

What Do Ye More than Others – Matthew 5:43-48

One of the problems, if not one of the actual tragedies of modern Christianity, is that sanctification and justification are taught as one and the same thing. *“Justification”* is one of the words that we use to talk about our salvation.

Justification is the act of God whereby sinners are declared to be righteous. It involves the imputation of our sins to the Saviour and then His righteousness imputed to us. Christ Jesus *“was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* *“By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”* And *“being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

“Sanctification” is also one of the aspects of salvation; by it saved sinners are set apart unto the Lord. But one of the differences between these two things is that sanctification comes as a result of justification. God is just in setting us apart unto Himself, only because He has already declared us to be righteous. Another difference between sanctification and justification is a matter of verb tense. Justification is basically something which is done once by God and it can never be done again. Sanctification, on the other hand, is something complete and fully accomplished in the decree of God, but it has on-going, practical significance – our sanctification will never be complete as long as we remain in this flesh. Furthermore this aspect of sanctification is something in which we as saints participate. Sanctification in one sense is a completed act of God, whereby *“sinners”* become *“saints.”* But it is also something the saint does in unison with God – setting himself apart from the world.

The problem that religion has when it comes to these who things is in getting the cart before the horse. Most *“professing Christians,”* – Protestant and Catholic – think that through sanctification comes justification. The more sin-free we become the greater is the strength of our salvation. These people are *“professing Christians”* only because they are not actual saints of God. Practically-speaking, sinners are justified by faith in Christ – not by their adherence to a set of rules and regulations which somehow make us holy or sanctified. It’s not by our accomplishments that souls reach Glory, but by the accomplishment of Christ on the cross. It’s not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by God’s mercy that sinners are saved.

On the other hand, without holiness no man shall see the Lord and rejoice in that sight. The Bible does not teach *“do this and live,”* but *“live first and do these things.”* **Ephesians 2** beautifully puts everything into perspective: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

It is by the grace of God that any of us are saved, and we come to understand this through our faith. These things strip us of any right to boasting in our salvation. We are God’s workmanship, created in order to serve Him as He had ordained. The word translated *“God’s workmanship”* is *“poiema”* (*poy'-ay-mah*). Your dictionary will tell you that the English word *“poem”* comes from this *“poiema.”* The saints of God are His poetry, written by the Lord to tell His story and to bring glory to His name. No poem has ever written itself. I have attempted to write a little poetry in the past, and I’ve found that I’m not very good at it. Mrs. Nimmo and some others in our church are very good poets. But I tend to think that even they would testify that good poetry doesn’t exactly write itself. It takes work to write good poetry. And as far as the poetry of God is concerned, the part which is *“good”* relates to our sanctified natures. We have been created by God to serve the Lord in holiness and godly living. This is the result and the proof that we are the workmanship of God. **Hebrews 12:14** reminds us that *“without holiness no man shall see God.”*

Getting back to our scripture in **Matthew 5**, Who should display characteristics of Christianity more: the Christian or the one who is seeking salvation? The child of God has been created unto God works, while the child of Satan has not. And that leaves us with the question: *“What do YE more than others?”*

Before I go any farther, please note that it is the Lord Jesus who is asking this question, *“What do YE more than others?”* There is a natural tendency to identify the words which the preacher says as his words. Even when the Word of God is spoken, listeners sometimes picture the preacher rather than the Lord. But in this case, it is the Lord Jesus who asks, *“What do YE more than others?”* and He asks that of the preacher even before it comes to any of that man’s congregation. And it boils down to this – more is expected from us than from others. **But WHY** does the Lord expect so much from us?

For one reason – we PROFESS more.

We profess to be children of God, born of the Spirit and officially adopted into the family of the Lord. We profess to be renewed from the inside out, beginning with our wicked hearts. We profess to have learned about the evils of our

sin, and we profess to have repented of it. We profess to have been indwelt by the Spirit of God Himself. We know the truth of the Scriptures by experience and not just the testimony of others. We tell the world that Christ Jesus is coming again, and that He will snatch us out from this evil society.

When the world hears things like this, its response is something like: *“Show us some proof.”* There is an ancient story about a man who grew up on the delta of a huge river – over a mile wide. When he got to be a young man he decided to travel and left his home for over a year. After months of travel he returned and told his neighbors of some of the fantastic things that he had seen and done. For example he talked about roaring rivers and streams, unlike the quiet, lazy river where they lived. He told them that at times it was necessary for him jump across some of the streams that he had found. One of his neighbors who simply couldn’t picture what he was describing, told the traveler: *“If you did it there, you can do it here.”* There are many things which we know to be true, which cannot be imagined by the unsaved around us. *“If you will do it there, then you should be able to do it here.”*

Well might we all blush at the lives of some people who profess to be saints of God. I put a little clip in the bulletin last week purported to come from the lips of Charles Finney. *“Most of these converts of mine are a shame to Christianity. If I had my time over again as an evangelist, I would preach nothing but holiness.”* An artist was hired by a prominent Catholic bishop to paint a portrait of Peter and Paul. When the patron came to see how the work was progressing, he complained that the faces were too red, and he wanted them to be toned down. The artist replied, *“No! I wish to show the embarrassment of the Apostles as they look down through history at their modern successors.”* There are thousands of people who actually reject Christ and Christianity who live more *“godly”* than those who claim to be *“Christians.”*

The Lord expects more of real Christians because not only to they profess more, but **they are more**. The believer is a child of the King; he is a temple of God; He is a vessel made unto the honour of the Lord. We have received God’s special unmerited love; we’ve been chosen before the foundation of the world. Christ laid down his life for us, and upon us is the stain of the blood of the Lord Jesus.

