

The Best Things in Life - Part 1

by J.R. Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the best things in life, which are the things of God's kingdom, and living a life of love and service, characterized by gentleness, kindness, and a focus on the good in others.

Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Pursuit of Excellence", "Christ-like Character"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of seeking the best things in life, which are rooted in spiritual values rather than material possessions. He encourages believers to focus on qualities such as humility, meekness, mercy, and purity of heart, as taught by Jesus in the Beatitudes. Miller asserts that true greatness in the Kingdom of God comes from serving others selflessly, and that the pursuit of the best requires sacrifice and commitment to Christ. He reminds us that our lives should reflect the beauty of Christ's love and peace, which can transform our character and influence those around us. Ultimately, Miller calls for a life dedicated to the highest ideals of love and service, as exemplified by Christ.

Transcript

The Best Things in Life

J. R. Miller

Chapter 1. For the Best Things

We should seek only the best things in life. If everyone did, this would be an ideal world. The trouble is, however, that many knowing the good--yet choose the evil. What shall we call the drift in human nature, that causes it to gravitate so often and so easily toward lower--rather than rise upward toward higher things? We need not trouble about the philosophy of it--but it is worth while for us to find some way of overcoming the unhappy tendency. There is a way. It may not be easy--the easy course is just to let ourselves drift--but we know too well what the end of this will be. We should be brave enough to take ourselves vigorously in hand and to get our faces turned toward the best things. Nothing will drift upstream; we shall have to use the oars if we want our boat to go that way. But that is the way to the best things.

What are the things that are worthiest and best? We do not need to say condemning words about the things of this world. It is our Father's world. It is full of beauty. The Creator saw when it was finished, that it

was all very good. We are to accept our place in life, contentedly and cheerfully, whatever the limitations, whatever the hardness, and set about living in such a way that we shall make our one little spot of the world, as much as possible like heaven.

We have only to turn to the Scriptures if we would learn what are the best things. Nothing can be worth while, which will ever perish. We are immortal, and only immortal things will meet our deepest needs. Nothing is best which we cannot carry with us when we go away from earth. We cannot carry money, or jewels, or estates, into the other world, hence these are not the best things.

Jesus Christ is accepted as divine Teacher--a Teacher come from God. Let us ask him, "What are the best things?" and we find answers to our question on every page of the Gospels. In his Sermon on the Mount he says, "Seek first the kingdom of your Father and his righteousness." He had been exhorting his disciples against worry and anxiety. He assured them that their Father who cares for the birds, and clothes the flowers, surely would much more care for them. They need never have any anxiety, therefore, nor give themselves a moment's care about their physical needs. Instead of this, they should seek first and only the Father's kingdom, and all else that they should need, would be supplied to them.

The things of God's kingdom, therefore, are the best things. We learn what some of these things are from the Beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," that is, the lowly, the humble. Those who think highly of themselves are not the highest in God's sight--but those who forget themselves and hold all their gifts and powers at the bidding of the Master for any service to which he may send them. Jesus spoke only once of his own heart, and then he said he was meek and lowly in heart. His whole life was one of lowliness. His hands had made the worlds--but he used them without reserve in serving earth's needy ones.

"Blessed are the meek." The meek are the long-suffering, those who endure wrong patiently, uncomplainingly, returning love for hate, kindness for unkindness, and prayers for curses. Men do not usually think of meekness as one of the best things--but Jesus writes it high in the list, and says that the meek shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." It is not attainment alone, which Heaven approves--but the longing to attain. Saintliness is beautiful--but it takes a long while to reach it. No doubt one of the best things is to be perfect, to wear the image of Christ--but the lofty reach seems almost impossible. This is the goal--but it shines far off, and it seems to us that we cannot come up to it until we gain heaven. It is a comfort to us to know that one of the best things is longing for the best, hunger for righteousness.

"Blessed are the merciful." Men do not praise the merciful. They commend what they call the heroic qualities. The strong, the brilliant, the clever, those who succeed even by trampling the meek under their feet, win the honors in this world. But the Master writes among those whom Heaven calls blessed, the merciful--those who are pitiful toward weakness, compassionate toward the erring, patient with the dull and slow, and almoners of the divine mercy toward all.

"Blessed are the pure in heart." Is there in all the range of the things one may live for, anything that will mean more in the making of happiness than, amid all life's experiences of temptation, to keep one's heart pure? This is a secret of peace which insures joy and gladness, whatever the experiences may be. It transfigures the life, making it shine as with an inner light. It gives one influence over others, making one a blessing everywhere. A pure heart is one of the best things.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." The highest of all the commendations in the Beatitudes is given to these, "they shall be called the sons of God." Unquestionably one of the best things in all the range of life is to be a peacemaker, to exert a loving influence over others, to help to bring together those who are in danger of falling apart, to deepen and strengthen friendships. There are enough people in the world who live to kindle strifes, to widen breaches and estrangements, to make men hate each other, to encourage quarreling and bitter feelings. No mission is diviner--than to be a maker of peace between man and man.

These are suggestions only of some of the best things. Jesus indicates others in his teachings. His disciples contended more than once on the question of greatness. It is a proper desire to wish to be a worthy follower of Christ. A good man used to pray, "Lord, make me an uncommon Christian." Christ will never blame us for wanting to follow him with uncommon faithfulness and to live a life of unusual earnestness and godliness. But the disciples were thinking of rank, of priority in position. Jesus told them that the first places in his kingdom must be won--not by valor on the battlefield, not by favoritism--but by love. Those who serve others the most humbly, the most unselfishly, the most helpfully, are the best and most Christ-like Christians. "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26-28

On another occasion, the same lesson was taught by an act. Jesus quietly rose, laid aside his garments, girded himself for the work of an actual servant, and then began to wash his disciple's feet. The Master showed them that such serving was not degrading--but honorable. Jesus never did anything diviner in all his ministry--than what he did that night. And no better opportunity of doing truly great and noble things will ever come to us--than when it is our privilege to perform some lowly duties of love, in serving or helping Christ's little ones. The lowlier the person is who needs the help, and the lowlier the deed it may be ours to do--the diviner the service.

