffer anything if we might but bring you to Christ? I assure you that many of us feel even so. Will you not care for yourselves? Shall we be earnest about your souls, and will you trifle them away? Be wiser, I beseech you, and may infinite wisdom at once lead you to our dear Savior's feet. Amen.

#### The Soul Winner's Reward

On my way to this meeting, I observed upon the notice board of the police station a striking placard, offering a large REWARD to any one who can discover and bring to justice the perpetrators of a great crime. No doubt our legislators know that the hope of a huge reward is the only motive which will have power with the comrades of assassins. The common informer earns so much scorn and hate that few can

It is far more pleasant to remember that there is a reward for bringing men to mercy, and that it is of a higher order than the premium for bringing men to justice; it is, moreover, much more within our reach, and that is a practical point worthy of our notice. We cannot all hunt down criminals, but we may all rescue the perishing. God be thanked that assassins and burglars are comparatively few, but sinners who need to be sought and saved swarm around us in every place. Here is scope for you all; and none need think himself shut out from the rewards which love bestows on all who do her service.

At the mention of the word REWARD, some will prick up their ears, and mutter "legality." Yet the reward we speak of is not of debt, but of grace; and it is enjoyed, not with the proud conceit of merit, but with the grateful delight of humility.

Other friends will whisper, "Is not this a low and mercenary motive?" We reply that it is as mercenary as the spirit of Moses, who "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." In this matter, all depends upon what the reward is; and if that happens to be the joy of doing good, the comfort of having glorified God, and the bliss of pleasing the Lord Jesus, then the aspiration to be allowed to endeavor to save our fellow men from going down into the pit is in itself a grace from the Lord; and if we did not succeed in it, yet the Lord would say of it, as He did of David's intent to build a temple, "It was well that it was in thine heart." Even if the souls we seek should all persist in unbelief if they all despise and reject and ridicule us, yet still it will be a divine work to have at least made the attempt. If there comes no rain out of the cloud, yet it has screened off the fierce heat of the sun; all is not lost even if the greater design be not accomplished. What if we only learn how to join the Savior in His tears, and cry, "How often would I have gathered you, but ye would not!" It is sublimity itself to be allowed to stand on the same platform with Jesus, and weep with Him. We are the better for such sorrows, if no others are.

But, thank God, our labors are not in vain in the Lord. I believe that the most of you, who have really tried, in the power of the Holy Spirit, by Scriptural teaching and by prayer, to bring others to Jesus, have been successful. I may be speaking to a few who have not succeeded; if so, I would recommend them to look steadily over their motive, their spirit, their work, and their prayer, and then begin again. Perhaps they may get to work more wisely, more believingly, more humbly, and more in the power of the Holy Spirit. They must act as farmers do who, after a poor harvest, plough again in hope. They ought not to be dispirited, but they ought to be aroused. We should be anxious to find out the reason of failure, if there be any, and we should be ready to learn from all our fellow laborers; but we must steadfastly set our faces, if by any means we may save some, resolving that whatever happens we will leave no stone unturned to effect the salvation of those around us. How can we bear to go out of the world without sheaves to bear with us rejoicingly? I believe that the most of us who are now assembled to pray have been successful beyond our expectations. God has blessed us, not beyond our desires, but yet beyond our hopes.

I have often been surprised at the mercy of God to myself. Poor sermons of mine, that I could cry over when I get home, have led scores to the cross; and, more wonderful still, words that I have spoken in ordinary conversation, mere chance sentences, as men call them, have nevertheless been as winged arrows from God, and have pierced men's hearts, and laid them wounded at Jesus' feet. I have often lifted up my hands in astonishment, and said, "How can God bless such a feeble instrumentality?" This is the feeling of most who addict themselves to the blessed craft of fishing for men, and the desire of such success furnishes as pure a motive as could move an angel's heart, as pure, indeed, as that which swayed the Savior when, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. "Doth Job serve God for nought?" said Satan. If he could have answered the question in the affirmative, if it could have been proved that the perfect and upright man found no reward in his holy living, then Satan would have cavilled at the justice of God, and urged men to renounce a service so unprofitable. Verily there is a reward to the righteous, and in the lofty pursuits of grace there are recompenses of infinite value. When we endeavor to lead men to God, we pursue a business far more profitable than the pearl fisher's diving or the diamond hunter's searching. No pursuit of mortal men is to be compared with that of soul winning. I know what I say when I bid you think of it as men think of entering the cabinet of the nation, or occupying a throne; it is a royal business, and they are true kings who follow it successfully.

The harvest of godly service is not yet: "we do with patience wait for it;" but we have earnest of our wage, refreshing pledges of that which is laid up in heaven for us. Partly, THIS REWARD LIES IN THE WORK ITSELF. Men go hunting and shooting for mere love of the sport; surely, in an infinitely higher sphere, we may hunt for men's souls for the pleasing indulgence of our benevolence. To some of us, it would be an unendurable misery to see men sink to hell, and to be making no effort for their salvation. It is a reward to us to have a vent for our inward fires. It is woe and weariness to us to be shut up from those sacred activities which aim at plucking fire brands from the flame. We are in deep sympathy with our fellows, and feel that, in a measure, their sin is our sin, their peril our peril.

