



SBAOC Weekly Update

NEWS & PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have any news, prayer requests, articles, or events that you would like to have included in this update, please email the information to Tony Mattia at spurgeonassociation@gmail.com.

MESSAGES LIKELY TO WIN SOULS

This week we continue Spurgeon’s sermon that he preached to pastors and the Spurgeon College. This comes from Spurgeon’s book, *The Soulwinner*. We have included the preface of the book followed by the sermon for your convenience. (Part 1 was printed in the Nov. 9 issue.)

Preface

This volume was planned by Mr. Spurgeon himself. His intention was to deliver to the students of the pastors' college a short course of lectures on what he termed "that most royal employment," soulwinning. Having completed the series, he purposed to collect his previous addresses to other audiences on the same theme and publish the whole for the guidance of all who desired to become soulwinners, with the added hope of inducing many more professing Christians to engage in this truly blessed service for the Savior.

This explanation will account for the form in which the topic is treated in the present book. The first six chapters contain the college lectures; then follow four addresses delivered to Sunday school teachers, open-air preachers, and friends gathered at Monday evening prayer meetings at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon's church. The rest of the volume consists of teachings in which the work of winning souls is earnestly commended to the attention of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thousands will rejoice to read what Mr. Spurgeon spoke and wrote concerning what he called "the chief business of the Christian."

Messages Likely to Win Souls, Part 2

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PURPOSE STATEMENT:

We unite as an association of Southern Baptist churches in order to manifest the glory of God above all. We purpose to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. We covenant to strengthen and support one another, motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

"If there is no church... should you not commence one?" C. H. Spurgeon

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Founders Conference — **January 18-20, 2024.**

Theme: *Remember Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:8)* with Tom Ascol, Phil Johnson, Conrad Mbewe, Joel Beeke, & Travis Allen. Go to founders.org/conference for more information.

True Church Conference — **February 15-18, 2024.** Theme: *9 Maxims of a True Church.* Anchoredintruth/true-church-conference.

Founders Midwest Conference
— **February 27-28, 2024.** First Baptist Church, Fenton, Missouri. Theme: *Learning from the Puritans Today.* Sbfcmw.com

If you have a conference or event that you would like listed here, please contact us by email: spurgeonassociation@gmail.com.

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In the fifth place, I think that we should try to take out of our messages everything that is likely to divert the hearers' minds from the object we have in view. The best style of preaching in the world, like the best style of dressing, is that which nobody notices. Somebody went to spend the evening with Hannah More, and when he came home, his wife asked him, "How was Miss More dressed? She must have been dressed very splendidly." The gentleman answered, "Really she was—dear me, how was she dressed? I did not notice at all how she was dressed. Anyway, there was nothing particularly noticeable in her dress. She was herself the object of interest." That is the way a true lady is dressed—so that we notice her and not her garments. She is so well dressed that we do not know how she is dressed. Likewise, that is the best way of dressing a sermon. Let it never be said of you, as it is sometimes said of certain popular preachers, "He did the thing so majestically; he spoke with such lofty diction, etc., etc., etc."

Never introduce anything into your message that would be likely to distract the attention of the hearer from the great object you have in mind. If you take the sinner's mind off the main subject by speaking after the manner of men, there is so much less likelihood of his receiving the impression you desire to convey, and, consequently, the smaller probability of his being converted.

I remember once reading what Mr. Finney said in his book *Revival*. He wrote that a person was on the point of being converted, when just then an old woman wearing clogs came shuffling up the aisle, making a great

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Alone**

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Founders Midwest Conference Schedule

February 27-28, 2024

First Baptist Church of Fenton, MO

"Learning From the Puritans Today"
Dr. Joel Beeke

Session 1—"The Puritans and Prayer"
Session 2—"The Puritans and Meditation on God's Word"
Session 3—"The Puritans and Life's Afflictions"
Session 4—"The Puritans and Assurance of Faith"
Session 5—"The Puritans and Spiritual Adoption into God's Family"
Session 6—"The Puritans and Biblically Raising Children"
Breakout Sessions: Mary Beeke (for women), "Laying Our Anxieties Before Christ"; Joel Beeke (for men) "Modern Challenges to Pastoral Faithfulness"

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disturbance. That soul was lost! I know what the evangelist meant, even though I do not like the manner in which he expressed the episode. The noise of the old woman's wooden-soled shoes probably did take the person's mind away from what he should have been thinking about. It is also quite possible that he could not be brought back to exactly the same position again. However, we are to look at all these little things as if everything depended on us, but remember that it is the Holy Spirit alone who can make the Word effective.

