

A Call to Holy Living

by C.H. Spurgeon

Christians should strive for holy living and do more than others in their lives because of their new nature, God's election, and redemption.

Duration: 47:27

Topics: "Holy Living", "Christian Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher encourages Christians to do more than others in their daily lives. He emphasizes the importance of being known by our fruits, as our works are visible to the world. The preacher also highlights the incredible grace and mercy that Christians have received through their faith in Jesus. He then refers to the fifth chapter of Matthew, where Jesus expects his followers to set a godly example and to obey his commandments more diligently than even the Pharisees. The sermon concludes with a challenge for believers to seek the truth and strive to know and fulfill Christ's will.

Transcript

METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT A CALL TO HOLY LIVING A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JANUARY 14, 1872 BY C. H. SPURGEON AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON MATTHEW 5.47 What do ye more than others? It is a very great fault in any ministry if the doctrine of justification by faith alone be not most clearly taught. I will go further and add that it is not only a great fault, but a fatal one, for souls will never find their way to heaven by a ministry that is indistinct upon the most fundamental of gospel truths. We are justified by faith and not by the works of the law.

The merit by which a soul enters heaven is not its own. It is the merit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am quite sure that you will all hold me guiltless of ever having spoken about this great doctrine in any other than unmistakable language.

If I have erred, it is not in that direction. At the same time, it is a dangerous state of things if doctrine is made to drive out precept and faith is held up as making holiness a superfluity. Sanctification must not be forgotten or overlaid by justification.

We must teach plainly that the faith which saves the soul is not a dead faith, but a faith which operates with purifying effect upon our entire nature and produces in us fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. It is not by personal holiness that a man shall enter heaven, but yet without holiness shall no

man see the Lord. It is not by good works that we are justified, but if a man shall continue to live an ungodly life, his faith will not justify him, for it is not the faith of God's elect, since that faith is wrought by the Holy Spirit and conforms men to the image of Christ.

We must learn to place the precepts in the right position. They are not the base of the column, but they are the capital of it. Precepts are not given to us as a way to obtain life, but as the way in which to exhibit life.

The commands of Christ are not upon the legal tenor of this do and live, but upon the gospel system of live and do this. We are not to be attentive to the precepts in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Our master motive is to be gratitude to Him who has saved us with a great salvation.

I am sure that every renewed heart here will feel no opposition to the most holy precepts of our Lord. However severely pure that law may seem to be which we have read just now from this fifth chapter of Matthew, our hearts agree with it, and we ask that we may be so renewed that our lives may be conformed to it. The regenerate never rebel against any precept, saying, This is too pure.

On the contrary, our newborn nature is enamored of His holiness, and we cry, Thy word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loveth it. O, that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes! Even though we find that when we would do good, evil is present with us, yet our inmost soul longs after holiness and pines to be delivered from every evil way. At any rate, dear friends, if it be not so with you, you may well question whether you are indeed the children of God.

My desire this morning is to insist upon the precepts which tend to holiness, and I pray the Holy Spirit to excite desires after a high degree of purity in all believing hearts. Too many persons judge themselves by others, and if upon the whole they discover that they are no worse than the mass of mankind, they give themselves a mark of special commendation. They strike a sort of average amongst their neighbors, and if they cannot pretend to be the very best, yet if they are not the very worst, they are pretty comfortable.

There are certain scribes and Pharisees among their acquaintance who fast thrice in the week and pay tithes of all they possess, and they look upon these as very superior persons whom they would not attempt to compete with them. But they thank God that they are far above those horrible publicans and those dreadful sinners who are put outside the pale of society, and therefore they feel quite easy in their minds, and they go to their place of worship as if they were saints and bear the name of Christian as if it belonged to them. They share in Christian privileges and sit with God's people as if they were truly of the family, their marks and evidences being just these, that they do about as much upon the whole as other people, and if they are not first, they are not altogether last.

The nests of such people ought to be grievously disturbed when they read the chapter before us, for there the Master insists upon a higher standard than the world's highest, and tells us that except our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. In our text the great Master asks of those who are professors of the faith that they should not only do as much as others to prove their title, but that they should do more than others, and He makes this a test question concerning their being really His followers. What do ye more than others? I shall try this morning first to show that there are grounds for expecting more from Christians than from others.