These are only hints of the best things in life. The world thinks that those who turn away from the quest for earth's prizes--to live lowly lives of love, trying to help the poor, the weak, the obscure--are throwing away their opportunities. It thinks they are following a delusion, and pities them. But those are rather to be pitied who think they are finding the best things in their quest for wealth, for honor, for fame, for power. There will come a day of revealing, when things shall be seen as they are, and then it will appear that those who have devoted their lives to the honor of Christ, and to the lowly service of love in Christ's name, are the really shining ones, that they are doing the best, worthiest, and most beautiful things under the sun, and will receive the highest honors and rewards.

If we learn this lesson well, the aspect of all our life will be changed for us. We shall see that there are things that are gloriously worth while, in which the world beholds no beauty, no honor. The greatest thing is love. To live the little thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians day after day, in quiet circumstances, among people who need to be loved and helped onward, is a greater achievement for a lifetime than to win one's way to fame or to wealth by selfish striving.

We should live always for the best things. Some people live for good things--but not the best, and the good is often the enemy of the best, inasmuch as it satisfies us and makes us contented to live on the lower planes. There is nothing dishonorable in having small capacities and in living and working in commonplace positions, if one is doing his best.

The lowliest person, who does God's will faithfully is as honorable in God's sight as the man who, with larger abilities and larger opportunities, does greater things. But when one with great gifts does only trivial things, he is not living worthily.

In our Lord's parable, the merchant sought always for the best. He dealt in pearls, one of the finest commodities of the time. He dealt only in good pearls, however, not in those of an inferior quality. One day he heard of a new pearl which had just been found, which was of exceptional beauty and brilliance. It was of great value--so great that the only way he could obtain it, was to sell all his other pearls. This he did, and purchased the one peerless pearl.

This man illustrates those who are content with nothing less than the best things. The good does not satisfy them--if there is a better; the better is quickly given up to get the best. This must be the rule of life for all who would live worthily. Especially should it be the rule for all who are following Christ. The good should never content them--if there is a better possible. They should be ready to pay any price to attain the best.

In Christian life, only the highest ideal should be accepted. It is not enough to say, "Some for self--and some for Christ," or even "Less for self--and more for Christ" the only true striving must be for "None for self--and all for Christ!" A young Christian asked whether dancing, card playing, and the theater are permissible for a Christian. The question may be answered by asking another: "Do you want to reach the highest and best in Christian life and service, or do you desire to attain only the lowest levels which the widest charity will accept as within the lines of permissible things? Do you want to rise to the absolutely best things in Christian consecration? Or do you wish to make just as little as possible of your devotion to Christ?"

In all lines of life, many pleasant things have to be given up in order to reach the best. There is a story of a boy who aspired to be a skillful surgeon some day. He was an enthusiastic baseball player. An eminent surgeon who knew the boy's desire, told him that his playing would stiffen and thicken his fingers and finally destroy the delicacy of touch which is so essential in critical surgical work. The favorite amusement was instantly sacrificed--the good given up for the better, the best.

The same rule must be followed in every department of life. We can attain to the best things--only by the sacrifice of the things that are merely good. "Everything is permissible--but not everything is beneficial." 1 Corinthians 10:23. "Do your best to present yourself to God." 2 Timothy 2:15. "This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ." Philippians 1:9-10

Chapter 2. Think On These Things

There are certain habits of life, which are far reaching in their influence. The habit of cheerfulness, for instance, is said to be of great worth to a person. The habit of being always an encourager, never a discourager, gives incalculable value to one's personality and influence. A discourager is a misanthrope. He makes life harder for every other life he touches; and an encourager is a constant inspiration to others, and makes life easier for everyone.

There is another habit of life, which if it were to become universal would change many things--namely, the habit of always seeing the good in people, in conditions, in circumstances, and in experiences. Paul suggests it, when he says in a remarkable passage, "If there is any virtue, and if there is any thing

praiseworthy--think on these things." Philippians 4:8. The emphasis seems to be on 'any'--if there is any virtue, even the least, in another, if there is in a life which seems almost wholly bad, even the smallest thing that is good--we are to find that and to think upon that mere speck of beauty, rather than on the much that is evil and unbeautiful. If there is in a person, any thing praiseworthy, any smallest quality or act that is worthy of praise, of which we can speak with even the faintest approval and commendation, we should give thought to that, and voice our appreciation, rather than think and speak of the many things in the person that are not good or praiseworthy.

It is easy to think of reasons why this is the Christian way. It is Christ's way with us. If there is anything good, even the faintest spark of virtue or hope in a life--Christ sees it. He is looking for good and hopeful things. Some people see only the faults and flaws in the lives of others--they are looking for these things--blemishes, defects, imperfections. They are never trying to find anything beautiful, and they find what they seek. Our Master, however, is looking for things that are praiseworthy--good beginnings of better things.

Someone asked the curator of an academy of fine arts, regarding the pictures of a certain artist: "What do you consider the defects in his work?" The answer was, "We do not look for defects here--but for excellences." It is thus that our Master does in our lives--he does not look for the imperfections, of which there always are many--but for things that are worthy of commendation. If there is any virtue--he finds it, takes note of it, nourishes it, and woos it out. If Christ looked upon us as we too often look upon others--seeing the flaws, the shortcomings, the inconsistencies, the failures--and judged us by these, not many of us ever would grow into beauty. But where there is even a spark of good he finds it, and cultivates it into his best possibilities.

We shall never become of much use in the world--until we learn this lesson of always finding and encouraging the best. We shall never lift up anyone to a higher, better life--until we have found in him something to approve and commend. There are some men and women who wish to help others, to be of use to them--but work after a wrong method. They think they must eliminate the faults and defects which they find--and so they watch for things they cannot approve. They have keen eyes for specks and blemishes--none are too small for them to see--but they never see the beautiful things in another. The Master refers to such people, in his teaching about motes and beams. He would have us look for the good, not the evil, in others.

There is no life so devoid of beauty and good--that it has in it nothing worthy of commendation. Ruskin found even in the mud of London streets, the elements out of which gems are formed--the opal, the sapphire, the diamond. The love of Christ finds even in the moral refuse of this world possibilities of loveliness in character and heavenliness in life. We cannot do anything to help men--by indulging in criticism and denunciation. We can call out the good in others only as the sun woos out the plants and flowers from the cold earth in the springtime--by its warmth. If the friends of Christ would cease their fault finding and become true friends of men, finding the smallest beginnings of virtue and encouraging them--the earth would soon be changed into a garden!

