

Found Wanting

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon 'Found Wanting' explores the biblical account of Belshazzar's feast to illustrate the importance of being weighed in God's balances and the need for repentance and humility before Him.

Scripture: Daniel 5:25

Topics: "Redemption", "Judgment"

Description

R.A. Torrey's sermon 'Found Wanting' emphasizes the dire consequences of living without reverence for God, illustrated through the story of Belshazzar's feast in Daniel 5. He highlights how Belshazzar was weighed in God's balances and found wanting due to his pride and idolatry, urging listeners to reflect on their own lives and how they measure up against God's commandments. Torrey stresses that true worth is not determined by public opinion or self-assessment, but by God's standards, which are outlined in the Ten Commandments. He concludes with the hope that through Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the law, individuals can find redemption and not be found wanting. The sermon serves as a call to repentance and acceptance of Christ as the only means to be weighed favorably in God's eyes.

Transcript

"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." -- DANIEL v. 25.

Any one who loves the drama should read the Bible, for the Bible is the most dramatic book that was ever written. There is nothing to compare with it in Eschylus or Sophocles or Euripides among the ancients, or in Shakespeare among the moderns, in striking situations, in graphic delineation, and in startling denouement.

One of the most intensely interesting and at the same time suggestive scenes in the Bible is that described in Daniel v. -Belshazzar's feast. Belshazzar was not the supreme King of Babylon. Nabonidus, his father, was king, and had associated him with himself on the throne; Belshazzar was second ruler in the kingdom. The critics used to tell us there never was such a king as Belshazzar; but Sir William Rawlinson dug up a tablet from Nabonidus himself, on which he speaks of his son Belsharuzzar; and again the critics, as so often before, were brought to grief by the discoveries of modern archeology.

But now Belshazzar was in supreme command in the city. His father Nabonidus had been shut outside the city walls by the forces of Cyrus. Puffed up by the pride of his newly-gotten power, Belshazzar makes a great banquet. The palace is a blaze of light. The long tables are set for more than a thousand guests.

They are brilliant and dazzling with plates and cups and tankards of silver and gold, many-jeweled, reflecting back the light from countless candelabra. Reclining at the tables are the guests, with fingers and arms ringed and jeweled. The air is heavy with perfume and tremulous with the music of harp and dulcimer and sackbut. Between the tables the oriental women weave through the contortions and distortions of the Asiatic dance. Back and forth across the tables fly jest and repartee.

In the midst of this hilarity a strange and daring conceit enters the mind of the royal entertainer. Belshazzar whispers to his chief steward a secret command. The guests are all agog with curiosity to know what the mysterious mandate may be. Their curiosity is soon gratified; for the chief steward, followed by a host of retainers, comes in bearing in their arms the cups of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple of Jehovah after the sack of the city of Jerusalem. Belshazzar commands that the cups be filled with Babylonian wine, and passed from lip to lip -while he and his guests sing the praises of the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

The hilarity becomes more boisterous. Louder and louder thrum the instruments, faster and faster spin the feet of the dancers, swifter and swifter fly jest and repartee. Suddenly a hush like death fans upon the banqueting hall. One of the revelers, lifting his eyes to the wall, sees the fingers of a man's hand writing. As he gazes in wonder he becomes the centre of observation, and all eyes turn in the same direction. Now the king turns and looks also. There, writing in characters of fire, are the mysterious angers of an armless hand. Terror freezes Belshazzar to the very soul in the graphic language of the prophet Daniel, "the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." In a few moments pulls himself together and hoarsely cries, "Bring hither the astrologers the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers."

In come the magi of Babylon, splendidly appareled, with proud and stately tread. Expectation rises high in their hearts. They think that by their cunning arts they can deceive the King and gain new emoluments; but only for a moment. The look of confidence fades from their faces. The writing is beyond their art.

Again terror lays hold on Belshazzar Again his countenance was changed in him. The queen-mother hears the confusion. She walks in with stately tread, and tries to reassure her royal son. "O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: there is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods" And she proceeds to sing the praises of Daniel. "Let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation." Daniel is summoned. Behhazzar turns to him, and says, "O Daniel, I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations., and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet., and have a chain of gold about thy and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel with noble pride, scorns the proffered gifts. "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another. I will have none of them; but I will read writing, and make known to thee the interpretation." But first Daniel proceeds to rebuke the blasphemous daring of Bebhazzar. He recalls the history of Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather, and how God had humbled his stout-hearted pride. Then he says "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified though thou knewest all this: then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing That vas written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing:

"MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

"PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persiam."