If another lose the way, My feet also go astray; If another downward go, In my heart is also woe.

It is therefore a relief to set forth the gospel, that we may save ourselves from that sympathetic misery which echoes in our hearts the crash of soul ruin.

Soul winning is A SERVICE WHICH BRINGS GREAT BENEFIT TO THE INDIVIDUAL WHO CONSECRATES HIMSELF TO IT. The man who has watched for a soul, prayed for it, laid his plans for it, spoken with much trembling, and endeavored to make an impression, has been educating himself by the effort. Having been disappointed, he has cried to God more earnestly, has tried again, has looked up the promise to meet the case of the convicted one, has turned to that point of the divine character which seems most likely to encourage trembling faith, he has in every step been benefiting himself. When he has gone over the old, old story of the cross to the weeping penitent, and has at last gripped the hand of one who could say, "I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me;" I say, he has had a reward in the process through which his own mind has gone.

It has reminded him of his own lost estate; it has shown him the struggles that the Spirit had in bringing him to repentance; it has reminded him of that precious moment when he first looked to Jesus; and it has strengthened him in his firm confidence that Christ will

save men. When we see Jesus save another, and see that marvelous transfiguration which passes over the face of the saved one, our own faith is greatly confirmed. Skeptics and modern thought men have little to do with converts: those who labor for conversions believe in conversions; those who behold the processes of regeneration see a miracle wrought, and are certain that "this is the finger of God." It is the most blessed exercise for a soul, it is the divinest ennobling of the heart, to spend yourself in seeking to bring another to the dear Redeemer's feet. If it ended there, you might thank God that ever He called you to a service so comforting, so strengthening, so elevating, so confirming, as that of converting others from their evil ways.

Another precious recompense is found in **THE GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION OF THOSE YOU BRING TO CHRIST**. This is a choice boon, the blessedness of joying in another's joy, the bliss of hearing that you have led a soul to Jesus. Measure the sweetness of this recompense by the bitterness of its opposite. Men of God have brought many to Jesus, and all things have gone well in the church till declining years or changing fashions have thrown the good man into the shade, and then the minister's own spiritual children have been eager to turn him out of doors. The unkindest cut of all has come from those who owed their souls to him. His heart was broken while he has sighed, "I could have borne it, had not the persons that I brought to the Savior have turned against me." The pang is not unknown to me. I can never forget a certain household, in which the Lord gave me the great joy to bring four employers and several persons engaged by them to Jesus' feet. Snatched from the utmost carelessness of worldliness, these who had previously known nothing of the grace of God were joyful confessors of the faith. After a while, they imbibed certain opinions differing from ours, and from that moment some of them had nothing but hard words for me and my preaching. I had done my best to teach them all the truth I knew, and if they had found out more than I had discovered, they might at least have remembered where they learned the elements of the faith. It is years ago now, and I have never said as much as this before; but I feel the wound much. I only mention these sharp pricks to show how very sweet it is to have those about you whom you have brought to the Savior

A mother feels great delight in her children, for an intense love comes with natural relationships; but there is a still deeper love connected with spiritual kinship, a love which lasts through life, and will continue in eternity, for even in heaven each servant of the Lord shall say, "Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me." They neither marry nor are given in marriage in the city of our God, but fatherhood and brotherhood in Christ shall still survive. Those sweet and blessed bonds which grace has formed continue for ever, and spiritual relationships are rather developed than dissolved by translation to the better land. If you are eager for real joy, such as you may think over and sleep upon, I am persuaded that no joy of growing wealthy, no joy of increasing knowledge, no joy of influence over your fellow creatures, no joy of any other sort, can ever be compared with the rapture of saving a soul from death, and helping to restore our lost brethren to our great Father's house. Talk of ten thousand pounds reward! It is nothing at all, one might easily spend that amount; but one cannot exhaust the unutterable delights which come from the gratitude of souls converted from the error of their ways.

But the richest reward lies in **PLEASING GOD, AND CAUSING THE REDEEMER TO SEE OF THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL**. That Jesus should have His reward, is worthy of the Eternal Father; but it is marvelous that we should be employed by the Father to give to Christ the purchase of His agonies. This is a wonder of wonders! O my soul, this is an honor too great for thee! A bliss too deep for words! Listen, dear friends, and answer me. What would you give to cause a thrill of pleasure in the heart of the Well beloved? Recollect the grief you cost Him, and the pangs that shot through Him that He might deliver you from your sin and its consequences; do you not long to make Him glad? When you bring others to His feet, you give Him joy, and no small joy either. Is not that a wonderful text, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"? What does that mean? Does it mean that the angels have joy? We generally read it so, but it is not the intent of the verse. It says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God," that is, joy in the heart of God, around whose throne the angels stand. It is a joy which angels delight to behold, what is it? Is the blessed God capable of greater joy than His own boundless happiness? Wondrous language this! The infinite bliss of God is more eminently displayed, if it cannot be increased. Can we be the instruments of this? Can we do anything which will make the Ever blessed glad? Yes, for we are told that the great Father rejoices above measure when His prodigal son that was dead is alive again, and the lost one is found.

