

Articles and Sermons :: Being Real Christians- George Whitefield

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The Great Necessity

IF WE WERE BUT SENSIBLE of the great necessity there is, in this our day, of being real Christians, sure we should not be contented with being nominal ones; but we are sunk into I know not what; we are no better than baptized heathen. And how amazing is it, that we should profess the name of Christ, and yet so little converse about him; surely, this name whereby we are called, should be the theme of our discourse here, and of our eternal Hallelujahs in a world to come. But is it not more amazing, to consider, that instead of the name of Jesus, whereby we are to have salvation, we are taught to look for it in ourselves, and that there must be a fitness in us before God bestows his grace and favor upon us. But what doctrine is this? Not the doctrine of the scripture, not the doctrine of Jesus, not that of the primitive Christians, not that of the reformation, nor that of the articles of the church of England. No, it is the doctrine of the devil; this is making Christ but half a Savior, and driving man into an error of the greatest consequence, in making him go to Jesus in his own strength, and not in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, my brethren, unless you go in the strength of Jesus Christ; unless you depend only upon him for salvation; unless he is your wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, he will never be your redemption. Our salvation is the free gift of God; it is owing to his free love, and the free grace of Jesus Christ, that ever you are saved.

Deceiving Your Own Souls

Do not flatter yourselves of being good enough, because you are morally so; because you go to church, say the prayers, and take the sacrament, therefore you think no more is required; alas, you are deceiving your own souls; and if God, in his free grace and mercy, does not show you your error, it will only be leading you a softer way to your eternal ruin; but God forbid that any of you, to whom I am now speaking, should imagine this; no, you must be abased, and God must be exalted, or you will never begin at the right end, you will never see Jesus with comfort or satisfaction, unless you go to him only on the account of what he has done and suffered.

Is it not plain to a demonstration, that we are acting the part of the Gergesenes, who came and desired Jesus to depart from them? Let us consider the words, and then we shall see how exactly we are performing the part of these men over again.

His Disciples Followed Him

And when he was entered into a ship his disciples followed him. Christ had been working of many miracles, as we may read a few verses before; and as he continually went about doing good, so now he was going to the country of the Gergesenes to dispossess two, who were possessed with devils; and his disciples followed him; No doubt they were reproached and pointed at, for following such a babblers, as the Scribes and Pharisees esteemed the Lord Jesus Christ. Doubtless they were pointed at, jeered, scoffed, and esteemed madmen, enthusiasts, and a parcel of rabble; but still they followed the Lord Jesus Christ, they did not mind a little reproach; no, they loved their Master too well to forbear following him for the sake of a little persecution. And if you do but love the Lord Jesus Christ, love him above all, you will follow him in spite of the malice of all the Scribes and Pharisees of this generation.

A Great Tempest

And behold there arose a great tempest on the sea. The presence of Christ in the ship, did not preserve the disciples from fears and troubles; they were filled with uneasiness, although Christ was with them: this was only for a trial of their faith, to see if they would stand fast for the Lord in a persecuting time. My dear brethren, if the Lord is trying of you, do not give out; no, stand fast in all that the Lord may call you to suffer: It is easy to follow Christ when all things are safe: but your love to Jesus Christ would be seen more, if you must lose your lives, or deny your Jesus; it would be a trial of your love, when fire and faggot was before you, if you would rush into that, rather than flee from the truth as it is in Jesus. Though all things are calm now, the storm is gathering, and by and by it will break; it is at present no bigger than a man's hand; but when it is full it will break, and then you will see whether you are found Christians or not. Persecution would scatter t

he hypocrites, and make nominal Christians afraid to worship God; they would then soon turn unto the world and the things of it.

