

THE TABERNACLE—WITHOUT THE CAMP

NO. 359

A SERMON
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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

“And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that everyone which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.”
Exodus 33:7.

I HAVE been somewhat perplexed in studying this text, for according to the book of Exodus, the tabernacle—the tabernacle strictly so called—did not exist at the time to which it refers. In the succeeding chapters of this very book, we have an account of the gifts which were made by the people for the construction of that tabernacle, wherein God dwelt while the children of Israel abode in the wilderness. It seems to me, after looking at the various authorities upon the point, and considering the opinions of those who have well studied it, that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt there may have been some large tent constantly pitched in the center of the camp, which had no ark of the covenant in it and probably no altar. The vessels and implements for the service of the sanctuary had not then been made. Not even had the pattern been seen by Moses in the holy mountain.

The people may be considered to have been at that time under the patriarchal dispensation which reaches on, if I understand Scripture aright, until the time of the giving of the law and forty days beyond that really, for it was forty days after the giving of the law, before the ceremonials of Levitical worship were thoroughly established. Moses was forty days in the mount, receiving instruction as to how the worship of God should in future be ordered. That worship had not then begun in all its glorious splendor. Aaron had not even been ordained a priest. The service of the Levitical dispensation awaited as yet those statutes and ordinances by which its observances were solemnly imposed.

Previous to this, as I take it, there was a large tent in the center of the camp, set apart for that worship which was common to patriarchal times for prayer, for praise, and for burnt sacrifices. Now, here God dwelt in the midst of this tabernacle. He was in the center of His people, His cloud overshadowed them by day, and kept off from their heads the burning heat, that cloud was like a luminous atmosphere above them by night, so that probably they could see by night as well as by day. God was in the midst of them—this was their glory and their boast. They had no strange God. The LORD Himself had made their camp the place for His feet, and glorious indeed it was.

But while Moses had ascended to the mountaintop, the people, who were an unspiritual race, wanted something that they could see. They wanted some visible personification of that spiritual God, whom they were unable to worship unless they saw Him in type and figure. So they said unto Aaron, “Up, make us gods that shall go before us!” They broke off their earrings and they fashioned there a golden calf, and they said, “These be your gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

Not, I think, that they meant to worship the calf, but they intended to worship JEHOVAH under the representation of a calf, for it is expressly said in the Word, “Then they proclaimed a feast unto JEHOVAH,” which shows that even their dancing around the calf was but a human invention whereby they hoped to honor and to glorify JEHOVAH. But they vexed the Holy One unto anger, and they grieved His Holy Spirit so that He went forth from the midst of them. He would not acknowledge the camp any more as being the place where He could dwell.

A voice might have been heard in heaven, “Let us go hence.” The holy God could not abide any longer in the central spot of a camp so defiled by sin. The pillar of cloud moved and Moses bade the proper officers lift up the sacred tent, they carried it up the side of the hill. Justice was about to take away from the people the presence of God, but Mercy stopped its march. Mercy seemed to say, “Though God cannot abide in the midst of the people, yet He will not go very far from them.”

So He stayed upon the hillside, and there was the tabernacle pitched, afar off from the people, yet not so far but that they could know that God was there, not so far but that they who “sought the Lord” might reach the tabernacle at an easy distance. This, I say was intended to teach the people that God did not recognize their camp as being any longer His dwelling place, because human invention had stained His worship and laid His honor in the dust.

What use are we to make of this very significant incident? Give heed, men and brethren, I beseech you. This is just the position, I take it, of God’s tabernacle at the present hour. They who seek the Lord must go out from the camp and from the congregation, and if they would commune with the Most High, they cannot do it in the camps of even the religious and professing world. They must, like the Master, go forth without the camp bearing His reproach. The day *will* come in which we shall be able to have fellowship with God in the camp, when the tabernacle of the Lord shall be among men, and He shall dwell *among* them, but that time is not yet. *Now* His tabernacle is out of the camp, and away from men. Those who would follow Him must be separate, must come out from the mass, must be distinct, and set apart, in order to be recognized as the sons and the daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

There are three points upon which I shall enlarge this morning. The first will be that *outside the camp is the place for true seekers of God*. Secondly, that this *going forth from the camp will involve some considerable inconvenience*. And thirdly, I shall *earnestly exhort you, as God shall help me, if you are seeking God, to take care that you go without the camp*, afar off from the camp, according to His Word.