We are continually meeting those who are discouraged, who have fallen under the shadow of misfortune, who have done wrong, perhaps, and are suffering in reputation; or who have been unjustly treated--and are enduring the sting. These are the people to whom our love should go out in words of hope and cheer, instead of blame.

One of the most significant words of personal experience in the Old Testament, is that in which David tells us, at the close of his wonderful life, that all he had attained and achieved he owed to God's gentleness. "Your gentleness has made me great." If God had been harsh with him--stern, critical, severely exacting, David never would have reached the noble life, with its wonderful achievements, which he finally attained. If God had been severe with him after his falls and failures, David never would have risen to power and distinction. God's gentleness made him great. We can help others to become great only by being patient with them. Men and women everywhere need nothing so much as gentleness.

Are not many of us too brusque with each other? Do we not lack in kindness, in patience, in tenderness? Some men would have us believe that gentleness is an unmanly quality. But it is not; rudeness and harshness are always unmanly; gentleness is divine. For many people, life is not easy, and we make it very much harder for them to live worthily--when we deal harshly with the, when we are exacting, when we chide or blame them, or when we exercise our wits in saying smart, cutting, and irritating things to annoy and vex them. It was said of William Cullen Bryant, that he treated every neighbor as if he were an angel in disguise. That is, he had a feeling akin to reverence for everyone who entered his presence. We do not know to who we are speaking, when we meet a stranger. Let us treat him as the poet did his neighbor--as if he were an angel.

Someone defines a gentleman, as one who never needlessly causes pain to another. If we are followers of Christ, we have no right to be ungentle, to be ill-mannered, to act disagreeably, and to treat anyone rudely, brusquely. "If there is any virtue, if there is any thing praiseworthy, think on these things." We should never forget the teaching of our Master--that the hungry person we feed in his name, the sick person we visit, the stranger to whom we show kindness, the discouraged person we encourage, the fainting one we lift up and start on his way again--is the Master himself. "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least--you did it unto me." How would we treat Jesus if we found him in any condition of need? That is to be the test in our dealings with men. We dare not to be ungentle to anyone--it may be an angel in disguise; it may be Christ himself!

The teaching applies to our own personal experience of sorrow. We should seek the line of brightness in any dark picture, and think of that. And there always are breaks in the clouds through which we can see the blue and the stars. No lot in life is ever so utterly hopeless as to have in it nothing to alleviate its unhappiness. There is always something of brightness, one line, at least, in the darkest experience.

There always are comforts, not matter how great the sorrow. Every cloud has on it some bit of silver lining. There are hopes, consolations, encouragements, in every experience of grief or loss, and we are to think of these--and not alone of the sad elements in the experience.

One chill day, a beam of sunshine, coming into the parlor through the shutters, made a bright spot on the carpet. The little dog that had been lying in a dark corner of the room got up at once and went and lay down in the patch of sunshine. That is what we should do in our larger life. When, into any darkness or gloom of ours, even the faintest ray of light streams, we should accept it, and sit down in its brightness. There is reason for gratitude in the most bitter experience--we should find that and enjoy its brightness. We should turn our eyes from the clouds--and look at the stars.

Think of the good--not the evil. Think on the loveliness--not on the disfigurements. Think on the pure--not on the soiled. Think on the hopeful things in others--their possibilities of nobleness, not on their faults. In sorrow find the face of Christ, and gaze on that until you forget your grief. In all life, if there is any virtue,

any thing praiseworthy, any beauty, any joy--think on these things, and it will lift up your life into strength, nobleness, divineness!

Chapter 3. Apelles, the Approved

Paul speaks of one of his friends as "Apelles, the approved." We do not know who Apelles was. He is not named elsewhere in the New Testament, nor does he have any place in secular history. Yet the distinction which Paul gives him is suggestive. Apelles had been put to the test in some way and had not failed. So he had won the title, "Apelles, the approved."

Every Christian should want to have the approval of men. There are instances, no doubt, in which good men have to brave the opposition of others and go against their opinions. Yet a Christian should seek to make his life so beautiful, so consistent, so worthy, so like his Master's--that everywhere he shall be well spoken of. The religion of Christ is beautiful. One of the few things said about the youth and early manhood of Jesus is that he "advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." It is not said only that he advanced in favor with God--that would not seem strange to us, since he was the Son of God--but that he advanced also in favor with men. As he grew older--his life became more winning and attractive, his disposition sweeter, nobler, manlier. There was nothing austere in him, nothing disagreeable, and nothing that made his neighbors dislike him.

Some people have the impression that religion is not winsome, that it makes one somehow uncongenial and less agreeable. But the very reverse of this is true. The nearer we approach to the perfection of Christ--the more will people love us and approve of our life. When the religion of anyone makes him disliked, there is something wrong, not with the religion--but with the person's living it out. If we would win for ourselves the honorable designation, "The approved," we must see to it that we make our life spotless in its beauty, and our conduct true to the teachings of our Master.

We are tested in many ways. We are tested by temptations. Everyone must be tempted. Untested strength is not trustworthy. An old chronicle tells of a company of men going into battle with swords which bent double, at the first assault. They had not been tried, and the steel was untempered. Before men can be entrusted with sacred interest and responsibilities, they must be tried. Not until we have been proved, are we ready for service.

We are tested by our duties. We do not begin to realize how much depends upon our faithfulness in the common days. To fail in our testing, is to come unprepared to great crises. We say God does his own work in the world. Yes--but not without us. Our faithfulness is essential to the carrying out of the divine purposes. There is a story of a blacksmith who was busy in his shop near the French and German border, one snowy night just before Christmas. He was very weary, for he had toiled all the day long. He was standing by his forge, looking wistfully toward his humble cottage where the lights were shining, and where his children were awaiting his homecoming. He was at his last piece of work--a rivet which required much care to shape it properly. This rivet was to hold together the metal work of a bridge that was to span the river near his forge. The rivet was the key to the whole bridge. The blacksmith, in his weariness, was sorely tempted to hurry, and to skimp his work. It was only a little rivet, and was so troublesome to make--why should he stay to do it carefully? But his conscience bade him to do his best. So he put away the temptation, and rested not until his work was perfectly done.