Secondly, I shall try to indicate the matters in which we naturally expect more from them than from others, and thirdly, I shall give some reasons why it should be the aim of every saved soul to do more than others. We will consider the grounds for expecting more from Christians than from others. There are legitimate

reasons why the world, the church and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself may expect more from Christians than from the rest of mankind, and the first is because they profess more.

Professions should always be supported by facts, or else they are deceits, impostures and hypocrisies. A Christian professes himself to be a renewed man. He has learned the evil of sin, repented of it, and fled from it to Jesus Christ.

He professes to have been pardoned and to have received a new heart and a right spirit. He professes also to be a child of God and an heir of heaven. Other men do not profess this.

Some who make no profession wish that they could hope that these things belong to them. Others of them altogether despise these things, but in neither case do they profess to be what the Christian is. Now, Christian, if you profess this, your life must prove it, or else, if your life gives the lie to your religious pretensions, you stand convicted of a flagrant falsehood, a fraud on men and a felony against God.

It is a high crime and a misdemeanor for a man to assume the name of a son of God when he is utterly devoid of the divine nature and lives in unholiness. In proportion as the privilege and the honor of a child of God is great, the sin of false pretensions to grace is increased. If you say you are regenerated, renewed and sanctified, then be all that this means, or else cease your boasting.

Vainly do they boast of scholarship, who cannot read a letter, and idle is that vaunting of valor which leaves a man afraid of his shadow. You remember the ancient story of the traveler who, upon his return to his native city, boasted of the extraordinary feats which he had performed and how, in particular, he had astonished all by his amazing leaps. I forget how many paces he had cleared, but something very wonderful indeed.

Those who stood round opened their mouths in amazement as they heard the marvel. But one sage was less believing and therefore marked out the exact length on the ground and said, If you leaped as far as that abroad, perhaps you will do the same here, and then we will believe you. The world in these times will be sure to ask for proofs.

The age for mere assertion is over. Men will say to you, You claim to have experienced this and to be that. Now just act accordingly and we will believe you, and if you do not give them a fair and honest reply, they will not mutter it in secret places, but they will make it plain to your face that they believe you to be a mere pretender, and what is worse, they will blame the Christian religion of which you are so unworthy a professor.

Alas, we may well blush for many of you professors. How might you blush for yourselves if you were capable of it? But it is to be feared that many are past shame and have brazen foreheads. How has Christ been dishonored, crucified afresh and put to an open shame by ungodly men who have dared to take His name upon themselves? When one of the great painters was engaged upon the portraits of Peter and Paul, a cardinal who stood by observed that he thought the painter put too much red into their faces.

No, said the artist, it is to show how much the apostles blush for the conduct of those who call themselves their successors. Ye professors are the successors of the early saints, but do you not dishonor their names? In how many cases may your pastors blush for you and weep over you because you cause the holy name to be blasphemed? We have all much cause for heart-searching here, but the misery is that the very men who have most cause to be anxious or refuse to search themselves, instead of doing more than

others, it is to be feared that many are not doing as much as others. Even worldly men are more honest than some professors, and, I might add, more generous and more sober.

There are thousands who do not profess to be converted, who nevertheless are scrupulous in their dealings and exact in their mercantile transactions, while some base-born professors have fleeced the public, have issued lying prospectuses of bubble companies and have ended in gigantic bankruptcies. If we have much of this, religion will be a scoff and a byword throughout the land. God save us from making a profession if we have not grace to live up to it.

But, secondly, we may well expect more from Christians than others, because it is a fact in the case of those who are truly Christians that they are more than others. It is not mere talk. It is a fact that the believer in Christ is born again.

He is not only, as other men are, made by God, but he has been made twice, new-born, new-created in Christ Jesus. It is no fiction, but a matter of truthful experience. We have passed from death unto life.

We have received the Spirit of God into our souls, which has implanted in us a new nature higher than the nature of other men, as much higher than the common soul of man, as the soul of man is above the nature of the beast. For the children of God are partakers of the divine nature. God dwelleth in them, and the Spirit of God inhabits them as a king inhabits his palace.

They are more than other men. They are so not only because of their regeneration, but because of that eternal act of God which set them apart in the covenant of grace, wherever the earth was. God has a chosen people.

