

How Do You Measure Up?

by Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard emphasizes the individual responsibility of Christians to actively share the gospel as representatives of Christ.

Duration: 44:52

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 19:31, John 6:35, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:20, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6

Topics: "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a Jew who approached him and expressed a desire to have what the preacher had. The preacher emphasizes the importance of living a life that attracts others to Jesus. He highlights that God has entrusted his people with the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the world. The preacher challenges the audience to evaluate their own lives and actions to see if they are truly representing Christ.

Transcript

And you're responsible to God, as I'm responsible to God, and while somebody may be of encouragement to somebody else, in the last analysis, the things that are vital, you're going to have to settle yourself. Nobody can settle vital things for you. It's been said that a man that gives advice is a fool, and a man who accepts it is a double fool.

But I'm going to ask a question of you tonight. It's a question that I'm concerned about for you and for me. And I'm going to ask this question with three scriptures in mind.

The first scripture is in John chapter 20, and the verse is 21. I suppose I, in 30-odd years, have quoted this verse of scripture more perhaps than any other as I've talked to God's people. The question I'm going to ask you tonight, I'm not going to tell you what the question is right now, but I'm going to ask it in view of the fact that you have been made a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, this morning it was suggested, that we have the privilege as a priest to offer praise and so forth. And I suggested it's not simply privilege, it's responsibility, because the book of the Revelation says that he hath made you a kingdom of priests. You couldn't make yourself a priest, but he made you one.

I didn't make anybody a priest, the Lord God did, and so whatever is involved in being a priest under the Most High God, that's between you and God. You can ride out if you want to on it, but nobody will be hurt

but you, for you're not responsible to anybody except God. I didn't make you a priest.

If you want to keep on with old traditions and customs and pay somebody else to do your thinking for you and your praying for you and your witnessing for you and your preaching for you, nobody on God's earth can stop you. But it ought to begin to dawn upon us that if God made us something that's serious and that's blessed and it makes life worth living, he's made us priests. We weren't priests, but he made us priests.

We don't have to get anybody to go into the presence of God for us, for nobody can. But we are. He's fixed us so we can approach God ourselves.

And that's a blessed privilege. And that's true of what I'm talking about tonight. In the 21st chapter of John, then Jesus, 20th chapter of John, verse 21.

Then, this is after the resurrection, when he made his appearance to his disciples in the room where they had gone, afraid they'd be killed next. Then the Lord said to them again, Peace be unto you as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. You are representative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second scripture, of course, is one that we could all stand on our heads, I trust, and quote going down a stair step on our heads at midnight. And it's from the 28th of Matthew, and I read it again, verse 19, verse 18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. You've been given a commission by the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the question I'm going to ask you will be in light not only of the fact that the Lord has made us representatives of him, that he's given us a commission that we share together, and no one can name the name of Christ who is not willing to tote his part of the blanket in this commission. If you have not been so saved as to seek to get others saved, you haven't been saved. There's no such thing as being a spectator in this business of knowing Christ and seeking that others shall know him.

Any human being whose one life mission primarily is not that others may know Christ doesn't know Christ himself. The only way you can keep Christ is by sharing Christ. You can argue about once saved always until you've blew him to pieces, but if you do not give yourself to winning others, you do not have Christ yourself.

Now, that's so. There's nothing in the Bible about a salvation that fixes you so you can live anymore except for the purpose of fixing it so others through you may know the Lord Jesus Christ. I used to try to exhort church members to try to get people to God.

I quit that. If you are saved, that's your life's work. I don't need to exhort you to go after souls.

You need to go after Christ. I didn't say get them to Christ. I said seek to get them to Christ.

We all stand helplessly and have to wait on the Holy Spirit taking the gospel we give out and causing fruit. But there's no such thing as being a Christian and living for yourself. Isn't that right? We've been commissioned.

We've been commissioned. And then we've been given the word for the world. The Lord says that the field is the world.

Everybody in the world then is our missionary test. And he's entrusted the word to the world to his people. He doesn't preach it himself except through his people.

He doesn't preach it through angels. He preaches it through his people. E. Stanley Jones.

I wish every one of you would do without a meal if you have to and buy the little paperback book. I think you can get it for two dollars, isn't it, T? On conversion. It'll thrill your soul.

Maybe set the song fire. And he tells of how yonder in India many, many years ago a man who as a preacher had fallen into adultery and had publicly confessed it and had been restored to the ministry was holding a meeting and preaching in a tent in India. And E. Stanley Jones knelt outside the tent and was healed inside and outside under the ministry of a former adulterer.

Now, that's the glory of the gospel. You say, well, wasn't he terrible? No, he's just a sinner. But the gospel is for sinners.

