

The Folly and Danger of Parting With Christ for the Pleasures and Profits of Life. (Matt. 8:23-34)

by George Whitefield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a real Christian and depending on Christ for salvation, and warns against seeking salvation in ourselves.

Scripture: Matthew 8:26-34, Mark 5:2, Luke 8:34

Topics: "True Christianity", "Salvation By Faith"

Description

George Whitefield preaches about the necessity of being true Christians rather than nominal ones, emphasizing the importance of conversing about Jesus and relying solely on His grace for salvation. He warns against the dangerous belief that one must be 'good enough' or have a certain 'fitness' before receiving God's grace, highlighting the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ's love and grace. Whitefield urges the congregation to surrender to Christ, acknowledge their unworthiness, and seek salvation through faith in Him alone, emphasizing the need to fully depend on Jesus for redemption.

Transcript

Matthew 8:23-34, And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to [him], and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him! And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw

him, they besought [him] that he would depart out of their coasts.

If we were but sensible of the great necessity there is, in this our day, of being real Christians, sure we should not be contented with being nominal ones; but we are sunk into I know not what; we are no better than baptized heathen. And how amazing is it, that we should profess the name of Christ, and yet so little converse about him; surely, this name whereby we are called, should be the theme of our discourse here, and of our eternal Hallelujahs in a world to come. But is it not more amazing, to consider, that instead of the name of Jesus, whereby we are to have salvation, we are taught to look for it in ourselves, and that there must be a fitness in us before God bestows his grace and favor upon us. But what doctrine is this? Not the doctrine of the scripture, not the doctrine of Jesus, not that of the primitive Christians, not that of the reformation, nor that of the articles of the church of England. No, it is the doctrine of the devil; this is making Christ but half a Savior, and driving man into an error of the greatest consequence, in making him go to Jesus in his own strength, and not in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, my brethren, unless you go in the strength of Jesus Christ; unless you depend only upon him for salvation; unless he is your wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, he will never be your redemption. Our salvation is the free gift of God; it is owing to his free love, and the free grace of Jesus Christ, that ever you are saved.

Do not flatter yourselves of being good enough, because you are morally so; because you go to church, say the prayers, and take the sacrament, therefore you think no more is required; alas, you are deceiving your own souls; and if God, in his free grace and mercy, does not show you your error, it will only be leading you a softer way to your eternal ruin; but God forbid that any of you, to whom I am now speaking, should imagine this; no, you must be abased, and God must be exalted, or you will never begin at the right end, you will never see Jesus with comfort or satisfaction, unless you go to him only on the account of what he has done and suffered.

Is it not plain to a demonstration, that we are acting the part of the Gergesenes, who came and desired Jesus to depart from them? Let us consider the words, and then we shall see how exactly we are performing the part of these men over again.

And when he was entered into a ship his disciples followed him.

Christ had been working of many miracles, as we may read a few verses before; and as he continually went about doing good, so now he was going to the country of the Gergesenes to dispossess two, who were possessed with devils; and his disciples followed him; No doubt they were reproached and pointed at, for following such a babbler, as the Scribes and Pharisees esteemed the Lord Jesus Christ. Doubtless they were pointed at, jeered, scoffed, and esteemed madmen, enthusiasts, and a parcel of rabble; but still they followed the Lord Jesus Christ, they did not mind a little reproach; no, they loved their Master too well to forbear following him for the sake of a little persecution. And if you do but love the Lord Jesus Christ, love him above all, you will follow him in spite of the malice of all the Scribes and Pharisees of this generation.

And behold there arose a great tempest on the sea.

The presence of Christ in the ship, did not preserve the disciples from fears and troubles; they were filled with uneasiness, although Christ was with them: this was only for a trial of their faith, to see if they would stand fast for the Lord in a persecuting time. My dear brethren, if the Lord is trying of you, do not give out; no, stand fast in all that the Lord may call you to suffer: It is easy to follow Christ when all things are safe: but your love to Jesus Christ would be seen more, if you must lose your lives, or deny your Jesus; it would

be a trial of your love, when fire and faggot was before you, if you would rush into that, rather than flie from the truth as it is in Jesus. Though all things are calm now, the storm is gathering, and by and by it will break; it is at present no bigger than a man's hand; but when it is full it will break, and then you will see whether you are found Christians or not. Persecution would scatter the hypocrites, and make nominal Christians afraid to worship God; they would then soon turn unto the world and the things of it.