I have chosen you out of the world, saith Christ. There are some upon whom everlasting love fixed its eye of grace wherever the mountains pierced the clouds or the rivers sought the sea. These are more than others and are infinitely more indebted to God's love than others.

He hath loved them with an everlasting love, and because of this He has drawn them to Himself. These men, because chosen of God, have been redeemed as other men were not. There is a sense in which the atonement of Christ reaches to all mankind, but undoubtedly Scripture teaches us that there is a people whom Christ has redeemed from among men.

He laid down His life for His sheep. He loved His church and gave Himself for it. There is a particular redemption, and in this every truly regenerated child of God is most certainly a partaker.

Upon Him is the blood mark, and He is Christ's. Of all such it may be said, You are not your own, but you are bought with a price. They have God's nature in them, they have God's election upon them, they have God's redemption emancipating them so that they are more than others.

They are precious sons of God, while others are heirs of wrath. They are in the light, while the whole world lieth in darkness. They are sheep of His pasture, while the rest of the world roam upon the wild mountains of vanity.

Now, if they are more than others, they ought to produce more than others in their lives. I will not insist upon the reasoning here, because I rather appeal to every believer's heart than to his head. According as ye have received, so will love suggest to you to render.

Can any holiness be too precise in return for the infinite love which has been bestowed upon you from before the foundation of the world? Can any service be too hard to repay the suffering which your Savior bore for your redemption? Can any self-denial be too severe to prove that the Holy Ghost in you has subdued your flesh and overcome your corruptions? I say the argument appeals to your love. I will not utter it in legal tones, lest you should think you hear the whip of the law behind me, but even the master himself, I think, would put it to you thus. Inasmuch as I have loved you thus and have redeemed you with such a price and have begotten you unto Myself by the power of My spirit, what manner of people ought you to be in all holy conversation? What must be expected from those so signally distinguished by the sovereign grace of God? Again, it is certain that true Christians can do more than others.

Can, saith one, why, they can do nothing. True, but through Christ that strengtheneth them they can do all things, and Christ does strengthen His people. I admit their weakness.

I admit, nay, I mourn and experimentally lament in My own person their feebleness, but for all that they are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Jesus Christ lends to them His conquering energy, and as His blood has overcome the enemy, they overcome through the blood of the Lamb. God has given them His son, and in the power of Jesus they can and must vanquish sin.

Moreover, what is the indwelling spirit within us? Is he not omnipotent itself? The Holy Ghost who has come upon us is no influence which might be limited in its efficacy, but He is a divine person who dwelleth with us and shall be in us. Who shall set any limit to the power of that man in whom the Holy Ghost Himself dwells? As believers we must never dare to say, That habit we cannot give up. We can and must overturn all the idols in our hearts.

We may never say, That height of devotion I can never reach. Brethren, omnipotence doth gird us. God giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are never to sit down and say, I must be a sinner up to such and such a point. I cannot get beyond that attainment. What saith the scripture? Be ye perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.

After this perfection we are to strain, and towards this mark of our high calling we are to press. God who dwells in us is working in us daily to will and to do according to His own good pleasure so that we can do what the dead sinner cannot do. We can do what sinners without the spirit cannot do, and if we can we must.

Surely it is required of a man according to what he hath, and where much is given much will be required. Let us take care that we quench not the spirit, that by our unbelief we restrain not His divine energies, but let us strive, God striving in us, after the highest conceivable standard of holiness and of separation from the world. O spirit of God, do Thou help us that we may be sanctified by Thy grace, spirit, soul and body.

Yet, further, more is to be expected of Christians than others, because they have more. But they are poor, saith one. True, but the poorest Christian possesses more than the richest unbeliever.

You shall set before me now the pauper who is a believer and the emperor who has no faith in Christ, and I am persuaded that the poor aged pauper would not exchange her lot, though the imperial purple should be offered her. She would refuse to leave her savior, though the world were offered her. Methinks she would quote Dr. Watt and say, Go you that boast in all your stores and tell how bright they shine.

Your heaps of glittering dust are yours, but my redeemers are mine. While the poor believer feels that his God is his portion, he despises rather than covets the glories of the world. Brethren in Christ, you know right well that you possess the covenant of grace, a covenant rich beyond comparison.

