

The True Saint (Isaiah Xxxiii. 14-16)

by Seth Rees

The sermon emphasizes the characteristics of a true saint, who walks righteously, speaks uprightly, separates from evil, and trusts in God's provision and security.

Scripture: James 5:12

Topics: "Christian Living", "Sanctification"

Description

Seth Rees preaches about the characteristics of a saint as depicted in Isaiah 33:14-16, emphasizing the importance of walking righteously, speaking uprightly, avoiding evil influences, and rejecting bribes. He challenges listeners to live above reproach, to be people of integrity in all aspects of life. Rees highlights the significance of shutting out negativity, both in speech and sight, and standing firm against corruption and bribery, trusting in God's provision and protection. He paints a vivid picture of a sanctified life dwelling on high, secure in the munitions of rocks, with assured provision of bread and water, ultimately leading to seeing the King in His beauty.

Transcript

"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil. He shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure " (Isaiah xxxiii.14,15,16).

The Bible is not only a storybook, it is not only the greatest love story ever written, but it is a picture book. It is full of pictures. We have pictures of God and of heaven; pictures of the devil and of hell; of saints and of sinners; of this world and its destiny. We are fond of pictures. Most of people are fond of their own pictures, especially if they flatter them; but there are some pictures in God's Word that we do not naturally like.

There are few people who ever read the third chapter of Romans. I doubt if you ever saw a Bible that was soiled at the third chapter of Romans. It is a very rare thing for a preacher to take his text from that chapter. In that chapter we get our own photograph, and I presume that the reason we do not take to it is because it is so very much like us. The wrinkles and blemishes have not been removed.

In the language which I have read to you out of God's Word, we have a picture of a saint. There are a great many people who do not like this picture because the contrast is so great, that it puts them under condemnation. But we had better have the truth now than to have it later on. You and I are going to come in contact with the truth somewhere; we are going to face things as they really are; and I would rather face the truth now than to face it when the death rattle is in my throat. I do not want to wait until this world is on fire to know my real self and my real need and God's real remedy; I want to know them now. I call your attention to this photograph; for God made it, and it is a good one. The first thing that I notice about this saint is his walk, his way, his bearing, down here in this world. The text says that "he walketh righteously." This must relate primarily to his relation to this world, his intercourse with the world. "He walketh righteously;" that is to say, he is a man of his word; he can be depended upon; his word is as good as his bond; and when he says he will do a thing, he will do it. If he agrees to pay you a bill upon a certain date, he will pay you then or he will be there to explain why he can not do so. He not only pays one hundred cents to the dollar, but he gives sixteen ounces to the pound, and thirty-six inches to the yard; he will not stoop to commercial trickery; he is a straight, clean man in business, as well as in pleasure and in church work. He does not make crooked paths; "he walketh righteously;" he looks before him, and he goes straight ahead. Now, there are some parts of this sermon that you will be excused if you do not shout over; and yet I have asked God to bring me to a place where I can shout as much over righteousness as over anything else.

If we are not righteous in our walk, there is not very much virtue in our shouting anyway. There would be no great loss if you should stop your shouting until you can shout over righteousness; for people who do not pay their debts, and do not purpose to pay their debts, who run up a grocery bill until it is as big as they can get it, and then take their little cash and go off somewhere else to buy, turning their back on the grocery man who has trusted them for weeks, ought to stop shouting until they get saved so they can walk righteously.

This man in the text would never think of riding on an electric car without paying, simply because the car was crowded, and the conductor overlooked him; he would never think of riding twice on a railroad ticket because the conductor failed to take it up the first time. This man would hunt the conductor up and give him his ticket. "he walketh righteously." There is a man like it. I believe God can make the man.

The next thing I notice about this saint is his talk. "He speaketh uprightly." That is, he has stopped his lying; he tells the truth, and nothing but the truth, and always tells the truth, if he tells anything. If he is a preacher he does not lie, he does not say there were forty at the altar when there were hardly twenty. If he is a preacher, he does not write a lie, and say there are six or seven hundred attending a meeting when there are not more than two hundred and twenty-five; and if he is an editor he does not publish such lies. I do not know that he was an editor; I do not know what he was; but I have his photograph, and the Book says he "speaketh uprightly."