And the gospel has been entrusted to sinners who've been saved. Not nice people, but sinners. You say, well, I'm guilty of that.

Well, you're guilty of something else. And yet, somebody said that a Christian witness was one beggar trying to tell another beggar where he found bread. And that's what it is.

It's not somebody sitting up on a pedestal looking down. It's somebody who's a sinner. Who's a saved sinner, but still a sinner.

Is a beggar with nothing in his hands to commend himself to God telling another old beggar the place where he found the bread of life. And it is the most challenging thing that ever took place on this earth except the coming of Christ that the Lord God has entrusted into our sinful earthen vessels the gospel of his grace. What a privilege to tell another beggar where you found the bread of life.

And the man that says he can't do that is denying that he is ever hungry and that he is ever fed. We're told that we have been given the word for the whole world. In 2 Corinthians, the 5th chapter is the 3rd scripture I want to read.

It's very familiar. Verse 17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us.

What? Anybody here claim to be a Christian? Not willing to get in on this? Given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To which that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. How did he do it? By not imputing their trespasses unto them and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then we are. Are we? Now then we are. Ambassadors for Christ.

As though God did beseech you by us. God help anybody who claims to be a Christian that can lay out the plan of salvation without tears in his heart. Cannot argue with anybody on God's earth about anything.

This is something deeper. We are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you.

We stand in there beseeching. Beseeching. Beseeching.

God's not too high and mighty. In all his sovereignty to stand at the heart's door of a sinner and beseech him. He says we'll do the same thing.

Beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead. Be reconciled to God.

Be reconciled to God. Now we are representatives of Christ, are you? Some of you are new converts now. You listen to me carefully.

Are we? We've been commissioned by Christ. Have we? We've been entrusted with the word of the gospel to a world of beggars who haven't found the bread. Now I want to ask you this simple question.

Use three brief words to talk about it. And the question is this. I ask you tonight to sit in judgment on yourself as to by what you are and by what you do how you're measuring up to your position.

You're not your own. You're Christ's representative. You can't work it out yourself.

You've been commissioned. And you've been entrusted with the word of the gospel. Now Gene, how are you measuring up? Nobody can answer that but you.

But God help you if you piddle away the days that God's given you here on this earth. And don't face this thing. I can't face it for anybody but myself.

And if I miss out, that won't help you. This is between you and the one who made you his representative. This is between you and the one who commissioned you.

This is between you and the one who trusted you with his gospel. How are you measuring up? First by what you are. And second by what you do.

Both are important. Both are important. I've been amazed at how much enmity two things I've wanted to see take place have incurred.

I've been amazed and recent events have added to the amazement of how much hostility there is toward our observance of the Lord's table each Lord day. I've been amazed at the preachers who seem to hate it. I would not quote to you this morning tonight one preacher who says that the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine each Lord's day is cannibalistic in this challenge of what we're trying to do.

And then I've been amazed at the hostility against the idea that the scriptures do not teach the matter of one local pastor. And I have longed for you and prayed for you and hundreds of times got awful discouraged about you. I believe it's New Testament and I wish you'd work more at the job that you would not be so dependent on somebody working you up to something and that you'd face the fact that God has made you priests under him.

And I said this morning we could set things on fire and we'll do that now but bless God we could build a laboratory that would break down the awful prejudices of this hour if we ourselves would start to doing what we know we ought to be doing. That's right, beloved, I wish we could do it. I remember the couple that could come into our services because they said they came to hear me and never got to hear me.

I remember the many phone calls that every Sunday gets out I'm in town and get phone you're going to be preaching tonight and I don't care about the gospel or the scripture nothing I'm like just a few like to hear me preach. I don't want to succumb to that I'm not going to personally and I don't want you to. But somebody's got to lead brethren that's God appointed.

Somebody's got to shepherd the flock. Somebody's got to encourage and that must be every one of you encouraging each other. Forseek not the assembling of yourselves together as the custom of some is but the rather encouraging one another and so much the more and I don't know what this next phrase means I'm honest about it as you see the day approaching boy something sure approaching.

Under God we're sitting on top of all he knows that are not extinct. Only God knows what the day will bring forth. Encouraging one another.

I envision a congregation of people every time they come together they'd be so full of their victories and defeats as they were trying to be a Christian and to speak as a Christian that they'd want to share one with another every time they met their joys and their defeats. Our closed mouths and our waiting one upon another bespeak the fact that we're going along for the ride. You mean tell me that Christian people can take it easy when the world's in the shape it's in now.