Belshazzar calls for the royal robe, and it is placed on Daniel. A chain of gold is cast about his neck, and he is proclaimed next to Belshazzar, third ruler in the kingdom. The royal banquet goes on. The hilarity increases; but, hark! the tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp Of soldiers' feet in the streets of Babylon. The armies of Cyrus have turned the waters of the Euphrates, and have come in by the river-bed and the two-leaved gates of Babylon.

There is a crashing sound at the gate. The guests look round for a place to flee. But it is too late. Tramp, tramp, tramp, up the palace stairs, with a crash and a rash, the Persian and Median soldiers come in. Swords flash in air for a moment. Belshazzar looks up, and sees the sword over his head. It fans. Belshazzar is a corpse. "That night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" I call your attention to one word on the wall:

"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting!"

In whose balance was Belshazzar weighed? The balances of God. Not in the balances of his own estimation of himself: he would never have been found wanting there. Not in the balances of public opinion: the men of Babylon would have said, "Belshazzar is the greatest of our statesmen, and the coming man." Not the balances of human philosophy. In the balances of God.

Every man and woman here tonight is to be weighed the same balances, the balances of God. How much you suppose that you weigh in the balances of God? do not ask you how much you weigh in your own opinion of yourself. That is of no consequence, for a man who thinks most of himself is of least in the mind of God. I do not ask how much weigh in the balances of public opinion. You may a leading citizen and a chief magistrate, whom all to honour; but oftentimes that which is highly esteemed in the sight of God.

How much do you think you weigh in the balances of God? There are

some of us who set much store by moralitv, our culture, and our refinement; but if knew how little we weighed in the balances of the eternal and all holy God we would fall on our knees and pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Is there any way in which we can tell how much we weigh in the balances of God? There is. God has given to us the weights wherewith He weighs us.

Turn to Exodus xx. and you will get the weights by which God weighs men -the well-known Ten Commandments. Let me read them.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me!" What is a man's god? A man's god is the thing he thinks moat of. If a man thinks more of money than anything else, then money is his god; and many a citizen of Edinburgh worships Plutus, the god of wealth. Many a man is sacrificing conscience, sacrificing honour, and obedience to God to gain money. You do things in business that you know are not according to the teachings of the Bible, that you know are not pleasing to a holy God, because there is money in them. Gold is your god, and you are found wanting by the first of God's commandments. There are men who

worship gold just as really as if they had a sovereign hung up in their bedchamber, and said their prayer to it.

Many worship social position. How many are doing things in matters of dress and in matters of social life that are disapproved by conscience! But it is what society does; and they think that if they do not do the same they will lose their position in society. You are putting society before God. Society is your god. You are weighed and found wanting by the first of God's laws.

Major Whittle once went, in Washington, to call upon a man who had been prominent in public and social life. He was showing Major Whittle over his beautiful new house. They came to a large and beautiful room, and Major Whittle asked, "What is this for?" The man was silent at first. "What is this for?" asked Major Whittle again. The man hung his head, and said, "Well, Major, if you must know, this is a ball-room." "What! a ball-room. Do you mean to tell me that you have sunk so low that you have a ball-room in your house?" "Well, Major, I never thought I would come to this; but my wife and daughter said we were in society now, that this was the thing in Washington, and that we must have it to keep our position in Washington society?" Social position was their god; and that man paid for it dearly in the wreck and ruin of his home.

Many a man worships whisky. How many a man is sacrificing his brain-power, his business capacity, the respect of his fellow-citizens, the reverence of his wife and children, in devotion to the cursed whisky. I saw many a hideous god when I was traveling in India, all sorts of beastly images which men bow down before and worship, but I know no god more beastly, no god more disgusting than this god of whisky, upon the altar of which men are offering as a sacrifice their children and their interests.

How many a young man and young woman worships the god of pleasure. They are doing things for pleasure that their conscience disapproves of, things that hinder communion with God. They are sacrificing everything that they may have amusement and pleasure. Amusement is their god. Weighed, and found wanting by the first weight of the ten commandments.

