

John 12:42, 43. Many Who Believe, Refuse to Confess Christ.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving Christ and standing up for him in the face of opposition, and warns of the consequences of refusing to confess him.

Scripture: Matthew 5:11, Matthew 10:32, Mark 8:36, Luke 9:26, 1 Peter 4:16

Topics: "Confessing Christ", "Resisting Temptation"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer emphasizes the importance of resisting temptations and doing the will of God, using examples of rulers who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Despite the trials and fears faced by these rulers, the consequences of denying Christ are far greater in eternity. True believers may be tempted but will not continue in sin, as seen in Peter's repentance. Mortimer challenges listeners to confess Christ in the face of opposition, showing love for the Lord above worldly admiration.

Transcript

It is very profitable to observe what temptations have overcome men in past times. None can estimate the force of temptation, excepting those who are actually under its influence. Even those temptations by which we ourselves have once been overcome, appear feeble and insignificant when we are removed from their power. We have read of a young ruler who refused to follow Christ because he had great possessions. Now we read of many rulers who refused to confess him, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. What various reasons men have for not doing the will of God! But there is not one of all those reasons that will appear a strong one at the last day. "We cannot," thought these rulers, "confess that Jesus is the Son of God, lest we should be put out of the synagogue." There was a beggar born blind who endured the trial; why could not they endure it? When he was cast out, the Son of God found him and revealed himself unto him. Had those rulers acted as he did, they would have been comforted as he was. One word from the Son of God could impart more peace to the heart than the plaudits of a whole multitude, or the praise of the whole Sanhedrin. But it appeared to these rulers an insupportable calamity to be put out of the synagogue. Not to be allowed to approach within an arm's length of any person, or to eat and drink with any for thirty days, was a trial they would not encounter. Then if, at the end of thirty days, they continued to confess Christ, a curse would be pronounced on them in the midst of the congregation, accompanied by the extinguishing of lights, and the sounding of trumpets. Then would follow destitution, and desolation, and disgrace. They would be deprived of their property, forbidden to hire

or to be hired, to buy or to sell, to teach or be taught; when they died stones would be cast at their coffin, and none would follow them to the grave.

These things were sufficient to terrify a human heart; but yet what were they all, compared to the woes God will inflict on the unbelieving and the fearful! Not to be permitted to approach our fellow-mortals is not so dreadful as to be separated from saints and angels and God and Christ forever and ever. The sudden darkness in the synagogue, and the clangor of trumpets, could not be as appalling as the darkness of the sun at noonday, and the sound of the last trumpet!

But though these rulers believed that Jesus was the Christ, they did not believe with the heart. They did not love him. They loved men more than God; therefore they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. It is possible that a true believer may be tempted to deny his Lord--but then he will not continue in the sin. Peter denied Christ; but one "kind upbraiding glance" brought him to repentance, and made him go out and weep bitterly. These rulers were not like Peter. They could bear to see their companions insult the Lord day after day, and yet never take his part--they could bear to hear them plotting his death, and yet be silent. They were content to be on good terms with his enemies, and not to be counted among his friends. Could they have done this had they loved him? O no! had they loved him they would, on some occasion, have betrayed their feelings. Nicodemus could not sit in the Sanhedrin and hear the Lord calumniated. He exclaimed, "Does our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he does?" and thus he brought upon himself the derision of the assembly. Could an affectionate son hear his father insulted day after day, and never show by word or look how deeply he was wounded!

Perhaps we never hear men speak openly against Jesus himself. But do we not meet with many who speak against his laws and his people? It is before such persons that we are called upon to confess him. If we do not seem to approve of worldly amusements, if we show an attachment to truly religious people, if we refuse to smile at sin, and to admire what the world admires, the enemies of Christ will hate and despise us. Are we willing to bear their hatred and contempt for our dear Master's sake? Is Christ's approbation dearer to us than the world's admiration? These are signs that we love the Lord, and that he loves us; and that he will confess us when he comes in his glory with all his holy angels.

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