I. First, then, they who seek the Lord must, at this day, as in the time of the narrative we have just read, GO WITHOUT THE CAMP.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say that no man can be a true seeker of God who has anything to do with the camp of the *profane*. We must take care that our garments are entirely clean from those lusts of the flesh, and those blasphemies of the ungodly. It will be impossible for you, O seeker, ever to have communion with God while you have fellowship with Belial. You can not go to the synagogue of Satan, and to the synagogue of God at the same time. You will be an arrant fool if you shall attempt it, you will be mad if you shall persevere in the attempt, you will be something more than lost if you hope to be saved while you continue in so estranged a state.

God will not allow us to do as the old Saxon king did, who set up his old gods in one part of the church, and hung up the crucifix in another, hoping that by having two strings to his bow, he might make sure to be safe. Other religions may be tolerant, but the religion of Christ knows no tolerance with regard to error. Before God’s ark, Dagon must fall. Dagon may be content for God’s ark to stand, if he may stand too, but the ark of God knows of nothing but an absolute supremacy for itself and a total destruction of all other gods.

Either you must serve God or mammon. No compromise must be attempted. It will be considered as an audacious blasphemy of God. Come out, then, if you would be saved, come out from the herd of sinners, leave the godless and the Christless generation, for in that camp there will be no possibility of fellowship with God.

Again we must as much come out from the camp of the *careless* as from the camp of the profane. The largest company in the world is not that of the profane, but of the thoughtless—not those who *oppose*, but those who *neglect* the great salvation. For every man who is openly an antagonist of truth, there are probably a thousand men who care neither for truth nor error. The Sadducees still remain a very numerous body—men who are content to live as they list, holding really and secretly within them

certain evil thoughts, but still willing to go with the crowd, and to be numbered with the followers of Christ.

Ah, if you would see the face of God, my hearer, then come out from among the giddy, thoughtless throng. It is not possible for you to worship Him who bore the cross, while you shall be mingling in the amusements of the world, and toying with the charms of the flesh. Come you out from among them, be not numbered with them, let your conduct and conversation distinguish you at once from them. Let it be seen that you also are with Jesus of Nazareth. Let none mistake you for a mere bystander, a simple looker-on, but let all know that you are one of His disciples, because your speech betrays you.

Oh, I do again repeat it, let none think that in the camp of the negligent, the thoughtless, those who count it enough to be moral before man, but who never think of God—let none think that salvation is to be found *there*.

But we must go further than this. If a man would have fellowship with God, he must go even out of the camp of the *merely steady, sedate, and thoughtful*, for there be multitudes whose thoughts are not God's thoughts, and whose ways are not His ways, who are in every respect conformed outwardly to the laws of God, and who rigidly observe the customs of upright society—who *think*, and therefore abhor the trifles of the world—who do sit down, and meditate, and therefore understand the hollowness of this present life, but who, notwithstanding, have never learned to set their affections on things above. Though they are not as foolish as to think that the shadows of this world are a substance, yet have they never sought eternal realities.

You must come out from these, for except your righteousness exceeds theirs, you shall not be saved. Unless there shall be something more in you than in the merely steady, respectable and outwardly moral, you shall never know the peace-speaking blood of Christ, nor enter into the "rest which remains for the people of God." Up! Get you hence. Get you away from them. It is not enough to leave the Amalekites, you must leave even the hosts of Moab, brother though Moab may seem to be to the Israel of God.

We must draw yet another line, more marked and distinct than this. He that would know anything of God aright must even come out of the camp of the *merely religious*. Look at them how they go to their church. What for? Frequently to show their finery, and often to be seen of their friends. See many as they go to chapel and what for? It is their custom, it is their habit.

They sing as God's people sing, they appear to take a holy delight in the worship of the Most High, they bow as God's people bow when they pray—nay, they do more—they sit at the Lord's table, and appear to know somewhat of the joy which that ordinance affords. They come to baptism, they pass through the stream, and yet in how many cases they have a name to live and are dead?

Oh, it is one thing to attend to religion, but another thing to be in Christ Jesus. It is one thing to have the name upon the church book, but quite another thing to have it written in the Lamb's book of life. There is not a church under heaven that is quite pure. With all our care, with all our industry and watchfulness, we cannot prevent the sad fact. Hypocrites will mingle with the sincere, and the tares will be sown with the wheat. So I suppose it must be, till the reapers come and gather the tares in bundles to burn.