When Moses looked from the top of Nebo and saw the land from Lebanon even to the river of Egypt, no such prospect gladdened his gaze as that which rises before the eye of your faith when you survey the covenant ordered in all things and sure. More than that, you have Christ in the covenant, and Christ is all. All the glories of His immaculate manhood and His infinite Godhead and all His merits and all His conquests and all His glories, all are yours, seeing you are His.

And what is most of all, God is yours. I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And having God to be your God, providence is yours.

All things work together for your good. Life's goods are yours, and so are its ills. This world is yours, and worlds beyond the river.

Time and eternity, things present and things to come, life and death, all are yours. And yet no good thing was yours by natural inheritance. No good was yours by purchase from your own earnings or procurement of your own labor.

They are all gifts of the sovereign grace of God. Brethren, we are debtors. Who shall tell how much we owe? If I said to any of you, Take thy pen and sit down quickly and write how much thou owest to thy Lord, if you had to sit there till you completed the wondrous tale, you certainly would never leave those seats.

Depths of mercy that I, a sinner, should ever have a hope of heaven, but, O heights of mercy, that I should be adopted into the family of God and made a joint heir with Christ Jesus of all the heritage of the firstborn of God, to have all that God is and all that God has, to be the portion of my cup. This is grace indeed. My cup runneth over, bless the Lord, O my soul.

And now, after all this, ought you not to do more than others? Shall the servant who has but his daily pay love the master better than the child who has the father's heart? Shall the stranger who comes into the house occasionally love the master of the house better than his spouse who is beloved of his soul? O, by the favors you have received, countless and immense, by the precious fountainhead of mercy from which all those favors come, by the many years in which goodness and mercy have followed you all your days, if you be not indeed insensible and your hearts change to adamant, I beseech you, brethren, do more than others. Serve your Lord with an intensity which others cannot reach and live for Him with an ardor of which they cannot conceive. I think there is a good argument here.

It will be powerful reasoning if you feel it to be so. Do you feel it, brother? And feeling it, will you try to live it out? Believers ought to do more than others in the next place, because they are looking for more than others. The ungodly man's lookout is dark and dreary.

When he dares open the window and look, what seeth he? Come hither, come hither, ungodly man, I must take thee to the battlements of thine house and bid thee look abroad. What seest thou? Ah, he closes his eye and refuses to look, for he sees a river, the name of which is death, and he seeth that the waves are black and foaming with the wrath of God. Look, sir, look, I pray you, for to close your eyes upon it will not dry it up, and see you what is beyond that river.

Ah, he dares not think, for after death to him cometh hell and the wrath of God. O man, look, I beseech thee, look, for it will be thy portion except thou repent and fly to Christ for mercy. But no, he covers his eyes and gets him back to his gaities, for he cannot bear to look at what will surely be his portion.

But come thou Christian, thou who hast washed thy robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb, what seest thou? Suppose it should be thy lot to die before the master comes in the second advent. What seest thou? I see, saith he, but a couch whereon I recline, and close mine eyes on earth to open them in heaven. I see angels waiting round that bed, and the master, the Lord of life, ready to receive my spirit.

What next do you see? Nay, I cannot tell you, for my eyes are dazzled with the glory, and my tongue is not able to describe what God revealeth to his children by his spirit. But there is the never-ending glory, forever with the Lord, the rest that knows no fear, the Sabbath without end. O the glory, the glory that lasteth on for ay in the presence of the master whom we have served and the father who hath loved us of old! This is your prospect now, and, brethren, as your prospect is so bright, I beseech you, do ye more than others.

This is a very large field, but we must leave it because our time fails us, and we must call your attention to those matters in which we may naturally look for the Christian to do more than others. I thought I would not utter my own ideas this morning, but to fortify myself would go back to the master's own language. So I must refer you again to this fifth chapter of Matthew, and you will see in looking from the thirteenth to the sixteenth verses that our Lord expects his people to set a more godly example than others do.

Observe, they are to be the salt of the earth, they are to be the light of the world, they are to be as a city set on a hill and therefore seen of all. If you were not a professor, my friend, you would certainly have some influence and be under responsibilities for it, but as a Christian your place in this world is peculiarly that of influence. You are not like a stone affected by the atmosphere or overgrown by moss, a merely passive thing.