God save us in this day from exaggeration and from lies! I am always glad to hear of a revival, and to hear of a great number being swept in; but I am not glad to hear a report of three or four hundred people converted when you can go over the spot in thirty days and not be able to find a baker's dozen of them. This man would not falsify. "he speaketh uprightly." Beloved, do you know that life is largely made up of words; and do you know that one of the Evangelists said that "he that offendeth not in word is a perfect man"; and do you know that it is exceedingly important that we shall have the right expression about the mouth? Do you know that it is exceeding important that we shall be saved from this sin which is not lacking in a "multitude of words"?

This fellow would not gossip. I can not mention gossip but that people begin to think of women; but the biggest gossips I know of are men. This man did not talk things behind people's backs that he would not say to their faces. No, he did not. You do, but he did not. You have said things behind folks' backs that you would not begin to say to their faces; but here is a man who is so fair and so strict and so honest that he "speaketh uprightly." There is a great deal of cheap talk these days. I want to say, that light talk, chaffy, frivolous talk, fireside and table tattle, is damaging spirituality in this country. God bless you, 'we had better be as silent as the old-fashioned Quakers than to indulge in the light, chaffy talk that is in vogue nowadays. I am disgusted, I am sick and tired of people's tongues wagging as if they were hung in the middle. If you will undertake to record the conversations of many a tea party and many a social, you will find that they appear awful on paper.

God save us from chaff, from chaffy talk; light, frivolous, senseless talk! Preachers sometimes indulge in it. With men marching into the infernal regions in regiments as they do in these days, preachers have no time to joke and jest and guffaw, and sit around in groups, like some at camp meetings and at conferences, and tell little funny stories. I tell you the time has come when we should have more weeping prophets, preachers who weep instead of laugh; that talk uprightly instead of deal in the tattle and gossip of the day. You talk chaff because you are chaffy; or, if you are not, if you talk chaff a little while, you will become chaffy. You read chaff because you are chaffy; or, if you are not, if you read chaff a little while, you will become chaffy. There is a great deal of lightweight stuff nowadays. God help us! A man that "speaketh uprightly!" O, thank God for some one who tells the truth; some one whose words are solid, are heavy.

Again, I notice that this man "stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood." He did not read murder tales. The text says it: I am preaching from the text. I did not make the Bible; I am not responsible for it; but God has given me the photograph of a man who "stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood." He had evidently lost his appetite for war stories and murder trials and adultery cases; he stopped his ears, and would not hear them.

Do you know that you can not let the newspapers of this country convert the center table in your drawing room into a cesspool, and pour out the vomit of hell as it is done through the newspapers, and keep your daughters and families clean? I do not care whether you shout at this or not. The fact is, we bring men into our families and set them down at our center tables in the form of a newspaper, when we would spurn the idea of our pure daughters being associated with them in any other way. The vilest men who walk the streets of our licentious city come into our homes and pour out their damnation into our families. You indulge in that sort of thing until your boys and girls have slipped through your fingers into the cesspool of iniquity, and then you come to me, as an evangelist, to pray them out!

Here was a man who stopped his ears from hearing of blood. He did not take to that sort of thing. Before I get through you will find he was going to use his ears for something else, and he was taking care of them. You can not afford to soil your ears with all the voices of this world if you are going to hear the voice of God.

We are living in a time when there are a great many voices speaking. The voice of pleasure wants to fill my ears. The voice of money comes, the voice of place wants a hearing; the voice of this world makes its appeal. The voice of ecclesiasticism is calling after me. Popery and all that sort of thing, is asking me to hearken, and there are a thousand voices that I might listen to; but I have to stop my ears if I am to hear the voice of God. This man did.

Another thing I notice about this man is, that he "shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil." He would not look on evil things, not so much because he was afraid he would fall, as because he did not want to be contaminated. The vulgar troupes of this country can come into our city, and post bills with the most obscene pictures, and most of the preachers will not raise a voice in remonstrance; and your daughter can scarcely walk down the street without having her eyes invited to turn to some indelicate picture.