I pray you let none of you think that you have taken out a patent for heaven when you have made a profession of your faith in Christ. That profession may be a lie. The conduct which springs from it may be but the result of custom. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and only "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Do you believe that one-tenth of the religion you see about you is sincere? What do we say then to the fact that when investigation has been made as to articles sold at shops, there is scarcely a single article in any trade which is not found to be adulterated? Whence comes this? If it were only some men who did this, and they were notorious, we might flatter ourselves that Christians are surely clear. But what if it grow into a custom!

When the fact comes out that in the most cases our articles of food are shamefully mixed, and that with poisonous ingredients in some instances, what are we to say? Can that religion which spreads over London—which seems to be adopted by almost everybody—can that be sound while it allows this thing to go on under its cover?

And have you not remarked the course of business? How often you must have noticed “astounding failures,” and that, too, of men professedly religious. Do you not sometimes see the most shameful fraudulent bankruptcies, and these are perpetrated by men who have occupied your pews and listened to your ministry? What does this teach us but that there is more glitter than there is gold, and that there may be much varnish and much paint where there is but little of the sound material of divine grace.

Oh, sirs, if half the religion of England were true religion, we should not be such a people as we now are. Give us but one man out of three of those who profess to be followers of Christ, sincerely His and thoroughly His, and how changed would this empire become, and what a different face would all the commercial relations of life bear to the eyes even of outward observers! There is, it must be confessed, much delusion. I believe there is more sound godliness in England than ever there was since she was a nation, but yet as in the rolling of every chariot, there is a cloud of dust, so is there mixed up with the advance of the Savior’s kingdom, that rolling cloud of dust—hypocrisy and vain pretense.

Let us take heed to ourselves, then, that we go forth without the camp, that we are distinguished and separated, not merely from the irreligious, but from the religious too, that we are as separate even from the nominal church as we are from that people who profess not to know the Lord and are therefore cursed.

Here I am stopped by the question, “But in what respect is a Christian to come out from all these, and more especially to come out from the mere professors?” I will tell you, brethren. There is occasion enough just now for the watchman to sound the notes of warning in your ears. The reason why the nominal church at the present time is not the place where the tabernacle is pitched, is that the church has adulterated the worship of God by the addition of human ceremonies. I shall not stay to indicate them, but I believe there is a great proportion of the worship of Christians in these days which is not warranted by the Word of God. We have made an advance beyond its plain letter, and have added to the pure Word of God, inventions of our own.

Now, in coming out from the church, we must leave all ceremonies behind us which are not absolutely taught in the Scriptures. We must shake our garments of every performance, however fair and admirable it may look, unless it has strictly the letter of divine inspiration to warrant it. Having done this in a church capacity, we must then come out from all the doctrines of the church which are not strictly Scriptural. We must leave behind us the dogmas of our creeds, if the creeds are not consistent with the Word of God.

We must dare to bear our testimony against all false teaching. We must take care that we share none of the blame of those men who keep back a part of God’s Word, and therefore mar their ministry, and spoil its effect upon their hearers. We must come out from all the practices of the church which are not in accordance with God’s Word. We must never plead the precedent of godly men for any act or thought which God Himself has not enjoined. Come right out. You have nothing to do with what even a Christian might tolerate. You are to come straight out from the camp, and taking heed that you swerve not to the right hand or to the left, “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes.”

Take care, too, that you are not actuated by the motives of the nominal Christian. Many nominal Christians have, as the motives of their lives, the maintaining of appearance, the keeping up of the respectable sham of godliness. Your conversation must be in heaven, your motive must be derived from heaven, and your life must be, not in profession, but in reality, “a life of faith upon the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you.”

In conclusion, to gather up all in one, if you would have true fellowship with Christ, you must come out from the camp and be devoted—your whole spirit, soul, and body—in the Lord’s strength, entirely, perpetually, and continually to His service. You must say what many say with the lip, but what few can

really feel in the heart, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Nothing short of this will be a true coming out of the camp. Nothing but this will give you that near and intimate relationship and communion with God after which every believer’s soul is panting, and without which it cannot find repose.