I have no time to dwell upon the second command: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them or worship them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous Go, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments"

The Third Commandment- "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." How much do you weigh when you are weighed by that law! Oh, how many a man on your streets brakes that law! And men not only break it, but they think it a light matter. They think that law is of no consequence. When you approach men and speak to them about Christ, they will say, "Well, but I do not know that I need Christ. I am not a very bad man. I have never stolen anything. I have never killed anybody. I have never committed adultery. Oh, I do swear occasionally." They think it a light matter, but God does not regard it so. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

If there is any sin which shows that the very foundation of a man's character are honey-combed and rotten, it is the sin of profanity. You can not trust a profane swearer anywhere. A profane swearer is ripe for any crime. What is the only foundation for a sound character? Reverence for God; and when that is gone the foundation of character is gone. Character may not crumble away at once, as a building does not

always fall the moment its foundation is rotten, in a measure, but it will fall. The foundation is gone. No man can swear profanely until he has gotten very, very low in the moral scale. A man has to go down pretty low (has he not?) to speak disrespectfully of his mother. We have seen men go pretty far into sin and yet have so much manhood left that, when others spoke insultingly about their mother, they would resent it. A man has fallen very low who will speak lightly of his mother; but a man has got immeasurably lower before he will speak profanely of God. The purest mother is nothing to the all holy One. No mother ever loved a child, no mother ever-sacrificed for a child, as God has loved you and made sacrifices for you; and if you can take God's name upon your lips in profanity you are a vile wretch. I beseech of you get on your face before the eternal God before you sleep and cry to Him for mercy.

But there are other ways of taking God's name in vain besides profane swearing. Much that we call praying is taking God's name in vain. Every time you have knelt down to pray and have had no thought of God in your heart while you take His name upon your lips, you have taken God's name in vain. In the Church of England you go through those marvelously beautiful prayers in the ritual, but when you do it as a mere matter of form, with no thought of God in your mind, you have taken God's name in vain. You repeat that wonderful prayer that the Master Himself taught us: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever." All the time you recite it you have not one thought what you are saying. It is downright appalling profanity.

The Fourth Command- "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work, but the seventh day" -not the seventh day of the week, as some men say, daring to put into God's Word what He did not put in, but the seventh day for rest after six days of work, without specific which day of the week it should come. Of course it was the seventh day of the week with the Jew, in commemoration of the old creation; but with the Christian it is the first day of the week, in commemoration of the new creation through a Risen Lord. "The seventh day it is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter. nor thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it!" There was a day when Scotchmen kept

that law. It may be you do now; but, alas, in India I saw a thing that stirred my blood and sickened my heart. I saw Scotchmen- not merely Englishmen and Irishmen_-I saw Scotchmen, from the land of the Covenanters, on holy day, not in the house of God, but off playing gold, riding on their wheels, engaging in all manner of amusement. I do not know whether you do it at home or not, but the land, the city, the individual who forgets the Sabbath day has undermined the foundations of God's favour and its own prosperity.

The Fifth Command-"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. I wish I had time to dwell upon that; for we are getting into a day when the young think they know more than their parents, speaking lightly about "the old man" and "the old woman." They think father and mother are old fogies, and that the young people know it all. They disobey their parents. The child who disobeys a parent will bring upon his own head the curse of God. There is only one law superior to the law of father and mother; and that is the law of God. Even those who are grown up, and do not treat the father and mother with the respect and consideration which they should, will reap what they

sow. God have mercy upon the one, young or old, who breaks that commandment.

The Sixth Command-"Thou shalt not kill. "How much do you weigh by that law? You say "I'll am all right by that law. We have no murder here." Are you absolutely sure? "Why, certainly. Where do you think you are talking? Down in the Grassmarket?" No, I am talking in the Synod Hall; but there are other ways of killing people besides driving a dagger into their heart or firing a bullet into their brain. A husband can kill his wife by neglect, and cruelty, and unfaithfulness. How many a woman is hastening to an early grave, with a broken heart, because she has learned that the man who swore to be true to her is unfaithful.

One day I was talking with a very brilliant man, who was under the influence of liquor. I said to him, "John, you ought to take Jesus Christ." "Oh," was his reply, "you know I do not believe as you do. I am one of these new theologians. I have a broader theology than you have. I am one of those believers in the eternal hope. You do not believe that old-fashioned theology, do you? Now, honestly, suppose I should drop right down here now, what would become of me?" I said, "John you would go straight to hell, and you would deserve to go!" "What have I done?" "I will tell you. You have got your wife's heart under your heel, and you are grinding the life out of it. What is worse, you are trampling under foot the Christ of God, who died on the Cross of Calvary to save you."

