

THOUGHT CONDEMNED, YET COMMANDED

NO. 2973

A SERMON
 PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1906
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
 ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 5, 1875

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
Matthew 6:31-33

THESE are soothing words to read, but difficult words to put into practice. Had anyone except the Lord Jesus Christ uttered them, we might have quoted to Him that ancient saying, “Physician, heal thyself,” for we shall never find any other teacher who is himself absolutely free from care. But Jesus Christ not only gives us the purest possible precepts, but His own life is the best exposition of them. If ever you want to know what Christ means by His teaching, look at His life. You may rest assured that He never gave us a command which He was not Himself prepared to obey.

Those of us who have put our trust in Christ are His servants, and He Himself condescended to be a servant for our sakes, indeed, He is the great model Servant, and the service which He requires of us He himself shows us how to perform. I do not intend, therefore, so much to expound the text by any words of my own, as to illustrate it by the life of Jesus Christ Himself. I think that it may be more profitable, and certainly it will be more unusual, if I take these words of Christ, and say to you, “If you would know their meaning, look at the life of Him whom you call Master and Lord. You can best understand His words by His works.”

I see in the text, first, a *precept forbidding thought*, secondly, a *precept commanding thought*, and then, in the two precepts, if they are rightly kept, I see a *frame of mind admirably fitted for all believers in coming to the table of communion*.

I. First, then, we have here A PRECEPT FORBIDDING THOUGHT—a precept which says, “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” How are we to understand this precept?

Certainly, we are not to understand it in the sense of the idler, who says, “God will provide, and therefore, there is no need for me to labor. God’s providence is my inheritance, and therefore, I may fold my arms and sit still.” The man who talks and acts in that fashion will have thistles on his land, emptiness in his cupboard, rags on his back, and ruin to his character, and all that will serve him right.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat,” and it would, perhaps, be the best way of treating some men if they were never allowed to eat anything except what they had themselves earned. Of course, this rule would not apply in the case of those who are disabled by old age, or laid aside by sickness, but in every other case, work is the lot of us all, and it is a benefit to us all, and we ought never, under the pretense of piety, to endeavor to shirk it.

You have heard, perhaps, of the very pious man, who entered a monastery in order that he might spend all his time in devotion, so when the time came for the brethren to go into the fields to work, he did not leave his cell, he was too spiritual to handle a hoe or a spade, so he continued in communion with angels. He was very much surprised, however, when the time came for the brotherhood to assemble in the refectory that he was not called, and after waiting till the demands of hunger overcame the claims

of his spiritual being, he went to the prior, and asked why he had not been called to the meal, and he was informed that, as he was so spiritual that he could not work, it was thought that he was probably so spiritual that he could not eat, and at any rate, the laws of the monastery did not permit him to eat until he had earned what he needed.

There was much common-sense in that reply, and our Lord Jesus Christ was not one of your lackadaisical, goody-goody sort of people, who have nothing at all to do. Point me to a single wasted hour in our Savior's whole life, show me one instance in which He was a sluggard, if you can. There is His life record before you, written by four truthful men, put your finger, if you can, upon a single spot where He might be rightly accused of being sluggish. If He had been so, we might have had a warrant for interpreting this text according to the lazy man's version of it, but it is not so. His motto ever was, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

Neither did our Lord Jesus Christ intend to inculcate prodigality when He said, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat?" and so on. This is what the young spendthrift does when he comes into possession of his estate. He scatters all he has with both hands. Take thought? Not he, as long as the gold will last, he will spend it without reckoning. All the proverbs of prudence he despises, he is too free-hearted and generous to think of them, and so, by his sinful extravagance, he speedily brings himself to poverty.

Our Lord Jesus Christ never mean that, and He never acted like that. With what singular economy did the Savior always behave! Generous to the last degree, He fed five thousand men, beside women and children, but equally economical, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Jesus Christ would have us take care of what we have, for we are only stewards, and a steward must not waste his lord's goods. Extravagance, waste—the suffering of anything to perish which ought to be used—is a wrong thing which cannot be too sternly condemned, and the Savior never intended, for a single moment, to justify any such action as that.

Neither did our Lord forbid a certain amount of forethought. One kind of forethought He certainly did condemn when He said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." But He Himself—and as I have reminded you, He is His own Expositor, and the key to His own teaching—often looked forward. For instance, with regard to Lazarus, who He might have gone to him at once, He stayed away awhile, looking forward to the time when Lazarus should have been dead and buried four days as the proper period for displaying His resurrection power.

