

Littered With Castaways!

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-scrutiny and humility in avoiding the pit of being a castaway, and encourages listeners to seek God's forgiveness and restoration.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:16

Topics: "Self-Examination", "Spiritual Birthright"

Description

F.B. Meyer delivers a poignant sermon on the dangers of despising one's spiritual birthright, using the examples of Esau and Saul to illustrate how yielding to temptation and partial obedience can lead to being cast away from God's service. He emphasizes the importance of self-examination and the need for believers to confront their appetites and hidden sins that may hinder their relationship with God. Meyer urges the congregation to seek God's forgiveness and restoration, warning that even those in ministry can become castaways if they do not fully surrender to God's will. He calls for a deep introspection to ensure that one's life is not choked by unconfessed sin, which can block the flow of God's grace. Ultimately, Meyer encourages a return to fervent prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit to avoid the fate of being a castaway.

Transcript

Let us then understand why men are cast away. I take the first case, that of Esau. He comes in from hunting. He is born to the birthright. The birthright includes the power of standing between God and the clan, speaking to God for men. He is famished. Yonder is the steaming mess of pottage prepared by his brother Jacob. "Give me that red lentile pottage," he cries. Jacob, crafty in heart, bargains: "Give me your spiritual birthright." Is there not here some Christian, who in the past has had some steaming mess of pottage appealing to the senses?

There is not one of us who has not been tempted by some temptation to sense. Aye, it may be there is many a man who is glancing back into his past life, and who knows that he has yielded--not once or twice, but oftener--to the appeal to the senses. He has taken a drink, or indulged some other appetite, and has despised his birthright. I once heard a story that made my heart ache, of a gray headed man who had been greatly used of God. In his home he had fallen into one gross act of immorality.

Another went to accuse him of his crime. They were sitting together at the tea table. His portion was not sufficiently sweet; and in the midst of this talk upon which depended whether or not the one should be held guilty, and whether he should be permitted to continue in his ministry, he said slightlyly: "My tea is sour."

Give me some more sugar." He cared more at that awful moment of his life whether or not the tea was sour or sweet enough, while his power as a minister of God's holy gospel was trembling in the balance. He did eat and drink, and despised his birthright.

Have you never eaten and drunken, and despised your birthright? Are you quite sure that some silent and beautiful form has not come into your life and destroyed your heart's true love? Are you quite sure that there is not in you some hungry appetite that has sought satisfaction? "Give it me. I must have it. I cannot live without it. Even though I have not quite the spiritual power that I had, give it me." So men despise their birthright still, and they are cast away. Esau became a prince in this world, and the father of a line of dukes, and all the world flattered him and thought him a prosperous and successful man, but God wrote over him the awful epitaph: "This man is a castaway, He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus he despised his birthright."

I turn the page of Scripture, and come to the first king of Israel, Saul. A noble man in many respects, he was sent by God to fulfil His mission, but he put a reserve upon his obedience, and told Samuel with a kind of pious blarney: "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." The old prophet at that moment detected the lowing of the herd and the bleating of the flock, and said very significantly: "Performed the commandment of the Lord! What means then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

I am not here to denounce specific forms of sin. If I did, the result would be that the people who were not directly attacked would hold up their umbrellas and let my words drip upon some others whom they think they would fit, and they would suppose therefore that they passed muster. But I am here to bring you face to face with the eternal God, to lead your consciences before the great White Throne, and let the light of the eternal purity of God blaze like a flash light upon them.

It will be for you to determine if under the profession of obedience there are some flocks and herds that you are reserving for yourselves. It is possible when you go to a man's home, or when you even smell his breath, or when you hear him speak, to know whether or not he has given up all for God. Some unfortunate sheep starts bleating. Saul professed obedience, but kept back something for himself; and God rejected him. He lingered ten years more on the throne, but he was a castaway.