No, you are active and are to affect others as the salt which operates in seasons. You are not a candle unlit which can exist without affecting others. You are a lighted candle, and you cannot be so lit without scattering light around.

You are made on purpose to exert influence, and your master warns you that if your influence be not salutary and good, you are a hopelessly useless person, for when the salt has lost its savor it is good for nothing but to be trampled underfoot. You are expected, therefore, to influence others for good. You are an employer.

Let your influence be felt by your servants. You are a child at home. Let your influence be felt around the social hearth.

You are perhaps a domestic servant. Then take care that, like the little maid who waited on Naaman's wife, you seek the good of the household. Your influence must act quietly and unostentatiously, like the influence of salt which is not noisy but yet potent.

You cannot get through this world rightly by saying, If I do no good, at least I do no hurt. That might be the plea of a stone or a brick, but it cannot be an apology for savorless salt, for if when the salt is rubbed into the meat it does not season and preserve it, it is bad salt and has not performed its work but has caused loss to the owner and left the meat to become putrid. And if you in this world, according to your capacity

and means, do not affect other people for good, you have convicted yourself of being useless, worthless, a cumberer of the ground.

The master expects, as he has put the pungent influence of his grace into you, that you should be a salt, as he has put the burning light of his grace upon you, that you should be as a lamp and scatter light all around. Take heed of that. It is no saying of mine, it is the saying of him whom ye call master and lord.

Think you hear him speaking of it from those dear lips, which are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, and instead of seeing my hands lifted up in warning, think you see the print of the nails in his hand. Let the words come home with force to your soul. Next, if I read from the seventeenth to the twentieth verse, I am taught that our Lord expects from His people a more exact performance of the divine will than even the Pharisees pretend to give.

Observe, He speaks here about jocks and tittles never passing away and about those who break the least of His commandments and teach men so, and I gather that He would have us observe the very least of His words and treasure up His commandments. Do you think, dear brethren, there would be so many sacks among Christians if all believers honestly wanted to know the truth and to know Christ's will? I do not think there would be. I cannot think our Lord has written a book so doubtful and ambiguous in its expressions that men need differ in interpreting it upon plain points.

I am afraid we bring prejudice to it. The prejudice of our constitutional temperament or of our parents or of the church with which we are associated, and we pay reverence to somebody else's book, perhaps a catechism, perhaps the book of common prayer over and beyond the Bible itself. Now this is all wrong.

We must purge ourselves of it and come to the word of God itself, and when we come to this book, it must be candidly and humbly with this feeling. I desire now to unlearn the most precious doctrine or practice I have ever learned if the Lord will show me that it is inconsistent with His will, and I desire to learn that truth which will bring me most into derision or that ordinance which will submit me to the greatest inconvenience if it is His will, for I am His servant and I desire nothing to support my own opinion or to be my own rule. I think we shall all get pretty near together if in the spirit of God we begin reading our Bibles in this way.

Surely the Lord expects this of us. I do not think He expects this of some professors, for certainly He will never get it. They are quite satisfied to say, I attend my parish church and that is the faith of our church, or my grandmother joined the dissenters, and therefore I keep to them, and besides, after all, you know there are no sects in heaven.

That last assertion is one of the most shallow pretenses ever designed on earth to excuse men from being scrupulously obedient to every word of their lord and master. I do not doubt, O disciple, but what you will reach heaven even though you mistake some of the master's teaching. But I do doubt you are ever reaching there if you willfully despise his words or decline to learn what he came to teach.

Our Lord has said unto us, Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And therefore if you will not become disciples and learn of Christ, we have not even begun with you, neither can you be baptized or bear the name of the triune God. Instead, Jesus will have you obey His will as well as trust His grace.

Mind that, beloved. This demand for exact obedience is no word of mine, but of the master. Look again from the twenty-first to the twenty-sixth verse, and though I do not pretend to expound every word, I

remark that Christ would have His people excel all others in gentleness.

Others will retaliate on those who vex them and call them hard names and will even go to the length of saying, Fool, and perhaps go still further and even come to cursing and imprecating terrible judgments. A quarrelsome man, when he is in a quarrel with another, rather takes pleasure in it, and he does not mind how many hate him or how many he hates. His religion is quite consistent with the worst temper.