How many a son is killing his mother by his wild, dissolute life. I remember staying in a beautiful home, where there was everything that wealth, could buy. - One would have thought that the of that home must be a perfectly happy woman. But she would rise in the riddle of the night, and walk up and down the halls of the beautiful home with a breaking heart. A few mouths after she died. Why? She had a wandering boy. She did not even know where he was; and as I was by her grave, with that wandering boy, who had come to her dying bed, I thought in my heart, "Murdered by her wayward son!"

Some of you are hastening your mother's footsteps to the grave. You have not written your mother for six months. In Melbourne a man came rushing down the hall and said, "Oh, I have killed my mother." He rushed into the inquiry room, and was led to Christ. Is there a man here who is killing his mother? Repent, take Christ; write to your mother tonight that you are saved.

There are other ways of murdering people. I do not know whether it is common in Scotland. I think and I certainly hope not. But it is common where Scotch men have gone. How shall I describe it? The most appalling kind of murder in the world. Mothers murdering their own helpless babes, to escape the responsibility of what is one of the greatest privileges in the world, a large family. If there is any hand in the world that is scarlet with the blood of murder, it is that of the woman who murders her own unborn babe; and there are men who call themselves physicians who will act as helpers in this hellish business. Such a one ought not to put "M.D." after his name, but "D.M." damnable murderer. In our country they hang them, which is just. Alas, they do not always catch them. I said this in an Australian city, and the wife of a physician was very indignant about it. But her indignation did not alter the truth of what I said. It only exposed a guilty party.

The Seventh Command-"Thou shalt not commit adultery."- I cannot dwell on that. It needs to be dwelt upon, but not here. Simply let me say that there is no class of sins upon which God has set the stamp of his disapproval in a plainer way, by the fearful consequences that immediately follow the sins covered by this commandment. The woman untrue to her husband, the husband untrue to his wife: the curse of God always follows them. It may be done by legal means, under the cover of divorce laws that controvert God's laws, but it does not lessen the sin. The meanest scoundrel that walks the earth, the meanest man alive, is

the man who steps in, under any circumstances, between a man and his wife; and the meanest woman on earth is the one who steps in between a woman and her husband. Remember, furthermore, that our Saviour interpreted this law as applying not only to the overt act but to the secret thought of the heart, when He said, "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart."

The Eighth Command- "Thou shalt not steal." -How, much do you weigh, weighed by that law? Wait a moment. What is it to steal ? To steal is to take property from another without giving an adequate equivalent in either property or money. For example., every man who sells goods under false pretenses is a thief. The man who sells a piece of cloth as being "all wool" when it is part cotton, is a thief. The man who employs labour, and takes advantage of the poor man's necessity, and does not give him in pay a full equivalent for his labour, is a thief. Every labouring man who does not give to his employer, in good honest work, a fair equivalent for the wages paid to him, is a thief. The gambler who gambles and wins is a thief. Every time you bet on cards, on a horse race, on a boat race, every time you invest in pools or in a lottery, whether it be a public lottery or a church lottery, and win. You are a thief. The man who gambles and wins is a thief, the man who gambles and loses is a fool. So every gambler is either a thief or a fool.

The Ninth Command-"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. "I know you do not like what I am saying, but that does not alter it; and you will not escape God by trying to forget what I say. But if you do not pay attention to my words, as far as they are true, they will rise up against you in the day of judgment.

How much do you weigh, weighed by that commandment? "Well," you say, "I am all right by that, because I was never in court." Does it say anything about court? Every time you tell anything about another that is derogatory to them, and is not true, you have broken this law of God. You hear a story, and do not take pains to find out whether it is true or not. Perhaps you add a bit to it, and go on and tell it, and it is not true. You have broken the law of God. You say, "I thought it was true." It is not what you think: it is the fact. Whenever you hear anything against a neighbor, do not believe it until it is proven absolutely to be true; and even when it is, keep it to yourself, unless duty dearly demands of it, which is very seldom.

Some of you say, "Did you hear that awful story about Mrs.----? I was awfully sorry." You lie. You were glad to hear it. or you would have kept it to yourself. The gossip, the slanderer, is viler than the vilest thief that walks your streets. The thief only steals money: the slanderer steals what money cannot buy -reputation.

