

Laboring And Not Fainting

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon exhorts believers to persevere in fervent, continuous labor for Christ without fainting, emphasizing that true Christian service requires wholehearted dedication and endurance.

Scripture: Revelation 2:3, Deuteronomy 6:5, Psalm 33:18, Judges 16:20

Topics: "Perseverance", "Christian Service", "Spiritual Endurance"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon passionately calls the Church to persevere in diligent, wholehearted labor for Christ. He contrasts true labor with fainting, urging believers to serve with enduring zeal and self-denial despite hardships. Spurgeon challenges common excuses for weariness and encourages steadfastness until the end, promising the joy of Christ's commendation. This sermon inspires believers to embrace their calling with renewed vigor and faithfulness.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"For My name's sake you have labored and have not fainted." Revelation 2:3.

THE Lord Jesus Christ never removes His eyes from His Church. He notes everything that concerns her, observing not merely the life of her members but their soul's health, and not merely their health, but the way in which they spend their spiritual strength. He knows their works, He observes their charity, their patience, their zeal for His name's sake. Seven times in His words to the Churches, He says, "I know your works." This should make us live with great care, for albeit the whole world is under the eye of God, yet of His Church it is true, "upon one stone there shall be seven eyes." The full perfection of Omniscience exerts itself upon the Lord's chosen people. The farmer has an eye to all his estate but his chief care is his own family. And, even so, while the Great Husbandman of all creation observes all His works, He chiefly looks upon His own household. "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy."

Our Lord Jesus, it appears from the text and its connection, notices what it is that His Church cannot bear and He is very glad when she cannot endure false doctrine or unholy living. He would have her never to endure these but to purge herself from them with all strictness. But He notes also, with joy, what she can bear—toilsome labor, abundant self-denial, reproach for His sake, persecution and suffering even unto blood. In this He sees her love made manifest and His delight is in her. It appears that our Lord especially

fixes His eyes upon the labors of the Church. What is the Church allowed to be on earth for but that she should labor for her Lord? If there were nothing to be done in this world there would be no reason for her lingering here below. She would be transported to the better land if there were not great ends to be accomplished by her tarrying here.

She is put here because the world needs her and because God's Glory is to be revealed through her. She is to be salt to a society which otherwise would be putrid—light to a people who otherwise would sit in darkness. Consequently a Church which does not labor misses the chief end of its being—it is a plant that bears no flower—a vine branch that yields no cluster. Christ observes the labor of His Church and He has special delight in it when it is continuous, so that He can give to her the double commendation of our text, "You have labored and have not fainted." Oh, that we might receive this commendation from our Master's lips at the last! May He whose blood and righteousness are our only hope of salvation see in us abounding evidences of the grateful love which He so well deserves at our hands.

We shall, this morning make persevering service our theme.

I. First I would call your attention to the text itself, noticing THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE GOOD here combined. "You have labored"—there is something positive. "You have not fainted"—there is a negative which helps to make the positive more positively excellent. "You have labored." We will not consider the original, but we will take the words of our version.

"You have labored." Now, to labor signifies working with the putting forth of much strength. It is work with an emphasis. It means hard work, intense exertion, vigorous action. Men may work, but yet not labor and I fear there are many who claim to be working men who do not often trouble themselves with anything approaching to "labor." There are also working Christians who do not approach to laboring—a lifetime of such work as theirs would not exhaust a butterfly.

When a man works for Christ he should work with all his might. Surely we should not offer less love under the Gospel than was required under the Law, and you know the Law speaks on this wise—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." Surely Jesus Christ deserves all that—and when we labor for Him it should not be with the careless indifference of slaves—but with the

ardor of lovers, the devotion of enthusiasts. If any master is to be served badly, let it not be our Master who is in Heaven! We owe Him too much to wish to be eye-servants towards Him. If anywhere a dilatory servant may be excused, certainly it cannot be in the service of Him who redeemed us with His most precious blood! A Church ought, therefore, not merely to be a working Church, but a great deal more—it should be a Church working to its highest pitch—a laboring church.

