

Our Daily Homily - 1 Timothy

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing one's own sinfulness, trusting in the living God, and living in harmony with the divine purpose.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:16, 1 Timothy 4:4, 1 Timothy 5:5, 1 Timothy 6:17

Topics: "Trust in God", "Grace", "Intercessory Prayer"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the profound grace of God as he reflects on Paul's declaration of being the chief of sinners, illustrating that if Paul could be saved, anyone can. He discusses the necessity of intercessory prayer for others, highlighting that true believers should feel a divine yearning for the salvation of all. Meyer also notes the importance of recognizing God's gifts and maintaining a spirit of thanksgiving, while encouraging those who are grieving to trust in God for comfort and provision. He contrasts the uncertainty of riches with the reliability of trusting in the living God, urging believers to find security in Him rather than material wealth.

Transcript

Sinners, of whom I am chief - 1 Timothy 1:15

If the elephant can go safely over the swaying bridge, the horse and mule can; and the apostle seems to glory that in the very beginning of the progress of the Gospel through the world it had laid hold of and converted himself, because if he had been saved, any one might be. As men have been brought under conviction, in successive ages, it has been a profound consolation to learn that the chief of sinners has been in heaven for eighteen hundred years. In him first Jesus Christ showed forth "all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe."

Without doubt Paul never forgot the excess of his hatred and persecutions toward the infant Church. But probably he alludes here also to the deepening consciousness of unworthiness and sinfulness which accompanies all progress toward the knowledge and love of God. This phase of experience may be accounted for thus. The true saint of God, though certain of forgiveness, reviews his past sins in the light of that purity of which he is ever obtaining truer perceptions, and thus recognizes shades of evil in them which a slighter knowledge of God had failed to reveal. He also feels himself a greater sinner than others, because he supposes that God cannot have treated another with the same forbearance and mercy as have been extended to himself; and the greater the love the more heinous the transgression. And in addition, as subtler forms of temptation are suggested to him, and to every one, he knows that there are

kindred susceptibilities within him, even though they are abhorred and resisted. It is beneath the pressure of such thoughts that he recognizes his uttermost indebtedness to the grace of God.

That supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men - 1 Timothy 2:1

A life is revealed here of which many of us know practically nothing. We do not feel the absolute necessity of being much alone in the presence of God, not so much for ourselves, as for others; and this sad neglect of intercessory prayer, which we all deplore, really points to a lack of the divine life, since if that were mightily within us we should inevitably feel its throb and pulse in this direction. This comes out clearly in the words that follow.

Intercession is necessary that we may know the secrets of a quiet, peaceable, and godly life (1Ti 2:2).

Such intercession for others is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (1Ti 2:3). And the word translated good might be rendered beautiful.

It is consonant with the Divine purpose, for God wishes to have all men saved (1Ti 2:4). If, then, His Spirit is within us, we, too, shall long that men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Our hearts will be filled with a Divine tenderness of yearning which will find vent in strong cryings and tears. It is only thus we can live in harmony within the Divine purpose. One writes: "When I think of this, I feel I must pray. Oh, how near it brings to God to pray in the Spirit, and leads me to see that no pressure of duty among men can free us from the absolute need of much prayer."

Such intercession is in profound union with the mediation of our Lord (1Ti 2:5-6). - As the great High Priest He ever liveth to intercede; and in our little measure we, too, as members of a holy priesthood, must blend our supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks with His (1Pe 2:5).

Without controversy great is the mystery of God - 1 Timothy 3:16

It is more than likely that this is a fragment of one of the earliest hymns of the Church. In her hymns, and maintenance of the ordinances, she thus becomes the pillar and ground of the truth. The words "mystery of godliness" are probably a general heading which is further unfolded and expanded in the six following sentences, which may have been sung antiphonally : -

"God was manifest in the flesh,

Justified in the Spirit.

Seen of angels,

Preached unto the Gentiles.

Believed on in the world,

Received up into glory."

The Extremes of Manifestation. - The Eternal Word was manifested in the flesh. But it was not simply a physical manifestation; we cannot forget the descent of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, or the authentication of His words which the Spirit gave in signs and wonders, and convinced hearts, and converted lives.

The Extremes of Created Intelligence. - Angels worship Him; and Gentiles, sunk in heathen darkness, hear the story of His wondrous love. Jesus is the centre of all worlds: from heaven's bright spaces they come to Him on the one hand; from earth's dark sins they come on the other. In Him meet angels and men.