>The Tenth Command-"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's." God's law covers not only the overt act, but the covert thought of the heart as well. Many of you would not steal your neighbour's horse, but you wish it was yours. You would not run off with your neighbour's wife, but you wish she were yours. You would not rob your neighbour of his money, but you wish it was your money. You have broken the law of God.

How much do you weigh, weighed by the law of God?

There are two other weights heavier than these. Matthew vii. 12: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." The so-called Golden Rule. How many talk about it, and how few keep it.

One day I was talking to a sea-captain. I asked "Captain, why are you not a Christian?" "The Golden Rule is a good enough religion for me," he replied. "Do you keep it?" He dropped his head. He talked about it, but he did not keep it. Talking about it will not save you. Do you do it? Mind it does not merely put it negatively, "Do not do to others whatsoever ye would not that they should do to you. That is Confucianism. The Christian rule is positive. "Do these things to them." Sell goods to other people just the way you want other people to sell goods to you. Talk about other people behind their back just as you want them to talk about you behind your back. Do you do it? Always? Then you are weighed and found wanting.

The heaviest weight of all is in Matthew xxii. 37, 38. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." How much do you weigh by that law? Put God first in everything-in business, in politics, in social life, in study, in everything. Do you do it? Have you always done it? No, you say, I have not. Then you are weighed and found wanting, not only by breaking a law of God, but this is "the first and great command" you have broken the first and greatest of God's laws.

A minister asked me to talk to a young man who wanted to go into the ministry. He was a splendid looking fellow. When he came to me, I said, "You want to go into the Ministry. Are you a Christian?" "Why, of course I am. I was brought up a Christian and I am not going back on the training of my parents." "Have you been born again?" "What?" "Jesus says, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" "Well," he said, "I have never heard of that before." "Did you know that you had committed the greatest sin a man can commit?" "No, I never did." "What do you think it is?" "Murder" "You are greatly mistaken. Let us see what God's Word says." I turned to Matthew xxii. 37, 38, and read: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." "Which command is it?" I asked. "The first and greatest" "Have you kept it? Have you loved God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind? Have you put God first in everything- in business, in pleasure, in social life, in politics?" "No sir, I have not." "What have you done then?" "I have broken this commandment." "Which commandment is it?" "The first and greatest" "What have you done then?" "I have broken the first and greatest of God's commandments. I have committed the greatest sin a man can commit. But I never saw it before."

How much do we weigh, every one of us including the preacher? Every one of us is weighed and found wanting. What shall we do then? This is where the Gospel comes in. I have preached up to this point nothing but law. God has weighed the whole world in the balances and found it wanting, and in Christ He provided salvation for a wanting world.

God sent His Son, who kept that law, and then died for you and me and me who have broken it; and all you and I have to do is to take Christ into the balances with us. Christ can weigh up all the weights. When we take Christ into the balance with us, then we are weighed, and found not wanting.

Will You take Jesus Christ into the balances with you to-night?. Woe to the man who is weighed in the balances of God for the last time without having Jesus Christ with him. This may be the last opportunity for some; it may at all events be the last opportunity which some will ever take. The time will come when you will be weighed and found wanting; and you will look back and say, "Oh, why did I not listen to the preacher?" You will remember this sermon and the text; and you will say "Oh, if I only had improved the opportunity."

Mr. Moody told a story I shall never forget. A man was set to watch a drawbridge. He had orders not to open the draw until a special train passed. Boat after boat came up and urged him to open the bridge and let them through. "No, I have my orders to wait until the special passes." At last a friend came and he encouraged him and allowed himself to be persuaded. He drew the draw open. No sooner was the bridge well open and the vessels beginning to enter. than he heard the whistle of the special. He sprang to the lever but he was too late. The train came on with lightning speed. He looked on as it dashed into the open chasm, he heard the shrieks of the injured and saw the corpses of the dead, and went mad. He never recovered his senses, but walked up and down the padded cell of the asylum, crying, "Oh! if I only had! oh! if I only had." Had what? Obeyed orders. Men and women reject Christ for the last time, and you will walk up and down the eternal madhouse wringing your hands, and saying, "Oh! if I only had; oh! if I only had!" Had what? Obeyed God, and accepted His son as your Saviour. Will you do it now?

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