

ABC's of SALVATION

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

‘XCUSES

“Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse . . .” (Luke 14:16-18).

A STRICT interpretation of this portion of the parable, spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, will make the Jews the excuse makers. It was to them that God had sent His Son and to them the Son was speaking. But it is equally true that men still make excuses for not receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

We shall notice a few of the many excuses given for not accepting this **“great salvation”** so freely offered.

I. I Do Not Feel Like It

Salvation is not based upon feeling but fact, and that fact is **“that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”** (I Corinthians 15:3). Salvation is no such trifling thing as to depend upon the unstableness of man’s feelings—for they are as variable as the wind that blows.

But the very fact that men make this excuse shows the pitiful condition they are in, providing they are telling the truth. If I had no feeling in my hand or arm, while penning these words, instead of boasting about it I would be alarmed lest it was a precursor of something radically wrong in my physical body.

Unsaved reader, if you really have no feeling about the necessity of your soul’s salvation, it shows that sin has stabbed that monitor in your breast until it fails to react to the work of the Holy Spirit.

There is a plant known to naturalists as the sensitive plant.

Touch it and it will vibrate in every branch and leaf. Continue to touch it and it will finally show no more reaction to touch than a ragweed. You may be in that condition.

II. It Costs Too Much

Salvation is one of the free things in this world (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is not for sale, yet it is the most priceless treasure in all the world. God has bestowed on us generous gifts in the physical world; but man, in this mechanical age, has harnessed many of these gifts in a way that we have to pay for them. Not so with salvation. It is true that some religious systems try to “harness” salvation and put a price upon it through the sale of indulgences, yet, “Salvation is by grace plus nothing.” To gain the whole world and miss this salvation makes a man a pauper throughout all eternity (Mark 8:36).

It is true that a sinner who accepts this salvation gets rid of a number of things. The drunkard gets rid of his drunkenness; the gambler gets rid of gambling; the liar gets rid of his lying; etc. These are not prices you pay, but vices you lose.

This excuse, it costs too much, is one of the most absurd that is made and shows the gross darkness of a lost soul on the subject of salvation.

III. The Hypocrisy of Church Members

It is sad that the sinner is able to make the excuse that there are hypocrites in the churches. There always have been and probably always will be hypocrites while the church is on earth. There is but one place a hypocrite will never be found—that is heaven (Matthew 24:51; Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15).

What makes the hypocrite so conspicuous in the church? Is it not the background of genuine Christians? But why see the few and shut your eyes to the many? No doubt there are hypocrites in the legal profession, yet no right-minded sinner would send for a blacksmith to draw up his will. No doubt there are hypocrites in the medical profession, yet the sinner would never consent to an automobile mechanic taking out his appendix. Sinner, on that day when your feet are growing chill, the cold sweat is upon your brow and you are struggling for breath, and the doctor is shaking his head to your relatives, the hypocrites in the church will not concern you.

IV. So Many Things in the Bible I Cannot Understand

Viewed in the light of the Word of God, inability to understand the Bible is a most silly excuse. In I Corinthians 2:14 it is written, “**But the natural (unsaved) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**”

Who knows what electricity is? Yet, who would be so foolish as to refuse to use the benefits to be derived from it? Thousands ride in automobiles, yet the ignition system belongs to this unknown something we call electricity. Some of the most trivial and commonplace things of life are not understood, yet men will reject salvation because there are some things in the Bible they cannot understand.

There are things in the heavens that are only telescopically discerned; there are things of the earth that are only microscopically discerned. Sinner friend, when you are saved and indwelt by the Spirit of God, many of the difficult things of the Bible will become clear. Do not let the difficulties of the Bible keep you from salvation.