Some years later war broke out. A squadron of the blacksmith's countrymen was driven over the bridge in headlong flight. The bridge trembled under the weight. All depended on the little rivet--was it secure

enough to stand the strain? Only the blacksmith's work that night, stood between the men and destruction. The rivet stood the test--the blacksmith and his work were approved.

We do not know what important interest may depend some critical hour, years from now, on the piece of work we are doing today--or on the honesty and truth we shall build into our character tomorrow. Let us do all we do so well that the Master and the world shall speak of us as the approved.

The lesson applies also to the cultivation of our Christian life and character. Perhaps we do not pay enough heed to this matter. We confess Christ, and take our place among his people, and think nothing more is required of us. But that is only the beginning. Ten or twelve years ago, a man gave himself to Christ. He was sincere from the first--but was only a diamond in the rough. He had been brought up in ungodly associations and companionships. He had been a profane man, a man of quick temper, resentful, of loud and uncouth speech--lacking all gentleness and tenderness. But this man took Christ into his heart and life, with most loving welcome, and he has been marvelously transformed by the divine indwelling. His whole nature has been changed. His manners have been softened into real gracefulness. His temper has been sweetened. The very tones of his speech have become quiet and kindly, almost musical. He has had but little time in his busy days and nights for reading and study, and yet he seems now like a man who has received a liberal education, since his conversion.

This example illustrates the value of spiritual culture in a Christian. The word "grace" means beauty of form, manner, and movement; something pleasing, agreeable, and winsome. To grow in grace is to grow in spiritual beauty. The finer things in Christian character should be cultivated. Someone chided a great artist with giving too much time to trifles in the finishing of his statues. He would spend hours on a small feature. He replied, "Little things make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." Likewise, we cannot spend too much time or thought on the culture of what may seem the smaller elements of Christian character.

In the fourth century B.C. there was a great artist named also Apelles. His motto is said to have been, "No day without a line." Every day he must make at least a little progress in his art, become a little better painter, do a little more beautiful work. Is not this a good motto for us who are Christians? We never should be content with anything less than perfection, and in striving to reach perfection, we should add a line every day. We should never allow a day to pass, in which we do not become a somewhat more beautiful Christian.

For example, in the matter of temper. Perhaps there is nothing that mars the beauty of more Christian lives, than ill temper in some of its manifold forms. There is no confession made oftener that this, "Somehow I cannot control my temper." Many good people seem to think that faults of temper are not really sins, certainly not grievous sins--that they are only little infirmities, not needing even to be repented of. Also, the fact that nearly everybody has the same fault, seems to make it less a fault, scarcely more than a common human trait. But let us not allow ourselves to be deceived into any such minimizing of faulty temper. Think how much pain and bitterness are caused every day to gentle hearts--by bad tempers. Then think how outbreaks of temper in others appear to you--how unlovely, how inappropriate, and how undivine. That is just the way similar outbreaks in you, appear to others. If we would be approved, we must get this vice of ill temper in us, transformed into gentle, patient lovingness.

Thought for others is another of the details in which Christians should cultivate their characters. It is only when self dies and we learned to put others in the empty place--that we begin truly to live the Christian life. We cannot understand, to what refinements of love, the religion of Christ calls us. We are not always kind

to each other, not always patient with each other, not always courteous, not always forgiving, not always large hearted and gentle. Sometimes we are fretful, irritable, sensitive, too easily hurt. We speak words which are like thorns! We doubt and suspect each other. We are too likely to take up an evil report against another. If we would be among the approved, we must get the sweetness of love for others in our lives. We admire love in others. It warms our hearts to find the whole thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians in some person's life. That is the ideal for us. It vexes us--to find others selfish, suspicious, unforgiving, thoughtless, and unkind. It vexes others just as much--to find the same unloving things in us.

"Search your own heart. What painest thee

In others--in yourself may be."

Again, if we would win the honor of being approved by men--we must trust God. If the religion of Christ stands for anything in the lives of those who follow him--it stands for faith and confidence. We are to be anxious for nothing. The meaning of this, is that we need never doubt nor be afraid. But what is the fact? Are Christians any more trustful in the presence of danger and troubles, than unbelievers are? Are followers of Christ any more confident and joyful in time of trouble and loss, than other people are? Joy is a Christian duty. We are to rejoice always. How is it with most Christians? What comes of the joy--when we suffer pain or when we experience loss?

There is a story of song birds being brought over the sea. There were thirty six thousand of them, mostly canaries. At first, after the ship sailed, the sea was calm and the birds were silent. They kept their little heads under their wings, and not a peep was heard. But the third day out the ship struck a furious storm. The travelers were terrified, the children wailed. Then this strange thing happened. As the tempest reached its height, the birds all began to sing, first one, then another, until the whole thirty six thousand were singing as if their little throats would burst. Is that the way we Christians do? When the trouble begins, when the clouds of sorrow gather and break, when the storm rises in its fury--do we then begin to sing? If we fully understand the covenant of our God, and believed his promises, should not our song break forth in tenfold joy when the tempest begins? But instead, we get frightened at the smallest troubles; we fret and grow discontented when any hope fails. We chafe at little sufferings, we complain and repine, and the sunshine dies out of our face, and the gladness out of our voice.

No doubt, one reason Apelles was called the approved was because he trusted God absolutely. Whatever word he found among the promises--he received it as one of God's words, none of which ever has failed, or ever can fail. If we can convince the people of the world that we have tried and proved the divine words, thousands will desire our God too. People who know us will not doubt our sincerity, nor will they doubt the faithfulness and the power of our Christ. When we begin to live thus, believing, trusting, rejoicing--then people will receive our gospel, and we shall become approved.

Are we living so as to commend Christ and his gospel to all who know us and see us--weekdays as well as Sundays? We are always in the eye of the world. A moment's ill-temper, a bit of selfish living, an angry word, a careless act; an unseemly display of pride, of greed, of passion, of resentment, of sharpness in driving a bargain; a little impatience, a neglect of duty, the lack of gentleness toward others, unlovingness shown even toward the lowliest--there is nothing so trivial--that in it we may not either honor or dishonor our Master!

