

Faith Working By Love

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true faith in Christ is always alive and active, producing genuine love that manifests in a believer's life as the true evidence of salvation.

Scripture: Galatians 5:6, John 15:12, 1 John 4:19, Matthew 7:16, Romans 5:8, Psalm 63:1, John 20:28, Luke 24:32

Topics: "Faith", "Love", "Justification"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon expounds on Galatians 5:6, emphasizing that true faith in Jesus Christ is not a mere intellectual assent or ritualistic observance but a living, active trust that works through love. Spurgeon challenges believers to examine their faith by its fruits, showing that genuine faith inevitably produces love for Christ and joyful service. This message calls Christians to a deeper self-examination and a fuller experience of the grace that unites faith and love inseparably.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"Faith which works by love." Galatians 5:6.

ALL ways of justification by human works and outward forms are set aside by the Apostle. In one sentence he closes up every road which is cast up by man and opens up the way of the Lord, even the way of salvation by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Some hope to be saved by ritualism—their hopes are struck hip and thigh by these words, "Neither circumcision avails anything." On the other hand, many are relying upon their freedom from all ceremonies and place their reliance upon a sort of anti-ritualism—they are struck by the words, "nor uncircumcision." As Jews relied upon circumcision, so do many depend upon Baptism and sacraments—to these the Apostle gives no quarter. Others glory in uncircumcision—they have practiced no rites nor ceremonies—their mode of worship is plain even to unsightliness, free almost to disorder and of this they are apt to make a righteousness.

It is quite as easy to make a self-righteousness out of the plainness of the Quaker as out of the gaudiness of the Romanist and the one confidence will be as fatal as the other. You and I, as Baptists, may glory in the simplicity of our worship and the Scripturalness of our Baptism, but if we think that outward things will save us because they are Scripturally simple, we shall err as much as they do who multiply gorgeous services and pompous processions. Let the whole sentence be quoted! Paul says, "Neither circumcision avails anything," but he does not stop there, for he adds, "nor uncircumcision." The outward, whether

decorated or unadorned; whether fixed or free, touches not the saving point—the only thing which can save us is faith in Jesus Christ, whom God has set forth as a Propitiation for sin.

Faith brings us into contact with the healing fountain and so our natural disease is removed. It appropriates, on our behalf, the result of the Redeemer's service and sacrifice and so we become accepted in Him. But anything short of this must fail—it is the tearing of the garment while the heart is unbroken—the washing of the outside of the cup and platter while the inner part is very filthiness. The Apostle, however, does more than merely condemn other foundations than those of faith—he distinguishes here between faith, itself, and its many imitations. It is not every sort of faith that will save the soul.

True faith, undoubtedly, will save a man though it is but as a grain of mustard seed. But it must be true faith—the genuine silver and not a mere plated article. "Money answers all things," says the wise man, but then it must be current coin of the realm, for counterfeit money will answer for nothing except to condemn the man who has it in his possession! Real faith will save us, but forgeries of it will increase our peril. Assurance is of God, but presumption is of the devil. The test of true faith is that it works—"Faith which works," says the text. To that end it must, first of all, live, for it is clear that a dead faith cannot work. There must be heart in our faith and the Spirit of God breathing in it, or it will not be the living faith of a living child of God.

Being alive, true faith must not sleep, but must awaken itself as a child of the day, for a slumbering faith is matter for heart-searching, since sleep is a cousin to Death. A wakeful faith becomes active and in its activity lies much of its proof. "By their fruits you shall know them" is one of Christ's own rules for testing men and things—and we are to know faith by that which comes of it—by what it does for us and in us and through us. Faith is not worth having if it is fruitless. It has a name to live and is dead. If it works not at all, it lives not at all and cannot justify its possession. A dead god may be served by a dead faith, but only a living, waking, working faith can please the ever-living, ever-working Jehovah. God save us from a dreaming faith and a talking faith and give us "faith which works."—

"Not words alone it cost the Lord To purchase pardon for His own. Nor will a soul by Grace restored

Return the Savior words alone.'