The Extremes of Space. - Glory is above: "He was received us into glory." The world is but a speck, a mote in the beam of eternity. How great the space between the two! But the feet of our Emmanuel have trodden its low pavement, and He has now taken to Himself His former glory. Like Jacob's ladder, He links earth with the throne of God.

Every creature of God is good . . . If it be received with thanksgiving - 1 Timothy 4:4

We must be very careful in applying these words. Intoxicating liquor, for instance, is sometimes described as "a good creature of God." But surely that term is not legitimate. Whatever grounds there may be for defending its use, can this text be alleged as one? For there is a great deal of human manipulation in its preparation. Before it reaches our lips, it is greatly altered by the process of fermentation. It can hardly be called God's good creature.

When we are quite sure that we are dealing with one of God's pure and unadulterated gifts, such as human love, friendship, the beauties of nature, wholesome food, fresh young spirits, the innocent mirth of the Christmas home-gathering; we must distinguish between God's gifts and our abuse of them; between His creation and our distortion of it. There are things in our lives which are not His creation or gift, and which we must resolutely refuse and put away. There are others which come to us clearly and absolutely from His hand.

Rejoice in every good thing which the Lord gives. - Rejoice! Do not enjoy things as though under the sword of Damocles, suspended by a thread.

Be careful to maintain the spirit of thanksgiving and prayer. - What you can thank God for or use in His name and for His glory; what lifts you from the gift to the Giver, or is capable of being prayed over, with no shadow of misgiving, is innocent and healthy.

Watch only against the intrusion of self. Whatever you place between yourself and God, or rest on apart from God, or make the aim and centre of your life, is hurtful and must pass through the fire. The way to rid yourself of its poison is to insist on making it a subject of thanksgiving.

She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God - 1 Timothy 5:5

Art thou desolate indeed, because the light of thine eyes has passed from view, leaving thee immeasurably lonely? Dear soul, do not look down into the grave which has received the precious mortal frame, but up into the face of God.

He lent thee thy beloved. From the time of the first knitting of soul with soul he was but a loan for a specified time; and wouldst thou not rather have had him for so short a time than not at all? Wouldst thou not have said, had God asked thee, "I would rather have a year or month of such love as his than none"? Do not be angry, because God has done as He always intended.

Besides, that beloved one is still thine. Thy love so entered into his heart that it could not be eradicated, though ages should pass. Do not suppose that death is so mighty a magician as to alter the very nature of

those who pass for a moment beneath His wand.

And God will care for thee. Trust Him for society, that thou be not lonely; for the provision of what is necessary to thy support ; and for the protecting love which thy shrinking nature calls for. Thy Maker will be thy husband.

Wouldst thou be comforted, continue in prayers and supplications for others night and day. Cease to shut thyself up with thy sorrow, and go out to minister comfort to those who sorrow as without hope. A Hindoo story tells of a bereaved mother, who was advised to obtain a handful of corn from a house where there was no trouble, and was so occupied in seeking it, and in comforting the inmates of the various homes she visited, that her own grief was assuaged.

Nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God - 1 Timothy 6:17

The contrast here is very beautiful. Men, for the most part, look to riches to supply them with all they need richly to enjoy; but the apostle says that it is beyond all comparison better to look away from dead coin to a living Person, who takes pleasure in giving liberally without upbraiding.

Here is a rebuke. - Supposing you had your cellars filled with gold coin, would you not think yourself secure against all possible need and care? Almost certainly you would. But you ought to be even more at rest, since you have neither silver nor gold, and only your Heavenly Father's hand.

Here is a contrast. - Riches are uncertain at the best. A man in these difficult days finds it easier to gain money than to hold it. He who is rich to-day may awake to-morrow to find that some sudden turn of the market has made him poor. But God is not uncertain. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. His covenants are certainties.

Here is an appeal - Trust in the living God with as much restfulness as others in their lands and revenues, and be almost glad if God takes away from you what you have clung to so tenaciously, that you may drop securely into His everlasting arms. You smile at the story of the lady who was told by the captain that he had done all he could for the vessel, and they must now look to the Almighty; and who replied, "O captain, has it come to that?" But you may be nearer akin to her spirit than you suppose!

Here is an assured destiny. - Those who trust in riches are pierced through with many sorrows, and are caught in the maelstrom, which drowns souls in perdition; they who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed.

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