If I could say this as I ought to say it, it would make every Christian cry out, "Then I will labor to bring souls to the Savior;" and it would make those of us who have brought many to Jesus instant, in season and out of season, to bring more to Him. It is a great pleasure to be doing a kindness to an earthly friend, but to be doing something distinctly for Jesus, something which will be of all things in the world most pleasing to Him, is a great delight! It is a good work to build a meeting house, and give it outright to the cause of God, if it is done with a right and proper motive; but one living stone, built upon the sure foundation by our instrumentality, will give the Master more pleasure than if we erected a vast pile of natural stones, which might only cumber the ground. Then go, dear friends, and seek to bring your children and your neighbors, your friends and your kinsfolk, to the Savior's feet, for nothing will give him so much pleasure as to see them turn unto Him and live. By your love to Jesus, I beseech you, become fishers of men.

#### The Soul Winner's Life and Work

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30.

It seems to me that there is a higher joy in looking at a body of believers than that which arises from merely regarding them as saved. Not but what there is a great joy in salvation, a joy worthy to stir the angelic harps. Think of the Savior's agony in the ransom of every one of His redeemed, think of the work of the Holy Spirit in every renewed heart, think of the love of the Father as resting upon every one of the regenerate: I could not, if I took up my parable for a month, set forth all the mass of joy that is to be seen in a multitude of believers if we only look at what God has done FOR them, and promised TO them, and will fulfill IN them. But there is yet a wider field of thought, and my mind has been traversing it all this day, the thought of the capacities of service contained in a numerous band of believers, the possibilities of blessing others which lie within the bosoms of regenerate persons. We must not think so much of what we already are as to forget what the Lord may accomplish by us for others. Here are the coals of fire, but who shall describe the conflagration which they may cause?

We ought to regard the Christian Church, not as a luxurious hostelry where Christian gentlemen may each one dwell at his ease in his own inn, but as a barracks in which soldiers are gathered together to be drilled and trained for war. We should regard the Christian Church, not as an association for mutual admiration and comfort, but as an army with banners, marching to the fray, to achieve victories for Christ, to storm the strongholds of the foe, and to add province after province to the Redeemer's kingdom. We may view converted persons gathered into church membership as so much wheat in the granary. God be thanked that it is there, and that so far the harvest has rewarded the sower; but far more soul inspiring is the view when we regard those believers as each one likely to be made a living centre for the extension of the kingdom of Jesus, for then we see them sowing the fertile valleys of our land, and promising ere long to bring forth some thirty, some forty, some fifty, and some a hundredfold. The capacities of life are enormous, one becomes a thousand in a marvelously brief space. Within a short time, a few grains of wheat would suffice to seed the whole world, and a few true saints might suffice for the conversion of all nations. Only take that which comes of one ear, store it well, sow it all, again store it next year, and then sow it all again, and the multiplication almost exceeds the power of computation. Oh, that every Christian were thus year by year the Lord's seed corn! If all the wheat in the world had perished except a single grain, it would not take many years to replenish all the earth, and sow her fields and plains; but in a far shorter time, in the power of the Holy Spirit, one Paul or one Peter would have evangelized all lands. View yourselves as grains of wheat predestinated to seed the world. That man lives grandly who is as earnest as if the very existence of Christianity depended upon himself, and is determined that to all men within his reach shall be made known the unsearchable riches of Christ.

If we whom Christ is pleased to use as His seed corn were only all scattered and sown as we ought to be, and were all to sprout and bring forth the green blade and the corn in the ear, what a harvest there would be! Again would it be fulfilled, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains;" a very bad position for it, "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." May God grant us to feel some degree of the Holy Spirit's quickening power while we talk together, not so much about what God has done FOR us as about what God may do BY us, and how far we may put ourselves into a right position to be used by Him.

There are two things in the text, and these are found laid out with much distinctness in its two sentences. The first is, **THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER IS, OR OUGHT TO BE, FULL OF SOUL BLESSING.** "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." In the second place, **THE PURSUIT OF THE BELIEVER OUGHT ALWAYS TO BE SOUL WINNING.** The second is much the same as the first, only the first head sets forth our unconscious influence, and the second our efforts which we put forth with the avowed object of winning souls for Christ.

Let us begin at the beginning, because the second cannot be carried out without the first: without fulness of life within there cannot be an overflow of life to others. It is of no use for any of you to try to be soul winners if you are not bearing fruit in your own lives. How can you serve the Lord with your lips if you do not serve Him with your lives? How can you preach His gospel with your tongues, when with hands, feet, and hearts you are preaching the devil's gospel, and setting up antichrist by your practical unholiness? We must first have life and bear personal fruit to the divine glory, and then out of our example will spring the conversion of others. Let us go to the fountain head, and see how the believer's own life is essential to his being useful to others.