A further distinction is also set forth, namely, that true faith "works by love." There are some who do many works as the result of a kind of faith who, nevertheless, are not justified. As for instance, Herod, who believed in John and did many things and yet murdered his minister. His faith worked, but it worked by dread and not by love—he feared the stern language of the second Elijah and the judgments which would come upon him if he rejected the Baptist's warnings and so his faith worked through fear. The great test of the working of saving faith is this—it "works by love." If you are led by your faith in Jesus Christ to love Him and so to serve Him, then you have the faith of God's elect. You are, then, undoubtedly, a saved man and you may go your way and rejoice in the liberty with which Christ has made you free.

It shall be joy to you to serve the Lord, since love is the mainspring of your service. That is the point we are going to speak upon this morning—the connection which exists between faith and love—"Faith which works by love." We may be helped to test both our faith and love while we are speaking of the intermingling and intertwisting of the roots and branches of these two Divine Graces and it will do us good to perform a thorough self-examination. It never does any man harm to overhaul himself and to see in what a state he is—whether he is really right or not—whether he is prospering in soul or not.

I am afraid of our taking our good estate for granted, but I am not afraid of the most searching self-enquiry. May God the Holy Spirit bless our ministry to this end this morning!

I. Our first observation will be this—FAITH ALWAYS PRODUCES LOVE—"Faith which works by love." When faith has anything to do, she walks to the field with Love at her side. The two Divine Graces are inseparable. Like Mary and Martha, they are sisters and abide in one house. Faith, like Mary, sits at Jesus' feet and hears His Words and then Love diligently goes about the house and rejoices to honor the Divine Lord. Faith is light, while Love is heat and in every beam of Grace from the Sun of Righteousness you will find a measure of each. True faith in God cannot exist without love to Him, nor sincere love without faith. They are united, like Siamese twins, and where you meet the one the other is sure to be present.

This happens by a necessity of faith's own nature. The moment a man believes in Jesus Christ, he loves Him as a matter of course. It is possible to trust in another person and not love him, but from the peculiar circumstances of the case, our Lord, having loved us and given Himself for us out of the infinite charity of His heart, we are compelled to love Him the moment we repose upon Him. To trust the bleeding Lamb and not love Him is a thing not to be imagined! Faith is a gold ring which, in every case, the heavenly Jeweler sets with the beryl of love. Water faith with a drop of God's own dew and it blossoms into love!

The first steps of the prodigal, when he comes to himself, are all towards his father's house and heart. When he gets home he may make many steps here and there about his father's estate, but at the first, at any rate, his face is distinctly towards his father. Did he not say, "I will arise and go unto my father"? The first steps of the soul, when it begins to believe in God, are desires after Him in which there is a measure of love. The affections are awakened and drawn towards God as soon as there is the slightest degree of faith in the soul. Every Believer here knows that. Look back to the day when you first saw the Lord, if you can remember it—the hour you looked to Him and were lightened—did you not love Him immediately?

Love Him? Yes! We sometimes fear we loved Him better then, than now, though I hope that it is not the case. If anyone had asked me, in the first flush of my joy when first I beheld my bleeding Lord, "Do you love Him?" I should not have hesitated, but replied, "I love Him as my very soul, for He has redeemed me from going down into the Pit." Faith creates love as summer breeds flowers! Our first love came with our first faith by a necessity of nature which can never change. Love grows out of faith yet farther by the discoveries of beauty in Christ which faith is sure to make. Faith is the soul's eye and its telescope by which it sees that which is so far off as to otherwise be invisible. Holy faith gazes upon the Character of the Lord Jesus Christ, realizes His Person and discerns His matchless work and so creates knowledge out of which comes love.

Faith stands like the cherubim upon the golden Mercy Seat, looking downward always upon the blood-sprinkled Propitiatory, admiring and wondering, spying out something fresh every hour and thus filling itself with ever-increased delight with those things which the angels desire to look into. Out of this gracious discernment comes admiring love. Faith delights to unveil the superlative beauties of the Well-Beloved before the gaze of Love and then Faith and Love

unite in crying out, "Yes, He is altogether lovely!" Those who believe can say, "We see Jesus," and those whose hearts are won by Him can add, "We loved Him because He first loved us." O that we knew our Lord better! O that we believed in Him more! Then should we be knit to Him as the heart of Jonathan was knit to David.

