

# The Nazarene

by Robert Arthur

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*The Nazarite's devotion is a commitment to separate themselves from the world and devote themselves to God, embracing refusals, reproaches, and restraints in order to bring out the beauty and richness of Christ.*

**Duration:** 31:52

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the common thread of having a Nazarite in the fourth book of various sections of the Bible. He mentions that Numbers, Daniel, and the Gospel of John all have a Nazarite character and depict Israel in different situations. The speaker emphasizes the importance of avoiding certain things that may hinder our devotion to God. He shares a touching story about a man whose son was killed in Ecuador and highlights the lyrics of a hymn that speak of desiring only the sunshine of Jesus' face. The speaker also talks about the concept of being saved to serve, but emphasizes that God never forces or compels anyone to serve.

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## Transcript

Well, I'm something in the way of a pinch hitter this morning, although I don't think that's a good word. I remember once, years ago, I was in the hearing of a dear, aged man of God. He wasn't too worldly-wise.

He didn't know the parlance of the times. And he was filling in for someone, and he was searching, you know, for that word, pinch hitter, and the nearest he could come to it was the word hitchhiker. He said, I'm a hitchhiker today.

So, I'm something of a hitchhiker at the moment. I want to read with you once again in the passage that was before us yesterday morning. Let's have a read in Numbers chapter 6. Just briefly, however, not covering all of what we read, and then adding just a little portion in a later verse or two.

Numbers 6, 2, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dry. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine, free from the kernels, even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head, until the days be fulfilled in which he separates

himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

All the days that he separates himself unto the Lord, he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister when they die, because the consecration of his God is upon his head. Now, I want you to turn to verse 13 and read something of the end of this matter.

This is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled. He shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one you lamb of the first year without blemish for a thin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offering, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread mingled with oil, and their meal offering, for such is the word meat offering generally, and their drink offering. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering and his burnt offering, and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord with a basket of unleavened bread.

The priest shall offer also his meal offering and his drink offering. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. And the priest shall take the sod and shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite after the hair of his separation is shaved." We'll read no more for this moment.

Someone has remarked, and I know not its values, it's perhaps a little of the mechanics of things that some affect to see in the Scripture, but someone had remarked that four books, you must, I'm sure, know that the Bible is divisible into some five sections, and it's been thought that four books generally have a common thread. They have someone out of place, and they usually have a Nazarite. Do you remember the fourth book is Numbers, and Numbers sees Israel in the wilderness, and there's a Nazarite in Numbers.

And then if one would just skip hastily by some things, there's the fourth major book of prophecy, which is Daniel. And Daniel sees, the book of Daniel sees the people of Israel in captivity, they're out of place, and there's a Nazarite, Daniel. And then perhaps you remember that John is the fourth gospel, and there's a heavenly Nazarite there.

There's one who came unto his own, and his own received him not. He's a stranger, he's out of place. And he is the one who forbears to drink the wine, as it were, of his joy now.

But he'll drink it hereafter, when his people are with him. And so there's a fairly general line of thought that Nazarites, or devoted ones, are spread through the Scripture. And it is this morning to gather up a few of the strands of yesterday, just to say this, that we've been thoughtful that by illustration, the illustration of the Nazarite, we might well bring before our hearts once again the privileges and the challenges of a life devoted to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Say we this once again, that devotion starts from a view of the glory. Somebody has remarked that it's the look to Calvary that saves, it's the gaze into the glory that sanctifies. And whether or not that's true, sometimes things have part truth, you know, it still is a fact that the heart being occupied with our risen and ascended Lord is the heart that's going to be drawn out in devotion.

I rethought some of the things said yesterday. I realized their ineffectiveness. I realized that perhaps they're capable of misunderstanding a life, for example, of a Christian isn't merely three parts refusal, reproach, and restraint, but a life of devotion.

A devoted Christian life is going to see those three things in fair measure in that life. And I want to say this much again this morning, that the devotion of which I speak is not a devotion into which anyone is driven or compelled. Yonder in the day past, when much younger, I used to say perhaps it has again this part truthism.

I used to say we're saved to serve. I thought I discovered a little formula. Perhaps it's good, perhaps it isn't.