And as for His own death, He looked forward to that from the very opening of His earthly ministry, and long before. He had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened until it was accomplished. He steadfastly set His face to go unto Jerusalem, not merely once, but virtually all His life long. He did think of His latter end, and His whole life was a preparation for that great offering up of Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of men. He did not, therefore, forbid us to look to the end of life, and to the necessary preparation for that end. He did not forbid us to look towards ends and objects which may require futurity to ripen them, for if we did not do so, our life would be altogether a confusion, and certainly could not be a well-directed life.

What, then, did the Savior mean when He said, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" I think that He meant, first, "*Do not let provision for your temporal wants be the chief end of your life*, for this is what the heathen do. The heathen Gentiles live to eat, to drink, and to clothe themselves." This is what the savage still does, give him "happy hunting grounds" where he can get sufficient food, and where the skins of beasts may cover him from the inclemency of the weather, and you have given him all that he wants.

Jesus says, "After all these things do the Gentiles seek," but you are not to make this search the sole end and aim of your life, you were created for something nobler and better than that. For such an object as this, an ox or an ass may live, but not a Christian. It is utterly beneath the dignity of your immortal spirit, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, to be living alone, or chiefly, for this object. This is a

matter which will require your careful thought, God has formed you of the dust of the ground, and the appetites of animals are shared in by you, and they crave and demand your attention, but not such attention as would lead you to make these minor matters the main business of your life. But alas! how many men there are who are simply great consumers of bread, and meat, and wine, and such like things.

“Like brutes they live; like brutes they die.”

May God convert them by His grace, and so lift them up to something higher! As for all of you who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, scorn such business as satisfies the heathen savage.

But the Savior must have meant more than that. When He said, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,” He meant, *as compared with the service of God, and the honor and glory of His name, which should be the great object of your life, do not give any consideration to these other things.* Christ elsewhere puts the matter thus, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” He means that his disciple is to hate, or to love less, even his own life—to be prepared to consider that even that is a mere trifle, if it should ever be a hindrance to the glory of Christ.

You remember how the apostle Paul said to the Ephesian elders, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Brethren, if it ever comes to this, that you must lose your business, your situation, your livelihood, or else do wrong, lose everything sooner than commit the smallest sin. And if it came to this, that you must lose your liberty, and lie immured in a dungeon, or else deny the faith, accept the prison, but reject the opportunity of traitorously forsaking your Lord and Master.

And if it came even to death itself, remember how bravely the martyrs behaved when they refused to accept pardon at the price of recantation. They could die, but they could not deny their Lord; they could burn, but they could not turn; and therefore, they took no thought as to what they should eat or what they should drink, or whether they should live or die. They counted all such things as insignificant trifles to those who were seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and who will dare to say that they were unwise? If any should even hint that they were not wise, think of them as they are now within yonder pearly portals, amid the white-robed hosts bearing the victor’s palm.

*“Foremost of the sons of light,
Nearest the eternal throne.”*

These are they who, for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s, took no thought of minor matters, but followed the Lamb whithersoever He led the way.

Still further to open up the meaning of this injunction, let me remind you that *this is just what our Lord Jesus Christ Himself did.* You cannot say that Jesus Christ ever troubled His head about what He should eat, or what He should drink, His meat and His drink consisted in doing His Father’s will. Even life itself was as nothing to Him, for He cheerfully laid it down for our sakes. When the devil offered Him all the kingdoms of the world, you know how He answered him, and when, afterwards, Peter began to rebuke Him for talking about dying, He seemed to think that He was in the same position as when He was with the devil in the wilderness, and He said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” He counted nothing that He had as being worth preserving, and in this sense, taking no thought of anything, He surrendered all to God to be used for the good of His people.

And dear friends, we shall further see the meaning of the text if we note that *we are not to take such thought about eating, and drinking, and so on, as to make ourselves slaves to work and worry.* I know some professing Christians, who seem as if they wanted to grasp the whole world. They have plenty of

business already, yet they are craving for more. The days are not long enough for them, they would like to be up before the larks, or not to go to bed at all if they could do without sleep. They stretch out their arms, like huge encompassing seas seeking to swallow all the shore. They have what ought to be enough, they have long had enough, and a great deal more than enough for their needs, yet they have not enough, nor is it probable that they ever will have enough to satisfy their cravings, unless the grace of God should exert its gracious influence over their hearts.