But I have the picture of a man who shut his eyes to these things. I know a person who has shut his eyes many a time when he passed a saloon, not because he was in danger, but because he loathed such things. Beloved, if you go through this world staring at everything you can see, it will not be long before you can not see anything good. You look at the sun for five seconds, and you can see suns everywhere you look; and you stare around at sin in this country, and it will not be long before you can see nothing but sin. Shut your eyes to the seeing of evil, and fix them on the Son of God, and it will not be long before you can see Jesus everywhere you look. Another thing I notice about this man is, that he "shaketh his hands from the holding of bribes." He can not be bought. He has no price. He can never be bribed. He has convictions born of certainty, and has courage enough to stand by his convictions; and there are not men enough on earth or devils enough in hell to cause him to retract from his position. A great many people are bribed nowadays. Our courts are bribed, our legislature is bribed, our Congress is bribed. Our elections are controlled by bribery.

Sin is running this country, and you are so weak that you will not raise a voice against it. But here was a man who could not be bought. Preachers are bribed in these days, pulpits are bought. There sits a wealthy man over there, who is interested in the wholesale liquor business, and he has got his money influence into that pulpit and preacher until that preacher has no subjects left him to preach from except "The Jews." Nine pulpits out of ten in this country are so bought and controlled that the man who stands in the pulpit on Sunday morning to read his "little sermonette," does not dare to speak against the sins of the day; and you know it, and the preacher knows it, and God knows it, and the devil knows it, and everybody knows it.

But here was a fellow they could not buy. They could not scare him off from preaching the truth by threatening to take away his bread and butter. I remember when they threatened me thus. I remember that I said, "I will preach the truth if I have to live on clam shells and potato skins."

I will say to you that there are men in this country who are true and loyal to God, who do not have their price, who do not work for money, who can live without a backslidden church's bread and butter. Here was that kind of a fellow. He knew that God's ravens were not all dead. He knew that God owned the cattle on a thousands hills, and if he got into a close place some time, God could kill a beef and send him a hind quarter.

"He shaketh his hands from the holding of bribes." He did not want a stronger impulse than for some one to threaten him. He did not want anything more than for some one to say that if he did not stop preaching the truth he would be "sent off." It only moved him to preach stronger than ever before. O the bondage of this country! Just to think of having a fellow sit in the congregation, and crack a whip over my head, and tell me what to preach and what not to preach or he would not support me!

Here was a man who went straight. He always went straight. He walked straight, and he talked straight, and he preached straight, and he lived straight, and he would not mix up with anything that was even suspicious. He was a man who lived above suspicion. God help us in these days to walk so they will know

in three worlds who we are, where we are, and where we belong! I want them to know! I want them to know in heaven, I want them to know in hell, I want them to know in Cincinnati, that I belong to the "sheepskin society of whom this world is not worthy." I am delighted to live in tents, or holes, or any place, until they get my mansion ready. It is almost ready. I am only waiting for them to give it a few finishing touches. The next thing I want to notice about this man is his residence. If he walks righteously, and talks uprightly, and stops his ears against blood, and shuts his eyes against evil, and washes his hands from all uncleanness, I want to know where that sort of man lives. The Book tells me, "He shall dwell on high." O, thank God! He lives on the mountain top, with mountain scenery, and mountain air, and mountain sunshine. He is above the malaria and the river fog and the miasma of the lowlands. He is above the dust and the noise and the rattle of this sinful world. He lives up where the sky is clear and everything is serene. The thunder may mutter and the clouds may roll at his feet, but the sun always shines where he is. He is where the sun never sets, and where the flowers bloom forever, and where the saints never die. People tell me you can not live on the mountain top of Christian experience all the time; but here is a fellow who could, and I believe if he could, we can. "He shall dwell on high." If he ever came down into the valley at all, it was to bring up some other fellow; his home was up there. He may have come down sometimes to pull some one else out of the fire; but his dwelling was on the mountain top. O, glory to God for the mountain top of Christian experience!