V. I Do Not Like the Teacher

This is another shallow and pitiful excuse! If a man awakened you with the cry, “Your house is on fire—let me help you down this ladder!” you would never stop to study the voice of the rescuer to see whether it be basso or tenor, guttural or nasal. Be the voice as it may, you would heed it and allow him to show you the way to safety. Suppose you were being carried down a swift stream toward a cataract of destruction and someone would rush to a bridge over that stream and throw a rope to you as you passed under the bridge. But before you would seize the rope would you want to know something about the man’s scholastic standing, his political views, his dress, etc.? No, never! If in your right mind, you would seize the rope, and then seize the man’s hand in thanks for your rescue.

It is through the power of preaching that the Holy Spirit most often convicts men of sin. Gospel preaching was never designed to be a salve but always a sword. Read the first gospel sermon in the Book of Acts. Peter charged the Jews with crucifying Christ, by saying, “**Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.**” The Holy Spirit brought conviction by this kind of preaching and many of the hearers “**were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?**” Peter was not a man-pleaser but a pleaser of God.

Some time ago I received a church bulletin in which the pastor was inviting people to come to that particular church.

In his plea was the following statement, “Neither do we at our church preach against other creeds, and anyone—Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish—will never hear a thing said that would cause him to be sorry he came. . . . Nobody is ever molested in our services.”

Place alongside this statement the charge of Paul to Timothy, “**Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove** (*elegeho—admonish, tell the faults*), **rebuke** (*epitmao—censure, strictly charge*), **exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.**”

Another statement in the same bulletin reads “Our church does not preach against ‘things.’ One will never hear a sermon against dancing, card playing, cigarette smoking, nor even drinking.”

I realize that we need to preach a positive gospel, Paul preached a positive gospel. But remember Paul preached against divisions, immoralities, lawsuits, mixed-marriages, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling, etc., to the Corinthians. There is a difference between what people need and what they want. Billy Sunday used to say, “The backslider likes the preaching that wouldn’t hit the side of a house, while the real disciple is delighted with the truth that brings him to his knees.”

Sinner friend, you may need the kind of preaching which causes you to dislike the preacher.

VI. I Am Too Busy

Some years ago, in the church of which I was then pastor, the young people had printed several thousand tracts featuring the excuse, "I am too busy."

- The first page pictured a business man at his desk with Christ standing beside him pleading for a few minutes of his time. His answer to Christ was, "I am too busy."
- The next picture showed the same man at the same desk, but another visitant—the black-robed figure of Death.

Death was saying, "Come with me." It was the businessman who was now pleading for a few minutes, but it was too late.

Listen to me, dear reader! It may be that the angels will fly over the spot where you are now sitting, fold their wings and veil their faces and say, "There is the place where So-and-So was too busy in the affairs of this world to accept Christ."

VII. I Am Afraid I Cannot Hold Out

"I am afraid I cannot hold out" is a sad excuse. Sad— because so many professed followers of Christ teach that a man's salvation depends upon his "holding out."

In a southern city I heard a street preacher tell his audience about how he had been saved from a life of sin. I rejoiced to hear his clear-cut testimony to the grace of God. A few moments later he exhorted his hearers, "Never say you are saved. The Bible says '*He that endureth to the end shall be saved.*'" A number of his followers shouted "Amen."

They seemed to enjoy an insecure salvation.

This preacher did not realize that he was unconsciously putting into the devil's hand his most formidable weapon to keep men and women from Christ. Most personal workers will testify that one of the common excuses given by the unsaved is, "I fear I cannot hold out."

Christian people, please quit putting this weapon into the hands of the devil to keep sinners from Christ. Remember sinner friend, Christ says of the saved, "**I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**" The little Scotch lassie when quoting this was told, "You might slip through His fingers." Her laconic but scriptural reply was, "I am one of the fingers." She was right, for it is written in Ephesians 5:30, "**We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**"

In Isaiah 28:17 it is written, "**Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.**"

Sinner, what will you do then?

All things are ready, Come,
Come to the supper spread;
Come, rich and poor; come old and young;
Come, and be richly fed.

All things are ready, Come,
Tomorrow may not be;
O sinner, come; the Saviour waits
This hour to welcome thee!

~ end of chapter 24 ~

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