

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

and Other Sermons

by

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SERMON NINE

NO DIFFERENCE

(Romans 3:22-26)

THERE is still no difference. In every department of secular activity, this world has traveled far since the time of the Apostle Paul. Everything mundane is different. Politically, economically, scientifically, educationally, socially, even religiously, man has changed everything. But spiritually, we are still on the same level, in exactly the same place men were at the time of the Letter to the Romans. Nay, we may go farther back than that.

On the basis of the law, in our relationship with God, on the question of sin and salvation, this generation is at the same point as were Adam and Eve when they were driven from the Garden of Eden— sinners in need of the saving grace of God.

There are all sorts of mental distinctions, of social strata, of educational qualifications, of monetary differentiations, of political categories, of national barriers, but spiritually we are all alike. There is no difference in the need of salvation. There is no difference in the provision of salvation. There is no difference in the way of salvation.

I. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE NEED OF SALVATION

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We were all born in sin. That is the dictum of God. Philosophize, analyze, psychologize about it all you please, God’s inerrant Word still declares, **“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray speaking lies as soon as they be born.”**

There is no difference in that we have all sinned in practice.

- **“There is no man that sinneth not.”**
- **“There is none righteous, no, not one.”**
- **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”**
- **“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”**

Your own hearts will tell you the truth of this. Your own experiences and observations of yourselves and others will more than verify the truths of these blanket condemnations.

In order, however, that the Holy Spirit may burn these convictions into your souls, let us **“to the law and to the testimony.”**

Hear the Law of God, the Ten Commandments.

- **“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”**
- **“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness . . .”**
- **“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . .”**
- **“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”**
- **“Honor thy father and thy mother.”**
- **“Thou shalt not kill.”**
- **“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”**
- **“Thou shalt not steal.”**
- **“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”**
- **“Thou shalt not covet.”**

Hear now the words of Paul, **“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”**

Heed again the words of James, **“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”**

Now, where do you stand? Measure yourselves by the law, by the unchangeable Word of God. Have you kept every commandment? Is your record absolutely clean of the overstepping, of the transgression, of the violation of a single one of the requirements of God? Is there one of you, a man, a woman, a child, anywhere, who can stand up before God and before this people and say, “Preacher, you are not referring to me, nor is Paul. Before God, I have not broken a single one of the decrees of God”? Surely there is not one of us who can take such a stand or make such a statement.

What difference does it make which of the laws you have broken, if a single misstep makes you a sinner in the sight of God?

Moody tells that they used to have a game in England called “Sinner.” The players would take a tall pole, affix a hoop to the end of it, stick it in the ground, and shoot arrows through that hoop. The one who missed putting the arrow through the hoop was called a sinner and had to treat the rest of the gamesters. No matter how many arrows they had to shoot, a single miss would lose the game. Even so it is with the commandments of God. Keep nine of the commandments, violate one, you are a sinner. Keep eight, or seven, or six, or five of the laws, break two, or three, or four, or five, you are a sinner. What matter which one of the commandments you have smashed when the disregard or the overt disobedience of any one of them blots your record with the transgression of God’s law? Where does this put the moral man, the self-righteous woman? Surely no intelligent, honest-hearted person would dare insist upon being absolutely sinlessly perfect.

There is also no difference in the fact that we have all come short of the glory of God.

The glory of God in this connection surely means the standards of holy, righteous living, presented as our rule of conduct, as God's blueprint for our lives, in the life, the character, the ministry, the work of Jesus Christ. There are many people who take comfort in their own comparative goodness as they measure themselves by the evil lives of out-and-out sinners or even by the unclean lives of backslidden church-members. But that is not the standard. That is not the measurement. That is not the yardstick.

When we stand before God at the judgment bar, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ will be the criterion of justice.

- Which one of us has lived as Christ lived?
- Which one of us has loved as Christ loved?
- Which one of us has obeyed God as did Christ?
- Which one of us sacrificed with the measure of Christ's sacrifice?

O beloved, look away from yourselves, look away from each other, look to Christ. There is the goal set up for us by God. We have all come short of that goal. There is not one of us who can place his life by the life of Christ and not be abashed, not be ashamed, not be stricken with the guilt of the blackness of the sins that corrode the souls of the best of us when exposed by the side of the spotless purity of the Lamb of God.

There is no difference in the punishment for sin.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is the universal declaration of God. What a leveler that word is! Who art thou? What art thou? Art thou rich or poor, young or old, weak or strong, Jew or Gentile? Have you sinned? Have you come short of the glory of God? **"The wages of sin is death."**

The curse of the law is hanging over your head like the sword of Damocles.

- **"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."**
- **"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."**

You are a sinner. You have not measured up to the matchless, perfect, glorious life of the Son of God. You may be as good as the best in this town. Your life may be as clean, perhaps cleaner than that of any church-member. Have you accepted Christ as your Saviour? Has the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ been imputed to you by faith? If not, by the authority of God's Word, this hour you are hanging over the burning pit of an eternal hell by the brittle uncertainty of your life that at any minute may be snapped in twain and you yourself plunged beneath the fiery waves of that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

But, thank God, there is a way out. I am commissioned by God to point you to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

II. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE PROVISION OF SALVATION

There is salvation provided by God for every soul in this world. There is no need of anyone's perishing. There is balm in Gilead, pardon on Calvary, for all who will avail themselves of the matchless grace of God. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse from all sin, for all time and eternity, all those who come unto God by Him. It has never lost its power. Its crimson tide has never abated its force or lost its fullness. There is as much of it today, and it is just as effectively efficient, as it was when it first flowed from Immanuel's veins. I can and do propose, proclaim, proffer it to you by the authority of God's Book.