Chapter 4. Rule of Peace

Peace is one of the most suggestive words in the Bible. It appears in very ancient promises, as the richest and ripest fruit of trust in God. It is found in the angel's announcement of the birth of the Savior, as one of the blessings of his coming. It is the bequest of the Master to his disciples at his leaving them. It runs through the epistles as the greatest of the blessings of redemption-- peace with God, the peace of God.

Paul exhorts us to "let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts". A marginal reading suggests another rendering, "Let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts." It is to sit on the throne and have undisputed sway in our life. When, in the circumstances of any day, things arise which naturally would trouble us, break into the calm and composure of our hearts--peace is to sit as arbiter, settling all conflicts of feeling, and bringing all strifes and differences to quiet adjustment.

We are exhorted to let this peace rule. So we can hinder its ruling if we will. It cannot rule unless we let it. We have the same truth everywhere in the Bible--nothing can enter our heart and have sway there--unless we let it. Christ stands at the door; he wants to enter to bless us--but we have to let him in. He will never lift the latch of the door with his own hand. "If any man opens the door--I will come in." So it is with peace. It seeks to enter our hearts, and wants to rule there--but it will not force its way in. We must let it rule.

Sometimes people are discouraged when they find how high is the ideal of Christian life, in this matter of peace. We must remember, however, that while the ideal is high, the attainment is always progressive. No one begins with the accomplished ideal. Peace is a lesson which has to be learned, and learned slowly. In our Lord's wonderful promise, he says that he will give rest to all who come to him--rest as an immediate gift. Then he says, farther on, that if we will take his yoke upon us and learn of him--we shall find rest. The full and complete rest has to be learned. We must enter Christ's school. We must accept his training and discipline. The same is true of Christ's peace. When we begin, we find it impossible to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts fully and continually. We go stumbling on our way, making many mistakes. It takes years to reach the complete standard. But there should be growth every day. Ruskin, in speaking of Christian growth, has this suggestive sentence, "He alone is advancing in life--whose heart is growing softer, and whose spirit is entering into loving peace." The growing spirit, is one that is entering more and more fully into peace.

The whole matter of spiritual culture seems to be included in this thought. "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18. Every day should see us advancing, learning more of Christ, and growing more and more into the beauty of Christ.

The other day it was said of a Christian man, who has been active in many forms of usefulness, and whose life has been full of good deeds--that he is growing irritable, that he is getting easily vexed and fretted, that he is losing his sweetness of temper, and is becoming easily provoked. This may be the result of ill health. We dare not judge another man when we see, or think we see, such faults manifesting themselves in his disposition. There may be a physical reason for this apparent deterioration in spiritual life. There are certain conditions of health, which make it very hard for a man to keep sweet. When we see a Christian sensitive, touchy, easily hurt, hard to get along with, we must beware that we do not think or speak uncharitably of him. There may be a reason--ill health, business trouble, disappointment, and a hidden sorrow. God understands, and we must not judge or condemn.

Nevertheless, we should mark well the lesson--that one phase of Christian growth should be this--the spirit entering into more and more loving peace. If the peace of Christ is ruling at all in our hearts, it should rule a little more fully today than yesterday, and tomorrow than it does today. We should be growing continually

in all that belongs to peace.

Worry is not only a sin--it is also one of the most disfiguring of the vices. It mars and spoils the beauty of a life. Discouragement is a sin, and discouragement hurts a life immeasurably. If we have the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts we will be getting farther and farther away from worry every day. Peace sweetens the life, sweetens the disposition. It puts a stop to discontent, to complaining; it makes a man patient with others, gentle to all, humble and lowly in his thought of himself. What does worrying ever accomplish? Does it make the way sweeter, the burden lighter?

"I've learned as days have passed me,

Fretting never lifts the load;

And that worry, much or little,

Never smooths an irksome road;

For you know that somehow, always,

Doors are opened, ways are made;

When we work and live in patience

Under all the cross that's laid.

"He who waters meadow lilies

With the dew from out the sky;

He who feeds the flitting sparrows,

When in need for food they cry,

Never fails to help his children

In all things, both great and small;

For his ear is ever open--

To our faintest far off call."

A recent writer, speaking of the habit of worry and of the evil that comes from it, asks: "What is the effect of your presence in your home? Does your look fall like a sunbeam--or like a shadow across the breakfast table? Does your conversation lie like a strip of summer sky, or a patch of midnight, across the family life? Upon what subjects do you speak with largest freedom and keenest relish--troubles and failures, or the things which are beautiful and noble? For your own sake, and for the sake of others--you ought to bring your soul into a jubilant mood. All Christian virtues grow best under a sky filled with sun. The man who persists in being gloomy, sour, and moody--will have his home filled at last with weeds, brambles, and briars."

So we see that the lesson of peace is not a mystical and unpractical one--but one that is most practical. Our hearts make our lives. If we are not learning this lesson--if peace is not ruling more and more in our

hearts--our lives are becoming less and less beautiful. We do not ourselves, like people who are sour, contentious, and censorious, who are dictatorial, tyrannical--and who are not disposed to be kindly, accommodating, and agreeable. And what is not beautiful to our eyes, in others--is not likely to be lovely to the eyes of others, in us. Our religion must be winsome; else it is not the religion that Christ teaches us. "Whatever things are lovely," is one of the features which we find in Paul's wonderful picture of true Christian character.

We need to look well, therefore, to the matter of the growth of gentle peace in our life. Wherever it rules in the heart--it produces beauty in the disposition. It makes the whole life more and more loving. In horticulture they tell us that thorns are only leaves which through heat or lack of water or some other unfavorable conditions, have failed to grow. The thorns which we so dislike, would have been beautiful leaves--but for the hindering conditions under which they grew. It is, no doubt, true of the things in us which are disagreeable--and we all have them--that they are blemished or arrested growths. God meant them to be lovely qualities in us, marks of beauty, adornments to make our lives more Christ-like. But in some way, they have been stunted, dwarfed, blemished--and in actual life are thorns, instead of shining leaves. Instead of being blessings to other lives--these marred growths in us hurt them. Instead of being leaves to give shade to those who seek shelter from the heat, they are thorns which pierce, give pain, and wound!

