

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

10:24-33

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

To do good to souls in this world is very hard. All who try it find this out by experience: it needs a large stock of courage, faith, patience and perseverance. Satan will fight vigorously to maintain his kingdom; human nature is desperately wicked: to do harm is easy; to do good is hard. The Lord Jesus knew this well, when he sent his disciples out to preach the Gospel for the first time. He knew what was before them, if they did not. He took care to supply them with a list of encouragements in order to cheer them when they felt cast down. Weary missionaries abroad, or fainting ministers at home, disheartened teachers of schools and desponding visitors of districts would do well to study often the nine verses we have just read. Let us mark what they contain. For one thing, those who try to do good to souls must not expect to fare better than their great Master. «œi» A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord.ï» The Lord Jesus was slandered and rejected by those whom he came to benefit. There was no error in his teaching; there was no defect in his method of imparting instruction, yet many hated him and called him Beelzebub. Few believed him and cared for what he said. Surely we have no right to be surprised if we, whose best efforts are mingled with much imperfection, are treated in the same way as Christ. If we let the world alone, it will probably let us alone; but if we try to do it spiritual good, it will hate us as it did our Master. For another thing, those who try to do good must look forward with patience to the day of judgment. «œi» There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known.ï» They must be content in this present world to be misunderstood, misrepresented, vilified, slandered and abused. They must not cease to work because their motives are mistaken and their characters fiercely assailed. They must remember continually that all will be set right at the last day: the secrets of all hearts shall then be revealed. «œi» He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noonday. ï» (ï» Psalm 37:6). The purity of their intentions, the wisdom of their labors, and the rightfulness of their cause shall at length be made manifest to all the world. Let us work on steadily and quietly. Men may not understand us, and may vehemently oppose us, but the day of judgment draws nigh. We shall be righted at last. The Lord, when he comes again, «œi» will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart. And then shall every man have praise of Godï» (ï» 1 Corinthians 4:5). For another thing, those who try to do good must fear God more than man. Man can hurt the body, but there his enmity must stop: he can go no further. God «œi» is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.ï» We may be threatened with the loss of character, property and all that makes life enjoyable if we go on in the path of religious duty: we must not heed such threats when our course is plain. Like Daniel and the three children, we must submit to anything rather than displease God and wound our consciences. The anger of man may be hard to bear, but the anger of

God is much harder; fear of man does indeed bring a snare, but we must make it give way to the expulsive power of a stronger principle, even the fear of God. It was a fine saying of good Colonel Gardiner, "I fear God, and therefore there is none else that I need fear." For another thing, those who try to do good must keep before their minds the providential care of God over them. Nothing can happen in this world without his permission. There is no such thing in reality as chance, accident or luck. "The very hairs of their heads are all numbered." The path of duty may sometimes lead them into great danger; health and life may seem to be perilled if they go forward. Let them take comfort in the thought that all around them is in God's hand. Their bodies, their souls, their characters are all in his safekeeping: no disease can seize them, no hand can hurt them, unless he allows. They may say boldly to every fearful thing they meet with, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." In the last place, those who try to do good should continually remember the day when they will meet their Lord to receive their final portion. If they would have him own them, and confess them before his Father's throne, they must not be ashamed to own and confess him before the men of this world. To do it may cost us much. It may bring on us laughter, mockery, persecution and scorn; but let us not be laughed out of heaven. Let us recollect the great and dreadful day of account, and let us not be afraid to show men that we love Christ, and want them to know and love him also. Let these encouragements be treasured up in the hearts of all who labor in Christ's cause, whatever their position may be. The Lord knows their trials, and has spoken these things for their comfort. He cares for all his believing people, but for none so much as those who work for his cause, and try to do good. May we seek to be of that number! Every believer may do something if he tries. There is always something for everyone to do. May we each have an eye to see it and a will to do it!

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