II. Having thus tried briefly to describe the truth that outside of the camp is the place for seekers of God, I shall now take the second point, **THIS GOING OUT OF THE CAMP WILL INVOLVE MUCH INCONVENIENCE.**

Some try to get over the inconvenience in the way Joshua did, they think they will come out of the camp altogether and live in the tabernacle, and then there will be no difficulty. You know there are many pious minds, a little over-heated with imagination, who think, that if they never mix with the world they could be holy. No doubt they would like to have a building erected in which they could live, and pray, and sing all day, and never go to work, nor have anything at all to do with buying and selling. Thus, they think by going without the camp, they would become the people of God.

In this, however, they mistake the object of the Christian religion, “I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil.” That were an easy, lazy subterfuge, for getting rid of the hard task of having to fight for Christ. To go out of the battle in order that you may win the victory is a strange method indeed of seeking to come off “more than conquerors!”

No, no, we must be prepared like Moses, to go into the camp and to come out of it, always to come out of it when we seek fellowship with God, but still to be in it, to be mixed up with it, to be in the midst of it doing the common acts of man, and yet never being tainted by its infection, and never having the spirit troubled by that sin and evil which is so rampant there. I counsel you, not that you should come out of the world, but that being in it, you should be so distinctly not of it, that all men may see that you worship the Father outside the camp of their common association and their carnal worship.

This will involve many inconveniences. One stands on the outset. *You will find that your diffidence and your modesty will sometimes shrink from the performance of duty’s stern commands.* If you follow Christ, you must avow Him. The Master desires to have no secret disciples. If Christ be worth anything, He is worth confessing before the world, before angels, and before devils. “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

You must be able to say distinctly, “I am not ashamed to avow that my heart is given to Jesus the crucified. As He espoused my cause publicly before a gazing world, so I espouse His. I His cross have taken, all else to leave, if it be necessary, that I may follow Him. He is my Lord, to Him I will submit, He is my trust, on Him I lean, He is my hope, for Him I look.”

Do not try the plan which some are attempting of being Christians in the dark. Put on Christ. You know how the promise is made, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Do not shrink from the second part of the command. If you have believed, profess your faith in baptism. Be not ashamed of your Lord and Master. Know you not that the Lord has said, “He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth confesses, shall be saved”?

You must make a public confession. I know there is no merit in the confession, but still, is it not right? is it not reasonable? How can you expect the blessing of God if you do not *what* Christ tells you, and do it not *as* Christ tells you? Come you out, wear His badge, bear His name, and say to the sons of men, “Let others do as they will, as for me and my house, we will, we must serve the Lord.”

When you have got over that difficulty, when your reserve has given place to a good confession, and you appear upon the stage of action, you will find that then your trouble begins. Perhaps when you go without the camp *you will lose some of your best friends.* Perhaps your mother may say she would not mind your serving Christ, but she wishes that you belonged to her denomination, while you feel that if you serve Christ at all, you must go just where He would have you go, and carry out to the letter all your Lord’s will.

Some of your dearest companions may say, “Well, if you turn religious, certainly our acquaintance must cease, we should never agree, and therefore, we had better part.” And some with whom you have to live will day after day put you to a sort of martyrdom before a slow fire, by giving you the trial of cruel mockings. You will find that many a tie has to be cut when your soul is bound with cords to the horns of the altar.

Can you do it? As Christ left His Father for you, can you leave all for Him? Do you know that text, and is it terrible to you, “If a man love father and mother more than me he is not worthy of me; and if a man love son or daughter more than me, he is not worthy of me”? Are you ready to carry out your convictions, come what may? Should you turn back, would that be to rely upon the promise which David uttered, “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord shall take me up”? You are not fit to be a disciple of Christ if you cannot take the like of this into the cost of following your Savior, and estimate it as a light affliction compared with the eternal weight of glory, which shall be given to them who faithfully serve Him and fully avow themselves His when others would turn them aside.

You will find, too, when you go without the camp, *you will have some even professedly godly people against you*. It is one of the sorest trials that I know of in the Christian life to have godly men themselves censure you. “Ah,” they will say, when you are filled with the Spirit, and are anxious to serve God as Caleb did, with all your heart, “Ah! young man, that is fanaticism, and it will grow cool by-and-by.”