He can say his prayers or he can offer his gifts to his God and yet be as malicious as he likes, but with the Christian it is not so and must not be so. We are to bear a great deal of wrong before we make any reply of whatever, and when we do give an answer, we must, if we would be like our master, give a gentle one. Heaping coals of fire upon the head of our enemy by returning abundant kindness is the right revenge for a Christian, and all other revenge is denied to him.

He is not to stand upon his rights. He is rather to say, I know it is my right, but I will yield it sooner than I will contend. I know this man does me an injustice, but I will bear it sooner than my tempter shall be ruffled or my spirit shall be defiled by a thought of evil.

O saith one, this is a hard measure. Do you think it so? Are you a Christian then? For while in my soul I feel it is difficult, my heart feels I desire to do it, and I love it and aspire after it, and I think every real Christian, though by reason of infirmity he often breaks this blessed rule, yet sees the beauty of it and does not think it hard. Nay, rather the hard point of him is that he should fall so short of the gentle, loving nature of his dear Lord and master.

But I must pass on, for the next point in which the Christian is to excel is in purity. Read from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-second verse. I do not go into particulars, but purity is earnestly commended.

The ungodly man says, Well, I do not commit any act of fornication. You do not hear me singing a lascivious song. In saying that, he feels content.

But the Christian's master expects us to carry the point a great deal farther. An unchaste look is a crime to us, and an evil thought is a sin. O, it shocks me beyond measure when I hear of professedly Christian people who fall into the commission of immodest actions, not such as are called criminal in common society, but loose, fleshly and full of lasciviousness.

I beseech you, all of you, in your conversation with one another, avoid anything which has the appearance of impurity in this respect. Looks and gestures step by step lead on to fouler things, and sport which begins in folly ends in lewdness. Be ye chaste as the driven snow.

Let not an immodest glance defile you. We do not like to say much about these things. They are so delicate, and we tremble lest we should suggest what we would prevent.

But O, by the tears of Jesus, by the wounds of Jesus, by the death of Jesus, hate even the garments spotted by the flesh, and avoid everything that savors of unchastity. Flee youthful lusts, as Joseph did. Run any risk sooner than fall into uncleanness, for it is a deep ditch, and the abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.

Strong temptation lie in wait for the young in a great city like this, but let the young man learn of God to cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to His word. May you all be kept from falling and be presented faultless before the presence of God with exceeding great joy. You are not to be commonly

chaste.

You are to be much more than that. The very look and thought of impurity are to be hateful to you. Help us, O Spirit of God.

Next to that, the Christian is to be more than others in truthfulness. Read on from the thirty-third to the thirty-seventh verse, and the gist of all this, that whereas another man utters the truth because he swears, you are to speak the truth because you can do no otherwise. Your ordinary word is to be as true as the extraordinary oath of the man who stands in the witness box in the court of justice.

You are to avoid those evasions, those modes of concealing truth which are common enough in trade, those exaggerations, those lies which are a common nuisance. Why, our advertisements swarm with lies, our shop windows are daubed with them, such as tremendous sacrifices, when the only sacrificed person is the customer. All the world sees through puffery, and yet even professors go on puffing and exaggerating.

Shun it, Christian! If you tell a man you sell him an article under cost price, let it be under cost price, or do not say so. There are other modes of commending your wares which will be quite as effectual as falsehood. Scorn to earn a farthing by uttering that which is not true, and what you might allow in your next-door neighbor and say, Well, he is under a different rule from me, do not for a moment tolerate in yourself.

The strict literal truth in all things should be the law of the child of God. Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay. We have already touched upon the point which our Savior mentions from the thirty-eighth to the forty-second verse, namely, that the Christian should excel in forbearance.

He should be ready to suffer wrong again and again, sooner than be provoked to resistance, much less retaliation. That I have already spoken of, but may we excel in it? And lastly, from the forty-second to the forty-eighth verse, our Savior shows that He expects us to excel in love to all mankind, and in the practical fruit of it, in trying to do them good. We ought to be, above all others, the most loving people and the most good-doing people.