And I want to ask you in view of two or three facts for yourself just for you now between now and last Lord's Day what have you counted for in the kingdom of God? Have you weighed anything? Huh? Have you? Have you witnessed a good confession? Have you not only prayed for doors to open but have you entered the ones that opened? Have you? Now come on between you and God The other night I looked at the Pacific Ocean Wife and I made a hard journey first time in our 32 and a half years of marriage we ever took a vacation We made a long, hot journey across this nation like in from the other coast As I stood there the night lights were shining on Pacific and I closed my eyes as with my brother and I tried to picture Asia and Europe and Africa where all hell is popping and what isn't popping now will be popping tomorrow And I wanted to say some things when I got back I want you to take a brief look tonight at this world If the Lord tarries in His presence return you and I living in this world need to ask ourselves this question again and again How am I doing as a representative of Christ under His commission entrusted with His gospel How am I doing?

I'm one person in two and a half billion souls living on this earth I can't now listen to me I can't bear the load of this world I can't carry the responsibility of two and a half billion people This world is God's responsibility Did you get that? This world is God's responsibility But God shouldering His responsibility has made me one of His representatives and He's commissioned me with others to carry the only message that can change anybody anywhere, anytime and He's entrusted that to me I can't shoulder the load of the world I'm not big enough to carry the burden of a city, are you?

But I must bear my burdens that God has put upon me Every man in that sense must bear his own burdens and if he's got any quarrel his quarrel must be with God for God gave them to us One thing that will scare you and make the question I'm asking you tonight pretty serious We're assured that in 40 more years Now listen to this carefully In 40 more years the population of the world will triple We're assured that by 2000 AD if the Lord tarries there'll be over 6 billion people in this world Now with civilization spreading antibiotics and so forth instead of the babies dying by the millions and all the other lands now many of them are being saved This world in the next 40 years you youngsters will live through that span Many of you here will other things being equal Listen to Brother Mark We are told by those who know what they're

talking about that in 40 more years there'll be 2 billion people lacking only a few million being as many people in China as there are in the whole world now And the most godless red-blooded terrible nation on the face of God's earth Not Russia but Red China And ladies and gentlemen I'm standing here talking to you in a little bitty old tabernacle by the side of the road a little handful of us folks but we live in a world and in 40 more years there'll be 3 times as many people in Red China as today And there's not a missionary of the cross of Jesus Christ in China now Not a one They've all been driven out We're told by those who know that there'll be 1 billion You see they're just How many?

About a hundred and They're not 200 million people in the United States now are they? 180 180 That's just a million But we're told there'll be a billion That's a thousand million isn't it? People in India in 40 more years One half as many people as are alive on the face of the earth now in 40 more years will live in India You know anything about India? Let me tell you a story that'll break your heart Mahatma Gandhi All of you know who I'm talking about don't you? Gandhi One of the greatest men that ever lived And he had India in the hollow of his hand for over a generation didn't he?

He used to attend a little Methodist congregation in India And he went there for the purpose of considering the claims of Jesus Christ But they were so lifeless and so dead that he quit going and died not a Christian Suppose it had the life of Christ in that congregation Now there's a billion people going to be in India in 40 more years In 40 more years the population of the United States and of Canada will be four and seven tenths percent of the population of the world In other words the white folks are infarct folks Now you think you're facing some trouble here in Winston-Salem where the whites and the Negroes are about 50-50 But brother the yellow man and the black man are going to take this world over And in Africa there are more Mohammedan missionaries in Africa alone than are gospel missionaries in all of the world Now let me repeat that You're reading about what's happening over in the Belgian Congo now, aren't you?

Well a few years ago that was one of the hot spots of revivals in the world And yet 900 of the 1000 missionaries have already had to leave And they're saying now they don't know whether they'll ever get to go back or not What I'm simply saying is this You and I are living in a world where the races that are going to just completely dominate this world are not receiving the gospel at all You see it? Now we can just face it if you want to, brother But it's not only the politicians that are scared to death now God's people who have had sense enough to come in out of the rain will begin to recognize that while we've been respectable Christians some of us content to tithe and be respectable This world is rising up in our faces and throwing our gospel down our teeth In Latin America where there are 200 million people now You know Latin America, Brazil, Argentina, Brazil, all those countries, Mexico There'll be one half a billion people in 40 more years And 93 out of every 100 people in Latin America are Roman Catholics And only 10% of them ever attend the Catholic Church In Asia, which will triple in population in 40 more years They've all got religion And nobody is preaching the gospel to them There are 365 million Hindus in Asia There are 341 million Mohammedans in Asia There are 405 million Buddhists in Asia There are 300 million Confucianists in Asia There are 25 million professing Christians in Asia And they've all got their religion Everybody in India is religious They turn their ear to windmills, say that prayer Now let me give you another sobering fact, something happened Within these nations and continents where the population is going to triple in 40 more years Let me draw this sad picture right quickly Communism is on the march In 37 years, the Communists have taken a third of the people of the world In these lands, these pagan religions Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, so forth, Shintoism are on the march There are 405 million Buddhists in Asia And you know what they're doing?