When you are called to some good work for your fellow men, they will tell you, “That is too bold a deed, too daring an act of enthusiasm.” To say, “Whether any will follow me or not, here I go straight to battle and to victory”—this is the prowess of faith, and Christ requires it of every one of you. The godly will follow you by-and-by, when you succeed, but you must be prepared to go without them sometimes.

Look at young David. He knows that he is called to fight with Goliath, but his brothers say, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart to see the battle are you come.” But David cares not, he brings back the bloody head of the giant, and there is his refutation of their slander. Do you the same. Be prepared to meet with cold-hearted Christians, you will have to stand alone and bear their sneer as well as the sneer of the world, you will have to endure their “judicious” remarks, and bear their sage cautions, and their serious suggestions against your being too bold and too hot. Let none of these things dismay you. Do your Master’s will and do it thoroughly. Go the whole way with your Lord and Master, and you shall come to be had in reverence of them who sit at meat with you.

There is another inconvenience to which you will most surely be exposed, namely, *that you will be charged falsely*. Some will say, “You make too much of non-essentials.” That is a thing I frequently hear—*non-essentials*. There are certain things in Scripture they tell us that are non-essentials, and therefore they are not to be taken any notice of. Doctrinal views, and the baptism of believers, for instance, these are non-essential to salvation, and therefore, is the inference which follows according to the theory of some, we may be very careless about them.

Do you know, believer in Christ, that you are a servant? And what would you think of a servant should first wittingly neglect her duty, and then come to you and tell you that it is non-essential? If she should not light the fire tomorrow morning, and when you came down, she were to say, “Well, sir, it is non-essential, you won’t die through the fire not being lit”—or if, when she spread the breakfast, there was no provision there but a crust of bread, and nothing for you to drink, what if she should say, “Well, sir, it is non-essential you know? There is a glass of water for you and a piece of bread, the rest is non-essential.”

If you came home and found that the rooms had never been swept, and the dust was upon them, or that the bed had not been made, and that you could not take an easy night’s rest, and the servant should say, “Oh! it is non-essential, sir, it is quite non-essential.” I think you would find it to be non-essential for you to keep her any longer, but extremely essential that you should discharge her.

And what shall we say of those men who put aside the words of Christ, and say, “His precepts are quite non-essential”? Why, I think because they are non-essential, they therefore become the test-points of your obedience. If you could be saved by them, and if they were necessary to your salvation, your

selfishness would lead you to observe them, but inasmuch as they are not necessary to your salvation, they become tests of your willingness to obey Christ.

If the Lord had left a record in His Word, “He that believes and picks up a pebble stone shall be saved,” I dare not neglect to pick up the pebble stone. And if I found that in Holy Scripture there were doctrines even of less value than the great points of our Christian religion, I should still think it were my duty to bow my judgment, and to turn my intellect to the reception of God’s truth just as God sent it forth.

That idea about non-essentials is wicked and rebellious. Cast it from you. Go without the camp. Be particular in every point. To the tiniest jot and tittle seek to obey your Master’s will, and seek His grace that you may walk in the way of His commandments with a perfect heart.

But then, if you do walk according to this rule, others will say, “*You are so bigoted.*” Thus reply to them, “I am very bigoted over myself, but I never claim any authority over you. To your own Master *you* stand or fall, and *I* do the same.” If it be bigotry to hold decisive views about God’s truth, and to be obedient in every particular, as far as God the Spirit has taught me, if that be bigotry—all hail bigotry!—most hallowed thing!

The thing called bigotry is that which inclines one man to bind another’s conscience. The duty of all men is truly the same, but then I must not make my conscience the standard for another. It must be the standard for myself, and I am not to violate it, “He who knows his master’s will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” Take heed, therefore, that you do His will when you know it.

But if another, not knowing His will, should reprove you, be you ready to give an answer to him that speaks to you with meekness and fear. But be not harsh with any man. You are not his master. Be not stern with those who differ from you, for you are not made the judge of mankind. You are not arbiter of right and wrong. Leave others to be as conscientious as yourself, and believe that a Christian man, though he may differ from you, is as much sincere in his difference as you are in your dissent from him.

Yet, be careful that no unhallowed charity compel you to lay down the weapons of your warfare. Be careful that Satan does not deceive you, and make you charitable to yourself. Be charitable towards every other man, but never to yourself. Forgive every other man the injuries that he does, but forgive not yourself. Weep, lament and sigh before God, and so may He always help you thus to go forth without the camp.