#### **I. THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER IS FULL OF SOUL BLESSING.**

This fact we shall consider by means of a few observations growing out of the text; and, first, let us remark that **THE BELIEVER'S OUTWARD LIFE COMES AS A MATTER OF FRUIT FROM HIM.** This is important to notice. "The fruit of the righteous" that is to say, his life is not a thing fastened upon him, but it grows out of him. It is not a garment which he puts off and on, but it is inseparable from himself. The sincere man's religion is the man himself, and not a cloak for his concealment. True godliness is the natural outgrowth of a renewed nature, not the forced growth of pious hothouse excitement. Is it not natural for a vine to bear clusters of grapes? natural for a palm tree to bear dates? Certainly, as natural as it is for the apples of Sodom to be found on the trees of Sodom, and for noxious plants to produce poisonous berries. When God gives a new nature to His people, the life which comes out of that new nature springs spontaneously from it. The man who has a religion which is not part and parcel of himself will by and by discover that it is worse than useless to him. The man who wears his piety like a mask at a carnival, so that, when he gets home, he changes from a saint to a savage, from an angel to a devil, from John to Judas, from a benefactor to a bully, such a man, I say, knows very well what formalism and hypocrisy can do for him, but he has no vestige of true religion. Fig trees do not bear figs on certain days, and thorns at other times; but they are true to their nature at all seasons.

Those who think that godliness is a matter of vestment, and has an intimate relation with blue, and scarlet, and fine linen, are consistent if they keep their religion to the proper time for the wearing of their sacred pomposities; but he who has discovered what Christianity is knows that it is much more a life than an act, a form, or a profession. Much as I love the creed of Christendom, I am ready to say that true Christianity is far more a life than a creed. It is a creed, and it has its ceremonies, but it is mainly a life; it is a divine spark of heaven's own flame which falls into the human bosom and burns within, consuming much that lies hidden in the soul, and then at last, as a heavenly life, flaming forth, so as to be seen and felt by those around. Under the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, a regenerate person becomes like that bush in Horeb, which was all aglow with Deity. The God within him makes him shine so that the place around him is holy ground, and those who look at him feel the power of his hallowed life.

Dear brethren, we must take care that our religion is more and more a matter of outgrowth from our souls. Many professors are hedged about with, "You must not do this, or that," and are driven onward with, "You must do this, and you must do that." But there is a doctrine, too often perverted, which is, nevertheless, a blessed truth, and ought to dwell in your hearts. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace:" hence you do not obey the will of God because you hope to earn heaven thereby, or dream of escaping from divine wrath by your own doings, but because there is a life in you which seeks after that which is holy, pure, right, and true, and cannot endure that which is evil. You are careful to maintain good works, not from either legal hopes or legal fears, but because there is a holy thing

within you, born of God, which seeks, according to its nature, to do that which is pleasing to God. Look to it more and more that your religion is real, true, natural, vital, not artificial, constrained, superficial, a thing of times, days, places, a fungus produced by excitement, a fermentation generated by meetings and stirred by oratory. We all need a religion which can live either in a wilderness or in a crowd; a religion which will show itself in every walk of life, and in every company. Give me the godliness which is seen at home, especially around the fireside, for it is never more beautiful than there; that is seen in the battle and tussle of ordinary business among scoffers and gainsayers as well as among Christian men. Show me the faith which can defy the lynx eyes of the world, and walk fearlessly where all scowl with the fierce eyes of hate, as well as where there are observers to sympathize, and friends to judge leniently. May you be filled with the life of the Spirit, and your whole conduct and conversation be the natural and blessed outgrowth of that Spirit's indwelling!

Note, next, that **THE FRUIT WHICH COMES FROM A CHRISTIAN IS FRUIT WORTHY OF HIS CHARACTER**: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." Each tree bears its own fruit, and is known by it. The righteous man bears righteous fruit; and do not let us be at all deceived, brethren, or fall into any error about this, "he that doeth righteousness is righteous," and "he that doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." We are prepared, I hope, to die for the doctrine of justification by faith, and to assert before all adversaries that salvation is not of works; but we also confess that we are justified by a faith which produces works, and if any man has a faith which does not produce good works, it is the faith of devils. Saving faith appropriates the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and so saves by itself alone, for we are justified by faith without works; but the faith which is without works cannot bring salvation to any man. We are saved by faith without works, but not by a faith that is without works, for the real faith that saves the soul works by love and purifies the character. If you can cheat across the counter, your hope of heaven is a cheat, too; though you can pray as prettily as anybody, and practice acts of outward piety as well as any other hypocrite, you are deceived if you expect to be right at last. If as a servant you are lazy, lying, and loitering, or if as a master you are hard, tyrannical, and unchristianlike towards your men, your fruit shows that you are a tree of Satan's own orchard, and bear apples which will suit his tooth. If you can practice tricks of trade, and if you can lie, and how many do lie every day about their neighbors or about their goods! you may talk as you like about being justified by faith, but all liars will have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, and amongst the biggest liars you will be, for you are guilty of the lie of saying, "I am a Christian," whereas you are not. A false profession is one of the worst of lies, since it brings the utmost dishonor upon Christ and His people. The fruit of the righteous is righteousness: the fig tree will not bring forth thorns, neither shall we gather grapes from thistles. The tree is known by its fruit, and if we cannot judge men's hearts, and must not try to do so, we can judge their lives; and I pray God we may all be ready to judge our own lives, and see if we are bringing forth righteous fruit, for if not, we are not righteous men.