Faith creates love, next, by its appropriation of that which it discerns, for while faith is the soul's eye, it is also the mind's hands by which it grasps the blessing. Faith sees the love of Christ and then says, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Faith sees the wounds of Jesus and perceives His Deity through those windows of ruby and immediately appropriates Him and cries, "My Lord and my God." Love is sure to arise out of a sense of possession. Does not a mother love her child very much because it is her own?

When we have an interest in a person so as to call him, "my brother," "my husband," "my son," then a sense of property increases our sense of affection. This made the Psalmist sing, "O God, You are my God, early will I seek You." Why, even in dead things, such as gold and silver and goods and lands, when they are a man's own they are apt to be loved, for the affections cling to that which is possessed—"Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." And therefore, the danger which attends worldly things, lest our heart be bird-limed with them and so be held captive, instead of mounting upward towards God. This tendency is clearly seen in reference to higher possessions and especially with regard to Christ. If Christ is yours and Faith can say, "Jesus is mine," Love alters the sentence and cries, "This is my Beloved and this is my Friend."

When the faith of Thomas saw Jesus as Lord and God, his love gave a musical ring to his exclamation by joying in personal possession and calling Him, "my Lord and my God." Love rejoices in Jesus as her own possession, triumphs in Him and right sweetly sings of love to Him because He is her own Husband and Lord. Thus you see faith creates love from a necessity of its nature, from the discoveries which it makes and from its appropriation of the good things that are in Christ. Dear Hearer, do you know anything about these matters? Faith further excites love by another step, namely, by its enjoying the mercy and then leading the heart to a grateful acknowledgment of the source of the mercy. There are two links in the chain in this case—faith wins the mercy by prayer—the mercy is enjoyed and then out of the enjoyment of the gift springs love to Him who gave it.

Brothers and Sisters, what innumerable favors faith has already brought to us! Some of you, I trust, do not look upon the Covenant as a locked-up storeroom from which nothing is to be taken until you come to die. But the key of David has been put into your hands by faith and you have enjoyment, even now, of the fat things full of marrow and the wines on the lees well-refined which the Lord has prepared for them that love Him. At this moment you know that you are justified; you know that you are adopted into the family of God—do you not, therefore, love the Lord? I know you do! You feel, at this moment, that you are enjoying the privileges of heirship with Christ—does not this bind you fast to your elder Brother?

Every day you are receiving Providential mercies. I hope you keep your eyes open to see them—every day you are receiving preserving mercies, restoring mercies, instructive mercies, sealing mercies—do you not love God for all these priceless gifts? Spiritual blessings are coming to you from the God of All Grace and you are filled with joys, like your Savior's grief—immense, unknown—surely this cements your soul to your Redeemer! Unless your heart is altogether out of order, you love God better and better because He is manifesting His love to you more and more. Is it not so? Faith told you that the Lord was good and then she cried, "I will prove it to you," and she handed out of the Covenant storehouse mercies rich and rare and laid them at your feet! And since you have possessed them and lived upon them as your own, you have blessed the Giver and loved Him more than you ever did before.

Thus Faith receives promises and feeds Love on the fruit of them. It does this even more sweetly by the familiarity with God which it breeds in the heart, for Faith is in the habit of going to God with all her burdens and coming away with her load removed. Faith has the daily practice of pleading promises with God,

speaking to Him face to face as a man speaks with his friend and receiving favors from the right hand of the Most High which make even her expectant soul to wonder! Faith commences with God in the morning, as Abraham did, and walks with Him in the field at evening, as Isaac did. Faith houses herself with God as the swallow built her nest under the eaves of the temple. Faith's life is in God, even as the life of a fish is in the sea.

The bosom of Jesus Christ is the pillow of faith and the heart of God is the pavilion of faith. Because faith thus keeps us near to God, it causes us to love Him. Oh, poor blind Soul, if you could see Jesus, you would love Him! You who are

most opposed to Him would become His friends if you knew Him! It is not possible for a Believer to be in Christ's company an hour without feeling his heart warmed. The pilgrims to Emmaus said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He spoke with us by the way?" Those who have known and believed His love towards them must feel His spell upon their affections holding them captive. There is none like He among the sons of men—His beauties ravish the heart! If Jesus does but lift the veil and let us have a glimpse of one of His eyes for a moment, our hearts are melted within us—

"Where can such sweetness be

As I have tasted in Your love,

As I have found in Thee?"