If I may use the figure, we ought to employ every particle of our steam power. We should drive the engine at high pressure. We have no force that can be allowed to escape in waste. We should not be simply walking to Heaven, but running the heavenly race and running it with diligence and eagerness! When a man truly labors it takes a good deal out of him. Laboring, therefore implies self-denial. In labor the man's strength is brought forth and expended. See how the hot sweat stands upon his brow, how it pours from him as he continues to exert himself. He has to deny himself, for he would like to be at rest. He sees his comrade, perhaps, lounging against yonder pillar or stretching himself at ease upon the greensward. But he cannot do that and labor—he knows he cannot. He lays aside his ease and comfort for the sake of what he has to do.

So would the Church if she were what she should be—she would deny herself and take up the cross of high-pressure service. She would toil without cessation and give without stint. An energy far beyond anything usual in Christendom would be common in the Church if she were in a right state of heart. Alas, I fear the bulk of professors are not earnest enough to preserve their professions from ridicule. I noticed the other day a remark which struck me. Speaking of a certain congregation, the writer said he believed there were a hundred persons in it who were worth not less than 5,000 pounds a year each, and then he mentioned the sum that was given for the maintenance of the work of God, and he added, "if any ordinary person who was not a Christian, went in there and heard them sing—

"And if I might make some reserve,

And duty did not call,

I love my God with zeal so great,

That I would give him all"

—he would say to himself, "I was at the theater on Saturday night and saw a farce, but if I need a screaming one I must come here on a Sunday."

Indeed, I thought the remark to be sadly true. When I see how much there is of available strength both in worldly substance, in mental vigor and in other forms in the Church which is never used, I dare hardly say that any Church now upon earth really labors for Christ. A little of your spare strength is given to Jesus and then you think you have done well. He is put off with odds and ends—the cheese parings and the potato peelings of the Church! I ask you, does He get much more? What are the gifts of most? Do they give as much as would keep the lowest menial in their kitchens? It was not so in early times. Then men were Christians all over and altogether and served Christ first, Christ last, Christ midst, and Christ without end! But now it is enough if we gloss over life with a little varnish of holy talk and pious profession.

Would God these eyes might live to see a Church that really labored, putting forth all its strength with all its might, using all the force in its possession for the propagation of the Gospel of the Lord and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom! But labor implies not merely the strong effort I have tried to depict, but a continuance of it, for a man might take up a workman's tool and for a few minutes make a mighty show of effort and yet be no laborer unless he kept on working till his task was done.

If a few minutes sufficed him and he said, "I have had practical experience of what labor is and I rather think it does not agree with me." And if, therefore, he should lay down his tool and go back to his gentlemanly ease, he would be no laborer. He merely plays at labor, that is all. So have we known too many whose service for God has been occasional— they have fits and starts of effort, but they are soon over—their spasmodic zeal is today so hot as to be well near fanatical and tomorrow it will be succeeded by an indifference far more astounding! If the Church is said to labor, it means that she puts forth all her strength as a regular thing. Like the sun and moon she continues in her orbit of duty. She does not flash and foam for a brief interval like a torrent, but she flows on steadily and continually like a river. She keeps at her lifework and with all her might she continues in well-doing and is not weary.

There is the positive good. The negative, as I have said, crowns the positive—"And have not fainted." Now, there are different degrees of fainting. Some may be said to faint comparatively when they flag in exertion. They drop from running to walking, from diligence to indolence. They did run well—what

hindered them? They flag. Many continue to do as much as ever they did outwardly, yet their heart is not in it and so they faint. Their service is the same to the eyes of

man, but not the same to the eyes of God. They act as mere officials—their work is done mechanically—they go through the routine, but they put forth no energy, no life power. There is no anointing of the Holy Spirit in them.

There is fruit, but it resembles the berries of a sunless summer. It is tasteless, insipid, and all but worthless. Some flag by growing weak in all they do. They do put forth such force as they have, but they are essentially feeble. They preach their best, but their best is wine mixed with water. They teach in the school and what they teach is the Truth of God and they deliver it with some degree of earnestness—but they have lost the power with which to influence the heart. Ears they can weary, but they cannot stir consciences!

They are vigorously feeble, vehemently weak. They have got away from God, the Source of all spiritual strength and therefore their locks are shorn and though, like Samson, they shake themselves, they shake themselves in vain. The power of God has departed from them and though they may not know it, Ichabod is written upon their works. Too many go further than this—they renounce all or a large part of the Christian work they were accustomed to do. Content with the efforts of other days they surrender to the sluggard's vice. They faint, that is, they give up the work altogether! The soldier grounds his arms; the workman puts away his tools—they count their day's work to be done before the day is done, and cry for their wages before the pay day has arrived!