Let it, however, never be forgotten that the fruit of the righteous, though it comes from him naturally, for his new born nature yields the sweet fruit of obedience, yet **IT IS ALWAYS THE RESULT OF GRACE, AND THE GIFT OF GOD**. No truth ought to be remembered more than this, "From Me is thy fruit found." We can bring forth no fruit except as we abide in Christ. The righteous shall flourish **AS A BRANCH**, and only as a branch. How does a branch flourish? By its connection with the stem, and the consequent inflowing of the sap; and so, though the righteous man's righteous actions are his own, yet they are always produced by the grace which is imparted to him, and he never dares to take any credit for them, but he sings, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give praise." If he fails, he blames himself; if he succeeds, he glorifies God. Imitate his example. Lay every fault, every weakness, every infirmity at your own door; and if you fall in any respect short of perfection, and I am sure you do, take all that to yourself, and do not excuse yourself; but if there be any virtue, any praise, any true desire, any real prayer, anything that is good, ascribe it all to the Spirit of God. Remember, the righteous man would not be righteous unless God had made him righteous, and the fruit of righteousness would never come from him unless the divine sap within him had produced that acceptable fruit. To God alone be all honor and glory.

The main lesson of the passage is that this outburst of life from the Christian, this consequence of life within him, **THIS FRUIT OF HIS SOUL BECOMES A BLESSING TO OTHERS**. Like a tree, it yields shade and sustenance to all around. It is a tree of life, an expression which I cannot fully work out as I would wish, for there is a world of instruction compressed into the illustration. That which to the believer himself is fruit becomes to others a tree: it is a singular metaphor, but by no means a lame one. From the child of God there falls the fruit of holy living, even as an acorn drops from the oak; this holy living becomes influential and produces the best results in others, even as the acorn becomes itself an oak, and lends its shade to the birds of the air. The Christian's holiness becomes a tree of life. I suppose it means a living tree, a tree calculated to give life and sustain it in others. A fruit becomes a tree! A tree of life! Wonderful result this! Christ in the Christian produces a character which becomes a tree of life. The outward character is the fruit of the inner life; this outer life itself grows from a fruit into a tree, and as a tree it bears fruit in others to the praise and glory of God. Dear brothers and sisters, I know some of God's saints who live very near to Him, and they are evidently a tree of life, for their very shadow is comforting, cooling, and refreshing to many weary souls. I have known the young, the tried, the downcast, go to them, sit beneath their shade, and pour out the tale of their troubles, and they have felt it a rich blessing to receive their sympathy, to be told of the faithfulness of the Lord, and to be guided in the way of wisdom. There are a few good men in this world whom to know is to be rich. Such men are libraries of gospel truth; but they are better than books, for the truth in them is written on living pages. Their character is a true and living tree; it is not a mere post of the dead wood of doctrine, bearing an inscription, and rotting while it does so, but it is a vital, organized, fruit producing thing, a plant of the Lord's right hand planting.

Not only do some saints give comfort to others, but they also yield them spiritual nourishment. Well trained Christians become nursing fathers and nursing mothers, strengthening the weak, and binding up the wounds of the broken hearted. So, too, the strong, bold, generous deeds of large hearted Christians are of great service to their fellow Christians, and tend to raise them to a higher level. You feel refreshed by observing how they act; their patience in suffering, their courage in danger, their holy faith in God, their happy faces under trial, all these nerve you for your own conflicts. In a thousand ways, the sanctified believer's example acts in a healing and comforting way to his brethren, and assists in raising them above anxiety and unbelief. Even as the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations, so the words and deeds of saints are medicine for a thousand maladies.

And then what fruit, sweet to the taste of the godly, instructed believers bear! We can never trust in men as we trust in the Lord, but the Lord can cause the members to bless us in their measure, even as their Head is ever ready to do. Jesus alone is THE Tree of Life, but He makes some of His servants to be instrumentally to us little trees of life, by whom He gives us fruit of the same sort that He bears Himself, for He puts it there, and it is Himself in His saints causing them to bring forth golden apples, with which our souls are gladdened. May we every one of us be made like our Lord, and may His fruit be found upon our boughs!

We have put into the tomb many of the saints who have fallen asleep, and among them there were some of whom I will not at this moment speak particularly, whose lives as I look back upon them are still a tree of life to me. I pray God that I may be like them. Many of you knew them, and if you will only recall their holy, devoted lives, the influence they have left behind will still be a tree of life to you. They being dead yet speak; hear ye their eloquent exhortations! Even in their ashes live their wonted fires; kindle your souls at their warmth. Their noble examples are the endowments of the church, her children are ennobled and enriched as they remember their walk of faith and labor of love. Beloved, may we every one of us be true benedictions to the churches in whose gardens we are planted! "Oh!" says one, "I am afraid I am not much like a tree, for I feel so weak and insignificant." If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you have the commencement of the tree beneath whose branches the birds of the air will yet find a lodging. The very birds that would have eaten the tiny seed come and find lodgment in the tree which grows out of it; and people who despise and mock at you, now that you are a young beginner, will one of these days, if God blesses you, be glad to borrow comfort from your example and experience.