For the first time in the history of Buddhism They're on the march, and they've created hymns You know what they sing over in China now, those Buddhists? Communists don't mind the Buddhists going to worship They sing Buddha loves me, this I know To the tune of Jesus loves me, this I know Shintoism is on the march in Japan And they say they're going to restore emperor worship Which was outlawed, you know, by MacArthur For the first time in the history of India The sacred writings of Hinduism Are being put in language that the people can read And being distributed all over India Roman Catholicism is on the march Witness what's happening in this nation That's the kind of world you and I live in And it's not a big world now When I was a boy living down in Alabama I used to hear them talking about Cincinnati 400 and some odd miles away That fellow never get that far When I was a boy It's just a hop, skip and a jump from now to anywhere now We live in that world And that world is the field And I've been made a representative of Jesus Christ in that world I've been commissioned with my brothers and sisters in Christ To gospelize that world And he's entrusted the gospel in the earthen hands And if we don't get it out, it won't be gotten out I can't bear the burdens of the world But God help me, I have to face this question Am I measuring up to doing What I can do In this world The New Testament is based on need It's teaching of you giving yourself and thus what you have Is based on need My God, the scripture says, will supply everyone Every need of your life The scripture say, and distributed them to all as any had need The scripture say, your heavenly father knows that you need them all The scripture says, if anyone says anything to you, you shall say the Lord has need of them And he'll send them immediately Need is the Christian basis If we believe that Not as preachers of the people But as the people of God We would strike a blow into that awful heresy That has done more to allow this world To get in the shape it's in now Than any other thing And that's the conception That the only way you can serve God Is what they call full time service The New Testament calls every Christian Not to do a job to make a living And then serve God But to serve God in his job There isn't anything more foreign to the Bible Than the division between sacred things And things of the world Every last one of us Needs to consecrate ourselves and our jobs and everything we have Into full time servants That in them and through them we can be God's people In this awful world After we've said everything else We've used up all the alibis and tried all the plans The only thing on God's earth that will work now Is for men and women's souls To invest themselves in their daily grind As to serve the kingdom of God And to have men and women Taking notice of us To ask us to give a reason For the faith that is within us I've never been able to get away from Al St.

John He and I went to school together in the seminary He was a good looking duck, came from wealthy Paris He'd been a terrible, terrible drunkard He said God saved him He was well educated, but when he got saved he came to Southwestern Trained to be a preacher And he and I became buddies He was older than I, but we became buddies When he got through school he went to New York City And worked for board and room As assistant of some kind in the old Bowery mission And later he was made the superintendent of that mission Wife and I spent a week First time we were with him Preached to his bums in the mission every night Stayed with him day and night He told me of the greatest thing that had ever happened to him He was on the radio Exploiting what they were doing in the Bowery mission there in New York City The proprietors of the Adam hat I don't know if it's still a hat or not, but it used to sell all over the country Jewish men Were his sponsors And he said After having dealings with the Jewish men Who sponsored the broadcast For about 18 months One night a knock came on his door And when he opened the door The head partner in the Adam hat company Was standing outside his apartment door And said, can I come in, I've got to talk with you This Jew came in and when they engaged in the conversation This Jew man said, I've been watching you And I don't believe in Jesus Christ But I've been watching you And I've come to ask you If you can show me how To get what you've got God help us that said What use having the Lord suffer every day And going through all these motions And trying to get back to a new

pattern If it's not going to develop men and women If somebody's going to say, I've been watching you I'd love to have what you've got He was a Jew Taught from the time of his knee high to a death If it had anything to do with this If Jesus would go back on the Bible of his fathers And the religion of his fathers and the God of his fathers Comes to a Gentile Christian and says I don't believe in Jesus Christ but can you show me how To get what you've got And Hal said, I haven't got anything, I've got him Down on his knees, they went And he surrendered to the one He said he didn't believe him Two nights later at three o'clock in the morning Hal St.

John said, he worked all night with those bombs And went to sleep till four or five o'clock in the morning He said somebody knocked on the door and liked to knock it down He opened the door and here's that Jew with his wife And pushed her in and said, I brought my wife I want her to get what I got I can't shoulder the burden of the world But I long for you And for me Just to be a Christian Be ready Give a reason For the faith that's in you Grady wouldn't be nice, some old bum come over to your place He said, Grady, I've been watching you You've got something I haven't got That's what I'm talking about You've got something I haven't got Brother, that's our hope There isn't any hope anywhere else May God bless you

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