And his disciples came to [him], and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

Here we may see the great compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ; no sooner had the disciples awakened him, and he saw their danger, but he rebuked the winds and seas, and all things were calm. Thus it was in a natural way, and will be so in a spiritual one; for no sooner does Jesus Christ speak peace to a troubled soul, but all is calm and quiet. Now none but God could have performed this great miracle, and therefore it is no wonder that his disciples and the men of the ship were amazed to see the wonders he performed; and they could not forbear to express their sense thereof, by inquiring, "What manner of man is this!"

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Two men, who were possessed bodily with that evil one who is going about seeking whom he may devour, met Jesus; as soon as they saw him they were afraid, and cried out: though they made every one afraid of them, yet they no sooner saw Christ, but their power left them, and they cried out, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" We know that thou are God; we do not want thee, we have no power over thee, but thou hast over us, and we fear thou art come to torment us before our time; we know that we are to be brought to judgment, and therefore we would not be tormented until that time come.

And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

The evil spirits were sensible that Christ was come to dispossess them, and that their time was now come, when they must leave the bodies of these two men; for when Christ comes, who is stronger than the strong man armed, all must fall before him; they could not stand against the power of Christ. And here we may observe, that though the devil is an enemy, yet he is a chained one; he cannot hurt a poor swine until he has power given him from above: and we may likewise see the malice of the devil, that he would hurt a poor swine rather than do no mischief; and the devil would, if in his power, destroy each of your souls, but Christ, by his mighty power, prevents him.

And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought [him] that he would depart out of their coasts.

Here observe, that no sooner had Christ given the devils permission to enter the swine, but they did, and their malice was so great, that the swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned.

What poor spite was here, that the devil should disturb poor swine! And the city, therefore, was so grieved for the loss of a little wealth, that they came and besought Christ to depart; they did not want his company; they preferred a few poor swine before the company of Christ; and few worldly good, a little pleasure, or any thing rather than Christ, part with Christ before any thing; but one, who is sensible of the love of Christ, will part with all, rather than with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus far the letter of the story goes; perhaps you think there is nothing to be learned herefrom, and that this is all you are to understand by it; but if so, my brethren, you are much mistaken; for here is an excellent lesson to be learned, and that you will see, by considering the words again, in a spiritual sense.

And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

And do not you frequently experience great tempests in this world? Does not the sea of temptation beat over your souls? You are afraid lest you should be overcome by them; you can see no way to escape, for your souls are covered with waves, and you expect to be swallowed up in the tempest; you are afraid lest you should fall into the hands of the evil one. O do not fear, for Jesus Christ, though he may be asleep to your thinking, yet will keep you, he will preserve you from the raging of the men, of the Pharisees of this world; they may rage and spit forth all their venom against you, still Christ will deliver, preserve and protect you; if you but seek unto him in a sense of your own helplessness and unworthiness, you will soon find he is a God ready to pardon and forgive. O that all that hear me would be persuaded to bow their knee, and their hearts, as soon as they go home: but alas, how many of our Christians go to God, day by day, and call him, Father, which is but mocking of God, when the devil is their father. None have a right to call him father, but those who have received the spirit of adoption, whereby they have a right to call him, "Abba, Father." Could the brute beasts speak, they might call God father as well as some of you; for he is their Creator to whom they owe their being; but this will not entitle you to call God father, in a spiritual sense; no, you must be born again of God; however you may flatter yourselves, you must have an inward principle wrought in your hearts by faith. This you must experience, this, this you must feel before you are Christians indeed.

The Lord Jesus Christ takes notice of each of you, you may think the Lord does not take notice of us, because we are in a field, and out of church walls; but he does observe with what view you came this evening to hear his word; he knows whether it was to satisfy your curiosity, or to find out wherewith you might ridicule the preacher. The thoughts and intentions of all your hearts are not hidden from Jesus Christ; though he may seem to be asleep, because you are, at present, insensible of his workings upon your heart, and he may not seem to take notice of you, and regard you, no more than he did the Syrophenician woman; yet he will turn to you and behold you with love; the Lord will be mindful of you in due time, and speak peace to your troubled soul, though the sea of troubles is beating over you, though the Pharisees of this day are scoffing at you, yet, when Christ rebukes, then they shall cease.