We need to look well to the culture of our lives, that in every feature there may be beautiful; and that we may be blessing to others, in the largest measure. And in no way can we attain such spiritual culture so surely, so richly--as by letting the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. Peace is the composite of all the graces. Love, joy, gentleness, thoughtfulness, humility, kindness, patience--all are blended in peace. The absence of peace in a heart, produces a life without beauty. Peace ruling in the heart, gives a life that is full of all lovely things.

Christ wants us to be beautiful. There is a little prayer in the ninetieth Psalm which means a great deal, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." God himself is beautiful. All moral excellences are in him--truth, justice, purity, patience, gentleness, love; and the ideal Christian life--is one in which all these features and qualities are found. A Christian ought to be gentle like his Master, full of helpfulness, good tempered, slow to anger, enduring wrong without resentment, returning good for evil, refined and courteous, sincere in his friendships, in honor preferring others, humble, not seeking his own advancement. As Christian people, we should seek to be like our Master in all things; we should be above reproach, without blame in all matters, even in what may be called the minor moralities.

Our dispositions should be sweet, and our conduct in all things so beautiful, that all who know us, or do business with us, or are associated with us in any capacity--will testify to our Christ-likeness; and will receive from their contacts with us--touches of blessing and of beauty. The way to have such a character, such a disposition, is to let the peace of Christ have sway in our hearts.

The trouble with us, is that we do not let this peace rule in us. Instead, we let a thousand other things--cares, disappointments, discontents, anxieties, fears, doubts--rule and mutiny against peace, the rightful heart ruler. No wonder we have so little of the reign of quietness and calmness in us. If we would let peace take its place on the throne, and control all our life--it would soon grow into beauty. Then joy would sing its sweet songs wherever we go.

We do not begin to realize the blessings that a heart truly controlled by the peace of God, will bring into our life. We do not know the possibilities of loveliness of character there are in us--if only we would let peace dominate everything. We do not dream of the good we might do in the world, the comfort we might be to others, and the cheer and inspiration we might give to discouraged ones, those who are in great troubles, and those who are in sorrow--if we would let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts. We do not know how many souls we might win for Christ, how many lives we might redeem from base things and evil ways--if only the peace of Christ truly dwelt in us, transforming us into the beauty of the Lord. Nothing so wins others to better things--as the influence of a sweet, disciplined and radiant personality.

Must we go on forever, in the unsatisfactory way in which many of us have been living? Must we still allow our peace to be broken by every passing cloud, every fear, and every shadow? Shall we not set the peace of Christ on the throne, allowing it to arbitrate all our affairs, and to give its beauty to our disposition? We cannot understand the reason why this or that suffering, sorrow, or disappointment comes into our life. But we do not have to understand! God is wiser than we--and we may leave the whole matter in his hand. That will give us peace!

Chapter 5. Sympathy With Weakness

No truth means more to us in the way of encouragement and strength, than the assurance of Christ's sympathy. To sympathize is to feel with. The Scripture tells us that in heaven Jesus Christ is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He feels what we are feeling. If we are suffering, the thing which troubles us, touches him. If we are wronged, the wrong pains him. But Christ is touched also with a feeling of our infirmities. Infirmities are weaknesses. We may have no particular sorrow or pain, and yet we may have infirmities. A man may not be sick, and yet he may be infirm, lacking strength.

Some men have no sympathy with weakness. They show it no consideration. They have no patience with those who stumble. They make no allowance for those who do their work imperfectly. But Jesus has infinite sympathy with weakness. One of the qualifications for the priestly office in the ancient times, was ability to sympathize with the people in their experiences, "who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring." This quality was in Christ. He was most patient with weakness, most gentle toward all human infirmity. His disciples were always making mistakes--but he never was impatient with them; he bore with all their infirmities.

There is special reference to temptation, when sympathy with weakness is mentioned. Christ is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for he was tempted in all points like we are. He knows all about temptation. When we are in the midst of the struggle, and when it seems to us we cannot hold out, he sympathizes with us, and is most gentle toward us. If we are in danger of falling, he helps us to overcome.

An English naval officer told a grateful story of the way he was helped and saved from dishonor, in his first experience in battle. He was a midshipman, fourteen years old. The volleys of the enemy's musketry so terrified him, that he almost fainted. The officer over him saw his state, and came close beside him, keeping his own face toward the enemy, and held the midshipman's hand, saying in a calm quiet, affectionate way, "Courage, my boy! You will recover in a minute or two. I was just so, when I went into my first battle." The young man said afterwards that it was as if an angel had come to him, and put new strength into him. The whole burden of his agony of fear was gone, and from that moment he was as brave as the oldest of the men. If the officer had dealt sternly with the midshipman, he might have driven him to cowardly failure. His kindly sympathy with him dispelled all fear, put courage into his heart, and

made him brave for battle.

It is thus that Christ is touched with a feeling of our infirmity when, assailed by sudden temptation, we quail and are afraid. He comes up close beside us and says, "I understand. I met a temptation just like yours, which tried me very sorely. I felt the same dread you feel. I suffered bitterly that day. I remember it. Be brave and strong, and your fear will vanish, and you will be victorious." Then he takes our hand, and the thrill of his sympathy and of his strength comes into our hearts, dispelling all fear.

This truth of the sympathy of Christ with human weakness has comfort for those who strive to live perfectly, and yet are conscious of coming short. Our Master sets us an absolutely flawless ideal. He bids us to be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect. He gives us his own peace. He never became anxious about anything. Nothing disturbed the serenity and composure of his mind. No wrong done to him, ever vexed him or aroused resentment or bitterness in his heart. No insult ever ruffled his temper. He never dreaded the future, however full it was of calamity. He never doubted that God was good, and that blessing would come out of every experience, however dark it might be.

This peace of Christ is to be ours. We are to live as he did, reproducing the quiet, the love, the truth, the calmness of Christ in our lives. That is the ideal. But after hearing a sermon on the Christian perfection to which the Master exhorts his followers, one person said, "I am afraid I am not a Christian. My life falls far below the standard. I do not have unbroken peace. I am often disturbed in my mind, and lose control of my feelings and of my speech."

