

A Needed Emphasis

by Homer Hailey

Among the many lessons emphasized by Jesus Christ, one of the most outstanding is that of **personal individual responsibility**. Have you observed that every parable of judgment spoken by Jesus was in condemnation for the failure to do, and not for wrong-doing? Check them — The Marriage Feast, The Ten Virgins, The Sheep and the Goats, The Rich Farmer, The Rich Man in Hades, and all the rest — all were condemned for a failure to do that which should have been done, rather than for having lived immoral, base, sensual lives. This by no means insinuates that Jesus will excuse sins of immorality; it means that He recognized the need of and placed the emphasis on doing that which should be done — positive conduct.

Here is where the emphasis needs to be placed today, while at the same time not neglecting to cry out against sinful practices. Let every Christian recognize that he is “salt,” “light,” “leaven,” where he works, among those with whom he associates in a social way, and in the community as a whole. Let each feel keenly his responsibility as a “missionary,” and for the growth and development of the church and the spiritual life in his own vicinity, and the story will be different.

If this is one of the fundamental causes for failure in making the impression we should, then you know what is the remedy? The remedy is to be found in emphasizing **personal responsibility** through preaching, teaching, and in the whole pattern of local church work. The remedy will be realized as Paul’s prayer finds answer in each Christian: *“That ye may be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”* (Ephesians 3:16-17). As Christ dwells by faith in the heart of each, *“God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,”* but, *“according to the power that **worketh** in us”* (verse 20). Until every disciple is made keenly conscious of his or her responsibility for the church’s evangelistic work, its benevolent work, and its edification to the building up of itself in love, the church will never realize the maximum of it power in the world.

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