And see how worried they always are. I have seen a poor man, with only a crust of dry bread to eat, yet he was perfectly happy, and I have seen a rich man, with an abundance of wealth, and he was utterly miserable. The one could rejoice in God, though he had little of this world's goods, but the other could not rejoice notwithstanding all that he possessed.

A Christian should not be one of those who are full of worry, those who rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, and devotes all their time to secular and secondary things, so that they have no leisure for private devotion, or for the service of God. God ought not to have the clippings, and the odds and ends of life. He ought not to come in for the cheese-parings and the candle-ends, as He seems to do in some men's houses, but the chief part of our time, yea, all our time should, in some respects, be consecrated to Him. While it is right for you to be diligent in business, yet you should always let everything be done for God's glory, and that cannot be the case if you become the slave of Mammon, and if the signs of fretting and worrying are plainly visible upon your very faces.

Think for a moment, when did your Lord ever fret and worry about gold and silver? Did anyone ever see upon that blessed brow of His any cloud because of His lack of these things? Enough was given to Him for His daily maintenance, and that He entrusted to Judas, the treasurer of His little band of disciples, but He made no request for it, nor did He levy any tithe or tax for the support of Himself and His followers, nor was He ever anxious about ways and means, He took all things calmly and quietly, and He would have you do the same.

And He meant too, dear friends, that *no Christian man ought to be very anxious about anything*. He never was. I know some Christians, and some of them are here now, who will not enjoy the service, or the communion, because they are so anxious about what is possibly going to happen. They say that they believe in providence, but they really disbelieve in it. They say that they are trusting in God, but they do not truly trust Him. They know that they ought to cast all their care upon Him who careth for them, but they do not do anything of the kind. They continue to care for themselves, and they are almost worn out with anxiety.

Look even at the mother of our Lord when the supply of wine at the wedding-feast ran short, she was, apparently, all in a fret, so she went to Jesus, and said, "They have no wine," but Jesus said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." His time would come in due course, and then He would give them what they needed for that wedding-feast, and until the right moment came, He remained calm and quiet, and that is how we should be, leaving everything in God's hand. Having done all that we can do, by honest labor and earnest prayer, let us leave the rest with God, for He would not have His children cumbered with much serving, nor have them vexed with earthly cares.

And more than that, dear friends, *we ought never to take such thought as to get murmuring, and repining, and complaining of our lot*, as though it had not been fixed by infinite love and wisdom. Some people wish that they were almost anything rather than what they are, albeit there are others who would be glad enough to be just what those very people are. You think, my brother, that your cross is heavier to bear than mine. I would not, however, recommend you to change with me, as I certainly would not change with you. If we could all lay our crosses down in this Tabernacle, and each man could take another one's cross, which he liked better than his own, within four-and-twenty hours we should all be back here, crying for our own crosses to be given to us again, for each man's cross fits his shoulders better than anybody else's cross would fit them.

Besides, we can have grace given to us to endure the trial which God has sent to us, but if we had a trial of our own choosing, we could not expect that grace would come to support us under that, so what

should we do then? Never murmur, my brethren, until you find Christ murmuring. Read all the records of His life and see when He ever complained. Foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but He had not where to lay His head, yet He did not mention that fact in any spirit of complaining. He was a poor man, His garment was the common robe of the country, His food did not consist of delicacies and dainties, neither was His drink selected from the choicest liquids in the world, yet He was a joyous man—"a man of sorrows" for our sakes, but as far as He Himself was personally concerned, the noblest, the calmest, and the happiest of mankind.

And brethren, *we must never let thought about temporal things drive us to despair*. Possibly, in this large audience, there is a man who says, "I have struggled very hard, but everything seems to go against me, and I am inclined to throw it all up." But my brother, when did your Lord throw up all His work, or throw up any of His work? He never did, and if you will take to God that portion of your care which you ought not to attempt to carry, you will find that the part of the load which you ought to carry is not too heavy for your shoulders when the Lord strengthens you with His grace.

The wear and tear of life comes not out of the providential trials which we have to endure, but out of the unbelieving cares and burdens which we make for ourselves. You can carry easily enough the load that God appoints for you, my brother, but if you let the devil sit on the top of it, in the form of your own anxieties, and doubts, and fears, then the burden will crush you to the earth. Imitate your blessed Lord and Master, and never despair, but hope on, hope ever, and even if God Himself should seem to forsake you, yet cry, "My God, my God," even as Jesus did when God had forsaken him.