That God wants every sinner to be a saint, and every saint to be a servant. And I would advise that only in this much. I believe we are saved to serve, but only in the sense that we're saved to be willing to serve.

God never compels. He never drives. Law might have the force behind of driving.

Grace always has the attraction before of beseeching. I beseech you. And so I say once again as we think of this Nazarite and his desire to devote himself to God, it was drawn out from him by his thoughts of God's glory.

I'm reminded of a little story. You may have heard the statement, the expulsive force of a new affection. I think of it in terms of this.

Any refusals, any saying no to things in life must come because something else has come in. And it's very interesting to me to rehearse what is said concerning the originator of that little phrase. It seems that one of the philosophical turn of mind was driving with another in a coach and pair in an olden day.

And as they bowled along, the philosopher was sitting up in front with the driver. And they seemed to be going merrily on their way, but as they came to a certain place, the driver made a vicious cut at one of the horses. And it shied, and then they went on their way again.

He couldn't help remark that to the driver. He said, why did you do such a thing? And the driver said, well, perhaps you've noticed that we were coming near to a white milepost. And he said, by experience, I've come to know that that horse on that side always shies and prances when we get to that milepost.

So I give it something else to think about, and we go on past, and we go on our way. And the philosopher, so to say, went on to write about the expulsive force of a new ideal or a new affection. When something else is primary place, then almost naturally, there are those things that are going to be expelled.

And this I say because there might be some who would be prone to an accusation that, oh well, when he speaks in terms of refusals and saying, no, that's negative. That's negative ministry, and we don't like that. Well, neither do I. But I found out that positiveness is usually accompanied by negativeness.

And sometimes in this modern day of ours, I find this much also. You know, I'm no artist. Were I to sketch or draw a horse, I think necessity would impel me to write underneath it, this is a horse, so that you would be warned of it.

I feel very much this way, that sometimes the lives, our younger lives particularly, in being taught positives, need to have underneath it, this is a... And name some things, because they never seem to catch it

through the positiveness of the things spoken of regarding our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, now I want to hurry on this morning. And will you notice that we did make a start in saying this, that the Nazarite was to be one who refused certain things.

I noticed this in Scripture, that God's best men have always been great refusers. You remember Daniel? He refused the king's dainties. You remember David? He refused the king's armor.

You remember Abraham? He refused the king's riches. And always and always there's a refusal in regard to something. Now my dear friends, and especially young Christian friends, I do believe that a devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ will invariably carry with it the necessity of saying no to many a thing.

Nor will that come into the line of saying, oh, he's merely negative. The no will come because an affectionate yes has been drawn out of our hearts to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. We said this yesterday, did we not? That when the Nazarite was told not to eat anything from the vine, it surely had a moral significance.

I believe that we are to draw from it that our joys and the impulses, the exhilarations of life, the exaltations, are not to come from the material. We're not to be like the men and the women of the world who can rise no higher. Their promptings can come from no other source.

They have to come from beneath. Ours are to come from above. I believe that the contrast is readily set before us.

That Christ is the one who is divine, and therefore we're to find our delights in him. There's another thing I would hasten to speak of, it's this. I think it's no accident of a divine occurrence that more than once, wine and the Holy Spirit are set over against each other.

You remember in the book of Acts, on that Pentecostal morning, there were those who tried to interpret the thing they were seeing then and hearing then, and they said, these men are filled with new wine. They're drunken. Incidentally, beloved friends, I think the world is still at a loss to explain a spirit-motivated and spirit-filled life.

It still can rise no higher than crediting or discrediting that life to be the product of the vine, drunkenness. And then you'll remember this much more too, that in the fifth of Ephesians, where counsel doth be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled in spirit, or filled with the Spirit. And so, it's fairly plain, is it not, that besides, or shall I rather say that along with thinking of the contrast as seeing natural joy and joy in Christ, there seems to be the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God is one who would constantly keep believing hearts in touch with Christ. I used to have a friend, I mean I have a friend, who used to say that he'd like to write a book someday on the Spirit of God. And then he said this, I don't think it would be a large book, I think I would say very little in it.