Your message should not distract the people's attention through being only very distantly related to the text. There are many hearers still left who believe that there should be some sort of connection between the message and the text. They might begin asking themselves, "How did the minister ever get over there? What does his talk have to do with the text?" Then you will have lost their attention. That wandering habit of yours may be a very destructive one to them.

Keep to your text. If you do not, you will be like the little boy who went out fishing, and his uncle asked him, "Have you caught many fish, Samuel?" The boy answered, "I have been fishing for three hours, Uncle, and I have not caught any fish, but I have lost a lot of worms." I hope you will never have to say, "I did not win any souls for the Savior, but I spoiled a lot of precious texts. I confused and confounded many passages of Scripture, but I did no good with them. I was not supremely concerned with learning the mind of the Spirit as revealed in the text so as to get its meaning into my own mind, although it took a great deal of squeezing and packing to get my mind into the text." That is not a good thing to do.

Stick to your texts, and seek to get from the Scriptures what the Holy Spirit put into them. Never let your hearers have to ask the question, "What does this message have to do with the text?" If you do,

people will not benefit from your message, and perhaps they will not be saved.

I would say to you, get all the education that you can, drink in everything that your instructors can possibly impart to you. It will take you all your time to get out of them all that is in them. Endeavor to learn all that you can, because, believe me, a lack of education may hinder the work of soulwinning. That "orrible" omission of the letter *h* from places where it ought to be, that aspiration of the *h* until you exasperate it altogether—you cannot tell what harm such mistakes may cause. There was a young woman who might have been converted, for she did seem greatly impressed upon by your message. However, she was so disgusted by the dreadful way in which you put in *hs* where they ought not to be, or left them out where they ought to be in, that she could not listen to you with any pleasure. Her attention was distracted from the truth by your errors of pronunciation. That letter *h* has done vast harm. It is "*the letter [that] killeth*" (2 Corinthians 3:6) in the case of a great many, and all sorts of grammatical blunders may do more harm than you can imagine.

You may think, perhaps, that I am speaking of trifling matters that are hardly worthy of consideration. But I am not, for these things may cause most serious results. As easy as it is to learn to speak and write correct English, do try to know all you can of it.

Perhaps someone says, "Well, I know such-and-such a successful brother, and he was not an educated man." That is true, but note this: times are changing. One young woman said to another, "I do not see why we girls need to learn so many lessons. Young women before us did not know much, and yet they got married." "Yes," said her companion, "but then, you know, there were no boarding schools in them days, but now the young men will be educated, and it will be a poor future for us as ain't."

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A young man might say, "Such-and-such a minister was not grammatical, and yet he did well." But the people of his day were ungrammatical, too, so it did not matter as much. However, now, when people have had more education, if they come and listen to you, it will be a pity if their minds are taken off the solemn things that you wish them to think about because they cannot help noticing your deficiencies of education. Even if you are not an educated man, God may bless you. Wisdom tells us that we should not let our lack of education hinder the Gospel from blessing men. Possibly you say, "They must be very hypercritical to find fault like that." But, then, do not hypercritical people need saving just as much as other people? I would not want a hypercritical person to be able to say truthfully that my preaching had jarred on his ears and disturbed his mind so much that he could not possibly receive the doctrine that I was trying to set before him.

Have you ever heard why Charles Dickens would not become a spiritualist? At a seance, he asked to see the spirit of Lindley Murray, the American grammarian. There came in what professed to be the spirit of Lindley Murray, and Dickens asked, "Are you Lindley Murray?" The reply came, "I are." There was no hope of Dickens' conversion to spiritualism after that ungrammatical answer.