I will only say one other thing upon this point, which is, that *we are not to think about temporal things so as to get into the habit of hoarding, as some do*. They scarcely spend enough to provide for *their own necessities*. The poor act nothing from them, and God's church, I was about to say, gets less than nothing, and I might truly say that, though it appears to be impossible, for there are some who give a good deal less than nothing to the Lord's cause, for they occupy a place in the building where services are held, which has been erected, and is still kept up, by others at an expense which these misers never attempt to share, so that, as far as God's house is concerned, they absolutely take from that house, instead of giving to it, albeit that they have superabundant substance of their own, from which they ought to contribute to the work of the Lord.

Saving is well, but the first thing that a man has to do is to see to the saving of his soul, and there are some, who always look so much to the saving of their wealth that their soul stands very little chance of being saved. To get and to hold, seems to be the great end-all and be-all of some men's being, but it can never be so with a true Christian. He, by divine grace, is like his Master, who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." His riches consisted in giving, and therefore, He was the richest man who ever lived, for He gave more than anyone else when He gave Himself that He might redeem His people.

I have thus explained to you the thought that is forbidden. May God's grace enable us to obey our Lord's injunction, and the secret—the only secret—by which we can learn how to obey it is this. Somebody must think and care for us, and as we are not to think and care for ourselves, we must cease all sinful caring by believing that our Heavenly Father cares for us. If Jesus cares for me, I may get rid of care about myself, and I urge all my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, by the wounds that were given Him for our sake, and by all the many tokens of His love that He has given to us, never to doubt that He cares for us in everything—in the little things as much as in the great ones, counting even the hairs of our head, and bearing all our afflictions, according to that gracious word, "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Cast your care, then, on Him, for so you may cease to care for yourselves.

II. But now, secondly, we have in the text A PRECEPT COMMANDING THOUGHT, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

Call back your thoughts from the pursuit of the tidings of this life, and when you have recalled them, send them forth in pursuit of the blessings of the life that is to come. What ought a Christian to care for? What did Christ care for? *Christ's great care was for His Father's glory*. For this He lived, and for this He died. There is no single action of His life that had not God's glory as its end.

O beloved brethren and sisters, who are bought with the blood of Christ, we cannot any of us say this about our own lives, yet we ought to be able to say it, and we ought now to pray God's blessed Spirit to enable us to concentrate all our thoughts, and powers, and energies upon this one object—that we might, in all things, glorify God. This is, as the catechism says, “man's chief end”—especially the chief end of redeemed man—to do everything, whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, to do all to the glory of God—to make the commonest acts of daily life, as well as the higher acts of service and devotion, subservient to God's glory. God help you to attain to this ideal Christian life!

Next to that, *Christ's great care was to do the particular work which God had given Him to do.* When He had been sitting by the well-side, talking to that poor woman of Samaria, His disciples wondered why He did not ask for meat, but He said to them, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” He was completely absorbed in that one thing—the finishing of the work which God had given Him to do. And how early He began that work!

What a bright example He has set before you young lads and lasses! When He was twelve years of age, after He had been “in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions,” and Joseph and Mary had sorrowed because they could not find Him, He said to them, in answer to His mother's question of reproof, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” and He might have finished His life with the same inquiry. When wicked men led Him away to crucify Him, and He willingly went as a sheep to the slaughter, He might have said, “I am still about my Father's business.”

He never sought to serve Himself, He always served His Father who had sent Him. There were no by-ends with Christ, you never find Him seeking personal honor. On the contrary, He hid himself away from men when they sought to thrust honor upon Him. You never find Him seeking personal pleasure, His life was a life of self-denial. You never find Him seeking riches, amongst all the poor, there were none poorer than He was. But He always delighted to do what God had given Him to do.

O brothers and sisters, if we were to live as He did, we should make our lives to be grand lives, and happy lives too, albeit that we should probably multiply our sorrows, even as Christ Himself did. Yet, as I have already reminded you, there was a deep happiness underneath the surface, in Christ's inmost soul, which abundantly recompensed Him for all the trials He had to endure. Let us labor to do as He did, so that we shall be able to say, “This one thing I do—the one thing which God has given me to do.” Short of this, let us never be content.

I long to be able to say, with the apostle Paul, “For to me to live is Christ,” I should like to be a thunderbolt, hurled from the right hand of God, and to go crashing through every obstacle till it had reached the mark at which God had aimed me. I pray that the love of Christ may thus constrain me, and drive me on towards the great object of my being—the glory of my God. So may it be with you too, dear friends, and to that end, “gird up the loins of your mind,” “lay aside every weight,” and the clinging garments which would entangle you, and impede you in running to the goal which lies before you—the finishing of the work which God has given you to do.