First, *God wants all men to be saved.*

- **“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”**
- **“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”**
- **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”**

There is the very heart of God speaking to our needy hearts. God wants you saved, saved from sin, saved from Satan, saved from hell, saved for Christ, saved for heaven. It is this unmistakable will of God that set the machinery of redemption in motion, that sent the Son of Man from heaven to die for our sins. God wills no man's damnation. If we die in our sins and are eternally lost, it is because we have abused the love of God, refused the mercy of God, rejected the offer of God.

Second, *Jesus Christ died for all of us.*

- **“He was wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”**
- **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**
- **“And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.”**

Yes, Jesus bore the sins of every one of us in His own body on that cursed tree. His blood was shed for every soul to the ends of the earth. His death was the efficient, efficacious atonement for all who will recognize Him by faith as their Redeemer.

The Jew, the Gentile, the American, the European, the Asiatic, the African, the man from the islands of the sea, all may find and have cleansing in the streaming wounds of Calvary's Christ.

Surely there is no soul who may not be washed free and clean, holy and wholesome in the blood of the Lamb. That is the greatest news, the best news, the most inspiring news. It is shouting good news. Jesus Christ died for all men. His blood is available for the cleansing of all souls from all sins. Freely, bountifully, lovingly, eagerly, God proffers that cleansing tide to all sinners alike.

Third, *the Holy Spirit invites us all to come and accept that salvation.*

- **“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”**
- **“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”**
- **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”**

Tell me, how could God have made that invitation any simpler, any broader, any more inclusive, any more inviting? Had He put our very names in each of these moving appeals, they could not have been more personal. Surely that sinner is beside himself, demon-possessed, who can hear and hear again the appeal of God and yet persist in his rejection of it. I Surely God has then, the perfect, justifiable right to say,

“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”

What a fearful condemnation, what a terrible indictment, what a horrible culmination to persistent rejection and unbelief! Beloved, hear the call of the Spirit as He pleads with you to accept the free bounty of God's love, the shed blood of God's Son! Turn your backs on Satan and sin and your faces toward the Saviour and salvation. Come ye to Christ.

III. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY OF SALVATION

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood . . .” **“Faith in His blood”** is the way appointed by God unto salvation. It is the universal way, the simple way, the only way. It is the way of God, the way of the Bible, the way for man.

By faith we obtain the forgiveness of our sins.

- **“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”**

- **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”**

All who believe are justified. That is the promise of God, the very foundation, the very basis, the very essence of our religion. All who believe are justified from all things. There is no barrier; there is no hindrance; there is no condition. Big sinner, little sinner, young sinner, old sinner, all alike may have the forgiveness of their sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The queen in her boudoir, the harlot on the streets, the banker in his counting-house, the murderer in death row, all are included in this blanket pardon.

There is no distinction of persons, no differences in rank, no barriers of education or social standing, no national or sex restrictions, all, all, every soul to the ends of the earth, of every clime, of every continent, of every country, of every condition, are covered by these blessed promises. There is no person who may not have the free pardon of every sin by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

By faith we are made to become children of God.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name . . .”

- By faith we are translated from the slavery of Satan to the family of God.

- By faith we are brought from the bondage of sin to the benefits of grace.

- By faith we are made the brethren and the sisters of Jesus Christ, heirs and joint heirs with Him to all of the fullness of God.

- By faith we make God responsible for the supply of all of our needs, for the care of all of our days.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

- By faith we may claim all of the promises, all of the provisions, all of the powers of God.

- By faith we are saved and by faith we are kept, for it is written, **“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

By faith we shall be raised from the dead and received up into glory.

Jesus said, **“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die.”** Paul said, **“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him . . .”**

- By faith this corruptible body will in God's own good time, put on incorruption, and this mortal flesh will put on immortality.
- By faith death is robbed of its sting and swallowed up in victory.
- By faith we will be united with our loved ones who have preceded us and with those who will follow on after us.
- By faith the family circle will be unbroken in the glory land.
- By faith we shall reign and rejoice with Jesus forever.
- By faith we shall be clothed in robes of spotless white.
- By faith we shall be crowned with the righteousness of the Son of God.
- By faith we shall receive the reward of our clean, consecrated, sacrificial lives.
- By faith we shall hear the joyous words, **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”**

The Holy Spirit offers you Jesus Christ as your personal Redeemer. Will you have Him? He has the power, the love, the willingness, the God-bestowed, un-changeable ability, to pardon your sins, to bring you into the family of God, to guarantee you the resurrection from the dead and the home eternal in the heavens. Will you receive Him? Will you be washed in His precious blood? Will you accept the salvation that cost Him so fearfully much and yet which He offers freely to you? Will you step out of damnation into salvation, out of darkness into light, out of death into life? God is waiting; Christ is willing; the Spirit is wooing. Will you come?

Come, ye sinners, lost and hopeless,
 Jesus' blood can make you free;
 For He saved the worst among you,
 When He saved a wretch like me.
 To the faint He giveth power,
 Through the mountains makes a way;
 Findeth water in the desert,
 Turns the night to golden day.

In temptation He is near thee,
 Holds the powers of hell at bay;
 Guides you in the path of safety,
 Gives you grace for every day.
 He will keep you while the ages
 Roll throughout eternity;
 Though earth hinders and hell rages,
 All must work for good to thee.

~ end of sermon 9 ~

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