Do not depend on yourself; say unto him, "Save us, Lord, or we perish!" beseech him to be your guide, and your salvation: I beseech you, by the tender mercies of God, which are in Christ Jesus, that you present yourselves to him, as your reasonable service.

Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, from the death of sin, and Christ then will give you the light of his righteousness. Come to Christ and you shall be welcome; O come unto this blessed Jesus, come notwithstanding your vileness; for if you come not you will perish. If Christ does not save you, your own good meaning, your own good intentions cannot; no, as you are in your blood, so you must perish in your blood; but if you come to Christ you will find mercy, you shall not perish. You cannot find salvation in any other but in Christ; if the disciples could have saved themselves, they would not have awoken Jesus Christ; but they were sensible that no one could save them but him; and therefore they cried out unto him; and so you, who are under the sense of sin, who are in fear of hell, if you seek unto your own works, you only seek your own death; for there is no fitness in you. I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, there is not fitness in you, but a fitness for eternal damnation; for what are you by nature, but children of wrath, and your hearts are Satan's garrison. Because you have gone to church, said the prayers, gone to the sacrament, and done o one any harm, you speak peace to your souls; and all is in peace you think, and your case is good enough; but indeed, all is a false peace, and if you have no other peace than this, you must shortly lie down in everlasting flames; this is an ungrounded, self-created peace, and if you trust to this peace you will perish.

But do as the disciples did when they were in distress; they go to Christ and say to him, "Lord, save us, we perish." I offer you salvation this day; the door of mercy is not yet shut, there does yet remain a sacrifice for sins, for all that will accept of the Lord Jesus Christ; he only knows the inmost thoughts of thy heart, he will embrace you in the arms of his love; he sees the first risings of grace in you, and would willingly encourage it: the angels long for your being in the love and favor of God; they will rejoice to see you turn from sin unto him. All the ministers of the blessed Jesus would be glad to be instruments to turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

And he saith to them, why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?

And so, my brethren, I may say to you; why are you fearful to leave you sins and turn to God? O turn to him, turn in a sense of your own unworthiness; tell him how polluted you are, how vile, and be not faithless, but believe; do not go in your own strength, and then you need not fear. Why fear ye that the Lord Jesus Christ will not accept of you? Your sins will be no hindrance, your unworthiness will be no hindrance; if your own corrupt hearts do not keep you back, or if your own good works do not hinder you from coming, nothing will hinder Christ from receiving of you: he loves to see poor sinners coming to him, he is pleased to see them lie at his feet pleading his promises: and if you thus come to Christ, he will not send you away without his Spirit; no, but will receive and bless you.

O do not put a slight on infinite love; what would you have Christ do more? Is it not enough for him to come on purpose to save? Will you not serve God in your souls, as well as with your bodies? If not, you are only deceiving yourselves; and mocking of God; he must have the heart. O ye of little faith, why are ye fearful lest he should not accept of you? If you will not believe me, sure you will believe the Lord Jesus Christ; he has told thee that he will receive you; then why tarry ye, and do not go to him directly? Does he desire impossibilities? It is only, "Give me thy heart;" or, does he want your heart only for the same end as the devil does, to make you miserable? No, he only wants you to believe on him, that you might be saved. This, this, is all the dear Savior desires, to make you happy, that you may leave your sins, to sit down eternally with him, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Thus, you see, it was only to the power of Christ to stop the raging of the sea; he rebuked it; the disciples might have spoken for ever, and it would not have ceased; so it is with the word preached; I may preach to you while I live; I may speak till I can speak no more; but the doctrines of Christ will never do you good, unless he impress them upon your hearts; O then, in all thy troubles look up to Christ, that he may rebuke them; and if he speaks the word, then they shall cease. If the Pharisees of this generation scoff and jeer you, if they say all manner of evil against you, do not answer them; leave it unto Christ to rebuke them; for all you can say will be of no more signification, than the disciples speaking to the sea; but when Christ speaks the word, then they shall cease; let it not discourage you, for if you will live godly in Christ Jesus, you must suffer persecution.