But one other thought on this point. Remember THAT THE COMPLETENESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOLY LIFE WILL BE SEEN ABOVE. There is a city of which it is written, "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life." The tree of life is a heavenly plant, and so the fruit of the Christian is a thing of heaven; though not transplanted to the glory land, it is getting fit for its final abode. What is holiness but heaven on earth? What is living unto God but the essence of heaven? What are uprightness, integrity, Christ likeness? Have not these even more to do with heaven than harps and palms and streets of purest gold? Holiness, purity, loveliness of character, these make a heaven within a man's own bosom; and even if there were no place called heaven, that heart would have a heavenly happiness which is set free from sin, and made like the Lord Jesus. See, then, dear brethren, what an important thing it is for us to be indeed righteous before God, for then the outcome of that righteousness shall be fruit which will be a tree of life to others, and a tree of life in heaven above, world without end. O blessed Spirit, make it so, and Thou shalt have all the praise!

II. This brings us to our second head. THE PURSUIT OF THE BELIEVER SHOULD BE SOULWINNING. For "he that winneth souls is wise. The tw It is implied in our text that THERE ARE SOULS WHICH NEED WINNING. Ah, me! all souls of men are lost by nature, You might walk through the streets of London, and say, with sighs and tears, of the masses of men you meet upon those crowded pavements, "Lost, lost, lost!" Wherever Christ is not trusted, and the Spirit has not created a new heart, and the soul has not come to the great Father, there is a lost soul. But here is the mercy these lost souls can be won. They are not hopelessly lost; not yet has God determined that they shall for ever abide as they are. It is not yet said, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still;" but they are in the land of hope where mercy may reach them, for they are spoken of as capable of being won. They may yet be delivered, but the phrase hints that it will need all our efforts: "He that WINNETH souls."

What do we mean by that word win? We use it in LOVE MAKING. We speak of the bridegroom who wins his bride; and sometimes there is a large expense of love, many a pleading word, and many a wooing act, ere yet the valued heart is all the suitor's own. I use this explanation because in some respects it is the very best, for souls will have to be won for Christ in this fashion, that they may be espoused unto Him. We must make love to the sinner for Christ; that is how hearts are to be won for Him. Jesus is the Bridegroom, and we must speak for Him, and tell of His beauty, as Abraham's servant, when he went to seek a wife for Isaac, acted as a wooer in his stead. Have you never read the story? Then turn to it when you get home, and see how he talked about his master, what possessions he had, and how Isaac was to be heir of it all, and so on, and then he finished his address by urging Rebecca to go with him. The question was put home to her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" So the minister's business is to commend his Master and his Master's riches, and then to say to souls, "Will you be wedded to Christ?" He who can succeed in this very delicate business is a wise man. o things are put together the life first, the effort next: what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

We also use the term in a MILITARY fashion. We speak of winning a city, a castle, or a battle. We do not win victories by going to sleep. Believe me, castles are not captured by men who are only half awake. To win a battle, needs the best skill, the greatest endurance, and the utmost courage. To storm fortresses, which are regarded as almost impregnable, men need to burn the midnight oil, and study well the arts of attack; and, when the time comes for the assault, not a soldier must be a laggard, but all force of artillery and manhood must be brought to bear on the point assailed. To carry man's heart by main force of grace, to capture it, to break down the bars of brass and dash the gates of iron in pieces, requires the exercise of a skill which only Christ can give. To bring up the big battering rams, and shake every stone in the sinner's conscience, to make his heart rock and reel within him for fear of the wrath to come, in a word, to assail a soul with all the artillery of the gospel, needs a wise man, and one fully aroused to his work. To hold up the white flag of mercy, and, if that be despised, to use the battering ram of threatening until a breach is made, and then, with the sword of the Spirit in his hand, to capture the city, to tear down the black flag of sin, and run up the banner of the cross, needs all the force the choicest preacher can command, and a great deal more. Those whose souls are as cold as the Arctic regions, and whose energy is reduced to the vanishing point, are not likely to take the city of Mansoul for Prince Emmanuel. If you think you are going to win souls, you must throw your soul into your work, just as a warrior must throw his soul into a battle, or victory will not be yours.

We use the words "to win" in reference to MAKING A FORTUNE, and we all know that the man who becomes a millionaire has to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, and it takes a deal of toiling and saving, and I know not what besides, to amass immense wealth. We have to go in for winning souls with the same ardor and concentration of our faculties as old Astor of New York went in to build up that fortune of so many millions which he has now left behind him. It is, indeed, A RACE, and you know that, in a race, nobody wins unless he strains every muscle and sinew. "They that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize;" and that one is generally he who had more strength than the rest; certainly, whether he had more strength or not, he put out all he had, and we

shall not win souls unless we imitate him in this.

Solomon in the text declares that, "He that winneth souls is wise," and such a declaration is all the more valuable as coming from so wise a man. Let me show you why a soul winner is wise. First, HE MUST BE TAUGHT OF GOD BEFORE HE WILL ATTEMPT IT. The man who does not know that, whereas he was once blind, now he sees, had better think of his own blindness before he attempts to lead his friends in the right way. If not saved yourself, you cannot be the means of saving others. He that winneth souls must be wise unto salvation first for himself.