Your man who buttons himself up within himself and says, Well, let every man see to himself, that is what I say, every man for himself and God for us all, the man who goes through the world paying his way with strict justice, but all the while having no heart to feel for the sick and the poor and the needy, with no care about anybody else's soul, his whole heart enclosed within his own ribs, all buttoned up in his own broadcloth such, a man is very like the devil, but he certainly is not like Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ's heart was expansive and unselfish. He gave Himself for His enemies and died breathing a prayer over them.

He lived never for Himself. You could not put your finger on one point of His life and say, Here, He lived for Himself alone. Neither His prayers nor His preachings, His miracles or His sufferings, His woes or His glories were with an eye to Himself.

He saved others, but Himself He would not save. His followers must in this follow Him closely. Selfishness is as foreign to Christianity as darkness to light.

The true Christian lives to do good. He looks abroad to see whom He may serve, and with this eye He looks upon the wicked, upon the fallen and the offcasts, seeking to reclaim them. Yes, in the same way He

looks upon His personal enemies and aims at winning them by repeated kindnesses.

No nationality must confine His goodwill. No sect or clan monopolize His benevolence. No depravity of character or poverty of condition must sicken His lovingkindness, for Jesus received sinners and ate with them.

Our love must embrace those who lie hard by the gates of hell, and we must endeavor with words of truth and deeds of love to bring them to Christ, who can uplift them to heaven. O, that you may all be gentle, quiet, meek in spirit, but full of an ardent, burning affection towards your fellow men. So shall you be known to be Christ's disciples.

O, say you, these are great things. Yes, but you have a great spirit to help you, and you owe a great deal to your precious lord and master. Did I hear one say, I will avoid sin by being very retired.

I will find out a quiet place where I shall not be tempted and where I shall have few calls upon me. Pretty soldier, you who, when your captain says, win the victory, reply, I will keep clear of the fight. No Christian, go about your trade, go into the busy mart, attend to your business, attend to your family, attend to those matters which God has allotted to you, and glorify God in the battle of life by doing more than others.

May God enable you so to do. Now into about two minutes we must condense what ought to have occupied at least a quarter of an hour. The last head was to deal with reasons for our doing more than others.

They were just these. First, by our fruits we are to be known. Men will never know us by our faith, for that is within us.

They know us by our works, which are visible to them. Bring forth, therefore, the fruits of grace, that the world may know you have been with Jesus. Remember also that works are to be evidence at the last.

It is consistent with the gospel of grace, no doubt, for it is a truth clearly revealed, that we shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. And you know that when the Lord gives us the description of the judgment, He did not say to His disciples, ye believed in me, or you loved me. These were secret matters.

But He said, I was a-hungred, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me.

It is by your works ye shall be judged. O believers, may grace enable you to abound in them. It is by such works that the mouths of gainsayers are to be stopped.

One holy action is a better argument against blasphemers than a thousand eloquent discourses. You are our replies to skeptics. You who have been rescued from sin maintain a life of holiness.

When they see the men that are healed, standing with Peter and John, they can say nothing against them. O, by your works confound gainsayers! These works, too, bring glory to God, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your father which is in heaven. And these works also ensure peace to your own conscience and have much to do with your close communion with God.

How can two walk together except they be agreed? If he walks contrary to him, he will walk contrary to you. Your sins will separate between you and your God, but the Holy Spirit, where He maintains holiness,

maintains peace and communion in the soul. If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

If ye keep My commandments, saith the Savior, ye shall abide in My love, shall abide in the conscious fellowship of that love and in the enjoyment of it. May God help you, may God help you for His name's sake. Look ye here, ye who say you believe in Christ and are living in sin.

What does this make of your boastings? Look you here, ye that say, I have only to believe by and by, and I may live as I like and yet be saved. Is it so? Is it so? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where will the ungodly and the wicked appear? As for those whose ungodly lives stare them in the face, so far from being saved by their pretended faith, they are trees, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. If they say they continue in sin, that grace may abound, their damnation is just.

The salvation of Christ is not a salvation in sin, but a salvation from sin. They who would be saved by Him must come and trust Him just as they are, and He will enable them to forsake their sin. But while they continue to say, We will take pleasure in sin, there is no salvation possible for them.

God bring us to Christ, and nail our sins to His cross, and give us life in our Savior's life. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11505.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/a-call-to-holy-living/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net