It is true, that those who are sincerely good, are set up for marks for every one to shoot at. There is a continual enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; if you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because Christ hath chosen you out of the world, therefore it hateth you.

Do not think of following Christ into glory, unless you go through the press here. Look forward, my brethren, into eternity, and behold Christ coming, and his reward with him, to give a kind recompense for all the temptations and difficulties of this present life.

But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the seas obey him!

The men of the ship were amazed to see the miracle that Jesus Christ wrought only by his word; they thought he was something more than a man. And have not we as much reason to admire, that when we are overwhelmed with troubles, from within and without, that Jesus Christ, only by the word of his power, should speak peace, and then there is peace indeed. When God first awakens us with a sense of sin, and sets his terrors in array against us, then there are troubles and tempests; for Satan having got possession, before he will give place, he will fight and strive hard to keep the soul from closing with Jesus. But when Christ comes, he storms the heart, he breaks the peace, he giveth it most terrible alarms of judgment and hell, he sets all in a combustion of fear and sorrow, 'till he hath forced it to yield to his mere mercy, and take him for its governor; then Satan is cast out; then the storm is rebuked, and he establishes a firm and lasting peace.

Can the sea be still while the wind is raging? No, it is impossible; so it is that there can be no peace in the soul, while it is at enmity with Christ; indeed, it may flatter itself and speak peace, but there can be no true peace; though thou, O Pharisee, may harden and fortify thy heart against fear, grief, and trouble, yet, as sure as God is true, they will batter down thy proud and fortified spirit, and seize upon it, and drive thee to amazement. This will be done here, or hereafter; here in mercy, or hereafter in wrath and judgment.

O my brethren, consider what Christ hath done, and you will be astonished that he has done so much for such wicked wretches as you and I are. If you are easy under the storm and tempest of sin, and do not cry to Christ for salvation, thou art in a dangerous condition; and it is a wonder to consider, how a man that is not sure of having made his peace with God, can eat, or drink, or live in peace; that thou art not afraid, when thou liest down, that thou should'st awake in hell: but if Christ speak peace unto thy soul, who can then speak trouble? None; no, not men or devils. Therefore, lie down at the feet of Christ whom you have resisted, and say, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? And he will rebuke the winds and seas of thy troubled mind, and all things will be calm.

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possesses with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who went about doing good continually, very well knew, that he should meet two poor men in this country of the Gergesenes, who were possessed with devils; and Jesus Christ went on purpose that way, that he might relieve them. The devil, where he has the power, never wants will; but as I said before, so I say again, though the devil is an enemy, yet he is a chained one; he could not destroy these two poor men, he could not hurt the people that passed that way, he could only terrify them; and thus it is with you; the devil tries his utmost skill and power to frighten you from coming to the Lord Jesus; he uses the utmost of his endeavors to keep poor sick and weary sinners from coming to Jesus; if he can but make you lose your souls, it is the end he aims at.

And how many souls does he keep from Christ, for fear of reproach? Many thousands would willingly see Christ in his glory, in the world to come, and would be happy with him there, but they are afraid of being now laughed at, and of hearing the Pharisees say, here is another of his followers; they are afraid of losing their worldly business, or of being counted methodistically mad and fit for bedlam. I doubt not but many are kept from Jesus Christ, for fear of a little of inconveniency.

What will such say, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear in his glory? Would you be glad to be confessed by him then, you must now not be ashamed of confessing him before men; let not the fierceness of the devil keep you back from Christ, for fear of being counted fools; for the time will come, when it will be found who are truly wise, and who are truly mad.

Are you afraid to stand up for the cause of Christ in the world? Dare not you be singularly good? Are you afraid of being members of Jesus Christ? I tell you, such persons would crucify him afresh were he in the world. But do not you, my brethren, so learn Christ; let not the temptations of the devil keep you from coming to the Lord Jesus Christ; he may be fierce, he may hurry you from place to place, but strive with him, so that he may not drive you from Christ; and if you seek unto Christ, he will so help you that you shall resist the devil, and then he will fly from you; Christ will dispossess him, be not afraid therefore to meet Jesus Christ; tell him all that your souls want, and he will give it to you; and you shall not be any longer troubled with the fierce outrages of the devil.

And they cried out, saying, what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the time?

As soon as the devils observed Jesus coming near, then they were afraid, lest he was come to punish them before that day of accounts, when all must be brought to judgment.