That being taken for granted, HE IS A WISE MAN TO SELECT SUCH A PURSUIT. Young man, are you choosing an object worthy to be the great aim of your life? I do hope you will judge wisely, and select a noble ambition. If God has given you great gifts, I hope they will not be wasted on any low, sordid, or selfish design. Suppose I am now addressing one who has great talents, and has an opportunity of being what he likes, of going into Parliament, and helping to pass great measures, or of going into business, and making himself a man of importance; I hope he will weigh the claims of Jesus and immortal souls as well as other claims. Shall I addict myself to study? Shall I surrender myself to business? Shall I travel? Shall I spend my time in pleasure? Shall I become the principal fox hunter of the county? Shall I lay out my time in promoting political and social reforms? Think them all over; but if you are a Christian man, my dear friend, nothing will equal in enjoyment, in usefulness, in honor, and in lasting recompense the giving yourself up to the winning of souls. Oh, it is grand hunting, I can tell you, and beats all the fox hunting in the world in excitement and exhilaration! Have I not sometimes gone with a cry over hedge and ditch after some poor sinner, and kept well up with him in every twist and turn he took, till I have overtaken him by God's grace, and been in at the death, and rejoiced exceedingly when I have seen him captured by my Master? Our Lord Jesus calls His ministers fishermen, and no other fishermen have such labor, such sorrow, and such delight as we have. What a happy thing it is that you may win souls for Jesus, and may do this though you abide in your secular callings! Some of you would never win souls in pulpits; it would be a great pity if you tried, but you can win souls in the workshop, and in the laundry, in the nursery, and in the drawing room. Our hunting grounds are everywhere: by the wayside, by the fireside, in the corner, and in the crowd. Among the common people Jesus is our theme, and among the great ones we have no other. You will be wise, my brother, if for you the one absorbing desire is that you may turn the ungodly from the error of their ways. For you there will be a crown glittering with many stars, which you shall cast at Jesus' feet in the day of His appearing.

Further, it is not only wise to make this your aim, but YOU WILL HAVE TO BE VERY WISE IF YOU SUCCEED IN IT, because the souls to be won are so different in their constitutions, feelings, and conditions, and you will have to adapt yourselves to them all. The trappers of North America have to find out the habits of the animals they wish to catch, and so you will have to learn how to deal with each class of cases. Some are very depressed, you will have to comfort them. Perhaps you will comfort them too much, and make them unbelieving; and, therefore, possibly, instead of comforting them, you will need sometimes to administer a sharp word to cure the sulkiness into which they have fallen. Another person may be frivolous, and if you put on a serious face you will frighten your bird away; you will have to be cheerful, and drop a word of admonition as if by accident. Some people, again, will not let you speak to them, but will talk to you; you must know the art of putting a word in edgeways. You will have to be very wise, and become all things to all men, and your success will prove your wisdom. Theories of dealing with souls may look very wise, but they often prove to be useless when actually tried: he who by God's grace accomplishes the work is a wise man, though perhaps he knows no theory whatever. This work will need all your wit, and far more, and you will have to cry to the great Winner of souls above to give you of His Holy Spirit.

But, mark you, he that wins souls is wise, because HE IS ENGAGED IN A BUSINESS WHICH MAKES MEN WISER AS THEY PROCEED WITH IT. You will bungle at first, and very likely drive sinners off from Christ by your attempts to draw them to Him. I have tried to move some souls with all my might with a certain passage of Scripture, but they have taken it in an opposite light to what it was intended, and have started off in the wrong direction. It is very difficult to know how to act with bewildered inquirers. If you want some people to go forward, you must pull them backwards; if you want them to go to the right, you must insist upon their going to the left, and then they go to the right directly. You must be ready for these follies of poor human nature. I knew a poor aged Christian woman who had been a child of God fifty years, but she was in a state of melancholy and distress, from which nobody could arouse her. I called several times, and endeavored to cheer her up, but generally when I left she was worse than before. So, the next time I called to see her, I did not say anything to her about Christ or religion. She soon introduced those topics herself, and then I remarked that I was not going to talk to her about such holy things, for she did not know anything about them, for she was not a believer in Christ, and had been, no doubt, a hypocrite for many years. She could not stand that, and asserted, in self defense, that the Lord above knew her better than I did, and He was her witness that she did love the Lord Jesus Christ. She scarcely forgave herself afterwards for that admission, but she could never talk to me quite so despairingly any more. True lovers of men's souls learn the art of dealing with them, and the Holy Spirit makes them expert soul surgeons for Jesus. It is not because a man has more abilities, nor altogether because he has more grace, but the Lord makes him to love the souls of men intensely, and this imparts a secret skill, since, for the most part, the way to get sinners to Christ is to love them to Christ.

Beloved brethren, I will say, once more, HE WHO REALLY WINS SOULS FOR JESUS, HOWEVER HE WINS THEM, IS A WISE MAN. Some of you are slow to admit this. You say, "Well, So and so, I daresay, has been very useful, but he is very rough." What does his roughness matter if he wins souls? "Ah!" says another, "but I am not built up under him." Why do you go to hear him to get built up? If the Lord has sent him to pull down, let him pull down, and do you go elsewhere for edification; but do not grumble at a man who does one work because he cannot do another. We are also too apt to pit one minister against another, and say, "You should hear MY minister." Perhaps we should, but it would be better for you to hear the man who edifies you, and let others go where they also are instructed. "He that winneth souls is wise." I do not ask you how he did it. He sang the gospel, and you did not like it; but if he won souls, he was wise. Soul winners have all their own ways; and if they do but win souls, they are wise. I will tell you what is not wise,

and will not be thought so at the last, namely, to go about the churches, doing nothing yourself, and railing at all the Lord's useful servants.