But one of the things I would say would be this, the Spirit of God was given to keep Christians in the delights of Christ. And so I believe that the Holy Spirit is seen, at least in contrast here, in his work of keeping the heart in touch with Christ. Now dear young folk, there are many, many occasions in which someone comes to me and says, Well, Mr. Arthur, do you think it's wrong to do this? Or do you think a Christian should do that? And you know, many, many a time I, well, of course there are answers to those things.

I always remember what the man said when he said to his wife, Wife, can I wear this collar once again? And she said, Well, hubby, if it's doubtful, it's dirty. And there are many answers to those questions of the doubtful kind. If you're in doubt, why, you better not do the thing.

But sometimes there are those who come and say, Well, now look, there's nothing essentially wrong with that, is there? And one has to admit, oh, in much part, no. It's just like a person going along munching grapes, munching raisins. There must surely have been those in the day of the Nazarite who ate their raisins or their cluster of grapes, and there was certainly nothing wrong with that.

But the only place where there's wrong in it is if you're a Nazarite. There are certain things not for the Nazarite that might be perfectly allowable for the other person. And so shall we bear this in our hearts once again, beloved friends.

Not from the element of a legalism, but from the element of an attractive force in our blessed Lord. There are those many things that the world might say are perfectly permissible, but for God's beloved who are giving themselves all to Christ, why they're not to be ours. Now, see that suffices for this word, refusals, and I notice how time passes once again.

But I'd like you to notice that the second thing about the Nazarite was, he was not to cut his hair. He's to let his locks grow long. And I'm at once reminded of a notable example of that.

You remember the man, Samson? Samson always springs to mind, at least for a very little while in his experience, was saddened by the many things that Samson did that are certainly not an exhibition of the power of God, that are an exhibition of dissipation of power. But we do remember that the man, Samson, with his long hair, coupled it with a Nazarite's strength and power. Some good while ago, I was in the Southland, and I was asked on a certain night to speak to some children, and I elected, in fact, I'd been ministering on the book of Numbers, or rather the book of Judges, and I elected to speak a little bit about Samson, and thinking to interest children and doing a wrong thing because you must never be quite sure of what children will respond.

And I asked somebody, what a man with long hair made them think of. Well, I naturally expected that some little chap would help me along in my ministry, and he would say, oh, it makes me think of a womanly man. Maybe he might even have produced the word a sissy, and that would have helped me because that was the point I was making.

But this little fellow had been more worldly wise than I credited him with, and he said, it makes me think of Tarzan, you know, the great, strong, strapping figure. Well, I'm not the least bit impressed that Samson looked like that. I think that doubtless he looked a weakling, and the hair made him a matter of reproach.

You know, Corinthians tells us that long hair in a man is a matter of reproach. And so when I summed it up quickly on our first morning, I take it that this is the part of a devoted life that enters into the reproach of our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be many things cast, as it were, in the teeth of the devoted one that will see of him a weakling or my boy comes home from school with the current vocabulary of his day.

And as I gather it today in school, if a fellow doesn't conform or if he doesn't meet the standards that have been set by common usage, there's a dread word they hiss at him, and it's the word chicken. He's chicken. He just simply doesn't measure up.

Well, there will be many, many times, I'm sure, when someone will throw the word at us if we will walk in a devotion to Christ while he's a sissy, he's a weakling. Somehow a strength in spiritual things in the eye of the world is looked on as weakness. He's no man's man if he's devoted to Christ.

By the way, I may be a bit of a heretic in any sense, but you know there's a lovely old world word that has fallen into disrepute. It's the word gentle man. Do you know what a gentle man is? Well, let me tell you, he's a gentle man.

And I don't care who says that it's weakness or anything of the kind. I believe a gentle man in Christian sense exhibits this power of refusal and of saying no to many a thing in order that he may be Christ-like and exhibit a likeness to him who we love. Well, now, I cannot take moments very much more this morning to amplify this matter of the reproaches that fall upon believers.

You remember that Moses chose to suffer reproach by aligning himself with the people of God in his day. I think it's singular that we're asked in the Hebrews epistle to go outside the camp bearing his reproach. I believe that reproaches in the sense of a devotion will always come upon those who want to go the whole way with Christ.