The devils themselves are enough to convince all our polite Arians and Socinians. They here own the Lord Jesus Christ to be God blessed for ever; they feel his power, and are assured of his being the God who must condemn them at the great day of accounts; and they were afraid lest the Lord Jesus Christ was come to punish them now. But though the devils believe the divinity of Christ, yet the world swarms with Arians and Socinians.

The Arians make Christ no more than a titular God, a subordinate deity, one who was more than a man, and yet less than God; that he was a prophet sent from God they own, but deny him to be equal with the Father. But I hope, my brethren, he is to you, what our creed makes him, God of God, very God of very God, co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father; that as there was not a moment of time in which God the Father was not, so there is not a moment of time in which God the Son was not. For he says himself, "All things were made by him;" and if they were made by him, he must be God; and whoever reads but the word of God, will find divine homage is paid to him, "and that he thought it no robbery to be equal with

God;" he is "the Alpha and Omega." These and a great many more places might be brought to prove the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; he could never have made satisfaction for our sins if he had not been God as well as Man. As Man he suffered; as God he satisfied; so was God and man in one person; he took our nature upon him, and was offered upon the cross for the sins of all those who come unto him, which if he had not been God he could never have satisfied for. It may be proved, even to a demonstration, that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and that he is equal with the Father.

The Socinians do not go so far as the others; they look on Christ to be no more than a good man, who told the people their duty, and died in defense of the doctrines which he delivered unto them.

But I hope there are none such here, that have so low and dishonorable thoughts of the blessed Jesus, and that thus despise the divinity of the Lord who bought them. No, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. Think you, that any one who denies the deity of Christ can ever be saved by him, living and dying in that state? Surely, the time will come, when they who have denied his Deity, shall feel the power of it hereafter; they shall feel that he is God as well as man; then he will be owned as God by all those who now dare to deny his truths; but God forbid it should go undetermined till then! Woe unto the polite infidels of this generation, for the devils will rise up in judgment against them.

If any such are here, consider what you are doing of, before it is too late; return, return ye unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you, and to Jesus Christ, and he will abundantly pardon. O my friends, let me beseech you to consider what you are about, lest you fall into hell, and there be none to deliver you.

And the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

Here we may see, that no sooner had the devil power, but he puts it into execution; thus, if the devil has but power to tempt, or to hurry a soul, O how grievous a tyrant he is, hurrying from one temptation to another, from one sin unto another, and would, if it were possible, hurry you all into hell with as much violence, as he did the poor swine into the sea; but Christ by his grace prevents it. Jesus Christ died for souls, and therefore the devil cannot do with them as he will; he may have the will, but he cannot get the power. It is plain, that when the devil himself, or persecuting men, get the power, they will harass the poor Christians; everything is goo good for them, and they are not worthy to be set with the dogs of the flock. My brethren, how joyful would many be, if the laws of our land would permit them to destroy us; how would the Pharisees hurry us to prison and to death; but, blessed be God, he does not say to them, as to the devil, "Go." No, he bids them stay, he hedges their way up with thorns that they cannot stir to hurt us; they would fain, but they dare not destroy us; nothing withholds them but the power of the blessed Jesus. And therefore, be not afraid of their wrath though it is cruel, and of their anger though it be fierce; let them shoot their arrows, even bitter words, against us, blessed be God, the shield of faith will be a preservative against them all.

And when you are thus preserved, it will be the occasion of joy in the Holy Ghost; though many look on the joy of the Holy Ghost as enthusiasm and madness, and say that there is no such thing; but well do I know there is, it carries its own evidence along with it. Plead therefore with God, in the name of Jesus Christ; continue to wrestle with him, until he bestows the blessing upon you, and gives you a feeling of that joy which the world intermeddles not with, and which they are strangers to; indeed the devil may stir up his agents to hurry us from one trouble to another; but it will not signify, for the Lord Jesus Christ will not suffer

him to hurry us into hell; no, but will give us his Spirit, which will be a preservative against all the assaults of the devil. Now see what followed this miracle, which Jesus had wrought, by permitting the devil to enter into the herd of swine.