Here is a dear brother on his dying bed, he has the sweet thought that the Lord enabled him to bring many souls to Jesus, and the expectation when he comes to the gates that many spirits will come to meet him. They will throng the ascent to the New Jerusalem, and welcome the man who brought them to Jesus. They are immortal monuments to his labors He is wise. Here is another who has spent all his time in interpreting the prophecies, so that everything he read of in the newspapers he could see in Daniel or the Revelation. He is wise, so some say, but I had rather spend my time in winning souls. I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unpick all the mysteries of the divine Word, for salvation is the thing we are to live for. I would to God that I understood all mysteries, yet chief of all would I proclaim the mystery of soul saving by faith in the blood of the Lamb. It is comparatively a small matter for a minister to have been a staunch upholder of orthodoxy all his days, and to have spent himself in keeping up the hedges of his church; soul winning is the main concern. It is a very good thing to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; but I do not think I should like to say in my last account, "Lord, I have lived to fight the Romanists and the State Church, and to put down the various erroneous sects, but I never led a sinner to the cross." No, we will fight the good fight of faith, but the winning of souls is the greater matter, and he who attends to it is wise. Another brother has preached the truth, but he did so polish up his sermons that the gospel was hidden. Never a sermon was fit to preach, he thought, until he had written it out a dozen times to see whether every sentence would be according to the canons of Cicero and Quintillian, and then he went and delivered the gospel as a grand oration. Is that wise? Well, it takes a wise man to be a thorough orator; but it is better not to be an orator if fine speech prevents your being understood. Let eloquence be flung to the dogs rather than souls be lost. What we want is to win souls, and they are not to be won by flowery speeches. We must have the winning of souls at heart, and be red hot with zeal for their salvation; and then, however much we blunder, according to the critics, we shall be numbered among those whom the Lord calls wise.

Now, Christian men and women, I want you to take this matter up practically, and to determine that you will try this very night to win a soul. Try the one next to you in the seat if you cannot think of anybody else. Try on the way home; try with your own children. Have I not told you of what happened one Sunday evening? In my sermon I said, "Now, you mothers, have you ever prayed with each of your children, one by one, and urged them to lay hold on Christ? Perhaps dear Jane is now in bed, and you have never yet pleaded with her about eternal things. Go home to night, wake her up, and say, 'Jane, I am sorry I have never told you about the Savior personally, and prayed with you, but I mean to do it now.' Wake her up, and put your arms round her neck, and pour out your heart to God with her." Well, there was a good sister here who had a daughter named Jane. What do you think? She came on Monday to bring her daughter Jane to see me in the vestry, for when she woke her up, and began, "I have not spoken to you about Jesus," or something to that effect, "Oh, dear mother!" said Jane, "I have loved the Savior these six months, and wondered you had not spoken to me about Him;" and then there was great kissing and rejoicing. Perhaps you may find that to be the case with a dear child at home; and, if you do not, so much the more reason why you should begin at once to speak. Did you never win a soul for Jesus? You shall have a crown in heaven, but no jewels in it. You will go to heaven childless; and you know how it was in the old times, how the women dreaded lest they should be childless. Let it be so with Christian people; let them dread being spiritually childless. We MUST hear the cries of those whom God has given to be born unto Himself by our means. We MUST hear them, or else cry out in anguish, "Give me converts, or I die." Young men, and old men, and sisters of all ages, if you love the Lord, get a passion for souls. Do you not see them? They are going down to hell by thousands; as often as the hand upon the dial completes its circuit, hell devours multitudes, some of them ignorant of Christ, and others willfully rejecting Him. The world lies in darkness: this great city still pines for the light your own friends and kinsfolk are unsaved, and they may be dead ere this week is over. Oh, if you have any humanity, let alone Christianity, if you have found the remedy, tell the diseased about it! If you have found life, proclaim it to the dead; if you have found liberty, publish it to the captives; if you have found Christ, tell of Him to others. My brethren in the College, let this be your choice work while studying, and let it be the one object of your lives when you go forth from us. Do not be content when you get a congregation, but labor to win souls; and as you do this, God will bless you. As for us, we hope during the rest of our lives to follow Him who is The Soul Winner, and to put ourselves in His hands who maketh us soul winners, so that our life may not be a long folly, but may be proved by results to have been directed by wisdom.

O you souls not won to Jesus, remember that faith in Christ saves you! Trust in Him. May you be led to trust in Him, for His name's sake! Amen.

"The Soul Winner" Charles Spurgeon; (19 June 1834 – 31 January 1892) was a British Particular Baptist preacher. Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is known as the "Prince of Preachers". He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the Church in agreement with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith understanding, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day.

\* This lecture was delivered on a Friday afternoon, when the tutors and students from Harley House came to meet their brethren at the Pastors' College.

( Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 424-426)

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