It is sad that there should be so many in the Church of this kind. And some go even further than that, for after retiring from labor, themselves, they cease to have any care about the Lord's work. They grow indifferent. They even become critical and censorious towards those who are zealously occupied—whether Christ's kingdom grows or declines appears to be little or nothing to them. They still wear the Christian name but they have fainted. They are like persons in a swoon who have become unconscious of all around. They need assistance from others and can give no help in return. They are a draft upon the Church's resources, instead of an addition to her strength. For all usefulness they might as well be dead—only as a tax upon the energy of the Church can they be said to be alive. Happy are they who are preserved from fainting in any of these degrees! God grant especially that we may never come to that last, lest it should be said of us that we had a name to live and were dead.

But, Brothers and Sisters, members of Christ's Church, by His Grace this may be said of us through a long course of years—"They labored and fainted not." When our hair is white with the snows of many winters, may it truly be said by the dear lips of Him who is in Heaven for us, "You have labored and have not fainted." When we lie in our last narrow bed, may this be the encomium which our spirit shall hear before the Throne of God, "You have labored and have not fainted." May this be such a sentence as an honest affection may dare to write upon our tombs. Have we begun to faint already? If we are yet in our youth let us scorn to faint so soon. If we are yet in the prime of our days, let us call shame upon ourselves for fainting before yet the sun shines.

Or, are we beginning to faint now that we are growing gray? Why should we faint now when the day is almost over, and the shadows are drawn out? Brothers and Sisters, call shame upon yourself if you would faint in your last evening hours when Glory is at your door and the crown of immortality is all but upon your brow! Let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord so that this text may be

our own at the last—"You have labored for My name's sake, and have not fainted."

II. Now we pass on to a second part of our discourse and that is to dwell upon EXCUSES FOR FAINTING. Fainting has become so common in the Church of God that various apologies have been made for it and they are constantly being repeated. When a sin is frequent, excuses for it are multiplied until men cease to blush and think that they have done no ill whatever.

There are some who faint in the work of God because the work itself has proven very tedious to them. When they first undertook it and the novelty was upon it they did not tire, but now the freshness is gone and they have come into the real wear and tear of it, they do not enjoy it quite so much as they thought they should. They hoped for an office in which the chief labor should be to gather lilies, or lie upon beds of roses. The service of the Crucified is far less romantic and far more laborious.

Dear Friends, if any of you think that the road of Christian service is all level and rolled with a steam roller, you have made a very great mistake. There is no royal road to eminence in anything—it is always uphill work and rough climbing—and certainly there is no such road in the service of God! Never was there a truer sentence than that we sung just now—

"True, it is a straight and thorny road, And mortal spirits tire and faint."

Friends were debating the other day concerning the work of the ministry, the ease or the labor of it, and I reminded one of them of that saying of Baxter, "God have mercy upon the man who finds the ministry of the Gospel to be easy work, for he will have need of all God's mercy, indeed, when he renders up his account at the Last Great Day."

I cannot conceive of a more atrocious offender against humanity and against God than the man who, having souls committed to his trust, finds it an easy thing to take care of them and watch for their salvation! Sirs, the ministry is a matter which wears the brain and strains the heart—and drains out the life of a man if he attends to it as he should. If God were served by any of us as He should be, I question whether we should not grow old before our time through labor and anguish, even as did that great lover of Souls, Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep! Soul-winning is a work that might fill an angel's heart—it did fill a Savior's hands. Any service for God, if it is done at all, should be hard work.

If you need to be feather-bed soldiers go and enlist somewhere else—Christ's soldiers must fight and they will find the battle rough and stern. We, of the Church militant, are engaged in no mimic maneuvers and grand parades! Our life is real and earnest. Our battle, though not with flesh and blood, is with spiritual wickedness in high places and it involves hard blows and keen anguish. You must look for real fighting if you become a soldier of Christ, and oh, Sir, if the excuse for fainting is that the work is toilsome, that it is too much a drag upon you, why did you begin it? You ought to have known this at the first. You should have counted the cost!