A young David was already anointed to succeed him. So when I pass through the Word of God and take case after case, my heart bleeds and cries out because I know not who may be here. I would speak with all tenderness and all pity and all love. I have not come to scathe anyone. I have not come to denounce. It is because I know what the horror of that pit is, and what the horror of being cast away from God's service means, that I now speak in this way. You expected that I would bring you a system of spiritual truth,--and I have such a system to present; you expected that I was going to teach you how to receive the Holy Ghost of Pentecost, so that every day might be a Pentecost,--and I have that blessed message to tell you; but I dare not come to those deep and blessed subjects until I have introduced into your heart a spirit of self scrutiny and searching, that everyone may ask himself: "Can it be that though I am a minister, or an officer of the church, and bear around the holy elements on Sunday at the Communion service, and give my money to philanthropic objects--can it be that in God's sight I am a castaway?"

Coming out of a meeting recently a brother minister came up to me, took me by the hand, shook it warmly, and said: "I have enjoyed your meeting so much." Directly he said that I knew that I had failed. When a man says that he has enjoyed a meeting like this, I know that I have not touched him. You remember

when Jacob got down into the Jabbok ford, how beneath those Syrian stars he wrestled with the angel, and the angel with him. Presently the angel put forth his hand and touched the sinew of his strength, and he limped.

Do you think it is possible that Jacob could have limped into the camp next morning, and going to his loved Rachel, have said to her "O Rachel, we have had a lovely time all night. I have enjoyed it!" Rather he must have said to her. "I have had a night which has blasted my strength, which has left a scar upon me which I shall carry till I die. O woman, I have fought with the angel of God's love!" This may be the beginning of But we must begin at the bottom; we must begin at the root of our self confidence.

The prime cause of all failure in private life as well as in public ministry is the assertion of self. As long as men and women think it is all right with them, nothing can be done for them. It is only when there is excited within them a fear that after all things may not be quite so well as they seem, a dread that after all they may have made a mistake and be self, deceived, it is only then that in the secret of their own chambers they begin to ask God: "Am I just what I expected?"

It is then that the heart is laid open, and they may be brought to understand how a man may be almost a castaway and yet be taken back to the bosom of Christ as Peter was; for within six weeks the man who was nearly cast away became the Apostle of Pentecost. Paul said: "Lest I should be a castaway. Therefore, though I have a perfect right to go to an idol temple, I shall not go for fear other men seeing me go may follow me, and what might be innocent to me might be death to them.

Lest I should ruin any man's soul by going, I will abstain. I have a perfect right, if I choose, to take a wife; but I shall not do it. I will live a bachelor life, and toil with my hands, because by being lonesome myself I may touch some other man who is lonesome too, and by working with my own hands I shall stay upon the bench beside others who will be drawn to me by sympathy. There are many things which this body of mine may have in innocence, but I shall not take them because I wish to keep my body under, lest it should master me and cause me to be a castaway."

Christ waits--the sweet, strong, pure Son of God, --His heart yearning over men and yearning to pour itself through us to save them. But many of us have choked Him, resisted Him, thwarted Him. One feels like asking the whole audience to fall before Him in confession, and to ask that this holy day may not pass until He has restored us to fellowship with Himself. My friend, Dr. Harry Grattan Guinness, told me once that all the water supply had become choked out of their college in Derbyshire, England.

They could not obtain one drop of water from the bottom to the top of the house. They searched the cisterns, and inspected the taps and the whole machinery, and found no cause. At last they went to the junction between the main reservoir pipe and their house-pipe, and there in the orifice, in the joint between the two, squatted a huge toad, which (as they were told) had probably come in as a tadpole, had fed upon the water, and had grown to this size, so that the whole water was stopped because it choked the orifice.

Your life has been dry lately; no tear, no prayer, no fervor, You have not met Christ, you have not seen His face for many a long day, He has not used you. It must be because there is something in your heart, innocent once but injurious now. May God show you what it is! Get quiet, and prostrate yourself before God. If people want to speak to you, brush past them. If they want to detain you with small talk, leave them. Cast yourself down in some solitary place before God, and say: "May God forgive me!

May God show me the sin, show me what it is that hinders me, show me what has nearly wrecked my life. Whatever comes, may I not be a castaway, but still used by Thee through the Holy Ghost for Christ."

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