But what of it? The reason I read the little passage at the last of the chapter was not to mystify some younger mind with all of those words about the offerings to the Lamb and so on. It was just to show the interpretation at the end of the Nazarite's period of devotion as to what his long hair meant. I think it's inexpressibly lovely that the Nazarite one day got an interpretation of what a reproach meant.

He was to come at the end of his days. He was to come with an offering in his hand. And then the priest was to take of that offering as we well read.

And then something was to be done. The long hair was to be cut. And the priest was to put into the man's hands the hair just cut.

And then it was to be thrown into the fire under the peace offering. And the offering then from the priest's hands put into his. You know what I think that means? And I realize I'm tending to garbling things by a haste now because of the time.

I believe this, beloved, that here is our man, our devoted man, our Nazarite. And at the end of his period, he sees that his long hair has been cast into the fire, as it were, beneath the peace offering to bring out the beauty and the wealth and the richness of that offering. In other words, he's given at last to see that his reproaches were all the while bringing out more of the beauty of Christ, more for God, and more for the priestly family.

I believe, friends, that one day we shall see we whose hearts have been drawn out to Christ will be given to see that all of the things, the refusals and the reproaches and all the rest of it, were all working to bring out beauty in Christ, to bring out things for the pleasure of God, and to bring out things for the pleasure of our fellow saints. You know, the peace offering was shared by the priests and by God. I take it that means this, that a devoted life will always make the saints of God far more conscious of Christ than they've ever been.

Blessed is that assembly of God's people that has in it lives fully devoted to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Well, I want to say one thing more, and it concerns the third thing that I've called restraints upon the devoted one. He was not to touch a dead body.

Even if it were his father or his mother, even if death came suddenly and almost you might well feel for him that he couldn't help touching death, he was still to be unclean if he touched a dead body. Somebody as well said, what's wrong with touching a dead body? I think one of the most profound and best things I've ever read about that was just this, there was no life in it. Very simple, isn't it? But simple in this sense, there was no life toward God in it.

And this is the other matter of devotion, that there may be many places and times in which we shall be impelled to say, no, I cannot take a part in that thing, because in so doing, I would be yoking myself or linking myself with something that has nothing for God in it, and therefore I cannot do that. And by the way, beloved, you must write in, as it were, underneath the lines in between spaces, you must write in all that that might mean. I believe this is the matter of association.

I believe it may be that we cannot team ourselves in certain things with death, those that have no life for God. I know very well, and I should make explanations far more clearly than I'm doing, I know very well that this can be mistaken and wrenched and rung into a wrong sense. I know it can mean, for some, a separation of a wrong kind.

And I'm not inculcating that by any manner, I mean. But I do think this, beloved, we shall learn that if we are to be kept for God, there are certain things into which we cannot come, because they would hinder us from being free to magnify our blessed Lord. I must finish.

I want to tell you something sweet that occurred in my hearing not too long ago down in Davenport. We were hearing the ministry of Mr. C. McCully, whose son was one of the five lads who shed his blood down in the riverbed of the Curaray River down in Ecuador. And that morning before he got up to speak, we had apparently sung, Beneath the cross of Jesus, I fain would take my stand.

And I'm of a mind that perhaps we sang it, as too often many of us sing the hymns concerning Christ. And apparently we had sung words that some of us perhaps had never noticed we had sung them. I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face.

But when Mr. McCully got up to speak, he reminded us we had said that. He said, Did you mean that? Did you mean that your life would count it sunshine only if Christ is made more real and count it shadow if anything comes in to keep his face from you? He said, Did you mean that you, in speaking to God, as it were, would say, I count it sunshine if I see Christ in any of your actions. Take away my home, take away my wealth, take away my children.

And it touched every heart that he was speaking out of an experience for. God had done that. And then that man, when I counted, God has graciously smiled upon him in these days through the experience.

He said, Oh, beloved, may our hearts mean what we have just sung. Everything must subserve the desire, and our lives will be drawn out unto Christ. Oh, may the Lord bless our little word concerning the Nazarene.

May it be that our every affection is touched alive and anew, that we might in very truth be drawn out unto him who loved us unto blood, for his name's sake.

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