This experience is well near universal. If the lesson of perfection were the last word in the description of a Christian life, if no one can be called a Christian unless he measures up to the lofty standard, how many of us can call ourselves Christians? When a critic in the presence of Turner complained that a picture of his on exhibition was not perfect, the great artist said, "Perfect! You do not know how hard that is." When anyone complains that our lives are not perfect--he does not know how hard it is to reach that lofty ideal.

Here it is that the truth of Christ's sympathy with our infirmities, comes in with its comfort. Our Master wants us to live the perfect life--but he knows how weak we are, and is infinitely patient with us. A writer has said, "How many infirmities of ours does Christ smother? How many indignities does he pass by? And how many affronts does he endure at our hands, because his love is invincible, and his friendship unchangeable? He rates every action, every sinful infirmity, with the allowances of mercy; and never weighs the sin--but together with it he weighs the force of the inducement--how much of it is to be attributed to choice, how much to the violence of the temptation, to the stratagem of the occasion, and the yielding frailties of weak nature."

Many of the words of Christ reveal his sympathy with weakness. In that most wonderful of all his promises, in which he invites the weary to him, promising them rest, he asks men to take his yoke upon them, and then says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is not a yoke which crushes by its weight. He never lays upon his followers any burden which they cannot bear. His commandments are not grievous. He never calls us to any duties that we cannot perform. Whenever he lays a load upon us--he promises grace to carry it. He never allows us to be tempted above what we are able to endure. There was never yet a responsibility put upon a Christian which was too great for his strength. No one ever is called to endure a sorrow which is sorer than he can bear.

Another word which shows his sympathy with human infirmities is quoted from one of the great prophets as being fulfilled in Christ himself: "A bruised reed shall not break, and smoking flax shall not quench."

What could be more worthless than a reed bruised trampled in the dust? Yet so gentle is our Master that he does not fling aside as of no account, even so worthless a thing as a shattered reed. There may be a little life remaining in it, and so he takes it up tenderly, cares for it gently, is patient with it, and waits, until at length it lives again in delicate beauty. Or take the other figure: "Smoking flax shall not quench." The lamp has burned down so that the flame has gone out, and there is only a little curling smoke coming from the black wick. Does he snuff it out and throw it away? Oh, no! such frailty appeals to him. "There may be a spark left yet," he says, and he breathes upon it, blowing it, putting oil again into the exhausted lamp, and in a little while there is a bright flame where there was only offensive smoke before.

After the terrible earthquake and fire at San Francisco, some children far out in the country were gathering up pieces of charred paper which had been carried by the currents of air. Among these fragments they found a partly burned leaf of the Bible. A boy found it, and took it home to his father, who smoothed it out and read for the first time the immortal words, "Now abides faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love." It was a strange message to come out of the great conflagration; strange--but wonderfully fitting. Everything else of beauty and power had gone down in dust and ashes--but love remained--that was imperishable, and faith and hope remained. Nothing is worth living for, but love--God's love, and the love that it inspires. If we would be rich with riches which nothing can take from us, we must make larger room in our hearts for this love. Christ loves, and has infinite compassion for weakness, for infirmity, for life's bruised reeds and dimly burning wicks. We shall become like Christ only in the measure in which we get the same compassion into our hearts, and are filled with a like sense of the weakness in others.

"Touched with a feeling of our infirmities." This wonderful revealing of the heart of Christ in his glory, should be full of comfort to those who, with all their striving, are unable to reach the perfect ideal. Christ understands. He sees into our hearts, and he knows when we have done our best, though that best fall so far below the standard. He knew when we tried to keep sweet-tempered in the provocation and irritation to which we were exposed yesterday and yet failed--and spoke bitterly and impatiently. He knew when we wanted to be calm and trustful, and to have quiet peace in our heart in some time of great sorrow, or in some sore loss or disappointment. Then when, in spite of our effort, the peace failed and we cried out--he knew what was due to unbelief in us, and what to human weakness. We have a most patient Master. He is pitiful toward our infirmities. He is tolerant of our outbreaks. He is gentle toward our failures. Do not think that you are not a Christian, because you have failed so often, because you fall so far below what you ought to be. Christian life is a long, slow growth, beginning with spiritual infancy, and reaching at last up to mature spiritual manhood.

But is it just to our patient, gracious Master--that we remain always spiritual infants--and never grow into full stature? We glory in the sympathy of Christ with our infirmities--but is it worthy of us, always to have the infirmities--and never to become any stronger? If he would have us accept his peace and learn the sweet lesson--is it worthy in us to go on living a life of fretfulness, discontent, and anxiety, of uncontrolled temper and ungoverned moods? Should we not try at least to please our Master in all things--even though we may never be able to live a single whole day without displeasing him in some way? It is the sincere effort which he accepts. If he knows that we have done our best--he holds us blameless, though we are not faultless. But we should not take advantage of our Master's sympathy with our infirmities--to continue in imperfect living, and to keep the infirmities uncured, unstrengthened.

So let us keep the ideal unlowered--we dare not lower it. "You therefore shall be perfect--as your heavenly Father is perfect," stands ever as the unmovable mark and goal of Christian life. Christ's patient sympathy

with our failures and weaknesses never brings the standard down a single line, to make it easier for us to reach it. There the ideal stands--and we are bidden to climb to it. Paul confessed that he had not yet attained to the goal--but said he was striving to reach it--ever pushing upward, with all his energy, earnestness, and bravery. Let us not in cowardly indolence live on forever on life's low levels--let us seek to climb to the heights. Let us set our feet a little higher every day, overcome some weakness, and gain some new height!

"Touched with a feeling of our infirmities." We may not always find sympathy in human hearts. Even those who ought to be most patient with us, may fail to understand us, and may prove exacting, severe, harsh in judgment, scathing in blame, bitter in denunciation. But in the love of Christ--we find infinite compassion, and sympathy which never fails, and never wearies. He remembers that we are dust. Only let us ever be true to him, and always do our best, confessing our manifold failures, and going on continually to better things.