But, ah, let me say, the work was not toilsome when your heart was loving! Neither would it now be so hard if your soul were right with God. This is but an unworthy excuse. Ardent spirits love difficulties! Fervent love delights in making sacrifices! They would not wish to swim forever in smooth seas of pleasure. They know that manhood's truest glory lies in contending with and overcoming that which is hard. Give to the child the easy task, but let the man have something worth the doing to perform. Instead of shrinking because the work is tedious, we ought to gird up our loins and push on the enterprise with all the greater force.

Another apology is pretty frequently heard. "But I have been so long at it now. I have been a tract distributor. I have been a city missionary. I have been an evangelist, or I have been a Bible Woman, or I have been a Sunday school teacher now 20 or 30 years and I think it is time to retire." Say you so, my Comrades? The sun has been shining now a great many thousand years, but I have not heard that he intends retiring from the business yet. God has given to us fruitful seasons and I have not heard that He intends to cease to bless our husbandry. Every day we drink from the river of His mercy and we have had no intimation, yet, that that river has ceased to flow and that God intends to cut off the supplies.

Why, then, should any one of us dream of staying his hand? What is a lifetime at its utmost length for the service of God? Suppose a man could spend 70 clear years in unflagging exertion in the service of his Master—what would it be, after all? But now half our time must go in sleep and in the necessary refreshment of the body. Next, a very large proportion must be taken off for the business of the world—and then what is left? Why, we can only give our Master a few hours in the week, the most of us, and yet you talk about having served Him so long! Dear Master, put Your hand upon our lips next time we would use such words and never permit us to insult the sovereignty of Your dear love by making such an excuse for our sluggishness!

Other excuses, however, will be sure to come and among them, this, that we have been disappointed up till now in the success of what we have attempted. We have sown, but the most of the seed has fallen upon the wayside or upon the rocks—and where it did spring up we have not gained anything like a hundred-fold increase. We thought that in our class we should have had all the girls or all the boys converted almost immediately—and when we went into the village to preach, we concluded everybody would come to hear us and that hearing us, they would be converted and a Church would be speedily formed. We dreamed that when we visited a district in the crowded city, we should be able, very soon, to so reform the people that the public houses would grow fewer and the Sabbath would be better kept, and I do not know what beside! Very little of this fair vision has been realized—we have not succeeded as we desired.

And what is very perplexing to us is the fact that we know of somebody who has succeeded where we have failed—a person who does not appear to have all the gifts we have, or all the capacities we have—whose sphere was evidently quite as difficult as ours and yet he has prospered and we have not. And therefore we conclude that we would do well to cease

our working. If we were in our right minds and did not need an excuse for being sluggards, we should not reason thus, but should argue to a conclusion of a diametrically opposite nature!

He who has succeeded so well might, perhaps, have an excuse for going home and saying, "Master, my work is done," but he who has done so very little should continue at his work till he can show some sort of result for his efforts. He should say, "I will stick to this till I succeed, or till I can say, 'If I have not succeeded it was no fault of mine—I did what my Master bade me, I called upon Him for help in it—and I went to work in His way with faith in Him,' and if I have not prospered, I have done what I could."

I remember hearing a certain young preacher exclaim after he had heard an older Divine who had preached with some power, "There now, I shall never be able to preach again after this. I shall feel quite ashamed to go into the pulpit with my poor sermons!" I could not help remarking that the effect ought to be the other way. If this man had done so well, it only shows what God can enable me to do, and I will go to God and ask Him to help me. If this Brother is so useful in the Church, I will bless God that he is a better

man than I am and if God pleases to give me a gleam of success occasionally, I will thank Him even if I am not able to bear so much success as my fellow servant. We must not give up the war because we have not yet conquered, but fight on till we can seize the victory. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Another set of excuses I must mention. They are little, pettish, pitiful, proud excuses—but they are very common. Here is one. "I shall leave the work, for I am sure I am not appreciated as I ought to be." You do not exactly use these words, but that is your feeling. I am only photographing your thoughts. You began to serve God very enthusiastically and you thought the minister ought to have said, "I am thankful that God has sent such a very zealous young man into our Church." But he has not made any such remark. You have gone on for some time working among the poor, but the good people around you have not been heard to say, "Have you heard of So-and-So? She is such a remarkably useful woman, quite a godsend among us, an example to us all." You feel hurt that you are not admired. You are vexed that you are not highly esteemed.

