

Holiness and Duty

by Samuel Logan Brengle

True holiness involves doing work faithfully as unto the Lord, and it leads to happiness, contentment, and God's favor.

Scripture: Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Holiness", "Duty and Responsibility"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes that true holiness not only frees us from worry but also heightens our sense of duty and personal responsibility. He illustrates this through the example of Jesus, who viewed the world as a field of labor rather than a playground, and he encourages believers to approach all work--sacred or secular--with a holy heart. Brengle argues that every task, no matter how humble, can be sacred if done with the right intention, and he reminds us that faithfulness in our duties, regardless of their nature, is what God values. He concludes by assuring that true promotion comes from faithfulness in little things and that the joy of serving God is immediate, even if the ultimate rewards are deferred. The sermon calls for a commitment to do our work as if Jesus were present, highlighting the importance of integrity and dedication in all aspects of life.

Transcript

If holiness delivers us from worry, it increases the sense of duty and of personal responsibility. It was the holiness of His heart that led the twelve-year-old boy Jesus to say to His mother, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' To Him the world was not a playground only, but a field of labor. His Father had given Him work to do, and He must do it before the night came in which no man can work.

By this I do not understand that He was continually engaged in ceaseless, grinding toil, with no hours of recreation and rest. 'We know that in after years He went away with His disciples to rest awhile. He took time to enjoy the flowers, to consider the lilies, to watch the sparrows, to view the grass of the field. But He neglected no duty; He did not slight or shirk His work, He was no trifler; He was honest; what He did He did well, and with His might, And this spirit always accompanies true holiness of heart.

Most people divide the work of the world into what they call sacred and secular work, Preaching, praying, reading the Bible, conducting meetings, and the like, they consider to be sacred work; but washing and ironing and learning, building houses and making shoes, practicing law or medicine, working in mines and mills, in shops and stores, and on shipboard, that they call secular work.

But why make such a distinction? It is not the work, but the heart and purpose behind the work, that God looks at. The Salvation Army Officer, or minister, or missionary who works for the salary he gets, or for the social position he enjoys, or for an opportunity for study and travel and personal culture, has a secular heart, and makes his work secular; while the farmer or lawyer, washerwoman or cook, shoemaker or miner, or stenographer who has a holy heart, and who does good work as unto the Lord, makes his or her work sacred.

The time was when a man built his own house, made his own shoes, sheared his sheep, and gave the wool to his wife, who dyed it, spun and wove it, and made it into clothes for her household. He raised corn and meat, and prepared it for food, and so they lived independent of the world on the fruits of their own toil. But times have changed. Society is now a great organism in which there are a thousand different occupations, and people must needs divide the work between them. And now God wants each to be faithful and holy and happy where he is, doing his own work faithfully as Jesus would do it.

A poor German woman in Massachusetts used to say, 'I am a scrubbing-woman and a missionary by the grace of God.' She went to the homes of the rich to scrub and clean, and she testified of Jesus everywhere she went. She scrubbed to pay expenses, and preached the Gospel, and she scrubbed well that the Gospel might not be despised or blamed.

They tried to arrest Paul in Damascus after his conversion, but he was let down through a window by the wall in a basket, and so escaped. Someone has said that possibly one of the early Christians made the rope that held the basket, and that by making a good rope, he saved Paul's life; and so in his humble way, without knowing it, helped in all the mighty missionary labors and salvation warfare of Paul. But what if he had carelessly made a poor rope, that had broken with Paul!

We know not what part of our work God is going to use in His plans for saving the world; therefore, let it all be good and true.

We are God's tools. He is the Workman. I took an axe to cut down a tree; but I took a tiny gimlet to bore a hole in a piece of furniture I wished to mend. I could not cut down the tree with the gimlet, nor bore the hole with the axe, and yet both pieces of work were important. So the Lord has different kinds of work, for which He must have different kinds of workmen.

The General stirs the world and lifts it towards God. You, perhaps, teach a few ragged boys. Do not despise your work or be discouraged. You are as important to God as the gimlet was to me. Do your duty. Do it as though Jesus were in the class you teach, by the bench where you work, in your kitchen, office, store, or mill. Do it without murmuring. Do it gladly, and He may take it up, and make it a part of His great plan, long after you have laid it down, as He did the rope which saved Paul. Never mind what your work is. Moses tended sheep. Jesus was a carpenter. Paul was a tent-maker. Gideon was a farmer's man. Dorcas was a dressmaker; Martha a housekeeper; Luke a doctor; Joseph and Daniel were governors and statesmen; in every relation of life and in all duty they were faithful, or we should not have heard of them.

If you are true, you will 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,' you will have the sweet approval of your own conscience, the smile of God, and however humble your work may have been, if you are steadfast unto the end, you will some day hear Him say, 'Well done. good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Hallelujah!

True promotion which is from God, both in this world and that which is to come, is the reward of faithfulness over little things and few, as well as over great and many, and if you have the experience of holiness you will be faithful.

You must not, however, be anxious about the reward. This is largely deferred into the next world. It is your duty and mine to be faithful, to be faithful unto death. If reward is delayed, it will be all the greater when it comes, be assured of that. God will see to it that your treasure which you lay up with Him bears compound interest. What a surprise to the man who made that rope, if he finds at the Judgment Day, that he had a share in the wealth piled up by Paul's labors!

There is one part of the reward, however, that is never delayed, that is, happiness and contentment and God's favor.

In service which Thy love appoints, There are no bonds for me:

My happy heart has learned the truth That makes Thy children free;

A life of self-renouncing love Is a life of liberty.

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