Because faith thus makes us familiar with our Divine Lord, it must inevitably produce love in the soul. And here again, are two links instead of one—our familiarity with Christ soon begets congeniality of disposition and spirit, for that we are much with Christ—we become much like Christ. He who lies on a bed of spices will naturally find his garments smell of the same. A mirror upon which the sun is shining is, itself, bright and flashes its reflected rays afar. He that walks with wise men will be wise, but he that dwells with the Infinite Wisdom shall be taught of God! Doubtless, happy couples who live together in mutual affection and confidence become very much like each other—the one becomes the other's self—they have the same aims and objectives, they are often surprised to find that they have thought the same thoughts and are about to say the same words at the same moment.

So do the saint and the Savior grow like each other after years of acquaintance, only the growth is all on one side—we grow up unto Him in all things who is the Head. Oh that our likeness to Christ were as clear and complete as our likeness to our dear companions below! You see how love is thus nurtured in the soul by a growing likeness of disposition. Wherever there is congeniality of taste, mind, view, disposition and spirit, love becomes strong and well established. And thus faith, by begetting in us likeness to Christ, causes love to Christ to become a mighty power in the soul! Surely all these points sufficiently show that faith creates love in the soul wherever it really dwells.

Do not, I pray you, begin to say, "I am afraid I do not love the Lord as I ought," and so on. Take it for granted that you do not love Him to the fullest of His infinite deserts. Instead of raising questions about the degree of your love, ask yourself whether you believe in Him. Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus? Are you confiding in Him? Because if the root is there, the flower will appear before long. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God and all who are born of the God of Love must, themselves, love God. Do not talk of trying to love God. You cannot force yourself to love anybody—who in his senses would ever dream of such a thing? Such attempts would be utter folly.

Love must be free-born, it cannot be bought or forced. We cannot tell what love is though we feel it. It is a mysterious something not to be described by the cold maker of definitions, but it is always a product of something else which goes before it. If you believe, you will love. If you do not believe you will never love till you believe. Go to the root of the matter. Do not try to grow the hyacinth of love without the bulb of faith. Do you trust Jesus with all your heart and are you confiding your soul's eternal interests with Him? Then I know that you love Him, though you may, for a while, be occupied with other pursuits.

Love slumbers in you like fire in a flint, or rather, it smolders like fire in smoldering turf. But before long it will burn vehemently like coals of juniper! Look well to your faith and your love will not fail. Remember the lines of a sweet poet and pray that you may sing them out of your own soul—

"Hallelujah! I believe!

Now, O Love! I know your power,

You have no false or fragile fetters,

Nor the rose-wreaths of an hour.

Christian bonds of holy union

Death itself does not destroy;

Yes, to live and love forever,

Is our heritage of joy."

II. Let me now enlarge upon a second remark—LOVE IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT UPON FAITH. "Faith which works by love." Love, then, does not work of itself, except in the strength of faith. Love is so entirely dependent upon faith that, as I have already said, it cannot exist without it! No man loves a Savior in whom he reposes no confidence. There may be an admiration of the Character of Christ, but the emotion which the Scripture treats as, "love," only comes

into the heart when we trust in Jesus. "We love Him because He first loved us." When we have a belief in His love and a sense of it, then we begin to love Jesus—but love to Jesus cannot exist without faith in Him.

Certainly love cannot flourish except as faith flourishes. If you doubt your Lord, you will think harsh thoughts of Him and cease to love Him as you should. If you fall into trouble and you doubt His wisdom, or His goodness in sending it, the next thing will be that your heart will be cold towards Him—you will begin to think your Lord to be tyrannical and harsh to you and you will quarrel with Him. The two Graces must diminish or increase together! If you attain to a simple, childlike confidence which rests in Christ as a babe on its mother's bosom reposes entirely in her care, then shall your love be made perfect! But if you need to trust yourself a little and you begin judging your God and do not repose entirely in Him, then it is that you have to ask yourself whether you love Him or not. May God the Holy Spirit work in us a mighty strength of faith that we may have a vehement love, strong as death, immortal as Divinity!

Love, again, as it cannot flourish without faith, so it cannot work without it. Love is a great designer and planner, but how to perform, it finds not unless faith shows the way. Love sits down and says, "I wish the world were converted to Christ!" But Faith goes out and preaches the Gospel. Love cries, "I would to God

that the children knew of Jesus and that their hearts were renewed even while they are yet little!" But Faith opens the Sunday school and teaches the young and trusts in God that He will bless the Word to their salvation. Love must have faith to give it muscle, sinew and strength—therefore take right good care of your faith.