Now, I will not waste words in exposing this feeling, but I will at once ask you to look at it and tell me if you don't think it is the meanest and most miserable thing you have ever set your eyes upon? Do you mean to give way to such pettiness and silliness? If so, I have done with you, for you will never do any good in this world! The slave of such a mean feeling is incapable of being free. "Ah," cries another, "my complaint is more reasonable, for I am discouraged because no one aids me in my work. I should not mind their not appreciating me, but they have not assisted me though I have needed much help. I have kept on under great pressure, and where I thought I should surely find sympathizers and helpers, I have met with the cold shoulder and unkind remarks."

Oh, my Brother! My Brother! Does your life, after all, depend upon the breath of other men's nostrils? Has it come to this, that you cannot live upon the approbation of your Master unless you gain also the smile of your fellow servants? Does it mean this, that you will not do your duty because other people are negligent of theirs? It seems to me if others will not aid me I must put my shoulder to the wheel and do the work myself by the help of God! If the toil is unshared the honor will be undivided. To tread the winepress alone makes us more like our Lord. Therefore, let us labor on in the name of the Lord whose support is far better than the help of kings or princes!

Another says, "I have no patience with these frivolous excuses, but mine is a solid one. I must leave my work, for I am so much opposed in it." Granted that you are opposed, but why should you run away? Overcome the opposition, dear Brother—the more of it to be overcome, the more Divine Grace you need—and the more honor you may gain. Suppose a troop should come against you. Is it not said of Gad, "A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last"? Would you be crowned without a conflict and made a victor without fighting? Of one of old it is said that he broke through a troop and leaped over a wall through his God. Why should you not do the same?

"But my wall is so high," you say, "I cannot leap over it." Is it an iron wall or a granite wall? Then, if God tells you to leap, leap right at it. He will either bear you over it, or else its solid substance will dissolve into impalpable vapor and vanish quite away. You only need courage! Go in this, your might, for you shall thresh the mountains and the wind shall winnow them and carry them away. "But I am so incompetent and feel so weak," says one, "in fact, the further I go the weaker I get!" You are progressing admirably, dear Brother, and when you become still weaker you will succeed!

Gideon could not win the battle because he had too many soldiers—the faint-hearted had to be sent away, but still there were too many troops remaining! And when the whole army was reduced to 300 and they had no weapons but earthen vessels and trumpets—then it was that the Midianites were conquered! When we are weak then we are strong. Oh, Brother, renounce this excuse and labor on, fainting not! God keep you from fainting.

III. Now, for a moment or two, I am going to mention the REAL CAUSES OF FAINTING. The first is an actual decline in spiritual strength. When a working Believer suddenly becomes a loitering professor, you may gather from it that his spiritual constitution has gray hairs upon it here and there, though he knows it not. It is not, dear Brother, merely that you do not do so much—it is that you are not so much—you have not the amount of life in you which you once had.

And is not this a sad thing? Ought not this to be an indicator to you of spiritual sickness and drive you at once to the Good Physician to seek healing at His hands? There is, if you would look a little into your spirit, I am quite sure of it, a falling off in your love to Jesus. Holy work is no harder, but you do not love Christ so well. You have, in truth, no more enemies than you had, but you have forgotten your best Friend. Oh, if you had been in the banqueting house with Him and His banner of love had waved over you—and you had been made to drink of the spiced wine of His pomegranate in sweet communion with His blessed Person, you would not have fainted—for he who is on fire with love will burn his way through difficulties.

I am afraid, too, there is coming over your spirit a great deal of deadness to spiritual and eternal things. You are now more moved and actuated by the things that are seen, and less by the things that are unseen. It is a very easy thing for us to get to enjoy the world and to give our hearts up to its troubles and cares. It needs the Spirit of God to make us sensitive to the Divine touch so that we feel eternity—so that we know the value of other men's souls, so that we put before us the great day in which actions shall be revealed—so that we estimate life aright as it will weigh in the balances of infinite justice! Oh, to be dead to these spiritual realities in any degree is a dreadful death and to be callous to holy things is a terrible hardness! May God keep us from spiritual insensibility and may we be tender and sensitive to the faintest motion of the Holy Spirit.

