

XI. to Robert Stewart, on His Decision for Christ

by Samuel Rutherford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of making an early decision for Christ, avoiding hypocrisy, and experiencing genuine conversion in order to truly know and love God.

Scripture: Psalm 78:34, Ezekiel 43:11, Hosea 2:14, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Galatians 6:14, Philippians 3:8, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Suffering And Perseverance"

Description

Samuel Rutherford preaches a heartfelt message welcoming a brother to the world of suffering and to God's house, encouraging him to grow in faith and trust in Christ. He emphasizes the importance of holding on to Christ, surrendering all burdens to Him, and finding comfort in the midst of trials. Rutherford urges believers to seek a deep conversion experience, to examine their love for Christ, and to be willing to suffer for His name, as it is a step towards their heavenly home.

Transcript

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER, -- You are heartily welcome to my world of suffering, and heartily welcome to my father's house; God give you much joy of your new Master. If I have been in the house before you, I were not faithful to give the house an ill name, or to speak evil of the Lord of the family: I rather wish God's Holy Spirit (O Lord, breathe upon me with that Spirit!) to tell you the fashions of the house (Ezek. 43.11). One thing I can say, by on-waiting, ye will grow a great man with the Lord of the house.

Hang on, till ye get some good from Christ. Take ease yourself, and let Him bear all; lay all your weights and your loads, by faith, on Christ; He can, He will bear you. I rejoice that He has come, and has chosen you in the furnace; it was even there where He and ye set tryst. He keepeth the good old fashion with you that was in Hosea's days (Hos. 2.14). 'Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her.' There was no talking to her heart while she was in the fair flourishing city, and at ease, but out in the cold, hungry, waste wilderness, He allureth her; He whispered news into her ear there, and said, 'Thou art Mine'.

What would ye think of such a bode? Ye may soon do worse than say, 'Lord, hold all; Lord Jesus, a bargain be it, it shall not go back on my side'. Ye have gotten a great advantage in the way of heaven, that ye have started to the gate in the morning. Like a fool, as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven, and near afternoon, before I ever took the gate by the end. I pray you now keep the advantage ye

have. My heart, be not lazy; set quickly up the bras on hands and feet, as if the last pickle of sand were running out of your glass, and death were coming to turn the glass.

And be very careful to take heed to your feet, in that slippery and dangerous way of youth that ye are walking in. Dry timber will soon take fire. Be covetous and greedy of the grace of God, and beware that it be not a holiness which cometh only from the cross; for too many are that way disposed. 'When He slew them, then they sought Him, and they returned and inquired early after God.' 'Nevertheless, they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues' (Ps. 78.34,36).

It is part of our hypocrisy, to give God fair, white words when He has us in His grips (if I may speak so), and to flatter Him till He win to the fair fields again. Try well green godliness, and examine what it is that ye love in Christ. If ye love but Christ's sunny side, and would have only summer weather and a land-gate, not a sea-way to heaven, your profession will play you a slip, and the winter-well will go dry again in summer. Make no sport nor bairn's play of Christ; but labour for a sound and lively sight of sin, that ye may judge yourself an undone man, a damned slave of hell and of sin, one dying in your own blood, except Christ come and rue upon you, and take you up.

And, therefore, make sure and fast work of conversion. Cast the earth deep; and down, down with the old work, the building of confusion, that was there before; and let Christ lay new work, and make a new creation within you. Look if Christ's rain goes down to the root of your withered plants, and if His love wound your heart whill it bleed with sorrow for sin, and if ye can pant and fall aswoon, and be like to die for that lovely one, Jesus. I know that Christ will not be hid where He is; grace will ever speak for itself, and be fruitful in well-doing.

The sanctified cross is a fruitful tree, it bringeth forth many apples. If I should tell you by some weak experience, what I have found in Christ, ye or others could hardly believe me. I thought not the hundredth part of Christ long since, that I do now, though, alas! my thoughts are still infinitely below His worth. And for Christ's cross, especially the garland and flower of all crosses, to suffer for His name, I esteem it more than I can write or speak to you. And I write it under mine own hand to you, that it is one of the steps of the ladder up to our country; and Christ (whoever be one) is still at the heavy end of this black tree, and so it is but as a feather to me.

I need not run at leisure, because of a burden on my back; my back never bare the like of it; the more heavily crossed for Christ, the soul is still the lighter for the journey. Now, would to God that all cold-blooded, faint-hearted soldiers of Christ, would look again to Jesus, and to his love; and when they look, I would have them to look again and again, and fill themselves with beholding Christ's beauty: and, I dare say, then He would be highly esteemed of many. It is my daily growing sorrow, that He does so great things for my soul, and He never yet got any thing of me worth speaking of.

Sir, I charge you, help me to praise Him. If men could do no more, I would have them to wonder -- if we cannot be filled with Christ's love, we may be filled with wondering. To Him and His rich grace I recommend you. I pray you, pray for me, and forget not to praise.

ABERDEEN, June 17, 1637

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