And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

The people were so amazed to see the power that Christ had, and the malice with which the devil was possessed, that they were afraid, and told all that had befallen the possessed of the devils; and so, when the spirit of God has been at work on your souls, and you are brought to feel the power of God upon your hearts, you will be so overjoyed that you will tell to every one what great things God has done for your souls; you will be so full of joy, that you will declare the whole working of God on your hearts, and you will declare how you have been enabled to overcome Satan, and how you were affected at such a sermon, in such a place, and at such a time.

You will then love to talk of Jesus; no conversation will be so pleasing as that of the Lord Jesus Christ; no, he will be altogether lovely unto you, when you have once tasted of his love, and felt the power of his grace upon your hearts.

And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought [him] that he would depart out of their coasts.

The whole city came to meet Jesus, not to worship, nor to thank him for the releasing of the two poor men who were possessed; no, but to beseech him to go from them; they valued their swine more than the Lord Jesus Christ, and had rather part from him, than them; and have we not among us, thousands who call themselves Christians, who had rather part with Christ than their pleasures? A play, a ball, or an assembly is far more agreeable to them than the company and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ: if they can but indulge their sensual appetite, please and pamper their bellies, satisfy the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, they regard no more, but rest contented, as if they were to live here always. O my dear brethren, I hope none of you can rest contented with such proceedings as these, but that you like the company of the Lord Jesus too well to part with him for a few delights of this life: and are there not many, who part with Christ for their own good works, and think they can go to heaven, if they do but go to church and say their prayers and take the sacrament? But alas! they will be much deceived, for if they were in any thing short of the Lord Jesus, if they do not make him the chief corner-stone, they will fall infinitely short of what they flattered themselves to attain unto.

I would speak a few words to you before I part from you this evening, by way of application. Let me beseech you to come to Jesus Christ; I invite you all to come to him and receive him as your Lord and Savior; he is ready to receive you; if you are afraid to go because you are in a lost condition, he came to save such; and to such as were weary and heavy laden, such as feel the weight and burden of their sins, he has promised he will give rest: such as feel the weight and burden of their sins on their souls, a burden too heavy for them to bear, are weary of it, and know not how to obtain deliverance of it, in the name of my Lord and master, I invite you to come to him, that you may find rest for your souls.

If you will but come unto him he will not reproach you, as justly he might; he will not reflect upon you for not coming sooner unto him; no, my dear brethren, he will rejoice and be glad, and will say unto you, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you:" these words he said to others; and if you will but come unto him, by faith in his blood, he is ready to say the same unto you now, as he did to them formerly,

for "he is the same to-day, yesterday and for ever:" though he suffered on the cross seventeen hundred years ago, yet he is the same in goodness and power as ever he was.

He calls you, by his ministers; O come unto him, beg of him to break your stubborn hearts, that you may be willing to be brought to him in his own way, to be made poor in spirit, and entitled to an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

O come and drink of the water of life; you may buy without money and without price; he is laboring to bring you back from sin, and from Satan unto himself: open the door of your hearts, and the King of glory shall enter in.

But if you are strangers to this doctrine, and account it foolishness; or, if you think you have enough of your own to recommend you to the favor of God, however you may go to church, or receive the sacrament, you have no true love to the Lord Jesus Christ; you are strangers to the truth of grace in your hearts, and are unacquainted with the new-birth; you do not know what it is to have your natures changed; and till you do experience these things, you never can enter into the kingdom of God.

What shall I say, my brethren, unto you? My heart is full, it is quite full, and I must speak, or I shall burst. What, do you think your souls of no value? Do you esteem them as not worth saving? Are your pleasures worth more than your souls? Had you rather regard the diversions of this life, than the salvation of your souls? If so, you will never be partakers with him in glory; but if you come unto him, he will give you a new nature, supply you with his grace here, and bring you to glory hereafter; and there you may sing praises and hallelujahs to the Lamb forever.

And may this be the happy end of all who hear me! may the Lord guide you by his counsel, until he comes to fetch you to heaven, and make you partakers of his glory!

May he direct you in his ways, and lead you in those paths which lead to everlasting life! May you be holy here, and happy hereafter: may your lives answer the profession you make, that we may all be found at the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come to judge the world according to our works, whether they be good or evil! And that we then may be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-whitefield/the-foolly-and-danger-of-parting-with-christ-for-the-pleasures-and-profits-of-life/>

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