With one other remark, I will leave this point about the inconveniences. If you follow Christ and come without the camp, *you must expect to be watched.* I have frequently noticed that when a member of our church does anything wrong, people will say, “There is your religion—a horrible thing.” If a person who scrupulously goes to church swears, nobody thinks anything of it, but if he is a Dissenter, “Oh! it is horrible!” Well, so it is, I admit. But it shows that people expect those who dissent to be better than those who do not. I only wish their expectation could always be fulfilled.

If you profess to go without the camp, others will look for something extra in you—mind that they are not disappointed. They ought to expect it, and I am glad they do expect it. I have heard some say, “I do not like to join the church because then there would be so much expected of me.” Just so, and that is the very reason why you should, because their expectation will be a sort of sacred clog to you when you are tempted and may help to give impetus to your character and carefulness to your walk, when you know that you are looked upon by the eyes of men.

I wish to have the members of this church carefully watched by the ungodly. If you catch them tripping, notice it. If you see them going into sin, let it be spoken of. God forbid we should wish to conceal it. Let it come out. If we are not what we profess to be, the sooner we are unmasked the better. Only do judge us fairly. Do judge the life of a professing Christian honestly. Do not expect perfection of him. He does not profess to be perfect, but he does desire to try to keep his Master’s law, and to do to others as he would they should do to him.

We would not say to the world, “Shut your eyes.” The eyes of the world are intended to be checks upon the church. The world is the black dog that wakes up Christ’s slumbering sheep, ay, and that

sometimes hunts them into the fold when otherwise they would be wandering upon the mountains. Expect to be watched, professor. In the day when you say, “I will go without the camp to follow Christ,” expect to be misrepresented. Expect that the dogs of this world will bark at you. They always bark at a stranger, and if you are a stranger and a foreigner, they must bark at you.

Expect, too, that they will watch your little slips, and let that be a check to you and make you pray each moment, “Lord, hold you me up, and I shall be safe.” I would that there could be trained in all our churches and places of worship, a race of men and women who would be really distinct—as much distinct from the professing church at large, as that church is from the ungodly world itself.

III. Now I come to use certain arguments by which I desire EARNESTLY TO PERSUADE EACH CHRISTIAN HERE TO GO WITHOUT THE CAMP, TO BE EXACT IN HIS OBEDIENCE, AND TO BE PRECISE IN HIS FOLLOWING THE LAMB WHITHERSOEVER HE GOES.

I use first a selfish argument it is to *do it for your own comfort's sake*. If a Christian can be saved while he conforms to this world, at any rate he will be saved so as by fire. Would you like to go to heaven in the dark, and enter there as a shipwrecked mariner climbs the rocks of his native country? Then be worldly, be mixed up with the people and remain in the camp.

But would you have a heaven below as well as a heaven above? Would you comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge? And would you have an abundant entrance into the joy of your Lord? Then come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

There are many professors, and I trust they are true Christians too, who are very unhappy, and generally it is because they are worldly Christians. Oh! we have some members of our church, I trust they are saved, but you know they are as money-getting and as money-keeping as any men whose portion is in this life. They seem to give as much of their whole force to the world as ever a worldling can, and then they wonder they are not happy.

Why, they have laid up much of their treasure on earth, and the moth has got at it, and the rust has corrupted it, and what wonder? Had they put their treasure wholly in heaven, no moth or rust would ever have consumed it. It is our unspirituality of heart that makes our misery. If we were more Christ-like, we should have more of Christ's presence and more of that peace of God which passes understanding. For your own comfort's sake, if you be a Christian, *be* a Christian, and be a marked and distinct one, distinct even from the church at large itself.

But I have a better reason than that, and it is for *your own growth in grace, do it*. If you would have much faith, you cannot have much faith while you are mixed with sinners. If you would have much love, your love cannot grow while you mingle with the ungodly. You cannot become a great Christian, you may be a babe in grace, but you never can be a perfect man in Christ Jesus while you have anything to do with the worldly maxims, and business, and cares of this life. I do not mean while you have to do with them in a right way, but while you mix yourself up with them, and are operated upon by them so as to turn aside from that straight line in which it is the Christian's duty to walk.