You may well laugh at the story, but see to it that you remember the moral of it. You can easily see that, by forgetting when to use the nominative or accusative case of a noun or pronoun, or by using the wrong tense of a verb, you might take the mind of your hearer away from what you are trying to bring before him, and so prevent the truth from reaching his heart and conscience. Therefore, divest your sermons as much as you can of everything that is likely to take the mind of your hearers away from the one object before you. The whole attention and thoughts of the people must be concentrated on the truth we

are setting before them if we are to preach so as to save those who come within sound of our voices.

Sixth, I believe that the messages that are most full of Christ are the most likely to be blessed to the conversion of the hearers. Let your sermons be full of Christ—from beginning to end crammed full of the Gospel. As for myself, I cannot preach anything but Christ and His cross, for I know nothing else. Long ago, like the apostle Paul, I determined not to know anything else "*save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*" (1 Corinthians 2:2). People have often asked me, "What is the secret of your success?" I always answer that I have no other secret but this: I have preached the Gospel—not about the Gospel, but the Gospel—the full, free, glorious Gospel of the living Christ who is the incarnation of the Good News. Preach Jesus Christ, always and everywhere. Every time you preach, be sure to have much of Christ in the message.

Do you remember the story of the old minister who heard a sermon by a young man? When the elder minister was asked by the preacher what he thought of it, he was rather slow to answer, but at last he said, "If I must tell you, I did not like it at all. There was no Christ in your sermon." "No," answered the young man, "because I did not see that Christ was in the text." "Oh!" said the old minister, "But do you not know that from every little town and village and tiny hamlet in England there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text, I say to myself, 'There is a road from here to Jesus Christ, and I intend to keep on His track until I get to Him.'" "Well," said the young man, "but suppose you are preaching from a text that says nothing about Christ?" "Then I will go over hedge and ditch until I get to Him."

We must do the same, friends. We must have Christ in all our messages, no matter what else is in them or not in them. There ought to be enough of the Gospel in every message to save a soul. Take care that it is

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so when you are called to preach before Her Majesty the Queen. Whether you are to preach to charwomen or chairmen, always make sure that there is the real Gospel in every message. I have heard of a young man asking, when he was going to preach in a certain place, "What kind of church is it? What do the people believe? What are their doctrinal views?" I will tell you how to avoid the necessity of such a question: preach Jesus Christ to them. If that does not suit their doctrinal views, then preach Jesus Christ the next Sunday you go, and do the same thing the next Sabbath, and the next, and the next, and never preach anything else. Those who do not like Jesus Christ must have Him preached to them until they do like Him, for they are the very people who need Him most.

Remember that all the tradesmen in the world say that they can sell their goods when there is a demand for them; but our goods create as well as supply the demand. We preach Jesus Christ to those who want Him, and we also preach Him to those who do not want Him; we keep on preaching Christ until we make them feel that they do want Him and cannot do without Him.

Seventh, friends, it is my firm conviction that the messages that are most likely to convert men are those that really appeal to their hearts—not those that are fired over their heads or aimed only at their intellects. I am sorry to say that I know some preachers who will never do much good in the world. They are good men, have plenty of ability, can speak well, and have a good deal of discernment; but, somehow or other, there is a very sad omission in their nature, for to anyone who knows them, it is quite evident that they do not have any heart. I know one or two men who are as dry as leather. If you were to hang them up on the wall, as you do a piece of seaweed, in order to tell what the weather is going to be like, they would be no guide to you, for scarcely any weather would affect them.

But I also know some men who are the very opposite of that type. They, too, are not likely to win souls, for they are so flippant, frivolous, and foolish that there is nothing serious about them, nothing to show that they are living in earnest. I cannot find any traces of a soul in them. They are too shallow to contain one. It could not live in the inch or two of water that is all that they hold. They appear to have been made without any souls, so they cannot do any good in preaching the Gospel. You must have souls. If you are to look after your brothers' and sisters' souls, depend on this: you must have a heart if you are to reach their hearts.

Another kind of preacher cannot weep over sinners. What good is he in the ministry? He never wept over men in his life. He never agonized before God on their behalf. He never said, *"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"* (Jeremiah 9:1).