Longfellow says, "Therefore love and believe, and works will follow spontaneously, even as the day the sun." Love is as Solomon's lily, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. How fair to look upon! Stand and admire its charms. Know, O gazer, that yon lovely flower could not be thus arrayed were it not joined by its stalk to a living root which is hidden underground! Faith is the necessary bulb out of which comes love as the perfection of beauty. You look over the fair city of Mansoul and you see a gilded dome glittering in the sun—that dome is love and it rests upon foundations of faith which are laid deep upon the rock—otherwise the dome would fall in ruins. Love to God, if it is worthy of the name, must be soundly based on confidence in Jesus. It cannot abide without it, but is carried away by wind and flood, like the house on the sand.

Therefore we are disposed to judge with prudence the outbursts of emotion which we see in certain excitable persons. We hear them sing, "Oh, yes, I love Jesus," but we are not so sure of it when we watch their lives. We are pleased with such emotions if they arise out of the knowledge of Christ and genuine faith in Him, but we have too often seen the semblance of ardent affection without knowledge and without humility—without penitence and without childlike faith— and therefore we rejoice with trembling. We fear lest the building which rises up in a night should vanish like "the baseless fabric of a vision" and disappear like the soap bubble of a child, which, though it is adorned with all the colors of the rainbow, dissolves in an instant.

See, then, to your faith, since love is entirely dependent upon it. See that you are rooted and grounded and settled, lest the high tower of professed love should soon lie in ruins and only indifference remain.

III. Thirdly, I advance to another observation which comes more closely home to the text though our previous thoughts have been necessary to bring us up to it—FAITH DISPLAYS ITS POWER BY LOVE. "Faith which works by love." For a moment you must permit me to compare faith to a craftsman in metals who is about to prepare some magnificent work which cunning smiths were known to produce in the days of worked iron, when skill and hand labor were thought much of and articles were produced which are almost worth their weight in silver.

Faith, as a smith, strong and vigorous, has love to be her arms. Faith lifts not a finger without love—it is her arm every morning. Faith believes and resolves and then it proceeds to action, but the power with which it can work lies in love. Faith without love would be a cripple without arms. More than this—it is not only Faith's arms but her tools. "Faith works by love." This is Faith's hammer and file and anvil—her every implement. You have seen a screw hammer which can be made to fit every nut and bolt, however large or small—love is just such a tool—for love will teach a little child or evangelize a nation!

Love can stand and burn at the stake, or it can drop two mites that make a farthing into the offering box. Love hopes all things, endures all things—nothing comes amiss to it. A wonderfully handy tool is this sacred Grace which Faith has adopted to work with! It can strike and it can cut, it is good for uniting and good for breaking, it will avail for anything which Faith wishes to perform. Only let Faith wield love as its instrument and it can fashion whatever Divine

Wisdom tells it to form. More than that, love is Faith's furnace. All the tools in the world will not suffice the smith unless he can blow the coals and create a fervent heat.

What is there, Brethren, that can kindle the heat of enthusiasm like earnest love to God? Faith believes God and rejoices in God and then comes in love and the heart grows hot as Nebuchadnezzar's furnace! The melting fire burns right gloriously and sparks of joy leap upward from it. What is there that cannot be performed if we have enough love? This is the great fire which burns in human hearts when God the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of Jesus—by its heat all things are fused. This fire will yet consume all sin and melt all hardness. None can quench it, everything must yield before it! That consecrated craftsman called Faith, blows the coals of Love and, plunged into its glowing flame, tasks difficult as iron is hard become easily workable! Thus, "Faith works by love."

Love is more than this, for, when all is melted and ready to flow, love is faith's mold—it pours out all it does into the mold of God's Love—fashioning its works according to the Divine pattern of Love in Christ Jesus. As Jesus loved us, even so should we love one another. And as He loved the Father and for love of the Father, that He might glorify Him, fulfilled the Law and made Himself a Sacrifice, even so are we willing to lay down our lives for the Brethren and for the Father's honor. Thus Love becomes Faith's mold into which she carefully seeks to pour out her whole being. What is more, she is Faith's metal, for into the mold of love, Faith pours love itself. Love thus "answers all things."