The next thing I notice about this remarkable man is, that though he is so high, he is perfectly safe. "He shall have for his defense the munitions of rocks." "They say" that a high experience is dangerous: if you get up too high you fall. In the first place, they do not understand the paradox of the thing; for in Christian experience you can get so high you can not fall; that is, if you stay in the right place. We get up by going down, and a man is away up when he is flat on his face, and when he is flat on his face he can not fall; all he can do is to roll over, and it is those people who are not on their faces that are in danger. In that position they are safe, because they have for their defense the munitions of rocks, "the Rock of Ages." He is not safe because he is a strong man, but he is safe because he is in a strong place.

I was never weaker in my life than I am now, but I am in a strong place. I am in the embrace of One who hold the Universe in His power. I am kept by the power that swung the worlds into existence. While I was never more conscious of my weakness, I am also conscious that He has hooked me up to the engines of heaven, and I need fall only when the throne falls. I believe that it is possible for men to get to a place where it is easier to go the other way than to go back. I feel "a divine pull" drawing me the other way. I am inclined to think it is going to pull until it pulls me into the harbor. Oh, the security; not in ourselves, not at all; but in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who keeps us! "The conies are a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;" and if the conies do this, certainly we also can have for our defense the "munitions of rocks"; and this we have when we receive the second blessing.

I notice next that "his bread shall be given him." Given him! He does not have to work for it. Oh, think what a relief! He works for the Lord, and the Lord gives him his bread, and is careful to butter it on both sides, too. Famine never reaches him; "he can not tell when heat comes. He lives up there so high above the confusion of Wall Street, that it makes no difference to him whether gold has gone up or down. All he needs is secured to him, thank God.

"His water shall be sure." He drinks pure, sparkling mountain water. His well never goes dry. There are a great many people, you know, who have water in the wet season, who have "wet weather religion"; they have salvation in the winter time, when there is nothing else but revivals going on; they do not take much interest when the summer's work is on. Their religion fails them then. Here was a man whose "water was

sure." He lived in luxury three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter days every year. When we get to the place where we accept our rations from God, the high God uses people to give them to us, we accept them as from Him; and whether there is much or little of them, we are thankful for them. Never since God sanctified my soul have I ever left a meeting grumbling at what I got. I have not always had enough to pay for a ticket, but I have always had enough to thank God for.

The devil is telling people all over the country that if they do right they will starve. I had a gentleman in my congregation get under conviction about selling tobacco in his store. The devil told him and some of the church folks told him that if he gave up tobacco he would starve; but he put tobacco out of his store, and he did just as well with out it, and God rewarded him.

My wife and I were assisting at a Convention in Boston, and a baker came to the altar and was sanctified wholly. He was in the habit of baking bread Saturday afternoon to sell Sunday morning; but when he was sanctified he went home and told his wife that he was not going to sell any more bread on Sunday. She said: "You are a fool." He replied: "I am going to walk with God;" and he got a placard and put it up, "No Bread Sold on Sunday." On Saturday he said to his wife: "I am going to bake just as much bread as I have been baking, and I expect God to sell it all out for me on Saturday;" and Saturday night at midnight he did not have a loaf left. He kept that up all the time, and God sold his bread for him. It is the devil's lie that people can not do business on Christian principles. They can, and they can walk with God, and do anything that is right to do at all.

"He shall see the King in his beauty." You remember that he refused to look at some things back yonder. He shut his eyes a short time ago, and now he sees the King in his beauty. He stopped his ears then, and now he hears the voice of God. The King fills all the horizon of his vision, eclipsing all lesser lights. He looks out over the heads of the people of this world, and sees into the land that is very far off.

What a saint this man was! Why was it? He was sanctified wholly. He had had his Pentecost. He had received the second blessing. When you get it, it will do everything for you that it did for him. It will fix your walk, it will regulate your conversation, it will stop your ears, it will anoint your eyes, it will cleanse your hands, it will secure to you your bread and water, and give you a residence where the devil can not get you. A life hid with Christ in God! Oh, it is wonderful! And you can have this hidden life! You can get away from the devil, and find a place of security. Do you not want this hidden life now?

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