Little stones in the shoe make a traveler's walk very uncomfortable, and some of these little practices and little sins as some call them, will make your path to heaven very unhappy. You will very seldom be able to run in God's ways, you will be a mere creeper. It will be a long while before you will bear the image of Him that created you. You will be a marred vessel, perhaps a vessel meant for honor, but marred upon the wheel notwithstanding that, by your mixing up with the customs of the world, and going with the worldly church and with the multitude to do evil.

But let me put it to you in another way. I beseech you Christian men and women, come right out and be your Master's soldiers wholly *for the church's sake*. It is the few men in the church, and those who have been distinct from her, who have saved the church in all times. Who saved the church in the days of the Reformation? It was not the good men who were in the midst of the church of Rome. There were very many humble curates in villages, and priests here and there, who were doing their best, I believe, to

teach the truth of God, but these men never saved the church of Christ. She would have gone to ruin for all they did for her.

It was Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli who came right out and said, “No, we will have nothing to do with anti-Christ.” Who saved the church a hundred years ago? Why, I dare to say, it was not those excellent men who in their own places of worship were pursuing their holy calling. But it was those who were first called Methodists—Whitefield and Wesley—the men who said, “This cold age will never do, in this absence of the Spirit of God, there can never be a time of blessing to the church.” Men looked upon as fanatics, enthusiasts, and heretics, who ought to be excommunicated. They came right out as distinct men, as if they were the particular stars of the sky, and they alone cleft the darkness.

So must it be with us. There must be some among us who care nothing for this world, who dash worldly laws and customs to the ground, and in the name of God and His church, and in truth are prepared though we may be embarrassed and hindered by what is called public opinion, to defy public opinion, and do the right and the true, come what may. And you, too, in your *life* must do what God’s ministers must do both with *tongue* and *life*. If the church is to be saved, it is not by men in her, but by the men who seem to go out even from her, to bear Christ’s reproach, and do Him service without the camp.

And *for the world’s sake*, let me beg you to do thus. Let the church become more and more adulterated with worldliness, let her Christians become more and more conformed to the world, let her lords be bowed down under the bondage and tyranny of worldliness, and what will the church be worth, and what will the world do? Her salt will have lost its savor, and then the world must rot and putrefy. The church itself can never be the salt of the world, unless there are some particular men who are the salt of the church. Do you then come out. Be singularly exact in your obedience to Christ, be scrupulously observant of all that He commands, be you distinct from the professing world, and so shall you bless the world through the church.

And now, lastly, *for your Master’s sake*. What have you and I to do in the camp when He was driven from it? What have we to do with hosannas when He was followed with hootings, “Crucify him, crucify him”? What have I to do in the tent while my Captain lies in the open battlefield? What have we to do to dwell in our ceiled houses and to be peaceful, and to have the smile of men, while Jesus is hounded to His death and nailed to the accursed tree?

By the wounds of Christ, Christian, I beseech you, mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. By Him who came unto His own and His own received Him not, expect not to be received even by your own. By Him who was the heir and of whom they said, “Let us kill him,” I pray you expect the like treatment from the same world. “Shall the servant be above his master, or the disciple above his Lord?” If they call the Master of the house, Beelzebub, what should they say of the servant?

Are you prepared for silken ease when your Master fought to win the crown? Did He die to save you, and you not be willing to die to serve Him? Again I say it, what have you to do with making love to that world which put Him to death? Dare you hold a parley with the enemy against whom you are sworn to fight? What! Will you be coward enough to ask for peace at the hands of the foe who has reddened himself with Jesus’ blood?

In the name of God and of His Son, cast down your gauntlet, draw your sword, and throw away its scabbard. The world was never friends with the man that was a friend to Christ. You cannot possibly have its friendship and smile, and have the fellowship and smile of God too. Make your selection, Christian. Make your choice now. Which shall it be—the world or Christ? It cannot be both. Which will you have? Will you be called a right good man, or will you be hissed and pointed at? Will you wear a fool’s cap and a fool’s coat, and go to heaven, or wear a wise man’s gown and go to hell? Will you wear a thorny crown to be saved, or a golden crown and be lost? Make your choice, professors, for one of these two things it must come to.

God help us now to say, in the name of Him by whose merit and blood we have been saved, “I do this day take Christ to be my Lord, and come fair or foul,

*‘Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I’ll follow where He goes.’*

So be it. So be it, for Christ’s sake, that while saved by faith in Jesus, we may prove our faith by never shrinking from the trial which that faith necessarily involves. The Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.