I know a brother like this. In a meeting of ministers, after we had been confessing our shortcomings, he said that he was very much ashamed of us all. Well, no doubt, we ought to have been more ashamed of ourselves than we were. But he told us that, if we had truly meant what we had said in our confessions to God, we were a disgrace to the ministry; perhaps we were. He said he was not like that. As far as he knew, he never preached a message without feeling that it was the best he could preach, and he did not know that he could do any better than he had done. He always studied the same number of hours every day, always prayed exactly the same number of minutes, always preached a certain length of time. In fact, he was the most regular man I ever knew.

When I heard him say this to us, I asked myself, "What does his ministry show as the result of this perfect way of doing things?" Why, it did not show

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anything that was satisfactory. He has great gifts of dispersion; if he goes to a full chapel, he soon empties it. Yet he is a good man, in his way.

I sometimes wish that his clock would stop, or strike in the middle of the half hour, or that something extraordinary might happen to him, because some good might come of it. He is so regular and orderly that there is no hope of his doing anything. The fault with him is that he does not have any faults. You will notice, friends, that preachers who do not have any faults do not have any excellencies either. So try to avoid that flat, dead level and everything else that makes people less likely to be converted.

Coming back to the matter of the possession of a heart, of which I was speaking, I asked a young girl, who recently came to join the church, "Do you have a good heart?" She replied, "Yes, sir." I said, "Have you thought over that question? Do you not have an evil heart?" "Oh, yes!" she answered. "Well," I said, "how do your two answers agree?" "Why," responded the girl, "I know that I have a good heart, because God has given me a new heart and a right spirit; and I also know that I have an evil heart, for I often find it fighting against my new heart." She was right, and I would rather feel that a minister had two hearts than that he had none at all. It must be heart work with you, far more than head work, if you are to win many souls. Amid all your studies, never let your spiritual life become dry. There is no need for it to, although with many, study has had that effect. The instructors will bear me witness that there is a very drying influence about Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. That couplet is true:

Hebrew roots, as known to most,
Do flourish best on barren ground.

There is a very drying influence about the classics. There is a very drying influence about mathematics. You may get absorbed in any science until your heart is gone. Do not let that be the case with any of you,

so that people would have to say of you, "He knows much more than he did when he first came here, but he does not have as much spirituality as he used to have." Take care that this is never the case. Do not be satisfied with merely polishing your fireplaces, but stir the fire in your hearts and get your own souls aflame with love for Christ, or else you will not likely be greatly used in winning the souls of others.

Lastly, friends, I think that messages that have been prayed over are the most likely to convert people. I mean those messages that have had much real prayer offered over them, both in the preparation and the delivery, for there is much so-called prayer that is only playing at praying. Some time ago, I rode with a man who claims to work wonderful cures by the acids of a certain wood. After he had told me about his marvelous remedy, I asked him, "What is in that remedy that effects cures such as you profess to have brought about?" "Oh!" he answered, "it is the way in which I prepare it, much more than the stuff itself. That is the secret of its curative properties. I rub it as hard as I can for a long while, and I have so much vital electricity in me that I put my very life into it."

He was only a quack, yet we may learn a lesson even from him. The way to make sermons is to work vital electricity into them, putting your own life and the very life of God into them by earnest prayer. The difference between a message that has been prayed over and one that has been prepared and preached by a prayerless man is like the difference that Mr. Fergusson suggested in his prayer when he referred to the high priest before and after his anointing. You must anoint your messages, and you cannot do so except by much communion with God.

May the Holy Spirit anoint every one of you, and richly bless you in winning souls, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

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PRAYER MEETINGS FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND REVIVAL

- Fellowship Baptist Church in Onaga, Kansas—5:00 pm on Sundays
- Trinity Baptist Church in Wamego, Kansas—8:00 pm on Saturdays

The Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches is an association of Southern Baptist Churches that are united to manifest the glory of God above all. We set out to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. As an association of churches we are bound in mutual covenant to strengthen and support one another - motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture - by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

We are a non-geographic association seeking to include any like-minded body of believers so that together we might better fulfill the great commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our intent is to lean on His instruction and not our imaginations so that He is honored in all that we do. We welcome churches who adhere to the confessions of faith accepted by Southern Baptists throughout their history, including, but not limited to, the Second London Confession (1689) and the Baptist Faith and Message.