It is to be feared, also, that those who faint have lost their reliance upon Divine power, at least in a degree. The man who labors for God aright never works in his own strength. He who works aright acts because he believes that God works through him—and can a man faint when he feels that? When we fight for God's Truth it is not our arm but the arm of the Eternal which deals the blow! When we bear testimony to His Word it is not we that speak, but God's Spirit speaks through us! Let the man of God go forth to any enterprise and hear the sound of his Master's feet behind him and he will march to the tune of Miriam's timbrel! But let him go alone and he will moan and murmur, and pine and fail, and die. Confidence in God makes us strong, but by turning away from our great unseen Helper we straightaway begin to faint.

Moreover, I am afraid that we forget that the Lord requires of us an unselfish dedication to His service and that we do not serve Him at all unless His Glory is our chief object. When I hear of a fainting Sunday school teacher who gives as a reason for fainting that he does not think the other Sunday school teachers are as kind to him as they ought to be, I ask him whether his main object was that he should be loved of men—for if he loved his God, what would it be to him how his fellow men regarded him? When I hear a man saying, "I shall give up that post, or that service"—(of course I am not mentioning those who have justifiable reasons, and there are such cases), but when I hear of a man's retiring because he is faint-hearted, I say to him, "You have met with difficulties—did you not know you would meet with

difficulties? You have gained no honor—did you not serve for another motive, namely, God's Glory?

"If you looked for ease and contentment and pleasure, and have not gained them, what wonder? You ought not to have looked for them. Oh, Brother, you have made a mistake! You must get into a better state of heart before God can use you! You must feel that you would have the Lord use you just as in His infinite wisdom He sees fit to do. You should be a piece of iron on the Almighty's anvil to be welded into a scepter if He chooses you to break the potter's vessels—to be beaten into a plowshare and plunged into the earth, if by you He means to turn up the furrows of the fallow ground— or fashioned into a spear-point, if by you He intends to strike His enemies."

Whatever He wishes to make us, that we should desire to be. We know not what it is to serve God fully until we come to perfect submission to His will.

IV. I have a little medical business to do in closing this sermon. Four sorts of persons are very common among us. There are, first, those who neither labor nor faint. Next, those who faint but never labor. Then, those who did labor once, but have fainted. And, fourthly, those who labor still but are ready to faint. To each of these four I desire to administer a little medicine.

Let the first come here. There are some who neither labor nor faint. I do not mean outsiders, now! Those God shall judge. I mean members of the Church. Labor? No. The greatest labor they ever do is to walk from home to the Meeting House to hear a sermon and some of them are hardly able to keep awake during the time of hearing the discourse. They are slumbering hearers like Eutychus and it is a great mercy God does not make an example of them as He did of that sleepy Brother. We have Church members who never labor and, therefore, never faint. What would they faint about? They have never done enough to come anywhere near an approach to that state of exhaustion.

They never draw the Gospel coach but they are delighted to ride on the top of it! They especially prize the box seat if they can get it. They never go into the Lord's vineyard to trim the vines but they are very fond of eating the clusters, though, indeed, even these they will, at times, call sour and destitute of the flavor of the older vintages. They do nothing, nothing whatever and, therefore they find fault with those who do! I am very thankful that very few of this class are among us, yet there are too many.

Now, I would prescribe for them a taste of the gall of bitterness. It might be beneficial to them if they had the flavor of it in their mouths, for I am very much afraid that unless they repent it will be their eternal portion. A Church member who brings forth no fruit, what did the Lord say about him? He said, "Every tree that brings not forth fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." How would you like that, you idle Church members? Every branch in the true vine that bears no fruit He takes away. What do you say to this? How do you like the looks of that threat, you fruitless members?

I speak not to you that are sick and whose fruit is patience—God bless you—you are good fruit-bearing branches. I speak not to you who are feeble in health, poor, obscure and with little gifts who, nevertheless, do what you can—the Lord accepts and blesses you—He counts your mite a greater gift than the rich man's larger portion! He calls your little word that you are able to speak for Jesus truer service than many an eloquent discourse.