O Come Unto This Blessed Jesus

Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, from the death of sin, and Christ then will give you the light of his righteousness. Come to Christ and you shall be welcome; O come unto this blessed Jesus, come notwithstanding your vileness; for if you come not you will perish. If Christ does not save you, your own good meaning, your own good intentions cannot; no, as you are in your blood, so you must perish in your blood; but if you come to Christ you will find mercy, you shall not perish. You cannot find salvation in any other but in Christ; if the disciples could have saved themselves, they would not have awoken Jesus Christ; but they were sensible that no one could save them but him; and therefore they cried out unto him; and so you, who are under the sense of sin, who are in fear of hell, if you seek unto your own works, you only seek your own death; for there is no fitness in you. I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, there is not fitness in you, but a fitness for eternal damnation; for what are you by nature, but children of wrath, and your hearts are Satan's garri-son. Because you have gone to church, said the prayers, gone to the sacrament, and done no one any harm, you speak peace to your souls; and all is in peace you think, and your case is good enough; but indeed, all is a false peace, and if you have no other peace than this, you must shortly lie down in everlasting flames; this is an ungrounded, self-created peace, and if you trust to this peace you will perish.

But do as the disciples did when they were in distress; they go to Christ and say to him, "Lord, save us, we perish." I offer you salvation this day; the door of mercy is not yet shut, there does yet remain a sacrifice for sins, for all that will accept of the Lord Jesus Christ; he only knows the inmost thoughts of thy heart, he will embrace you in the arms of his love; he sees the first risings of grace in you, and would willingly encourage it: the angels long for your being in the love and favor of God; they will rejoice to see you turn from sin unto him. All the ministers of the blessed Jesus would be glad to be instruments to turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

O Ye Of Little Faith

And he saith to them, why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? And so, my brethren, I may say to you; why are you fearful to leave you sins and turn to God? O turn to him, turn in a sense of your own unworthiness; tell him how polluted you are, how vile, and be not faithless, but believe; do not go in your own strength, and then you need not fear. Why fear ye that the Lord Jesus Christ will not accept of you? Your sins will be no hindrance, your unworthiness will be no hindrance; if your own corrupt hearts do not keep you back, or if your own good works do not hinder you from coming, nothing will hinder Christ from receiving of you: he loves to see poor sinners coming to him, he is pleased to see them lie at his feet pleading his promises: and if you thus come to Christ, he will not send you away without his Spirit; no, but will receive and bless you.

A Slight On Infinite Love

O do not put a slight on infinite love; what would you have Christ do more? Is it not enough for him to come on purpose to save? Will you not serve God in your souls, as well as with your bodies? If not, you are only deceiving yourselves; and mocking of God; he must have the heart. O ye of little faith, why are ye fearful lest he should not accept of you? If you will not believe me, sure you will believe the Lord Jesus Christ; he has told thee that he will receive you; then why tarry ye, and do not go to him directly? Does he desire impossibilities? It is only, "Give me thy heart;" or, does he want your heart only for the same end as the devil does, to make you miserable? No, he only wants you to believe on him, that you might be saved. This, this, is all the dear Savior desires, to make you happy, that you may leave your sins, to sit down eternally with him, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. Thus, you see, it was only to the power of Christ to stop the raging of the sea; he rebuked it; the disciples might have spoken for ever, and it would not have ceased; so it is with the word preached; I may preach to you while I live; I may speak till I can speak no more; but the doctrines of Christ will never do you good, unless he impress them upon your hearts; O then, in all thy troubles look up to Christ, that he may rebuke them; and if he speaks the word, then they shall cease. If the Pharisees of this generation scoff and jeer you, if they say all manner of evil against you, do not answer them; leave it unto Christ to rebuke them; for all you can say will be of no more signification, than the disciples speaking to the sea; but when Christ speaks the word, then they shall cease; let it not discourage you, for if you will live godly in Christ Jesus, you must suffer persecution.

The World Hates You!

It is true, that those who are sincerely good, are set up for marks for every one to shoot at. There is a continual enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; if you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because Christ hath chosen you out of the world, therefore it hateth you.

Following Christ Into Glory

Do not think of following Christ into glory, unless you go through the press here. Look forward, my brethren, into eternity, and behold Christ coming, and his reward with him, to give a kind recompense for all the temptations and difficulties of this present life.

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George Whitefield (1714-1770) - A minister of the Church of England and one of the early leaders of the Methodist movement. Was used mightily of God in revival preaching to 10,000's open-air.

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