Love is the substance of every good work. Melt it down in the refining pot and holiness is love. If there is any virtue, zeal, consecration or holy daring, its substance is love. All the grand deeds which the heroes of the Cross have performed are composed of the solid metal of love to Jesus Christ. Be it great or be it little, he who has served God aright has always brought into the sanctuary an offering of pure love comparable to the gold of Ophir. Love, also, is Faith's burnisher and file and with it she finishes all her work right carefully. Have you never lovingly gone over all your work to give it the finishing touches? Have you not wished to perfect all that you have attempted? I know well what it means.

My rough castings—how very coarse they are—and when I fix them I look at them and say, "That will not do, for I see self there. That will not do, unbelief is there. This will not do, too much of self-will is there." And then I have with tearful love, filed down and polished my poor efforts and found love to be an excellent burnisher, ready to my hand. When Augustine went over all his works to write his *Retractations*, it was Love removing roughness from her work. If we loved more, we might have more of retraction work to do. Thus Faith works by love—love is Faith's arm, Faith's tools, Faith's furnace, Faith's metal, Faith's mold and Faith's burnisher.

My Hearer, if you are working for God in any other way than this, you will make a mess of it! The Law can never help you to such work as God will accept. It is fitted to produce bars for a prison but not pillars for a temple. You must work for God because you love Him—no other labor except the labor of love can be acceptable with Him. Some people serve God because they are in religious society and they must not be thought lacking—therefore that blessed guinea, squeezed out by all the ten-pound subscriptions on the list at the top of it—respectable people must put down something, you know.

That occasional going out to week-night services is often done because it is expected of you and not because it is a delight. Even Sabbath assemblies grow to be a weariness and worship is regarded as a task. This is not gold, but gilded dross—take it away! This is forced service, devoid of the life-blood of obedience! This is fruit without flavor or scent. That which is done because a man loves God, because he loves to yield his heart to his God, however humble the service may be, is accepted of God. True affection to Him who redeemed you from going down to the Pit never fails to present an acceptable tribute before the living God! May you abound in this to your own comfort and to the Glory of Christ.

IV. I close with the fourth remark, which is this—LOVE REACTS UPON FAITH AND PERFECTS IT. While Love owes everything to Faith, Faith, by-and-by, becomes a debtor to Love. Love leads the soul into admiration and so increases Faith. Having loved Christ, having become enamored of Him, Love, which has dove's eyes which can see everything that is fair, spies out, daily, more and more of Christ's perfections and thus she aids the eye of Faith. Love sees among the rest of the Lord's perfections His power, His faithfulness, His immutability—and Faith at once concludes, "Then I can trust Him more than ever."

Knowing more of His power, more of His faithfulness, more of His unchangeableness, I can depend upon Him without wavering. So if Faith's eyes first look to Jesus, Love's eyes see yet more and discover further excellences. Faith is that other disciple which outran Peter, but Love is the disciple which enters in and spies out details. Love, moreover, forbids

unbelief and so helps Faith, for Love says, "How can we grieve Him by doubts?" Does not true love in every heart, when exercised towards a man or a woman, forbid distrust? Fear in the form of distrust has torment and, therefore, love casts it out.

The lack of mutual confidence in married life is the death of love, but love is instinctively tender of showing anything like suspicion towards a dear and faithful lover. Even when it supposes that there is an error, love puts it down as by no means a willful fault, but concludes that there may be a sense in which it is right, for love believes all things, endures all things and will not tolerate mistrust which it knows to be a worm at the very core of the heart. So you see, where there is great love of Christ, it forbids doubt and thus kills the foxes of distrust which spoil the tender vines of Faith. Love to Jesus feels that it were better to distrust all men and angels than doubt the dear Redeemer who poured out His blood to prove His love! Distrust the heavens, for they shall pass away. Distrust the earth, for it shall be utterly burned up. Distrust man, for he is as a broken reed! But never distrust the faithful God! Lean on Him with your whole weight! Repose in Him with your undivided confidence. So Love teaches and Faith learns her lesson.