But I mean you who could and do not! You who should and do not! You who eat the fat and drink the sweet in Zion and yet let men die and be damned while you take no care of their souls and do not even give them a tract, or write them a letter to tell them the way to Heaven or give them a warning. Believing

that you are saved yourselves, you button yourselves up and are perfectly content to sneak into Heaven alone! A pretty Heaven it would be if it were full of selfish spirits like yourselves!

Oh, that we may be stirred up to escape from such an unholy spirit! I loathe the very thought of living here merely to get into Heaven myself—going to Christ to be washed from my own sins and for daily mercy—and then never doing a hand's turn towards the building of His Temple, but just sitting down and caring for none besides. You idlers need to have a taste of salutary bitterness! May it be kept in your mouths till it is rinsed out with a glass of repentance and may it lead you to Jesus to ask Him to save you from all indolence and selfishness.

The next sort of persons to be dealt with are those who faint but do not labor. "Who are they?" you ask. I remember one in the days of Solomon who had to go down a street upon an errand, but did not go. Dear man, he would not venture out for there was a lion in the way. Now, truth to say, there was no lion that any man could see, but his imagination had invented the bloodthirsty animal. We know persons of the same family who would say, "Oh, do not attempt to do anything that has not been done before, it would be hazardous! Our forefathers were content to have sermons preached down back streets where nobody could find the Meeting Houses—let us keep to our obscurity."

Yet men of bolder heart have pushed to the front and mean to keep there. But hear how these cowards talk. "Do not go down that court! There are Catholics there! Do not think of going to that lodging house—they are sure to mock at you! Do not introduce religion to such a man, it will be of no use—he will only turn again and tear you apart! Do not cast pearls before such swine." These are excellent wet blankets and the stock is large. We have some of them in all congregations.

What advice shall I give to them but this—My dear Brothers and Sisters, just stand aside, please—get out of the way and let others come forward and serve God if you do not mean to do it yourselves. If you do not like to be so ignominiously put on one side, I would suggest to you the following medicine. Take every morning a few drops of the

essential oil of "try," and you do not know what an effect it may have upon you! Powers now dormant would be awakened and things impossible would be achieved. Add to this a strong draught of the wine of "must"—necessity is laid upon me—yes, woe is me unless I serve my Master! And I think you might be brought back into a tolerably healthy condition and yet, after all, labor and not faint.

Our third patient is one who did labor once, but has fainted. If he has fainted because he thinks he has done enough let me prescribe for him a strong potion of the salts of fear. They may be useful to him. He that puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the kingdom. "Remember Lot's wife." Shall I repeat that prescription, for it is a very useful one to those who leave off working for Christ! "Remember Lot's wife." If her fate is recollected perhaps your heart will be stirred up to renewed diligence.

But there are some who labor and are ready to faint. To them I would prescribe the "wines on the lees well-refined," the rich promises of God's Word, the sweet prospect of an eternal reward! I would recommend them to take the spirit of confidence in large quantities, yes, to be filled with it! Confide in God—He will not suffer you to labor in vain, or spend your strength for nothing! To you, my fellow Soldiers in this Church, I have these words to say—These are not times for fainting, these are not times for idling. All the world is active—the wheels of commerce are revolving at a greater rate than ever—events everywhere march with a giant stride! We have seen what our fathers dreamed not of! Now, if ever, the Church of God ought to be awake! The demands of souls require our utmost diligence. The enemy is

active in deceiving—we must be active in instructing and saving.

Now, by the precious blood of Christ who bought you, oh, you Believers in Christ, bestir yourselves! If, indeed, you are legitimately born from above! If the imperial blood is in your veins and if you are soldiers of that great Captain who unto death strove against sin! And if you expect to wear the white robe and wave the palm of victory—in the name of the eternal and ever-living One, seek His Spirit and the Divine energy that you may labor yet more abundantly and faint not! I am longing to have this Church all in working order for the campaign on which we are about to enter. The long evenings of Fall are our time of hope!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, help us, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, between now and next spring we may have many conversions and a large increase to our numbers! If the whole Church should be awakened throughout we might expect far greater blessings than we have ever received before! Oh, Spirit of the living God, come upon us! Come upon pastors and officers and members—and upon the whole congregation—and all the glory shall be unto Your name forever and forever! Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/laboring-and-not-fainting/>

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