What else did Christ care for? Well, I might, truly say that He cared for nothing else, for these two things—to glorify God and to finish His work—comprehend His whole life. Yet, as a matter of detail, I may remind you that *Christ lived to care for His people.* He was free from care about Himself, yet full of care for His people. From the very first day when He had disciples around Him, till the hour in which He was taken up from them, He was always thinking about them. Read any one of the Gospels through, with this thought in your mind, and you will be struck with the tender care of Jesus Christ towards those who followed him.

There is Peter, for instance. Christ knows that Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat, but He means to be before the devil, so He says to Peter, “I have prayed for thee, that my faith fail not.” He did not say, “I will pray for you when you get into Satan's sieve,” but “I have prayed for you already, I have anticipated the temptation by my supplication for you.”

When Judas and the band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came to arrest our Lord in Gethsemane, what did He say? “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” His only thought was about His disciples, not about Himself, just as, after instituting the last supper, and He was going out to be betrayed, and needed all the comfort, humbly speaking, that His disciples could give Him, He never asked them for comfort, but He began comforting them by saying to them, “Let not *your* heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

You see that all His care was for them, not for Himself, and brothers and sisters, let us have something like this care for the church of God. Let us be mindful of the Lord’s people, and let us watch for opportunities of doing good to others. If we hear of any who are seeking the Lord, let us try to guide them to Him. If we know any, among our brethren or sisters, who have backslidden, let us seek to be the means of restoring them. If any are sad at heart, let us endeavor to comfort them. Having given up all sinful cares, let the welfare of the people of God be our one and only care.

And then, again, *Christ had a care for those who had no care for Him*. That is a beautiful simile which He used concerning guilty Jerusalem, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” That is a beautiful emblem of what Christianity should be. The mother-bird seems utterly oblivious of herself altogether. If she can but spread her wings over those little chicks that nestle down close to her bosom, she will give away her own warmth for them, and sacrifice her own life in their defense.

Christ looked upon that city, which He knew would perish with an overwhelming destruction, but His big heart was palpitating in His bosom, and He was longing to cover even those great sinners with His wings of love. He manifested His care for the sons of men very practically. When a crowd gathers to hear anyone preach, surely it is not the preacher’s business to feed His congregation as well as teach them, yet Jesus thought it was His duty to do so.

They were hungry, and weary, and ready to faint, and the gracious Savior was concerned about them, though He had no care about Himself, and He specially cared for those poor pale-faced women and children, who had come so far, and looked so weak, and He said to His disciples, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.” And then, like a prince who makes a great feast, He fed them all with loaves and fishes.

And Christian men and women, if God enables you to get rid of care on your own account, you will begin to care for the poor and needy, and to care for sinners. Yes, and you will learn to love your neighbor as yourself, and when you meet with a case that needs your help, you will be careful in attending to it, and if you cannot tell whether it is a good case or not, you will be like Job, who said, “The cause which I knew not I searched out.”

That man is like Christ who lives, not for himself, but for others. It has been all too truly said that there are some people, whose first care is for themselves, and whose second care is for themselves, and whose third care is for themselves, and whose fourth care is for themselves, and so on as many times as you like to repeat it. Possibly, somewhere down in the millions, there is a little care for somebody else, but it is too low down ever to come to anything practical. I am afraid it is so often with some professing Christians, but let it not be so among you. The heathen care for themselves, the brute beasts care for themselves, but the Christian should care for others, with a view to the glory of God. For this object he should live, even as Jesus lived.

III. Now, thirdly, IN THE SPIRIT OF THESE TWO PRECEPTS, IT WILL BE WELL FOR ALL CHRISTIANS TO COME TO THEIR LORD’S TABLE.

Come first, my brethren and sisters in Christ, *without care about temporal things*. Did you come in here heavily burdened, my sister? Then you had forgotten that the Lord loved you, and that He knew all about your needs. Now that I remind you of these facts, leave your burden in the pew where you are

sitting—it will not incommode anybody else—and come to the table without it. “O sir!” you say, “I have worked very hard all the week.” Then, my dear sister, do not go on working or worrying today. “I have had a crushing burden to carry the last six months,” says a brother. Then, my dear friend, do not carry it any longer, there is no need that you should.

The Jews, when they ate the passover, stood with their loins girded, and each man had his staff in his hand. They might carry a burden, for they were going on a long journey, and they were thrust out in haste, so we read that “the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.” But the Christian, at the Lord’s table, does not stand.