Furthermore more is expected of us because we are **capable** of living more righteously than the lost. By ourselves we can do nothing, but we *“can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us.”* The Holy Spirit Who lives in us is the God of omnipotence. He can destroy evil habits more easily than you can squash an ant on the sidewalk. It was the Holy Spirit who told us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. It is His desire, His exhortation, and His ability that makes holy living possible.

More is expected of us, and we have **more to offer** than anyone else. The poorest believer possesses infinitely more than the riches of the unbeliever. That believer owns a store of eternal hope to match his eternal life. There is a peace which passeth understanding; he has been granted treasures in Heaven; He has friends unmatched by any that the world has to offer. We have the smile of the Lord, the ministry of angels, depths of mercy and mountains of grace.

And the **Lord expects more** of us for the simple reason that **the world expects more** of us – not that the Lord ever puts the world first. But your unsaved neighbor looks out of his dreary corner and sees you going to the House of God. Then he asks his wife if Christianity does anything more than ruin a beautiful Sunday evening. *“Is that Christian any more kind than my mother was before she died?; is he sweet or grumpy?”* Our Saviour asks us, *“What do YE more than others?”* Are we helpful or hurtful? Are we givers or takers? Are we bullies or lambs of God? Do we try to make our work the finest that it can be for the glory of God? Or to we try to make our work conform to that of the lost world around us? Do we do all things, giving thanks to God and the Father for the ability that He has given us? Both the world and the Lord expect more from us than from the average American.

But more specifically, IN WHAT AREAS do they expect more?

Matthew 5:13-16 tells us that God expects His people to set a Christian example – an Heavenly example. *“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

If God sent you into your kitchen and told you to find the ingredient there which most closely illustrated your life and attitude, what would you have to honestly pick? Some people are lemons, while some people are peppers. Some

people are sweet as sugar and others are as sticky as honey. Some are effervescent and others are flat. Some make a room smell wonderful and others just stink. Some are black and white, while others are colorful. Do you purify and bring out the best in others like salt, or have you lost your savor and are become good for nothing? Are you a candle that is unlit, unused and unuseful, or do you help folk to find their way? It's not enough just not to do anyone any harm. That might be all right for a granite rock, but that's not the work of rock salt. A pinch of salt or a candle that **does** nothing **IS** nothing; it is worth very little, and certainly not worthwhile as salt.

As Christians we are expected to do the will of the Lord. The Pharisees tithe, what do ye more than they? The Russellites go door to door spreading their lies; what do ye more than they? The Catholics attend early mass and burn candles and pray the rosary, what do ye more than they? The Mormons wear holy underwear; what do ye more than they?

We are expected to excel in purity. The lost man says, *"I'm not guilty of adultery, and I don't print pornography."* Our Master expects more of us than merely these sorts of things. The Lord expects more truthfulness, more patience, more love toward others, more gentleness. The Lord expects us to be more like our Master.

And WHY is it that the Lord wants these things from us?

Is God just trying to be mean and drive a wedge between us and our old friends? Does He think that just because He bought us, now he owns us and that he can boss us around? Is it that the Lord wants to make the road to heaven hard and to weed out the spiritual frauds and cripples? No. This call to holiness is not a penance or punishment. The Lord demands such things, because it is by our fruits that we are known. Men will never know us by our faith, because faith is something internal, spiritual and perhaps vertical. Lost people believe only what their eyes can convince their hearts is true. Christians are known by their works which are visible and consistent and godly. And it is by our righteousness that the mouths of the critical will be stopped. One holy action is worth a hundred perfectly good Bible quotations. But on other hand, one sinful deed by a professing *"Christian"* can destroy 10,000 good Biblical arguments. The Lord asks for a life spent for Him, because that is how He is glorified on earth.

And these things bring peace to our own hearts. *"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"* Not for very long or for very far. And since we profess to be on a long walk to glory with the Son of God, we had better agree with Him. If we haven't already learned that our sins bring about a break in fellowship with the Lord, it could mean several things: It might mean that there never was any fellowship with the Lord, because we are still God's rebels. Or it might mean that the Christian is so dense and has had so little fellowship with the Lord recently that he wouldn't recognize its absence if it slapped him in the face. Or it might mean that we have become so wicked that we refuse to recognize that broken fellowship. The Lord Jesus said, *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."* Isn't that where the Christian wants to be?

There are many millions who say, *"I have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; I am heaven bound."* But their lives say to the world, to God, and to themselves: *"I wish that I was still lost. I wish that I could sin like the rest of the world and not feel so guilty about it."* In some cases that is exactly the situation; they are as lost as Judas was. The salvation of Christ is not salvation **IN** sin, but **FROM** sin. There is no real salvation where there is no real repentance from sin. Over the head of the Saviour, as he hung on the cross, there was a sign. It said different things to different people. To the Jews it was a slap in the face. To Pilate, it was a simple declaration of the charge against Christ: He claimed to be the King of the Jews. But to the Lord Jesus it was a statement of fact. And there is a sense in which that sign contained a list of each of our sins. If we had in our hands a florescent lamp and the opportunity to use it, we should have scaled that cross and underlined everyone of our sins. *"This my sin was borne by Christ, and this one, and his one."*

The Lord wants us, expects us, and empowers us to be different from the lost around us. So what do ye more than others?