Chapter 6. Persis the Beloved

Among Paul's salutations to old friends at Rome, is one to Persis. "Greet Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord." There is not other mention of this woman in the New Testament. We do not know where Paul had known her. Her whole biography is given in the one little sentence. Probably she was obscure, though no one who works for Christ is obscure. When we live a pure, true, unselfish life, though it be in a most quiet way--we cannot know the extent of what we are doing, how far its influence may extend, how much good it may do, how long it may be talked about. Persis labored somewhere, in some quiet way for Christ, nineteen hundred years ago. Her work was not much talked about then by the neighbors--but Paul told its story in a few words, and here it remains in immortal beauty.

Persis lived without fame, and after she had been dead a little while--she was forgotten. But we open one of the New Testament pages, and there the story of her life lies in shining beauty.

Persis is called "the beloved." We are not told why she was so universally beloved. No doubt her character was beautiful. Every Christian woman should seek to be lovely in her life. Beauty of the face and feature--is not the highest beauty. There is a story of a girl who was so homely that even her mother said to her, "You are so ugly, that everybody will dislike you, and you will have no friends." The girl accepted the fact of her homeliness bravely, without being discouraged by it. "I will make my life so beautiful," she said, "that people will forget my face." So she set herself to cultivate her mind and spirit. She opened her heart to receive the fullness of Christ's love, until all the graces of the Spirit blossomed in her character. She grew so like her Master, that people no longer thought of the homeliness of her face--but only of the loveliness of her character, the sweetness of her spirit, and the helpfulness of her life. She became an 'angel of goodness' in the town where she lived.

Beauty of face may win admiration; only beauty of heart, of disposition, of character--can win love. Persis was called the beloved, not because of any merely physical attractiveness--but because she had in her the qualities of heart, which made people love her.

A legend tells of the origin of the lovely moss rose. Once on a time, an angel came down to earth--the angel of flowers. Busied all day in his ministry here and there, he became weary and sought a place to rest, finding it under a rose. There he slept, and was refreshed. Before returning to heaven he spoke to the rose, grateful for the shelter he had enjoyed, and offered to bestow upon it some new gift of loveliness. So soft green moss grew round the stem, making the beautiful moss rose, the loveliest of all the flowers. In

like manner, the life that gives the most gracious hospitality to Christ, receives new charms, new gifts of loveliness.

It is said also of Persis that she "labored much in the Lord." She was not a beautiful saint merely, living in holy seclusion, cherishing devout feeling and cultivating lovely qualities of character; she was a saint who sought to do all she could, in advancing the cause of Christ. She labored, "labored much." That is, she was not content to do little easy things for her Master--but was eager to do all she could do.

It is said further that she labored "in the Lord." Does this mean that she labored as in the atmosphere of Christ's life? Paul, in speaking of God, said, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." God is about us as the air is, and we live in him as we live in the atmosphere that surrounds us. It is said that one of the finest orchids in the world is found in England--but, owing to the inclement climate, it grows in dwarfed form, destitute of beauty, and is of no value. Climate is everything for fine plants. Spiritual climate is everything in the growth of heavenly graces. It is a great thing to live and work with the very atmosphere of Christ's love about us, with the very life of Christ for climate.

But that is not all that is meant, when it is said that Persis labored in the Lord. It means that there was such a vital relation between Christ and Persis that wherever she spoke, Christ was in her words, that when she loved, Christ's love mingled in hers, that whatever she did in trying to help, bless, and save others, Christ's power wrought in and through her feebleness, making it effective. That is what Paul said about himself to the Galatians. "It is no longer I who live--but Christ who lives in me." A distinguished scientific man believes that the seeds of living things now growing on the earth were first brought to our planet by meteoric stones. The thought is very beautiful. But whether true or not--we are sure that the seeds of the beautiful things of spiritual life which grow now wherever the gospel has gone, the plants and flowers of grace and love, have come from heaven, not borne to us on meteoric stones--but in the life of Jesus Christ. Every true Christian is a new incarnation--Christ lives in him. When it said of Persis, that she labored much in the Lord, the meaning is that she had Christ in her, and that it was Christ who did the things that Persis did. The much labor she wrought for Christ, was divinely inspired.

It is when we let Christ live in us, and work in us and through us--that our lives begin to count for God. We cannot be a blessing to others, until we are blessed ourselves. But when Christ lives in us, we cannot but be a blessing to every life we touch. There is an immense difference between your doing something, teaching a lesson, preaching a sermon, visiting a sick neighbor, training a child, seeking to comfort one in sorrow--between your doing the work yourself--and Christ doing it in you and through you. In the one case it is a piece of beautiful human service; in the other case it is human service filled with divine love and grace. In the one case it is you working, teaching, preaching, visiting, striving to make a life better; in the other it is you and Christ working together.

There is another suggestive word in Paul's salutation. In the same chapter he speaks of Tryphaena and Tryphosa, "who labor in the Lord." The tense is present--they were still active. But Persis had "labored." Her working time was over. She was still living, for Paul sent a kindly salutation to her--but she was no longer engaged in activities.

We are not told why Persis had ceased to work. Perhaps she was an invalid, unable longer to carry on her former activities. Or she may have become old and infirm. Some people chafe and are greatly discouraged when they become broken in health. They used to be strong, able for anything, undaunted in the presence of the greatest labors, laughing in the face of all obstacles. They responded to every call of

duty with alacrity. They labored much. Now they can only lie on their bed, or sit in their wheel chair to be rolled about--they cannot do any work. It takes more grace to keep patient and sweet, to be joyous and cheerful, in this broken condition, than it required in other days, to be busy in the field of service. Yet we are no less the Lord's servants when we cannot work--any more than we were when we were most active.

"They also serve--who only stand and wait." If standing and waiting are all that we can do, we please our Master just as well, and serve him just as acceptably, as we used to do when we were most active, that is, if we do not spoil all by chafing and fretting. Our work is not all doing things; we need also to have things done in us. There are lessons to learn which perhaps we never could learn, if in the midst of unhindered activities. Certain song birds, when they are to be taught a new song, are shut away in a darkened room for a time, and the song is sung or played over and over within their hearing until they learn it. May it not be thus with us oftentimes? Our Master wants us to learn a new song--the song of contentment, of peace, of uncomplaining joy--and we are called aside from our rushing activity, that in the quiet we may get the song into our heart!

We think that the world cannot spare us, that things will not go on at all--if we cannot go b

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/the-best-things-in-life-part-1/>

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