Moreover, perfect Love casts out fear because fear has torment and when perfect Love has cast out fear, then Faith has room to display its strength. Love has not learned to be afraid, nor will she permit the work of Faith to become the labor of a shrinking, crouching slave. Dread? Where can that find a lodging in the heart that loves? You hear very proper people sometimes cry out against certain of us because they say we speak as if we were on the best of terms with God and were familiar with the Lord Jesus. Sarcastically they speak what is soberly true—in their blindness they have hit the truth—it is even so. To them God is a stranger and I doubt not that the language which we use may well seem to them strange and almost profane.

It would be profane if they were to use it, being what they are. I do not accuse them of open sin, but I do say and will say that he who is not a child of God cannot fitly use expressions which are most becoming from the lips of those who are the sons of God. A child may say to his father what no one else may dare say and yet he has more reverence for him than anyone else. Your child shall rightly behave towards you in a manner which you could not tolerate in a stranger. Look at the judge on the bench—with that big wig and those solemn robes—the prisoner at the bar and the court and the jury must all be very respectful and distant. But I guarantee you when his lordship reaches home, his grandchild has no dread of grandpapa or his robes!

Love gives boldness and is yet most reverent—reverently familiar. Chilliness and coldness are not for the children of God—they are called to close communion with their heavenly Father and the Meeting Place is not at Sinai, but at Calvary! Faith and Love are home-living children and not out-of-door pensioners. They dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Oh Beloved, this is the joy of love, that it brings us into such close personal communion with God in Jesus Christ! That trembling, slavish fear is gone and, loving God, we are familiar with Him and trust Him implicitly. Oh, dear Friends, trust your God with everything! Trust Him in little things! Trust Him in great things! Trust Him in your joys to keep you sober! Trust Him in your sorrows to keep you from despair! Oh, that you may possess much of this love, for it is an eminent Grace. "Faith is child-like," says Dr. Eadie. "Hope is saint-like, but love is God-like." May we reach this God-like virtue through faith in God Himself!

My final word is this—let us, dear Friends, as a Church and people, be working people. Faith works. Let us work because we have faith. I wish that every member of this Church were at work for Jesus. I have very few complaints, however, because I believe that the majority of the dear Brothers and Sisters associated here are hard at it—but if there are any of you who are not serving the Lord—I pray you, bestir yourselves! You must work or your faith will be questioned and your love will be suspect! We are a hive of bees, but what will happen if, instead of making honey, the workers all turn to drones? Why, they will next turn to wasps!

If such a change cannot take place in Nature, it certainly occurs in morals and spirituals, for we have seen companies of good, hard-working Christians suddenly break out into factions and quarrel furiously! When bees turn to wasps there is nothing but fighting. May our good Lord save us from such a calamity! I do not mind being like the queen bee in the hive, king of the bees. But a leader of wasps I cannot be! Dear Friends, get to work for the Master—you, I mean, who stand idle all the day. Go work, today, in the Savior's vineyard. Oh, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you, do not relax your energies! Continue to be a lively, energetic Church.

Now that so many Sunday schools need teachers, I charge our friends not to let that blessed part of the service lag behind. There are dozens of schools crying out for teachers! The children come and there are none to instruct them. Should it be so? If you are to be a working Church, you must be a loving Church because faith works by love. You must love one another much and love Christ more and love the souls of perishing sinners! Yes, love them so that you will not let them perish if you can do anything towards their salvation. Personal doing of good to men is needed if love is to be real. The love of Jesus made Him seek and save the lost and if ours is worth the name, we shall be engaged in the same holy endeavor.

But if you are to be a working Church and a loving Church you must be a believing Church, for that is the bottom of it all. Faith works by love. Get home, then, to prayer and renew your faith in Jesus. May the Holy Spirit lead you anew to the dying love of Jesus. I often go straight away back to the Cross from which I started when I set out for Heaven. The devil says to me, "You are no Christian." I do not think he knows much about it, but I have, before now, tried to show him some evidences that I am a Christian and he has only puffed at them. I find the better way is to go right away to the Cross and say, "I rest on Jesus only."

Satan cannot deny but what you are a Christian when you stand there! Go and do your first works and believe in Jesus just as you did at the first and abide in Him forevermore. As sinners, cling to Jesus and let Him be everything to you. Constant faith will create fervent love and fervent love will do persevering work—so shall we be a people zealous for good works! The Lord bless every one of you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/faith-working-by-love/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net