What ought to be our posture at the communion table? In Matthew 26:20, we read, “When the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.” No doubt, according to the Oriental custom, they reclined in such a position that John even leaned his head upon the bosom of Christ. They sat, or reclined, perfectly at their ease, as if to remind us that, when we believe in Jesus Christ, we enter into rest. What is the teaching of the emblems upon the table—the bread and the wine? What do they mean? They are to remind us of the broken body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of His shed blood, of which we are, symbolically, to eat and to drink.

Paul says, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” What, will He deny you bread for your body after He has given you Christ, the Bread of heaven, for your soul? Will He deny you raiment for your body after He has clothed your soul with the robe of Christ’s perfect righteousness? Will He deny you a sufficient store of earthly goods that you may get through this world when He has already given you a mansion in the skies, and a crown of life that fadeth not away? If we should forget our cares anywhere, surely we should do so at the communion table.

Now, dear friends, let me, ask—*why do you still carry your cares?* Have they ever done you any good? Which one of you, who has been the most full of care, has ever put a sixpence into his purse thereby? With all your fretting and worrying, have you ever obtained any comfort? It is sorry music that you make with your moaning over your anxieties, I am sure that you have never enjoyed the tune yourself, nor has anyone else.

And as for you, who have been the greatest money-grubbers, I can tell you that you will die poorer than you were when you were born. “Nay,” say you “that cannot be, for naked came we into this world.” But you will die poorer than that, for when you came into this world, you had both soul and body, but when you go out of this world, you will have to leave your body behind, so that you will die poorer than you were born. You may save as much as you like, and you may struggle, and wrestle, and fret, and fume, and worry, but it will come to that in the end. The man who will carry fifty staves, or a hundred, or who will not be satisfied till he gets many hundred staves, and tries to travel along with all that bundle of sticks—well, he may do it if he likes, but if you will give me one good stout stick to walk with, I will be satisfied, and I think that is the wise thing to do. He who has what he really needs, and who is content therewith, is the truly rich man.

So, brethren and sisters, put aside all cares about temporal things as you come to the table of your Lord, but *come to His table with your heart full of care about your God.* Come with this care—that you may not come as a mere form, or with this care—that you may truly discern the Lord’s body, or with this care—that through the outward signs, you may behold your Lord and Master crucified for you. Come with this care—that you may really feed upon Christ after a spiritual fashion, and with this care—that when you go away from the table, you may not lose what you have gained here, but may show by your life that you have really been strengthened by feeding upon Jesus Christ. Concentrate all your thoughts into this one desire—

*“Nearer, my God, to Thee;
Nearer to Thee;”—*

and partake of the emblems of His body, and His shed blood, with this sole object, that you may get nearer and yet nearer to Him, and that you may afterwards live like Him. Come to the communion in this spirit, and God's blessing will surely reap upon you.

Before I close my discourse, I have a few words to say to those of you who have no part nor lot in the matter of which I have been speaking. I am addressing many persons who are not Christians, they are full of care about the things of the world, and very likely some of them say to me, "You might let us care about the things of the world, for we have nothing else to care for." Some persons say, "It is a dreadful thing that these unconverted people should have such-and-such amusements." So it is, but there is another act of the case. Whenever I see a pig in a sty, and the farmer is going to give him some wash from the house, I say, "Let the creature have it. He likes it, and it is the proper food for him." I do not envy him, and if I were to see a man of my acquaintance go and drink the hog's food, I should be shocked indeed.

So, when I see a man, who professes to be a Christian, taking delight in the pleasures of the world, I am shocked, but such things are suited to the poor creatures that like them. Only recollect, my friend, if you are going to be content with this world, you are thereby giving up heaven, and giving up the joys of eternity, and in taking the good things, as you call them, of sin, and the pleasures of the flesh, you take the devil and all his works, and that involves your being cast away from the presence of God forever.

Oh, if you only knew your true condition, you who are without God, and without Christ, you would want to get away to your houses, and to fall upon your knees, and cry unto the Lord to have mercy upon you, and if you were wise, you would not even wait till you reached your homes, but in this very place you would cry, "What must we do to be saved?"

If your heart really does utter that cry, let me give you the Scriptural answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Trust that Savior whose teaching I have tried to explain. Trust Him who did more than teach, for He lived; trust Him who did more than live, for He died; trust Him who did more than die, for He rose again, and ever liveth at His Father's right hand on high. Trust Him, and you shall be saved forever. The Lord bless you, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.